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NEWS FROM ICA

In this issue we explore the intersection between archives, activism and advocacy, offering a variety of perspectives on the vital role of archival work in shaping social justice and preserving documentary heritage. From reflections on archival solidarity inspired by the film 'Oppenheimer' to preserving the legacy of Nelson Mandela, this issue includes thought-provoking pieces on the ongoing journey of the Tandanya-Adelaide Declaration and the struggle for Indigenous rights in archival practice. Readers will also find updates on the achievements of the SPO and the Working Group on Archives and Gender Diversity, new faces in the ICA Secretariat and an exciting preview of the initiatives planned for 2025.



THE ARCHIVIST- ACTIVIST

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A Litany for Blessed Diversity

The genesis of an idea

The Sex-Affective & Gender Diversity Archives & Archivists Working Group (ICA-SAGDAA-WG) was launched by ICA Executive Director, Carlos Serrano Vasquez, in May 2024 to address a notable gap within the organisation. An initial group of about 20 members joined forces at a webinar, held on Thursday, 27 June 2024, which attracted 110-120 attendees. The event called *An Archive of Feelings* offered a global perspective on the subject through three insightful presentations.

Alejandro de la Fuente, a researcher in the field, opened with a presentation on the Yeguas del Apocalipsis Archive Project, discussing the archival legacy of artist and philosopher Pedro Lemebel in Chile. Composed mostly of photographs, the archive addresses political dictatorship in Chile, HIV, and the traces left behind by members of the queer community. To make the collections publicly accessible, these latter collaborated to keep copies with major archives, art museums and libraries. This presentation was followed by Sam Bourcier's introduction to the *Big Tata archives* in Paris, one of France's pioneering efforts to preserve LGBTQ+ community memories. It emphasised a living culture of archives, capturing not neutral facts but the emotions and desires of the people concerned. The archive contains 150 metres of physical archives and over 100 hours of oral histories, along with a podcast series.



Emma de Ramón Acevedo
President of the Latin American Association of Archives, ALA
Director of the National Archive of Chile



Marco Enríquez
Executive Secretary of the Latin American Association of Archives, ALA



Jordi Padilla-Delgado
Records Manager, Lloret de Mar Municipal Archive, Catalonia, Spain



Ammel Sharon
Assistant Professor and Archives In-Charge at the National Law School of India University, Bengaluru, India



Courtesy: *Yeguas del Apocalipsis Archive Project*

Watch the full recording of the webinar by clicking here.



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Courtesy: [Queer Indonesia Archive](#).

Lastly, Karina and Beau Newham presented the [Queer Indonesia Archive](#) (QIA) project. QIA is a digital archive founded in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic. The QIA team travels to different parts of Indonesia to gather material, often involving scanning documents on-site, and ensures the safety of contributors in a politically sensitive environment. Given the lack of professional archivists, the collective is conscious of the need for community-driven efforts to safeguard queer Indonesian history. This virtual gathering of so many archives and archivists amplified the importance of international collaboration in launching LGBTQ+ archival projects. If you missed it, the entire webinar, including these presentations, is available for viewing on [ICA's YouTube channel](#).

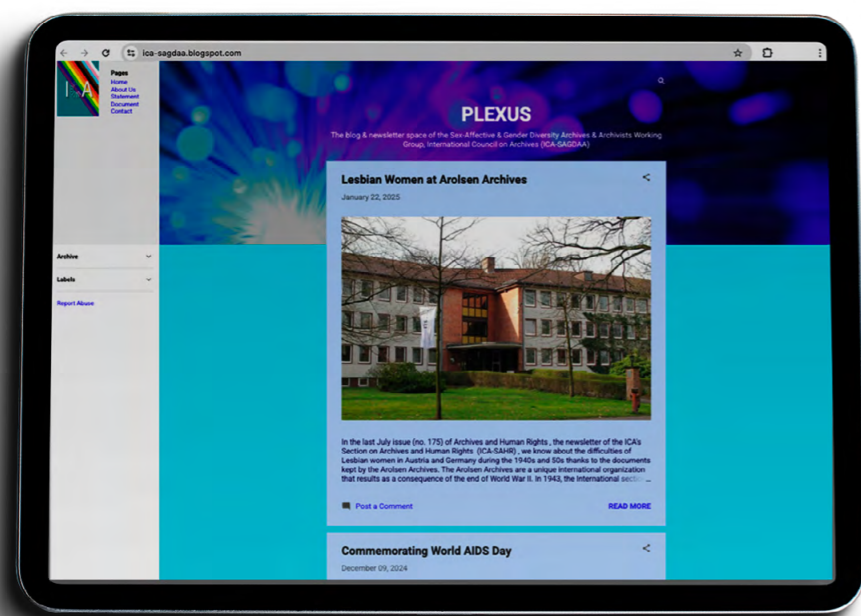
A different perspective on archival practice

These three projects represent just a few examples among the many global efforts to reclaim and celebrate the archival legacy of sex and gender diversity. Queer archives often face challenges in securing space, funding and staff, and yet continue their work with dedication and a sense of activism. It is exciting to imagine what a network of Sex-Affective & Gender Diversity (SAGD) archives might look like as they embark on a process of interconnection.

Questions from the audience raised important concerns about legal barriers to accessing sensitive LGBTQ+ materials, the secrecy often surrounding queer records, the difficulties of archiving in repressive environments, the role of collaboration between archives, and the significance of volunteers in maintaining and expanding these archives. We look forward to fostering intersectional dialogue with other groups working on gender, women's issues, social class, migration, racialisation, disability rights, and Indigenous concerns—communities that have often been overlooked by institutional archives and archival science.

The strange (or queer) look at documentary collections has a very different entry from what we usually know as Archives. Its difference, which gives it a very interesting freshness to share with other collections and other archival professionals, may be ascribed to the structures used for analysis of the information they contain, and the organisation and descriptions that they have been given. This is

perhaps the result of the fact these collections they are the fruit of personal and community experiences, of activism as a reaffirmation of an identity long denied and persecuted. In this sense and in our opinion, the archives of transgender women stand out, since these women have been the victims of persecution and discrimination throughout the ages and throughout the world. By gathering remains or fragments of photographic and epistolary memories of trans women persecuted and even murdered during the 1970s and '80s, archives, like the notable *Archivo Memoria Trans* (AMT; Trans Memory Archive) in Argentina, present us with documentary series in an approach that pushes us to rethink our traditional views on documentary organisation. From its materiality, this archive, like others, tells a different story, unknown to most people, and groups together voices very remote from those of official State bureaucracy. These stories are calls from the memory consciousness of the victims and form a kind of album-file relating the experiences of contempt that will hit home with visitors to the archive. Archives such as this offer a response to the insults suffered by the people concerned and reveal existences forced into invisibility yet very real.



Screenshot of the homepage of PLEXUS. Photo credit: ICA.

This is just the beginning of a journey that we hope will be long and fruitful in the protection and dissemination of sexual and gender diversity archives, as well as a meeting point for archival professionals who are interested in the subject or identify with the community.

Action for queer memory

ICA-SAGDAA-WG members expressed concerns that resonate with those voiced in their initial statement, which noted that safeguarding the rights of SAGD individuals and communities was becoming a key mandate for the UN, UNESCO, ICA, and related organisations as a critical Human Rights challenge. ICA-SAGDAA-WG aims to contribute by focusing on three main areas:

1. Archives and documents related to individuals who do not conform to dominant heteronormative and gender norms.
2. Archives and documents concerning associations and organisations of SAGD people.
3. SAGD individuals and organisations engaged in archives as academics, scholars, professionals, workers, users, and patrons.

To achieve these goals, the Group is considering different projects to offer resources and tools in support of this mission.



From the photo archive of the Homofil movement in Bergen.
Banner: “Lesbian fight is women’s fight / Women’s fight is lesbian fight”. Photographer unknown. SKA/A-0009 LLH Bergen and Hordaland, Skeivt archive. Bergen (Norway), 1 May 1980.

To achieve these goals, the Group is considering different projects to offer resources and tools in support of this mission. To channel these projects and provide information about them, the Group has launched **PLEXUS**, a blog and newsletter space for sharing resources and communicating about these initiatives.

This is just the beginning of a journey that we hope will be long and fruitful in the protection and dissemination of sexual and gender diversity archives, as well as a meeting point for archival professionals who are interested in the subject or identify with the community. The great Audre Lorde, the 90th anniversary of whose birth we recently celebrated, was very clear that *it is not our differences that divide us, it is our inability to recognize, accept and celebrate those differences*, blessed differences and diversity, which enrich us. In her 1978 poem *A Litany for Survival*, Lorde reminds us that silence does not end fear and that words (and memory) outlive us:

*And when we speak we are afraid
our words will not be heard
nor welcomed
but when we are silent
we are still afraid.*

*So it is better to speak
remembering
we were never meant to survive.* 🌟