

「檔案誘惑力」¹： 作為策展實務中的來源、提示、形式

泰莎·瑪莉亞·奎松
2021亞洲藝術雙年展策展人

The “Allure of the Archive”:
Source, Prompt, and Modality in Curatorial Practice

Tessa Maria GUAZON
Curator, 2021 Asian Art Biennial

國立台灣美術館
National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts

本文匯整了我對自己在 2021 年下半年所做的兩次發表的反思，² 這兩者的論述主軸都圍繞在檔案如何在策展實務中被活用的探討。本文副標稱檔案為「來源、提示、形式」，用來表達檔案參與策展型計畫的模式，而此計畫主要的具體成果可分展覽、畫冊和同類型的出版物、以及配合展覽推出的大眾活動。本文中將會列舉我在「未至之城－2021 亞洲藝術雙年展」中負責的部分，藉以說明我是如何利用檔案素材和當代藝術中與具檔案性質的事物。1990 年代的記憶研究熱潮，以及當代藝術創作與策展型計畫越發普遍利用歷史素材的趨勢，皆助長了對檔案的廣泛關注，而透過以下提問，可以讓這種對記憶研究的投入更加充實具體：「在檔案中，記憶是如何表述（或不表述）的？具檔案性質的記憶（或缺乏此類記憶）是如何影響當代的藝術製作？藝術家用檔案進行哪些記憶工程，這樣做又能暴露出當代藝術創作和檔案的哪些部分？」³ 最後一個提問對於我在本屆亞雙展中所做的兩個單元有其重要性，它們主要涉及藝術領域的記憶工程，以及把「紀念化」這個概念放在與展覽產生互動的大眾這樣一個更大的脈絡下來進行檢視。檔案同時被當作記憶工程和願景工程來思考，是對世界和眼前景況的直接介入。

檔案轉向 (archival turn) —— 其他的說法包括檔案的推動力 (archival impulse, 另譯檔案衝動、檔案驅力)、檔案熱 (archive fever)，—— 很大程度上來說，是在力量與知識的聯繫關係中形成的—— 已知或未知的、可視或外在表現上是不可視的、被記得或被遺忘的。在我的策展實務經驗中，一直都是用這種方式來看待檔案，它是可知或未知事物的發源處／來源，它促使我們去重新思考已知的，或假設已知的，它可作為一面透鏡或一個濾鏡，用來重新設定和過去、現在、未來的交會與相遇的框架。依照人類學家安·蘿拉·史托樂 (Ann Laura Stoler) 的論點，對檔案的重視，是為了「重新思考收集物的物質性和意象，以及文件記錄之下有什麼樣的真相」，⁴ 其他學者則認為，檔案的崛起是對新自由主義政治及經濟影響的回應。學者雪柔·賽門 (Cheryl Simon) 於 2004 年寫到，這股轉向檔案的現象反應出了幾個社會因素和文化狀態，例如「世紀末 (fin-de-siecle)、千禧年的懷舊情結、後現代時空壓縮的文化焦慮、資訊時代下證據美學的興起，或是視覺文化在社會和體制化生活裡的擴張。」⁵ 蘇·布萊克爾 (Sue Breakell) 在一篇於 2015 年發表的較近期文章中表示，檔案轉向迎合了這個時代特有的自我意識：(引言)「透過我們產生、分享、重新利用、消耗的大量數位文件所表現出」⁶ 的一個屬性。我們在思考、說話、書寫的

國立台灣美術館
National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts

1 蘇·布萊克爾 (Breakell, Sue), 〈視覺藝術中的檔案實踐作為與檔案工作的實踐〉(Archival practices and the practice of archives in the visual arts), (2015), 頁 2。

2 此處是指六月份的亞洲藝術雙年展論壇，和由 Afterall 出版機構與新加坡 Southeast of Now 學術期刊於十一月舉辦的寫作工作坊。

3 凱西·卡博內 (Carbone, Kathy), 〈檔案式藝術：記憶實踐、介入、製造〉(Archival Art: Memory Practices, Interventions and Productions), (2020), 頁 257。

4 凱西·卡博內 (Carbone, Kathy), 〈檔案式藝術：記憶實踐、介入、製造〉(Archival Art: Memory Practices, Interventions and Productions), 頁 258。

5 雪柔·賽門 (Simon, Cheryl), 〈導論：在檔案轉向之後〉(Introduction: Following the Archival Turn), 《視覺資源》(Visual Resources) 18 卷 2 期, (2002), 頁 102。

6 蘇·布萊克爾 (Breakell, Sue), 〈視覺藝術中的檔案實踐作為與檔案工作的實踐〉(Archival practices and the practice of archives in the visual arts), 頁 1。

當下便在創造檔案 (archiving) —— 我們的想法和文字都被記錄在以太或雲端或硬碟裡。轉向檔案會決定昔日的未來。

我大部分的策展計畫，都很倚重從史料和文學小說作品剖析而來的敘事。同樣地，我在本屆亞雙展論壇所做的發表，乃發想自兩個想像的世界：在一部小說中描繪的海底城，和一場國際博覽會中的萬國湖。這兩個世界在類型上迥然不同，在歷史背景上相距甚遠，但卻同時建構了未來世界的意象。海底的國度是來自臺灣作家紀大偉的小說《膜》，其英譯本《The Membrane》甫於近期出版，而萬國湖則是 1953 年菲律賓國際博覽會中的一個主題區域。這些想像世界或統一體 (unities)，會輔助我闡釋本屆亞雙展的主題「未至之城 Phantasmopolis」：它可以被解釋為未來的城市、我們夢想著卻達不到的城市，或是永遠不會具現的城市。紀大偉小說中的主角默默是一顆桃子生出來的，他的母親是兩名女子。住在一間「∞」（無窮或無限的數學符號）形房子的他，是一位拔尖的美容護膚專業技師，也是 T 市最受重視的美容大師。他有一間個人工作室，取名為「金絲雀」。他會在客戶身體敷上一種叫做「膜膚」的保護層，英文是 M-skin，（譯註：Memory Skin 的簡稱，意思是有記憶能力的皮膚），這是他的專業秘方。在默默那個年代（也就是我們的未來），所有的人類都住在海底下，因為日光中的紫外線已破壞了地表。海洋是「最適合的一層保護膜，十分厚實的一層，可以將人類和鳥獸蟲魚阻隔於紫外線之外」，⁷ 就像「膜膚」。十歲那年，默默搭上捷運，想像著車廂外的世界會是怎麼回事：「百科全書說，地球就像是一顆蘋果。二十世紀的人類住在陸地上，就好比住在蘋果皮上面的那層蠟上面；二十一世紀的人類開始穿越那一層透明的蠟，住在蠟層與蘋果皮之間。海洋就像一層蠟膜。」⁸ 新臺灣是（海底）東南亞的金融中心，地區影響力無出其右。默默的世界充滿了對氣味的記憶，他自己的和客戶的：他會像脫皮一樣，把客戶身上的「膜膚」撕脫下來，然後再為他們換上新的「膜膚」。那個世界還有生化人，他們的臟器組織可以移植給人類。太陽田和生化人製造廠都是在陸地上，也就是海洋保護膜之外的世界。默默的媽咪費盡心力在光碟上書寫、紀錄默默的記憶——那時的人類存世知識都是保存在光碟裡。他雖然擁有大量的記憶，卻顯得有些破碎。

本屆亞雙展中關於菲律賓的「探勘」(Prospecting) 文獻計畫以及菲律賓藝術家卡塔妮娜·艾菲卡 (Catalina Africa)、馬克·薩瓦圖斯 (Mark Salvatus) 及亞文·札夫拉 (Alvin Zafra) 的創作，是架構在一個特定的時間性下，這時間性不僅是在陳述未來，更重要的，還談到昔日的未來。由此提出的命題，是讓檔案成為一條邁向未來的路徑，同時當代藝術和檔案文件也會成為知識的橫向來源。當代藝術以不同方式運用檔案，無論是當作素材、過程或形式，並將檔案及其運作視為當代藝術環境中不可或缺的一部分。檔案在「行政系統（真實檔案）與精神系統（記憶或心智的歸檔系統）之間轉換。」⁹ 這些轉換的形式，可能會是關注檔案本身的敘事，或具有檔案性質的方法。保護著默默所生活的西元 2100 年那個世

7 紀大偉 (Chi Ta Wei)，《The Membranes》，韓瑞 (Ari Larissa Heinrich) 譯 (Columbia University Press, 2021)，頁 20。

8 同上註，頁 52。

9 蔡凱文 (Chua, Kevin)，〈新加坡當代藝術中做為數字圖表的檔案庫〉(Archive as Figure in Singapore Contemporary Art) (2018)，頁 64。

界的膜層，可以和本屆亞雙展的菲律賓參展藝術家馬克·薩瓦圖斯 (Mark Salvatus) 及亞文·札夫拉 (Alvin Zafra) 的部分作品元素相對應。馬克·薩瓦圖斯重新處理他從 2017 年開始進行的〈人類條件〉(Human Conditioned)，並以多頻道錄像投影呈現，內容指涉身體、景觀、建築、和數位技術，探索網路空間在回溯性與推測性方面的特質。薩瓦圖斯把他從某個網路儲存庫 (web repository) 取得的圖像拼接起來，就如默默的記憶那樣殘破、零碎，並在過程中藉由種種痕跡，將當地起義和革命事件的歷史加以擴大延展。值得一提的是，1986 年在菲律賓發生了「人民力量革命」，隔年臺灣宣布解嚴。〈人類條件〉所刻劃出的未來是為藝術家心中的「理想革命」鋪路。

亞文·札夫拉則是採取更直接的紀錄方法。在如砂紙這樣有表面紋理的材質上，他用刮擦的手法刮出模糊的城市景觀，以此指涉物質世界固有的過時性 (obsolescence)，同時傳達彌合真實物件及其形象之間差距的渴望。作品模糊的表面讓我聯想到紀大偉小說裡，那層保護海平面下世界不受日光紫外線毒射的膜。這表面就像〈膜膚〉，是一道紀錄、一道保護層，接收著來自世界和與他者互動的感官刺激。這些藝術創作和手法，包括我在本文後半段將會討論到的藝術家卡塔妮娜·艾菲卡 (Catalina Africa) 的作品，活化了一種歸檔的態度，讓檔案成為一種檢視與內省的工具。當代藝術其實就是本展策展簡介中提及的「奇跡之家」(wonder houses)：這空間代表一種被移交給藝術的功能：一種「與世隔絕（但）又包含世界」的功能。¹⁰

另一方面，在 1953 年的菲律賓國際博覽會中，出現了一座引人注目的萬國湖設計。該屆博覽會的會館和展位，是設置在原本的瓦勒斯大地 (Wallace Field) 上，園區內最具地標性的結構，是由建築師奧蒂里奧·阿雷利亞諾 (Otilio Arellano) 所設計的「通往東方的大門」(Gateway to the East)。另有一方水池，池中有各種小舟和迷你版船舶，象徵對於東方各國互相連結，邊界開放，彼此串聯流通的想像。該屆博覽會的主題是「菲律賓五百年來的進步」，訪客數量近兩百萬人次。同樣地，本屆亞雙展文獻展區中的「探勘」(Prospecting) 計畫，其名稱乃援引蘇里高省為參與 1937 年菲律賓博覽會所製作的圖錄。該省在當時被宣傳為菲國南部民答那峨島的「礦產資源第一大省」。在採礦產業裡，「探勘」常與預測和風險管理有關，而檔案是一種同步思考的方式。重新激活推測的能力，好使其成為創造生產的利器，則是此處需要思考及採取行動的衍生性問題。

「探勘」計畫展出的檔案文件包含了二十世紀初舉辦的菲律賓博覽會的大會圖錄，以及 1940 年代至 1970 年代菲律賓政府資訊部發表的各類政府報告及文章，內容討論住宅計畫、綠化和開發計畫、糧食增產、健康水準和整體生活品質的改善等。現場展示的是這些文件的複印本，由此可看出文件本身的脆弱、層次性、普遍性，文件中所傳授的知識滲透到日常生活中。此處引用一份 1944 年菲律賓農業調查委員會的訪臺報告當作例子。該行的委員代表目標是要調查臺灣如何取得農業發展甚至是財富分配上的優勢，而他們得到的結論是，在農、工業發展上，臺灣比菲律賓更為進步，並在報告中特別褒揚兩位日本政府官員所推動的公平待遇政策。這些文件中不少都是為了馬可仕獨裁政權所做的政治宣傳。1944 年的政府報告用一篇關於「富饒 99」(Masagana 99) 做出對比，這是一項透過「套裝技術」(package

10 〈藝術能做些什麼〉(What Art Can Do)，《E-Flux 雜誌》81 期 (2017.4)。

technology) 來執行的農業計畫，其中包含高收益稻米品種，和肥料、殺蟲劑、滅鼠劑的使用。複作和直接播種則是補充計畫，另外還有為農民設計的搭配監督制的信貸措施。長遠來說，「富饒 99」並未能造福農民，反而讓他們在貸款的泥沼中越陷越深。

對於馬可仕執政時期菲律賓的經濟繁榮與整體性進步的錯誤認知，如今在社群媒體上如洪水般氾濫，用一種驚人的速度竄流，來為 2022 年的菲律賓總統大選助勢。(譯註：馬可仕之子「小馬可仕」為候選人之一。) 這些過去的政府報告中所表述的崇高願景，說不定根本就扼殺了菲律賓人民的未來。馬可仕獨裁政權為新自由主義政策護駕，重創了菲律賓的經濟實力。在這個政權的領導下，實際工資下降，而且 1974 年《勞工法典》(Labor Code) 將菲律賓廉價勞工——也就是經常被限價的菲律賓海外移工 (overseas Filipino worker, 縮寫為 OFW) ——的輸出體制化。廉價勞工的輸出暫時解決了失業率上升和外匯儲備降低的危機。菲律賓科幻小說的題材上也屢見以 OFW 的移民經驗為參考，蓋布莉葉拉·李 (Gabriela Lee) (2021 年) 即指出，有幾個特殊的橋段：太空飛行、外星人、未來科技，會以移工們的悲慘處境為雛形。流離失所、對家的薄弱認知，都是菲律賓科幻小說中常見的敘事情境，而且通常和「無法回返」的故事線並行。在紀大偉的故事最後我們會發現，默默實際上是一個活的人腦裝在生化人的身體裡，就像蓋布莉葉拉·李的文章裡提到的菲律賓移工。

這些檔案文件和當代藝術創作，可以被用來處理和知識的製造及記錄搏鬥的固有任務。它們包含了一種充滿各種事件的時間性的感受力，而且這些事件是非線性的，會遇到各種無法預期的干擾。來自卡塔妮娜·艾菲卡 2018 年展覽「向四方流轉的時間」(Time Moving in All Directions) 的作品闡釋了這種感受性。他的藝術創作中表現出的穿越性，是立基於物質性及其檔案特質的表現，直觀通向內在宇宙的渡口，如藝術家所言，這是一種平行空間探索的旅程。但願我們不會輕易讓彼此共有的想像處於險境，因為那或許是生活在這大事不斷的時期中，我們最強大的工具，保證我們可以在此動盪時代的惡水上繼續漂浮。

國立台灣美術館
National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts

參考書目

蘇·布萊克爾 (Breakell, Sue) (2015 年)。〈視覺藝術中的檔案實踐作為與檔案工作的實踐〉(Archival practices and the practice of archives in the visual arts)，《檔案與紀錄》(Archives and Records) 36:1，頁 1 - 5。

凱西·卡博內 (Carbone, Kathy) (2020 年 4 月)。〈檔案式藝術：記憶實踐、介入、製造〉(Archival Art: Memory Practices, Interventions and Productions)，《策展人：博物館期刊》(Curator: The Museum Journal) 63:2，頁 257 - 263。

紀大偉，(1996 年初版，2011 年再版)。《膜》。英譯本《The Membranes: A Novel》。韓瑞 (Ari Larissa Heinrich) 譯。紐約：哥倫比亞大學出版社。

蔡凱文 (2018 年)。〈新加坡當代藝術中做為數字圖表的檔案庫〉(Archive as Figure in Singapore Contemporary Art)。《藝術期刊》(Art Journal) 77:4，頁 62 - 71。

〈藝術能做些什麼〉(What Art Can Do) (2017 年 4 月)。《E-Flux 雜誌》81 期。網址：<<https://www.e-flux.com/journal/81/>> (2021 年 6 月 3 日瀏覽)。

蓋布莉葉拉·李 (Gabriela Lee) (2021 冬)。〈對家庭生活的夢想：菲律賓科幻中的移工〉(Dreaming Domesticity: The Migrant Workforce in Philippine Science Fiction)，《科幻研究協會評論》(SFRA Review) 51.1，頁 133 - 140。

〈本年度「富饒 99」計畫之目標與籌辦：預定目標為 9485 卡文〉，1976 年 7 月 1 - 15 日。《共和國：一個國家，一個精神》(The Republic: Isang Bansa, Isang Diwa)，頁 7。

荷西·G·桑維克多雷斯 (Sanvictores, Jose G.) (1944 年)。〈臺灣引路〉(Taiwan Shows the Way)，《菲律賓評論》(Philippine Review)，第 2 卷，第 10 期，頁 41 - 42。

安·蘿拉·史托樂 (Ann Laura Stoler) (2002 年)。〈殖民檔案和治理的藝術〉(Colonial Archives and the Art of Governance)，《檔案學》(Archival Science)，2 (1 - 2)，頁 87 - 109。

蘇里高省參加 1937 年菲律賓博覽會。馬尼拉：公共印務局。

艾力克斯·威爾基 (Wilkie, Alex)、馬丁·薩弗蘭斯基 (Savransky, Martin)、瑪莎·羅森迦藤 (Rosengarten, Marsha) 主編 (2017 年)。《推測性研究：可能未來的誘惑》(Speculative Research: The Lure of Possible Futures)。倫敦和紐約：Routledge 泰勒弗朗西斯集團 (Taylor and Francis Group)。

國立台灣美術館
National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts

The “Allure of the Archive”¹: Source, Prompt, and Modality in Curatorial Practice

Tessa Maria GUAZON

This essay weaves together reflections from two presentations I did in the latter half of 2021.² Both discussed how the archive can be engaged in curatorial practice. The subtitle references the archive as ‘a source, a prompt, and a modality,’ as modes of engagement through curatorial projects. The main outcomes of these curatorial projects were exhibitions, catalogues and similarly published materials, and accompanying public programs. My work for the biennial exhibition “Phantasmopolis - 2021 Asian Art Biennial,” will be cited to illustrate my engagements with archival materials and with the archival in contemporary art. Memory studies and the increasing use of historical materials in contemporary art and curatorial projects in the 1990s prompted an expansive interest in the archive. This preoccupation with memory can be fleshed out in the following questions: “How does memory articulate (or not) in the archive? How does archival memory (or lack thereof) influence contemporary art-making? What kind of memory work does artists do with archives, and what does this reveal about contemporary art practice and the archive?”³ The last question is significant for the two components of the 2021 Asian Art Biennial I worked on. These exhibition components were primarily concerned with memory work in the realm of art and memorializing in the wider context of a public that an exhibition interacts with. The archive is simultaneously considered as memory work and visionary work which directly intervenes on the world and conditions at hand.

The archival turn, or what has been variedly referred to as the archival impulse, or archive fever is to a great extent formed within the nexus of power and knowledge— what is known or not, what is visible, or rendered invisible, and what is remembered or forgotten. I have regarded the archive in this manner through my curatorial practice, a source of what can be known or not known, a prompt to rethink what one already knows or what one assumes to know, and as a lens or a sieve to reframe encounters whether with the past, the present, or the future. The emphasis on the archive can be understood as a “rethink[ing] of the materiality and imaginary of collections and of what kind of truth lie in a documentation,” according to anthropologist Ann Laura Stoler.⁴ Other scholars have regarded it as a response to neoliberalism’s political and economic impacts. Writing in 2004, scholar Cheryl Simon frames this turn towards the archive as a response to several social factors and cultural conditions such as “fin-de-siecle, millennial nostalgia, the cultural anxieties of post-modern space-time compression, the emergence of an evidentiary aesthetic in the information age, or the expansion of visual culture in both social and institutional life.”⁵ In a more recent article from 2015, Sue Breakell noted that the archival turn accommodates the self-consciousness that is characteristic of our age; an attribute [quote] “expressed through the vast quantities of digital documentation that we generate, share, re-purpose, and consume.”⁶ We are archiving as we think, speak, or write— our thoughts and words recorded in the ether or cloud or in a drive. The turn towards the archive decides the future of our past.

1 Breakell, Sue, “Archival practices and the practice of archives in the visual arts,” (2015): 2.

2 These were the Asian Art Biennial Forum in July and the writing workshop organized by Afterall and Southeast of Now in November.

3 Carbone, Kathy, “Archival Art: Memory Practices, Interventions and Productions,” (2020): 257.

4 Carbone, “Archival Art: Memory Practices, Interventions and Productions,” 258.

5 Simon, Cheryl, “Introduction: Following the Archival Turn,” in *Visual Resources*, 18:2, (2002): 102.

6 Breakell, “Archival practices and the practice of archives in the visual arts,” 1.

As with most of my curatorial projects, I rely heavily on narratives that I parse from historical sources and works of literary fiction. The inspiration for my presentation at the biennial forum drew from two imagined worlds, the habitation on the ocean floor from a novel and the lagoon of nations from an international fair. These two worlds are far apart in genre, and distant in historical frame, but they simultaneously constructed an imaginary of a future world. The nation on the ocean floor is from the recently published English translation of the novel *The Membranes* by Taiwanese writer Chi Ta Wei. On the other hand, the lagoon of nations was a component of the Philippine International Fair of 1953. These imagined worlds or unities functioned as prompts for my understandings of the biennial theme *Phantasmopolis*, which can mean the city of the future, the elusive city of our dreams, or the city that will never be. Momo is the protagonist in Chi Ta Wei’s novel, birthed from a peach, and the child of two mothers. She lives in an infinity-shaped house and has a successful practice as a ‘dermal maintenance technician’ and a respected stylist in T City. She owns the Canary salon, and her specialty is the application of M skin or a protective skin membrane on her clients. All humanity lived on the ocean floor in Momo’s time (our future) because the sun’s ultraviolet rays had ravaged the surface world. The ocean, like M Skin, is described as a “perfect protective membrane, a thick, robust barrier that could shield humans, animals, and plants from ultraviolet radiation.”⁷ Aboard the Rapid Transit System when she was ten, Momo tried to imagine the world beyond her compartment window: “According to the encyclopedia, the earth was like an apple. In the twentieth century, humans lived on land, which was like the waxy coating on the apple’s surface; but by the twenty-first century, they had pierced that translucent layer of wax and begun living in the space between the wax and the skin of the apple. The oceans were like a membrane of wax.”⁸ New Taiwan is the financial center of (undersea) Southeast Asia and possesses unrivaled regional influence. Momo’s world is replete with fragmented memories, hers and those of her clients from whom she peels M skin like exuviae and on whose bodies she applies them again. There are cyborgs in that world, too, whose organs can replace humans. Solar fields and cyborg factories are on the surface or the world outside the ocean’s membrane. Momo’s mother labored writing and recording Momo’s memories on laserdiscs, repositories of existing human knowledge. While copious, these memories are somehow fragmented.

Prospecting, the archive section on the Philippines and artworks by Filipino artists Catalina Africa, Mark Salvatus, and Alvin Zafra were framed by a specific temporality that does not only speak to a future but more importantly, on the future of the past. The proposition then is for the archive to become a path towards the future, with contemporary art and archive documents becoming transversal sources of knowledge. Contemporary art has engaged the archives in various ways— as material, process, or modality. It regards the archive and its operations as integral to its milieu. The archive shifts between “administrative (actual archives) and psychic systems (memory or the mind’s filing systems).”⁹ These shifts can be in the form of narratives that concern the archives or methods that are described as archival. The membrane that shields Momo’s world of 2100 in the novel *Membranes* may very well correspond to elements in the works of Filipino artists Mark Salvatus and Alvin Zafra for the Biennial exhibition. Mark Salvatus revisits his project *Human Conditioned* from 2017, presenting it in a multi-channel video projection. It references bodies, landscapes, architecture, and digital technology and explores cyberspace’s retroactive and speculative nature. Much like the fragments of Momo’s fragmented memories, Salvatus stitches images from a web repository, and in the process, expands the local histories of

7 Chi Ta Wei, *The Membranes: A Novel*, trans. Ari Larissa Heinrich (Columbia University Press, 2021), 20.

8 *Ibid.*, 52.

9 Chua, Kevin, “Archive as Figure in Singapore Contemporary Art,” (2018): 64.

uprisings and revolutions through traces. Interestingly, the People Power Revolution in the Philippines happened in 1986, and the year after 1987 martial law was lifted in Taiwan. Human Conditioned speaks to a future, paving the road to what the artist describes as an 'ideal revolution.'

On the other hand, Alvin Zafra takes a more straightforward approach to documentation in works that show hazy images of cityscapes. He scratches these images on a textured ground, like sandpaper, to reference the inherent obsolescence of the material world. It conveys his desire to bridge the gap between the actual object and its representation in the drawn image. The blurred surface reminds me of the membrane that shields the world under the sea from the harsh rays of the sun's ultraviolet rays in Chi Ta Wei's novel. Conversely, this surface is close to M skin, a protective layer that records and receives sensory stimuli from the world and interactions with others. These artistic practices and methods, including that of artist Catalina Africa, which I will discuss in the latter part of this essay, all activate a manner of archiving, with the archive becoming a tool for examination and introspection. Contemporary art may very well be the 'wonder houses' mentioned by the curatorial brief; spaces that represent a function relegated to art: to be "enclosed against the world, [yet] to also contain that world."¹⁰

On the other hand, the lagoon of nations is a striking feature of the fairgrounds for the Philippine International Fair of 1953. Pavilions and booths were set up at the old Wallace Field, with the landmark structure Gateway to the East, designed by Filipino architect Otilio Arellano. Miniature boats and sea vessels of different kinds stay afloat in the field's pond, an imagination of how the region is imagined as interconnected, with borders opening and flowing into each other. The fair's theme was "500 Years of Philippine Progress," with close to two million visitors. Similarly, the title for the archive component on the Philippines for the Biennial, Prospecting, takes from a catalog on the participation of Surigao province in the 1937 Philippine Exposition. Surigao was touted to have been the "premiere province in mineral resources" in Mindanao, Southern Philippines. Prospecting is associated with predicting and managing risks, as used for mining, and the archive is a means to think along. The pertinent question to ponder and act upon would be the revival of speculation towards a generative end.

The archival documents include turn-of-the-century exposition catalogs and government reports and articles from the Department of Public Information. They date from around the 1940s to the 1970s. The articles discuss housing, greening and development programs, increased food production, improved health conditions, and the overall quality of life. The presentation of copies of these documents shows them to be fragile, layered, ubiquitous with the knowledge they impart permeating everyday life. Let me cite a 1944 report from when the Philippine Agricultural Survey Commission visited Taiwan. Delegates of the Commissions wanted to find out how Taiwan attained advanced agricultural development and even wealth distribution. Taiwan's agriculture and industry sectors were much more developed than the Philippines was their conclusion. The report credited two officials of the Japanese administration for their policy of equitable treatment. Several of these documents were propaganda for the Marcos dictatorship. The government report of 1944 contrasts with an article about Masagana 99 (translated as 'bountiful harvest'), an agricultural program implemented through a "package technology" that included high-yielding rice varieties and the use of fertilizers, pesticides, and rodenticides. Double cropping and direct seeding were supplementary programs and a supervised credit scheme for farmers. Masagana 99 did not benefit farmers in the long run as it buried them deeper in debt.

¹⁰ "What Art Can Do," *E-Flux Journal* #81, (April 2017).

Misconceptions of the Philippines's economic prosperity and overall progress during the Marcos regime now flood social media, deployed at an alarming rate to aid campaigns for the national elections in 2022. The lofty visions articulated in these old government reports may have very well sabotaged the future of the Filipino people. The Marcos dictatorship ushered in neoliberal policies that crippled the Philippine economy. Real wages fell under the regime, and the 1974 Labor Code institutionalized the export of cheap Filipino labor, the often valorized OFW, or overseas Filipino worker. The export of cheap labor temporarily solved increasing unemployment and diminishing foreign reserves. Philippine science fiction references the overseas Filipino workers' migrant experience. As Gabriela Lee (2021) noted, significant tropes reference the migratory plight of OFWs. These are space flight, the alien, and future technology. Homelessness and the tenuous ties to what one considers home are prevalent in Philippine science fiction, often juxtaposed with the impossibility of returning. By the end of Chi Ta Wei's novel, we will discover who Momo is. Momo's figure, a living brain inside a cyborg, corresponds to the Filipino migrant workers in Lee's texts.

These archive documents and contemporary artworks answer to the inherent task of wrestling with the production and documentation of knowledge. These comprise a sensibility to a temporality that is eventful, not linear but marked by unexpected disruptions. Catalina Africa's 2018 piece from her exhibition *Time Moving in All Directions* elucidates this sensibility. The traversal of her artistic practice, informed by and grounded in materiality and its expressions of archival quality, intuits a portal to our inner cosmos, a journey that she describes as parallel space exploration. May we not risk our shared imagination, perhaps our most powerful tool in these truly eventful times. It warrants that we remain afloat on the treacherous waters of our volatile present.



國立台灣美術館
National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts

References

Breakell, Sue. 2015. "Archival practices and the practice of archives in the visual arts," in *Archives and Records* 36:1, 1-5.

Carbone, Kathy. April 2020. "Archival Art: Memory Practices, Interventions, and Productions," in *Curator: The Museum Journal* 63:2, 257-263.

Chi Ta Wei. (1996, 2011). 2021. *The Membranes: A Novel*. Trans. Ari Larissa Heinrich. New York: Columbia University Press.

Chua, Kevin. 2018. "Archive as Figure in Singapore Contemporary Art," in *Art Journal* 77:4, 62-71.

E-Flux Journal #81, "What Art Can Do" (April 2017), <https://www.e-flux.com/journal/81/>, accessed 3 June 2021.

Lee, Gabriela. Winter 2021. "Dreaming Domesticity: The Migrant Workforce in Philippine Science Fiction," in *SFRA Review* 51.1, 133-140.

"Our Goals and Plans for Masagana 99: Our target is 94.85 million cavans," 1-15 July 1976. *The Republic: Isang Bansa, Isang Diva*, 7.

Sanvictores, Jose G. 1944. "Taiwan Shows the Way," in *Philippine Review* Volume II, No. 10, 41-42.

Stoler, Anne L. 2002. "Colonial Archives and the Art of Governance," in *Archival Science*, 2 (1-2), 87-109.

Surigao Participation in the 1937 Philippine Exposition. Manila: Bureau of Public Printing.

Wilkie, Alex, Savransky, Martin, and Rosengarten, Marsha, eds. 2017. *Speculative Research: The Lure of Possible Futures*. London and New York: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group.

國立台灣美術館
National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts