

The Art of Preserving Black Queer Stories: Archival Practices in the Dutch Context



Engaging Public Issues

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For those who shine through the shadows...

Abstract

This thesis explores the intricate dimensions of Black queer identity and the significance of archiving, artistic expression, and community solidarity. By delving into Black queer experiences in the Netherlands, the research underscores how artistic mediums such as film and poetry, and exploring ephemeral traces together illuminate and validate these identities, fostering a sense of kinship and belonging. The study addresses the persistent influence of postcolonial legacies on Black queer identities in the Netherlands, emphasizing archival practices as acts of resistance against dominant colonial narratives. Through engagement with archival materials from Black queer collectives, the research highlights the emotional and empowering aspects of these archives, which serve as vital blueprints for contemporary activism and ensure the preservation of marginalized voices. This thesis illustrates that archiving Black queer life is a radical act of reclaiming and celebrating identity, contributing to a more nuanced understanding of existence beyond colonial and heteronormative frameworks. Ultimately, the work showcases the resilience and creativity of Black queer individuals, advocating for the preservation and celebration of the stories to inform and inspire future generations.

Keywords

Archival Practices, Black Queer Identity, Community, Artistic Resistance, Postcolonial Dynamics

Excerpt from a poem by Mark Aguhar (Soto, 2018):

LITANIES TO MY HEAVENLY BROWN BODY

BLESSED ARE THE SISSIES

BLESSED ARE THE BOI DYKES

BLESSED ARE THE PEOPLE OF COLOR MY BELOVED KITH AND KIN

BLESSED ARE THE TRANS

BLESSED ARE THE HIGH FEMMES

BLESSED ARE THE SEX WORKERS

BLESSED ARE THE AUTHENTIC

BLESSED ARE THE DIS-IDENTIFIERS

BLESSED ARE THE GENDER ILLUSIONISTS

BLESSED ARE THE NON-NORMATIVE

BLESSED ARE THE GENDERQUEERS

BLESSED ARE THE KINKSTERS

BLESSED ARE THE DISABLED

BLESSED ARE THE HOT FAT GIRLS

BLESSED ARE THE WEIRDO-QUEERS

BLESSED IS THE SPECTRUM

BLESSED IS CONSENT

BLESSED IS RESPECT

BLESSED ARE THE BELOVED WHO I DIDN'T DESCRIBE, I

COULDN'T DESCRIBE, WILL LEARN TO DESCRIBE AND

RESPECT AND LOVE

AMEN

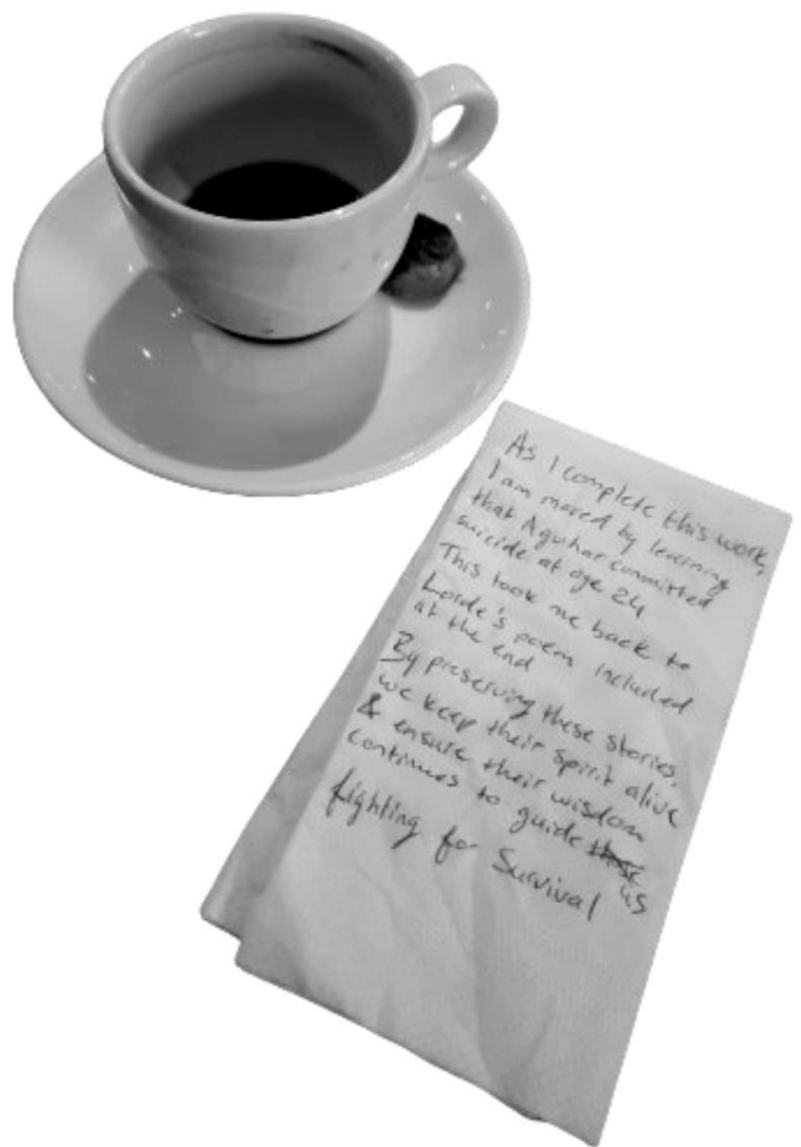


Figure 1: last minute reflections. Picture take by me

Introduction

“If there is no record, then how do we re-imagine what took place. We have not even scratched the surface yet of our Black queer stories and narratives in Europe through its artistic, cultural, and archival production”

(Colpani, Isenia & Pieter, 2019, p. 174).

Amidst the pages of history, the resilience of queer bodies of color is tested time and again, as we confront a myriad of obstacles that seek to deny us a place in the collective memory and historical consciousness of society (Jalili, 2017). I say this because “inclusion in the archive is deemed synonymous with life, exclusion from the archive means death, a death that the archivist is responsible for” (Edenheim, 2013, p. 53). Archives serve as the custodians of our collective narratives, shaping our understanding of the past and informing societal perceptions of history. Dominant power structures routinely manipulate archival materials to suppress or omit information, resulting in the erasure of the histories of marginalized communities, such as Black queer people in the Netherlands (Hosfeld, 2018). How, for instance, Black queer communities are presented is ultimately decided by the ones with power (Van Saarloos, 2019).

There are ongoing challenges in ensuring that the voices and experiences of Black queer people are not erased or overlooked, especially in traditional archival settings (Fullwood, 2021). The voices of Black queer people in the Netherlands are often erased. For instance: the IHLIA LGBT Heritage in Amsterdam organized an exhibition in 2018 titled ‘*With Pride*’, shedding light on the struggle for LGBTQ+ emancipation over the past decades (IHLIA, n.d.). Unfortunately, the archival organization failed to include efforts made by queer people of color, specifically regarding initiatives emerging in reaction to the racism within the predominantly white Dutch LGBTQ+ movement (Colpani, Isenia & Pieter, 2019). However, it’s crucial to emphasize that “we were there then as we are here now and we have participated and contributed” (Colpani, Isenia & Pieter, 2019, p. 176).

The Netherlands prides itself on being a progressive nation in matters of sexuality, particularly for its pioneering legalization of same-sex marriage. Conversely, its Black queer community continues to be excluded (Thierry, n.d.). The country grapples with a complex relationship with race, as Dutch racism functions within the discourse of tolerance and is therefore often denied by the dominant group (Essed, 1991). The white, Dutch, reluctance to confront racial issues enables racism to thrive and remain unchallenged (Thierry, n.d.).

For the scope of this thesis, my focus lies in exploring the practice of archiving, particularly regarding Black queer life in the Netherlands, and the role that this practice can

play in preserving this history. As we navigate this matter, it is pertinent to pose the question: who is Black, or what is blackness? Blackness encompasses a multitude of realities across the globe and is not clearly defined (Masenya, 2023). Fred Moten's Black mysticism disrupts conventional ideas about blackness by highlighting its ever-changing nature. Rejecting attempts to confine blackness within rigid definitions misses the manners in which it functions beyond these limitations (Masenya, 2023).

Moreover, archiving contributes to building an imagined future by preserving memories. Documenting memory is therefore crucial, "it brings to the fore what is continually erased, elided, negated or deemed false and propagandist by the state" (Pandit, 2023, p. 111). There's a need for dedicated archiving efforts to counteract the historical exclusion of Black queer narratives in this country.

Academic and Societal Relevance

Sociologist Avery Gordon writes extensively about how society must continually face various ghosts from the past, which are never really just from the past (Van Saarloos, 2019). In her book *Ghostly Matters*, Gordon (2008) highlights that even the ghosts that haunt us can silence some voices. This perspective is particularly relevant to the study of Black queer histories in the Netherlands, as these histories, though often appearing lost or concealed, exert significant influence in shaping our social world. Sociologists need to pay attention to hidden influences, which can be unravelled through careful listening to the echoes from historical contexts (Van Saarloos, 2019). By engaging with archival material in Black queer history in the Netherlands and conversing with community members and key figures of different generations we can have a deeper, nuanced exploration of our past and what this does for us in the present day.

However, there persists an issue within Black studies, characterized by what has been described as "sexual and epistemological conservatism" (Nash, 2019). According to Nash (2019), this conservatism is leading to the marginalization of work focusing on topics such as Black queers, Black trans folk, and Black sexual freedoms. As a result, these fields of study are often neglected, receiving less recognition than other subjects. Therefore, studying the practice of archiving Black queer life in the Netherlands holds academic relevance as it offers an opportunity to address and rectify the exclusion of these vital aspects of Black studies, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the complexities of Black queer experiences within the Dutch context.

In addition to its academic importance, the practice of archiving Black queer life in the Netherlands holds societal relevance, as it preserves narratives frequently erased from societal

discourse. It serves as an initiative to further the liberation for the “brothers and sisters, cis, trans, and otherwise, who are working to be physically free” (Allen, 2022, p. 293-294). The resonant words of Colin Robinson illuminate the imperative for this practice (Allen, 2022, p. 294):

*“rewrite history
redecline the past
conjugate a future
reinvent etymology
grow new roots”*

The poem speaks to the power of revisiting and transforming our history and language to create an alternative future. Overall, this thesis is a testament to the importance of archiving and its potential to preserve our history and challenge dominant discourses by imagining otherwise.

Research question

Given the focus of this study on the preservation and engagement with the practice of archiving Black queer life in the Netherlands, the central research question is:

How does an archive re-imagine and preserve the narratives of Black queer life in the Netherlands?

Theoretical framework

This part of the research begins by defining the concept of Black gender or ‘ungendering’ and clarifying underlying concepts. Knowledge gained through understanding gender in this way will shed light on the role that it plays in Black queer life, and ultimately in the practice of archiving Black queer life in the Netherlands. The key concepts guiding the research, alongside ungendering, are archiving as a praxis and postcolonial Netherlands, which helped formulate the research question.

1. Blackness as an Intrinsic Challenge to Gender

Attempting to fit Black women within the confines of Western femininity or womanhood is a disservice. Spillers (1987) advocates for a critical examination of the (loss of) history that has rendered Black women both invisible and hyper-visible in society. She challenges the prevailing assumption that biology inherently determines gender, highlighting its arbitrariness. This belief perpetuates patriarchal violence and affects societal structures, impacting the material conditions and lived experiences of individuals (Spillers, 1987).

Spillers (1987) coined the term ‘ungendering’, to depict how Black bodies during the Middle Passage lost their gender identities, reduced to mere flesh. Enslaved Africans were commodified and subjected to brutalization exceeding traditional gender categories. Colonizers rendered the African female ungended and stripped away her humanity. “The Black female was depicted by whites as an Amazon because they saw her ability to endure hardships no ‘lady’ was supposedly capable of enduring as a sight that she possessed an animalistic sub-human strength” (hooks, 2014, p. 82).

Hooks (2014) asserts that ‘woman’ is often used synonymously for ‘White woman’, highlighting underlying white supremacist assumptions. Douglas (Nash, 2019, p, 21) states, “The archive of gender is structurally anti-black,” pointing out that its assumption of uniformity among all women erases Black gender experiences and limits the understanding of gender violence. Spillers (1987) argues that post-slavery, Black women are often perceived as not truly being ‘women’. Applying Western scientific frameworks of ‘woman’ to African flesh, subjected to torturous conditions, lacks coherence. The notion of femininity is steeped in Whiteness, disconnecting it from the reality of Black existence.

Western narratives typically assume that all societies perceive the human body as inherently gendered and subsequently categorize individuals into binary gender roles based on this assumption (Oyěwùmí, 1997). However, not all societies, including those from the African

diaspora in the Netherlands, conceptualize gender in this manner. Some social categories are formed through different perceptions of the body, while others seemingly disregard bodily distinctions altogether (Oyěwùmí, 1997).

The naming of Black women, particularly within the context of slavery, reflects dehumanization and objectification, according to Spillers (1987). This process of naming contributes to the erasure of Black women's humanity, highlighting the importance of redefining autonomy. As Audre Lorde (2012, p. 40) asserts: "If I didn't define myself for myself, I would be crunched into other people's fantasies for me and eaten alive."

In this understanding of ungendering or Black gender, blackness has always been queer. It has always been an intrinsic challenge to gender. However, it's important to acknowledge that this view of Blackness as inherently queer exists alongside a persistent "sexual and epistemological conservatism" within Black studies (Nash, 2019). This conservatism marginalizes Black queer and trans narratives, reflecting a tension. I use the term queer here as hooks describes it: "Queer' not as being about who you're having sex with - that can be a dimension of it - but 'queer' as being about the self that is at odds with everything around it and that has to invent and create and find a place to speak and to thrive and to live." (Paul, 2022). This tension between different views on Black identity underscores the complexity in understanding Black gender.

Spillers (1987, p. 68) underscores that ungendering, "offers a praxis and a theory, a text for living and for dying, and a method for reading both through diverse mediations." The imperative lies not in conforming to Western notions of femininity but in delving into the overlooked histories of Black women to gain deeper insights into their experiences.

Emphasizing the historical erasure and objectification of Black women underscores the significance of preserving and redefining narratives within marginalized communities. By acknowledging the intrinsic challenge to gender posed by blackness and embracing the fluidity and complexity of identity, my thesis seeks to illuminate the experiences of Black queer communities in the Netherlands and challenge the dominant narratives that have silenced our voices.

By acknowledging and confronting these historical erasures and objectification, my research aims to see how an archive reimagines and preserves the narratives of Black queer individuals. Through this archival practice, we can challenge dominant narratives and ensure that the diverse experiences of the Black queer community are documented, valued, and celebrated.

2. Archiving as a praxis

The objective is to impose meaning as we look through material from archival collections, interpret and contextualize it, and then suggest new paths for our understanding of the past. Engaging with an archive is not without complexities, because there is an ongoing struggle regarding who gets included (Fullwood, 2021).

“Those whose narratives are kept in the archive are given the power to exist in the future, while others are lost in forgetting, impossible to be recalled again. Archivists, then, are protectors of those in history who currently exist, and the cultivators of those who will in the future be remembered” (Edenheim, 2013, p. 53).

By archiving and thus keeping these stories alive we honor the humanity and dignity of those impacted by oppression and violence – both in the past and present. This ensures that their experiences are not erased or forgotten. Documenting memory is therefore crucial. In this way, archiving contributes to building an imagined future by preserving memories. Archiving is not merely about documenting the past; it is about leaving a meaningful and accessible record for future generations to connect with, learn from, and build upon. Our future is inseparable from our memory.

Delving into an archive offers people the profound chance to seek out and uncover people from the past whose life stories mirror their own (ASHP, 2023). Pandit (2023) outlines that her feminist political praxis revolves around “re-membering”, which is besides a recollection of lived experiences, an avenue for new perspectives and comprehension. Remembering is about doing – un-doing and re-doing to be precise, so that what was forgotten can rise to the surface again (Pandit, 2023). Additionally, remembering is an action that requires community, meaning it’s not as fruitful to remember alone (Van Saarloos, 2019). This is the reason why I want to look at archival material with other people from the Black queer community of the Netherlands. Someone’s individual experience is shaped by the very recognition of commonality (Van Saarloos, 2019)

“History is how we change the future” (Van Reekum, 2023), aligns with the description of archiving as memory work (Fullwood, 2021). That is why archiving is important, it helps discover new perspectives that at the same time have always been. Breya Johnson articulates that the essence of Black radical feminist praxis is to consistently speak the truth and bear

witness, perpetually challenging propaganda, thereby embracing what is frequently perceived as contradictory (Black Women Radicals, 2023).

Imagining and living beyond the confines of our current reality requires us to share and embrace diverse narratives, including of Black queer life in the Netherlands. By doing so, we can contribute to shaping our collective understanding of an alternative world. The ability to thrive despite the violence is a powerful indicator of alternative ways of being and knowing. As Pandit (2023) emphasizes; we need to disrupt colonial knowledge frameworks and dominant narratives. Engaging with archiving as a praxis for my thesis, as a means of reclaiming and preserving Black queer history, allows for a deeper grasp of Black queer identity and culture.

3. Postcolonial Netherlands

“Queer bodies of colour have always existed, if you look closely enough there are traces of them left in art-works and poetry, proving that our ancestors may have experienced the world in a similar way to the way we experience it today.”

(Jalili, 2017)

To give context to the practice of archiving Black queer life in the Netherlands, we have to look at the Netherlands as a postcolonial issue. A postcolonial perspective offers a lens through which to analyze the complex interplay of race, gender, and sexuality, as articulated by Wekker (2009). Her critique of Dutch nostalgia for a racially homogeneous past illuminates a broader cultural framework embedded in what Edward Said termed the “cultural archive” (Wekker, 2009). This cultural archive encompasses ingrained attitudes, knowledge structures, and historical narratives that uphold colonial ideologies and their legacies. Central to this analysis is the recognition that notions of race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality have been historically intertwined in the construction of Dutch national identity (Wekker, 2009).

Postcolonial perspective prompts an exploration of how these intersections manifest in archival practices, influencing the representation and erasure of marginalized communities, particularly Black queer individuals. The dominant image of homosexuality - after decades of non-white migration in the Netherlands - is that LGBTQ+ people are white (Wekker, 2009). Inequalities and prejudices within homosexuality, where there is a lot of diversity, are also neglected (Mepschen & Buijs, 2011). By interrogating these dynamics, this part of the theoretical framework underscores the imperative of reimagining archival practices to encompass diverse experiences and challenge dominant narratives.

“We are here, because you were there” (Noorani & Nixdorff, 2024) is a poignant quote from the Black Dutch lesbian collective Sister Outsider that encapsulates the interconnectedness of colonial histories and contemporary social landscapes. This phrase underscores the enduring impact of colonialism on migration patterns, diasporic communities, and the formation of identities in postcolonial societies like the Netherlands. It highlights how historical processes of colonialism have shaped the demographic composition and cultural dynamics of Dutch society today. It calls for a critical examination of how these legacies influence the representation, visibility, and preservation of Black queer life in the Netherlands. Furthermore, Frantz Fanon argued that colonization becomes deeply embedded in the human psyche and cannot simply be eradicated (Van Saarloos, 2019). This insight further underscores the lasting impact of colonialism on societal structures and cultural attitudes within the Netherlands, reinforcing the importance of critically examining these influences in archival practices.

Audre Lorde’s (Allen, 2022, p. 253) assertion that “As we proceed upon the specific and difficult tasks of survival in the twenty-first century, we of the African Diaspora need to recognize our differences as well as our similarities (...) But we are not the same. (...) To successfully battle the many faces of institutionalized racial oppression, we must share the strengths of each other’s vision as well as the weaponries born of particular experience. First, we must recognize each other” resonates within the context of examining postcolonial Netherlands and its implications for archiving Black queer life. This perspective highlights the necessity of embracing differences within Black communities, including diverse expressions of queerness, gender, and identity. In the archival realm, this means acknowledging and preserving the multifaceted narratives of Black queer individuals, which are often marginalized or overlooked in dominant historical narratives. By centering these narratives, archival practices can actively challenge colonial legacies and contribute to a more comprehensive understanding, honoring the complexities of Black queer experiences while confronting institutionalized racism and exclusionary practices.

Methodology

Evoking memories, inspiring imagination

“What happens if we rework the material of the archive, remove layers of history and start afresh? Could an archive be harnessed as a resource, not as a memorial to remember us when we are dead, but now, as a source for living? I wanted to know not what archives are, but what they do. Could I find in archives powers to help us live in the now, as “inventing strategies for inhabiting unliveable worlds””

(Snorton 2017, p. 7).

In researching how an archive of Black queer life in the Netherlands reimagines, this study adopts an innovative approach grounded in the principles of inventive social research approaches. The methodology employed here aims to transcend conventional descriptive methods by actively engaging with Black queer experiences in archival practices (Marres, Guggenheim & Wilkie, 2018). Experimentation and imagination play central roles in this methodology where “creative intervention is about engaging with what is already ongoing, already happening in the world with an explicit view to what *might be* in the world in a *different mode*.” (Marres, Guggenheim & Wilkie, 2018, p. 30). In line with this notion, this study explores the practice of engaging with archival materials to experiment with other ways of knowing and being in the world as Black queer communities in the Netherlands. In doing so, we will collectively explore how we could approach the practice of archiving.

Moreover, this research adopts elements of ethnographic methodology. Unlike traditional, positivist, research approaches focused on measurement and reliability, the emphasis here lies in continual reflection (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). I try to immerse myself into the nuances of meaning and action of what it is to engage with the archive of Black queer life with key figures and community members, aiming for narrative richness of what was difficult, significant, and forgotten during the process. By doing so, I attempt to describe what is happening and how the journey unfolds instead of looking for general laws, because “the social world cannot be understood in terms of simple causal relationships or by the subsumption of social events under universal laws.” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 7). Central to this approach is a persistent presence in the field and adaptability in research practices, acknowledging the inevitability of changing plans as an inherent part of the process.

Considering the research question, *How does an archive re-imagine and preserve the narratives of Black queer life in the Netherlands?* I approached people I believe are fitting and

prominent in the community. While making a selection of people I want to create and invent with, I prioritized those with a deep understanding of archival work and those who have significantly shaped Black queer life in the Netherlands, the shoulders we stand on. I aimed to capture a range of perspectives, exploring variations within. In this manner, in-depth conversations can occur between people from different generations with differing sexualities and gender identities. Collaborating with people active in various domains of knowledge production and engaged in different disciplines is also valuable, so we can all learn from each other's experiences and wisdom.

This thesis is shaped by creating together with people. Every person is relevant for answering the research question, whether it's experts in the archival realm, activists, or artists reflecting our times. They all have and are shaping what Black queer life looks like in the Netherlands and I believe their understanding of archiving as a practice would be valuable.

They will receive a comprehensive document outlining my thesis project, including an informed consent form for using our discussions as data and details on data storage. They are invited to engage in conversations to share their point of view and expertise and contribute insights and reflections to this endeavor. After the session, permission to utilize our conversation as data is requested again, emphasizing their right to withdraw.

I chose to write in a way that feels organic and community-oriented. This decision was made to reflect the collective nature of the shared experiences and insights. As a result, I opted not to use individual names or pseudonyms. This approach analytically emphasizes the communal voice and underscores the interconnectedness of the narratives, bringing a deeper understanding of the shared experiences within the community.

What are we going to do?

Through a collaborative session, we'll utilize photos from the IHLIA archive to facilitate lively discussions and storytelling, capturing diverse perspectives. With the consent of the participants, I will record the process with my phone for analysis purposes. Furthermore, I will document the sessions by taking photos to demonstrate the dynamics and the setting. Delving into the intricate details captured within a photograph, zine excerpts, and a film, engaging in group discussions, and placing it within multiple contexts will help answer the quest to re-imagine and preserve the narratives of Black queer life in the Netherlands and what this practice means for us as a community. I'm aiming to create an intentional space where we invent something together, where we collectively explore how, in turn, we can archive the stories told during the session.

Observation & Analysis

Journeying Through the Archives

As I embarked on my fieldwork, I initially believed that collaborating with key figures of Black queer life in the Netherlands was essential. Their deep engagement with the community and intimate knowledge of archival materials seemed like a goldmine for first-hand wisdom. However, as my journey unfolded, I realized that embracing a wider array of voices—not just the central ones—was crucial. This approach would enhance my research and honor the rich tapestry of experiences within the community.

During my research, I crossed paths with the visionary series editor of *Archival Textures*. This publication series delves into the bits of knowledge “that are continuously obscured by normative perspectives on our bodies, desires, forms of cohabitation and expression” (Archival Textures, 2024). The upcoming books are “a testament to affective, collaborative practices and modes of research, building on queer, Black feminist thought.” (Archival Textures, 2024). They invited me to the launch of their first title, *Amplifying* (Noorani & Nixdorff, 2024), which echoed the very questions that had been stirring within me. This event is part of my exploration into how archives can re-imagine and preserve the narratives of Black queer life in the Netherlands.

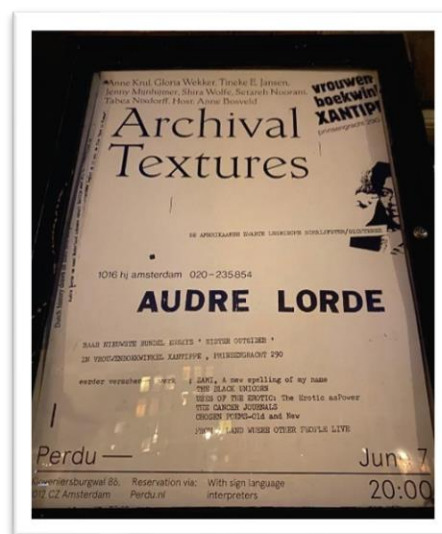


Figure 2: Poster outside of the event at Perdu. Picture taken by me.



Figure 3: Book presentation of *Amplifying* in Amsterdam. Picture taken by me.

Plans to collaborate with prominent community members faced obstacles—scheduling conflicts and prior commitments posed challenges. Despite this, I shifted my approach to organizing a session, using an online poster to reach out and welcome diverse participants, trying to attract all who felt connected to this project. By including the book presentation of *Amplifying* (Noorani & Nixdorff, 2024), I could still include key figures in Black queer life in the Netherlands in my research.

The choice of venue was essential for an intimate and community-based project like this. I selected KIOSK Rotterdam, a bookshop filled with radical theory and self-publishing practices, including *Archival Textures*. This intimate, cozy space, steeped in Black queer knowledge, provided the perfect backdrop for our gathering. Here, amidst shelves overflowing with radical ideas, space was held for the community.



Figure 4: Posters at KIOSK for *Archival Textures*. Picture taken by me.

As the day of the session approached, I found myself in a state of worry. Scheduled for the early evening, the morning brought a string of cancellations, as many attendees found themselves uncertain about their ability to join due to engagement in activism or other time management reasons. When the appointed time came, I was in the room with just one person. Thirty minutes ticked by, and still, no one else had arrived. At the forty-five-minute mark, someone glided in on roller skates, and soon after, others began to stroll in. We ended up starting an hour later than planned. Despite the rocky beginning, the session transformed into a beautiful and shared moment of connection.

In this warm, inviting atmosphere, our session unfolded. We came together, drawn by a shared passion for preserving our stories. We engaged in memory work—not as a passive act of remembrance, but as a vibrant, radical act of reclamation. Together, we breathed life into forgotten narratives, challenged dominant discourses, and wove a new tapestry of collective memory. This gathering was a living, breathing archive of Black queer life in the Netherlands, a testament to our enduring spirit and the connections that bind us across time and space.



Figure 3: Poster created by me for recruitment of participants.

Marival

We started the evening with the movie *Marival* by Felix de Rooy. I visited the Stedelijk Museum's exhibition last summer, which showcased Felix de Rooy's five-decade-long artistic journey. His work includes film, theatre, and a wide range of visual art (Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, n.d.). Throughout his career, he has fearlessly delved into societal taboos and preconceptions, particularly those surrounding race, gender, and sexuality (Isenia, n.d.). For example, de Rooy created this documentary-style theatrical production called *Marival* in 1996. This piece delves into the lives of four gay men from Curaçao and a trans woman residing in the Bijlmermeer district of Amsterdam, examining their unique experiences and perspectives while preparing for carnival (Isenia, n.d.). Within the exhibition, multiple spaces were designated, and in one particular area, it felt as though you were immersing yourself in his archive. The setup included screens displaying videos, photographs on the walls, magazines

showcasing his works, theatre scripts, and more. This was an intriguing approach to engaging with an archive.

I chose to screen this documentary because it offers a glimpse into their everyday lives as they prepare for carnival, a cultural celebration, and its unfolding within the Dutch context. Moreover, the film explores queerness through a Dutch Caribbean lens, and in general what it meant to be Caribbean in the Netherlands during the 90s.

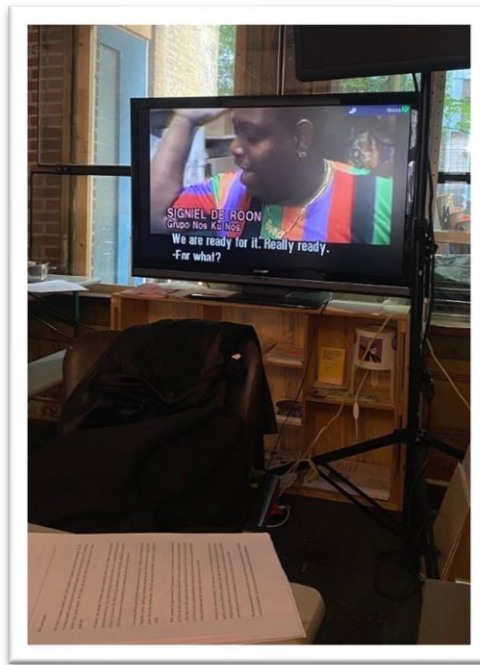


Figure 4: Screening of *Marival* during the session. Picture taken by me.

1. Carnival as a Living Archive

The title *Marival* merges ‘Mariku’, a derogatory term for homosexuals in Curaçao, with the festive connotation of ‘Carnival’. This section focuses on the personal reflections shared by fellow community members about their experiences with carnival, emphasizing its role as a living archive of memories and identities. It explores how carnival serves as a cultural touchstone for some Black queer individuals, shaping their upbringing and sense of diaspora connection.

In the intimate space that followed the film, a sense of connection unfolded between us. Each person present seemed to have a personal link to carnival. As someone with roots tracing back to the Ivory Coast, carnival had never been a part of my upbringing or cultural tapestry. Yet, amidst the candid exchanges, I felt a surprising kinship with the group. Somebody during

the discussion mentioned that carnival could resonate with many queer people, pointing out that:

Queer people celebrate, like every day or something. The extravagance and the whole like being bright and being loud and being who you are. That is also a celebration of yourself.

As I listened to the stories shared around me, I was amazed by the range of experiences. Despite our different backgrounds, we all appreciated the tales being told. In this shared moment of reflection, I realized the importance of holding space for diverse stories within the Black queer community. While carnival may not echo in the chambers of my memories, its resonance within the hearts of others speaks volumes about the richness of our heritage. And so, I watched and listened as each person shared their story, each adding to the beautiful collage of our interconnectedness.

One person within the group reminisced about the deeply ingrained role of carnival in their childhood, particularly the involvement of a gay uncle, which underscored the presence of non-heteronormative figures in their life:

That was really the period in my lifetime where I was really connected to carnival, and also with family members, like my gay uncle, which is a legend in my book. I saw him in this, you know. It's really important to have such a person in my life to see there's - not necessarily alternative - but like the non-heteronormative. That was good, you know? To have him in my life and see his world... Yeah, this brought me back.

Somebody else discussed the heteronormative nature of carnival in Portugal and how they observed minimal queer representation in the parades. “*It was very hetero, (...) you'd never see, like, anything gay or something.*” A third person from Aruba reflected on their childhood ambivalence towards carnival, which transformed into appreciation and a sense of diaspora connection as they grew older:

Growing up, I didn't appreciate carnival much—it was just loud music, standing in the sun for hours while parents got drunk (...) but leaving the island made me miss it, even when cooking or cleaning and you put on the music of like, oh my god, I miss this kind of environment. So for me, that's really touching. It's like this diaspora, how excited they are, even if it's a small event, they're still so excited about it because they miss it so much (...) As a kid, I saw it as a very hetero thing, only men playing music and only the women walk in the parades. But now I'm like, how is this not queer? At least for the men? We bring so much glitter and makeup and wear all these

rhinestones and skimpy outfits, like, how has there not been a queer connotation added to this before? (...) I just interpret it differently now, through my own queer experience.

The reflections on the heteronormative nature of carnival in certain contexts and the transformative experiences of community members underscore the fluidity and complexity of Black queer identities. This resonates with bell hooks' definition of queerness as a state of being at odds with the normative structures, requiring constant invention and reinvention (Paul, 2022). The shared narratives exemplify how Black queer individuals navigate and reinterpret cultural practices, asserting their identities in spaces that are often perceived as heteronormative. The emphasis on intergenerational connections and the role of non-heteronormative figures within families further illustrates the importance of community and kinship in the formation of Black queer identities. This aligns with the idea that archiving goes beyond documenting individual experiences; it's about creating a collective memory that honors and sustains community bonds.

The conversation then progressed to the intrinsic queerness of parades, recognizing these events as spaces for exploring and expressing diverse identities. This idea was contrasted with the Westernization of carnival, which some felt had reduced its expressiveness. The discussion also touched on the presence of white spectators and the discomfort it sometimes caused, underscoring the racial dynamics within these cultural celebrations. People shared experiences of feeling out of place and scrutinized in predominantly white spaces during the festivities. This was specifically prevalent for one person who grew up in Brabant, with the carnival culture there. They mentioned that:

There were a lot of white places I did not want to go to because I got a lot of stares. It's funny that carnival is this different thing for all of us. Yeah, to me, it's always a notice of how I'm different than everybody, right?

Additionally, there was discussion about the power dynamics surrounding carnival, with white individuals often exerting control over its direction and representation. This extends to the judging panel in the screening of *Marival*, where questions of legitimacy arise.

The group discussed the visible presence of white spectators at carnival, often sitting separately and observing rather than participating. This dynamic reflects broader themes of exoticism and control, where white people in power positions oversee and regulate the event, mirroring historical and ongoing power imbalances. The discussion pointed out how carnival,

despite being a celebration of Black culture, often falls under the control of white authorities who dictate the logistics and safety measures, reflecting deep-seated control dynamics.

2. The role of arts and cultural productions

The conversation during the session expanded to the role of artistic and cultural productions in shaping the narratives of Black queer life in the Netherlands. During the event of *Amplifying* (Noorani & Nixdorff, 2024) for the Archival Textures series, there were a couple of moments where a poem was recited. Poetry captures the unspoken and evokes new possibilities, fostering a sense of kinship. Lorde (2012) sees poetry as a form of illumination that brings clarity and understanding to our lives, guiding our choices and goals. These forms of expression, such as archival films or written speeches, are essential in documenting and also celebrating our experiences as Black queer people. Engaging with art or cultural productions can deeply resonate and inspire, thus amplifying narratives found within communities. As highlighted by Noorani and Nixdorff (2024, p. 22):

One can feel true power picking up a book, or a paper from the archives, and having the sentences reverberate through the body, to find others who have been touched in a similar way. This can be an experience so profound that it urges us to take up a pen, a printer, or a microphone – noticing how those words that enter our body transform, encourage, and empower thoughts into speech.

When discussing the significance of arts and culture in shaping the narrative of Black queer individuals in the Netherlands, it becomes evident that authentic representation plays a pivotal role. As articulated by one person during the session, the impact of seeing their own narratives represented authentically, without the mediation of mainstream Western media, is profound. They expressed,

I feel like until I saw this film, I was like, why do I always have to get my narratives from Western media? Or why do I always have to see my stories told through the lens of another? It can never fully be my own... but with this one, I really just felt like this is my story.

The discussion also highlighted how these cultural productions create a sense of community and belonging. Someone within the group described the experience of watching *Marival* and feeling a deep connection to the cultural and linguistic nuances portrayed.

It just hit home directly when you hear them speaking Papiamentu, and just see how they interact with each other; it just feels like I am back home... they've created this kind of culture for themselves.

We all agreed that “*it’s a shame that not more people know about these sorts of films or documentaries, that they exist, and that they tell a story that more of us could know.*” Participants emphasized the need for continued support and advocacy for such cultural expressions, recognizing their importance in preserving history and fostering community. By highlighting the struggles and triumphs of Black queer individuals, these cultural productions contribute to a broader understanding and appreciation of our experiences and identities.

During the book presentation of *Amplifying* (Noorani & Nixdorff, 2024), the movie *Born In Flames* was brought up. Anne Krul, active in the collectives Strange Fruit and Zami in the 90s, recited a flyer from the 80s that she had written and designed for an event where the movie was screened. She mentioned that after watching the film back then, the issues portrayed did not merely foster solidarity among viewers but reinforced a sense of urgency among Black women. The reaction in the room, marked by moments of silence and laughter, underscored the necessity for Black (queer) women to organize their struggles and create their own spaces on their terms. The film’s enduring relevance reflects the ongoing need for such autonomous spaces and initiatives.

The feelings elicited by the film, ranging from recognition to the imperative for self-organization, led to the realization that there was a need for dedicated screenings to address and discuss these perspectives. This initiative highlighted the importance of creating platforms where Black (queer) women could convene, discuss their experiences, and strategize their activism independently before seeking alliances with white women. Thus, *Born in Flames* exemplifies how cultural productions can catalyze community-building and action, emphasizing the ongoing struggle and the necessity for spaces that prioritize the narratives and needs of Black women.

The reflections on arts and cultural productions as living archives offer rich analytical insights into the intersectionality of Black queer identities and practices. The concept of ungendering (Spillers, 1987) challenges rigid Western gender binaries exposing the erasure of Black gender identities, vividly illustrated in these experiences where cultural productions emerge as spaces of resistance against normative gender and sexual identities. These narratives underscore the ongoing power dynamics and racial tensions within cultural spaces, reflecting

the broader postcolonial context of the Netherlands. By documenting and celebrating these experiences, the archival practice disrupts colonial knowledge frameworks, contributing to a more inclusive and equitable understanding of Black queer identities and cultural expressions. This approach emphasizes preserving diverse narratives and recognizing the histories of marginalized communities.

3. Postcolonial Echoes

In examining the practice of archiving and preserving the narratives of Black queer life in the Netherlands, it's essential to consider the postcolonial dynamics that influence these narratives. This involves recognizing the entanglements of Black queer movements with Dutch colonial violence and racism. The Netherlands, with its colonial history, continues to be intertwined with the cultures and histories of its former colonies. The editors from *Amplifying* (Noorani & Nixdorff, 2024) mentioned during the book presentation that the conversations highlight the importance of visibility and learning from local legacies, rather than constantly orienting towards American or English language discourses. This focus on local narratives reveals unique challenges and perspectives faced by Black queer communities in the Netherlands. For instance, people in the session discussed the persistent conservatism in certain cultural traditions and institutions. Someone from the Caribbean highlighted the conservatism in their home country, saying,

Carnival is also kind of conservative in a sense, and not really accepting. Not accepting gay or not accepting trans people for the pageant, like all these old concepts are still ingrained in there.

This remark points to the enduring influence of colonial values, which someone else elaborated on, noting,

I guess that's also why you have these people, nos ku nos in the Netherlands and not in Curaçao because there they wouldn't have been accepted at the time. To be so openly loving and accepted by everybody in the carnival, in the pageantry of it all.

This highlights the difficult reality many encounter, compelling them to find spaces of belonging away from their home countries. Someone captured the emotional complexity of this experience, stating,

There's a weird nostalgic feeling when you watch this. Something that is our own, you know, something that is created by us.

These discussions underscore the postcolonial issues at play, where Black queer individuals from the Caribbean navigate their identities in the Netherlands. Archiving their stories becomes an act of resistance and preservation, challenging dominant narratives and validating their experiences. It not only honors the past but also creates a space for voices in the present, enriching the understanding of Black queer life in the Netherlands.

I guess when I talk to other queers from the Caribbean, we always come back to the same topic of there being a reason why we're living here and not there, even though we long for home a lot. Yeah, we know there's still a reason why we're paying rent here instead of looking to build lives back home.

These experiences and observations enhance our understanding of Spillers' (1987) concept of ungendering. The notion becomes poignant here, as Black queer individuals navigate spaces that were historically designed to exclude and marginalize them. The archival practice, therefore, becomes a radical act of reclaiming and redefining identity, countering the erasure perpetuated by colonial histories.

Furthermore, archiving as praxis, as discussed, is not just about preserving memories but about engaging with and challenging the dominant narratives that have historically excluded our voices. This practice aligns with the idea of "re-membering" proposed by Pandit (2023), which involves not just recollection but an active reconstitution of the past to inform and shape the future. By documenting and archiving the experiences of Black queer individuals, we contribute to a broader understanding of identity and existence beyond colonial and heteronormative constraints.

Incorporating these lived experiences enriches the discourse on Black gender and queerness. It highlights the resilience and creativity within Black queer communities as we navigate and resist the legacies of colonialism. This dual process of archiving and reflection creates a space for Black queer individuals to assert their presence and shape their narratives within the Dutch postcolonial context.

4. Re-imagining horizons through archives

The practice of archiving serves as a powerful tool for re-imagining Black queer history and identity. I was curious to know what this meant to the people involved in the session, on a

personal level. When I posed the question, somebody who is a researcher and engages in archival work immediately expressed that archival work is deeply personal and transformative to them. They reflect,

In terms of my research into queerness, archival work has changed the possibilities and how we actually, from an ancient perspective, have been looking at gender identities.

This sentiment reinforces the disruption Blackness poses to traditional gender norms, as discussed in the theoretical framework. They emphasize the importance of archival materials in reshaping narratives and empowering individuals to embrace their identities authentically.

All the archives that are there, and we can find them and get this information either through films, books, Google, whatever research, essays you can read, I think that really changed the narrative. And it has been empowering me as a person, to know, okay, we have been doing this and these are actually our concepts. Yeah, a rainbow flag is cute but we've been doing this.

This response aligns with Spillers' (1987) concept of ungendering, where the retrieval and reinterpretation of historical records challenge the erasure and marginalization of Black identities within the confines of Western gender constructs. By engaging with archival materials, individuals reclaim their histories and identities, thus counteracting the historical narratives that have sought to render them invisible. Somebody else further elaborates on the liberating potential of exploring personal identity through archival engagement. They explain,

When you look at your spirit and when you explore it, you can be anything, or you can go places without being stuck in this thing (...) We have this broad palette of things Black people can be.

This sentiment underscores the fluidity and expansiveness of identity that archival exploration can facilitate. It speaks to Douglas' (Nash, 2019) assertion that Blackness inherently challenges and transcends rigid gender categories, offering a more inclusive and dynamic understanding of identity. Ultimately, we reflected on the transformative potential of archival engagement in reshaping perceptions of history and community. Someone asserted,

For me, reimagining means that there was a before and now I'm raising it up again.

This act of raising previously marginalized narratives speaks to the empowering nature of archival work in reclaiming and celebrating Black queer histories. Their reflections highlight the importance of engaging with archives to cultivate a sense of belonging and community. They assert,

Queer people have always existed. We've always organized in these sorts of ways to have a community.

In this regard, archival work serves not only as a tool for historical preservation but also as a catalyst for collective identity formation and solidarity within Black queer communities. In essence, through archival engagement, Black queer individuals reclaim agency over their narratives, ensuring that their voices are not only heard but also remembered for generations to come. The practice of archiving serves as a conduit for exploration, affirmation, and empowerment within Black queer communities, offering a pathway to re-imagine and reconstruct narratives of identity and belonging.

During the book presentation of *Amplifying* (Noorani & Nixdorff, 2024), Gloria Wekker of Sister Outsider, presented the essay she has written in collaboration with the other members of the collective, titled *Overlevers: Groepsportret van Sister Outsider*. The mission of the collective was to combat the invisibility of Black queer women, as expressed in the essay,

Sister Outsider aims to make black women's culture in general, and black lesbian culture in particular visible and to advance it

This endeavor reflects hooks' (2014) assertion that 'woman' is often synonymous with 'White woman,' highlighting the need to disrupt white supremacist assumptions and ensure that Black women's experiences and identities are recognized and valued. Spillers (1987) advocates for a thorough analysis of the (loss of) history that has rendered Black women invisible and hyper-visible in society, further emphasizing the importance of these archival efforts in reclaiming and preserving Black women's narratives.

When asked what it meant to her to revisit the essay nearly 40 years after its publication, Wekker reflected on several aspects. Firstly, the rediscovery of the essay served as a powerful reminder of the importance of actively engaging with her own archival materials. She had forgotten about this essay until it resurfaced, highlighting the need to think about and do something meaningful with her archive.

More significantly, Wekker was struck by the enduring relevance of her essay's themes. She realized that she had connected the presence of Black lesbians in the Netherlands with the imperial Dutch system even back then. This revelation underscored how deeply historical contexts influence contemporary identities and experiences. This also showed the persistent impact of colonial histories on present-day life.

Thus, for Wekker, re-engaging with her archival work meant reconnecting with the past in a way that reaffirmed her understanding of the ongoing interplay between history and identity. It was a call to action to preserve and utilize these archives, to continue drawing lessons from them, and to keep the narratives they hold alive and relevant.

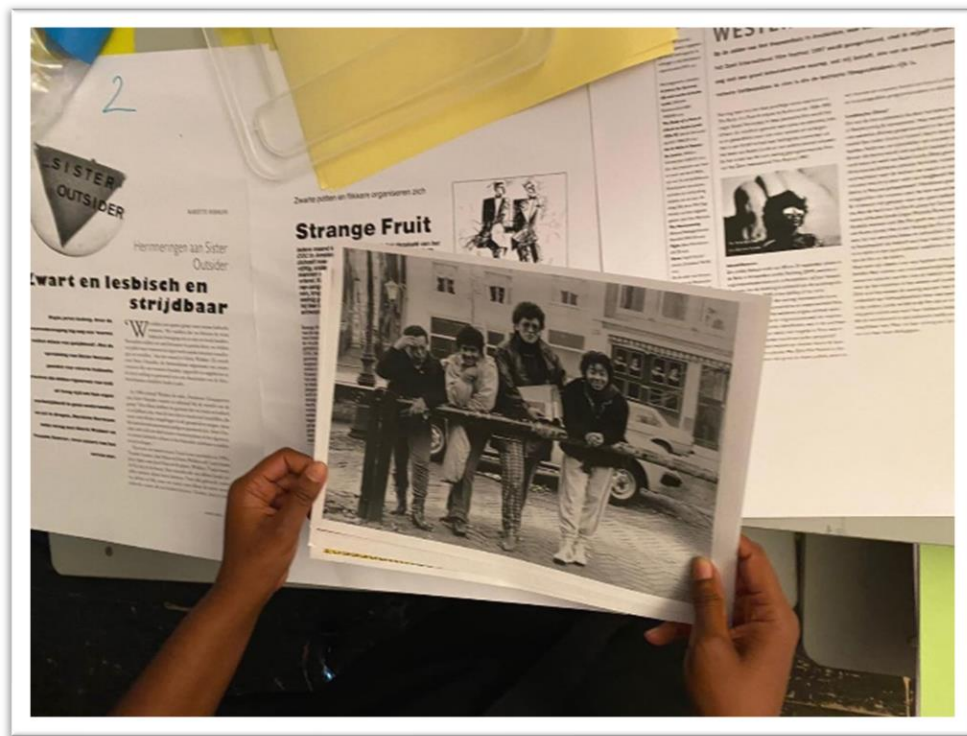


Figure 5: Ephemeral material during the session. Picture taken by me.

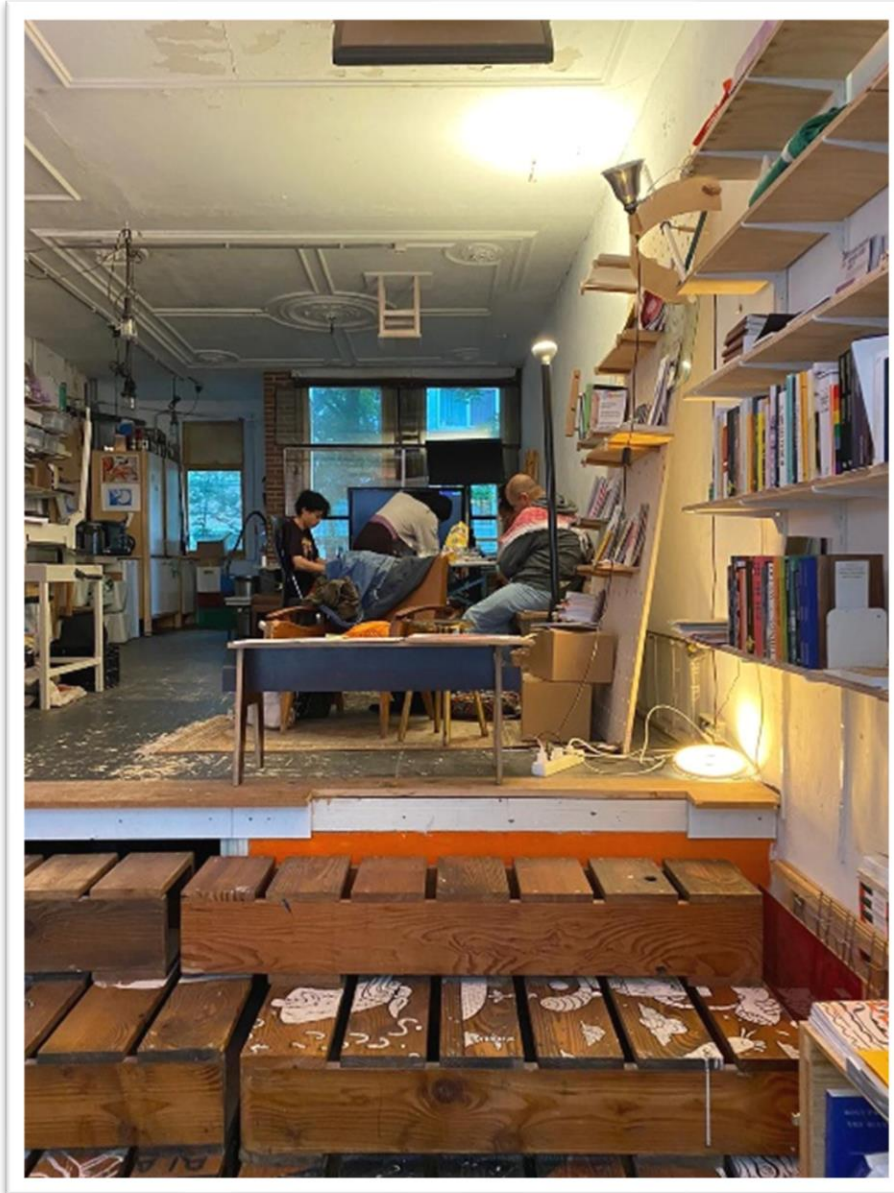


Figure 6: Session at *KIOSK*. Picture taken by me.

5. Exploring ephemeral traces

After an in-depth discussion of the film, we transitioned into the second part of the session, immersing ourselves in archival materials from Black queer collectives in the Netherlands. We examined photographs from groups like Strange Fruit, SUHO, and the Sister Outsider collective, along with posters and zine excerpts. We began by carefully observing and reading these materials and then engaged in a dynamic conversation with the histories and stories they held.



Figure 7: Session at KIOSK. Picture taken by me.

The people involved in the session expressed their thoughts and emotions when reflecting on the small archive I created. Some felt appreciation for the existence of such collectives and material. Someone mentioned,

I am warmed by the fact that this was around, you know, this was set up.

This highlights the emotional impact and connection they felt with the historical efforts captured in the archive. However, the reactions were not uniformly positive. Somebody also expressed initial shock and confusion over the language used in the excerpts of a specific zine, particularly concerning the terms *potten* and *flikkers* and the title of the collective *Strange Fruit*. They noted,

When they use those terms, I'm like, why? (...) When I saw that at first I was like, what is that about? Because Strange Fruit, how I know it, refers to, uh... Black people being hanged from a tree.

This reaction illustrates the unsettling nature of certain terminology within these historical materials. Somebody else offered a nuanced perspective on the transformative potential of reclaiming painful language. They stated,

It kind of showed me that they try to empower it and make something beautiful out of something very dark.

This sentiment draws a parallel to how terms like *queer* have been reappropriated and embraced by the communities they once sought to oppress. They continued,

We embodied that. So I think that was very interesting how they tried to switch that up.

The small archive also inspired feelings of hope and empowerment among us. For instance, another member of the group reflected on the importance of historical collectives, saying,

It's very inspiring to know that people were busy with these collectives in a time when I was still being developed. Not even knowing who I was yet. So yeah, it feels very empowering

Where someone else reflected upon,

It feels very empowering, these people being busy with this topic way before I was aware of it, it does affirm something that we've been busy. We've been organizing

This historical continuity provides a sense of legacy and ongoing struggle that fuels contemporary efforts. The conversation further revealed how the archives serve as blueprints for contemporary activism. Someone noted,

We can learn from these blueprints. I think that's what it's about. And that's why archiving is so important.

For instance, during the book presentation, they mentioned an intergenerational round table discussion that had taken place. This discussion brought together activists from different generations. They shared their thoughts and experiences on the challenges and triumphs of grassroots organizing, highlighting the power of collective action. Someone during the book presentation expressed how special they found it how these people managed to create impactful initiatives from seemingly nothing—often without financial resources, relying on the dedication and shared vision of a small group of committed individuals; from spontaneous actions to the creation of zines or publications. They underscore how urgent needs and shared passions drive immediate, powerful responses.

Someone else during the session emphasized the practical value of archival materials in offering strategies and insights into organizing, fundraising, and creating strong community networks. The availability of these historical documents allows current activists to build upon past successes and avoid reinventing the wheel, stating,

We can learn so many things in terms of getting money or making something strong. You know, we don't have to figure it out all over again. Like, it's good to have these sources.

Additionally, engaging with the curated collection highlighted the differences between past and present forms of organizing. Reflecting on the evolution of Black queer organizing, someone astutely pointed out that contemporary efforts often prioritize comfort over the discomfort necessary for authenticity,

People are always so concerned with creating these safe spaces that we also forget that to be able to be authentic selves, we also have to cope with being uncomfortable sometimes. And these people are very fucking uncomfortable. But they were brave and what they did was very beautiful.

Further delving into the comparison between past and present activism, another person expressed frustration with the dilution of diversity into a mere liberal token,

You said back then it was different or like they were more in danger or more oppressed. It's hard to make those kind of claims because, you know, we're still quite oppressed now. But I think there's some truth to that because I think in that time there was a lot more urgency.

They highlighted the urgency of past activism, driven by a need to challenge the prevailing norms and systems of oppression, contrasting it with the contemporary portrayal of diversity as a benign, non-threatening concept. Moreover, another member added depth to the discussion by stating,

I think for these people, it's what kept them alive. It's like it was their community.

This insight highlights the vital role of community, serving as a lifeline for individuals facing systemic oppression and providing a platform for collective resistance. As Wekker expressed during the book presentation; community becomes imperative in the face of exclusion. She recounted how, as Black women, they felt like outsiders within the predominantly white feminist and lesbian movements of the time, prompting them to advocate for the recognition of race as a barrier to equality. This struggle led many Black women to break away from mainstream feminist spaces and establish their own institutions. In doing so, she expressed that it felt akin to creating their own family, which was a heartwarming experience.

The editors of the book *Amplifying* (Noorani & Nixdorff, 2024) highlighted the significance of Tania Leon's archive, a member of the Sister Outsider collective. This archive, housed at Atria, comprises an array of diverse materials, including photographs, workshop notes, and letters exchanged with Audre Lorde. Notably, it contains subsidy requests for Lorde's visit to the Netherlands, underscoring the efforts to cultivate sisterhood, solidarity, and kinship.

In the final part of the session, I envisioned a collective creation. I proposed creating a zine from our work, which could be archived. I invited everyone to contribute a quote or create something that encapsulates the significance of archiving Black queer life in the Netherlands. I encouraged everyone to share afterward because we were running out of time; whether a picture, a song, or any other form of expression, as the zine project continues.

The reactions to the archival materials—ranging from appreciation to discomfort—highlight the complexities of reclaiming and preserving Black queer history. These materials not only serve as a testament to the resilience and creativity of Black queer communities but also challenge Western notions of gender and identity. By archiving these ephemeral traces, we

engage in a praxis that honors the humanity and dignity of those impacted by oppression, ensuring their experiences are not erased or forgotten. This archival practice, becomes a powerful tool in shaping our collective understanding of an alternative world, where diverse narratives and identities are documented, valued, and celebrated.

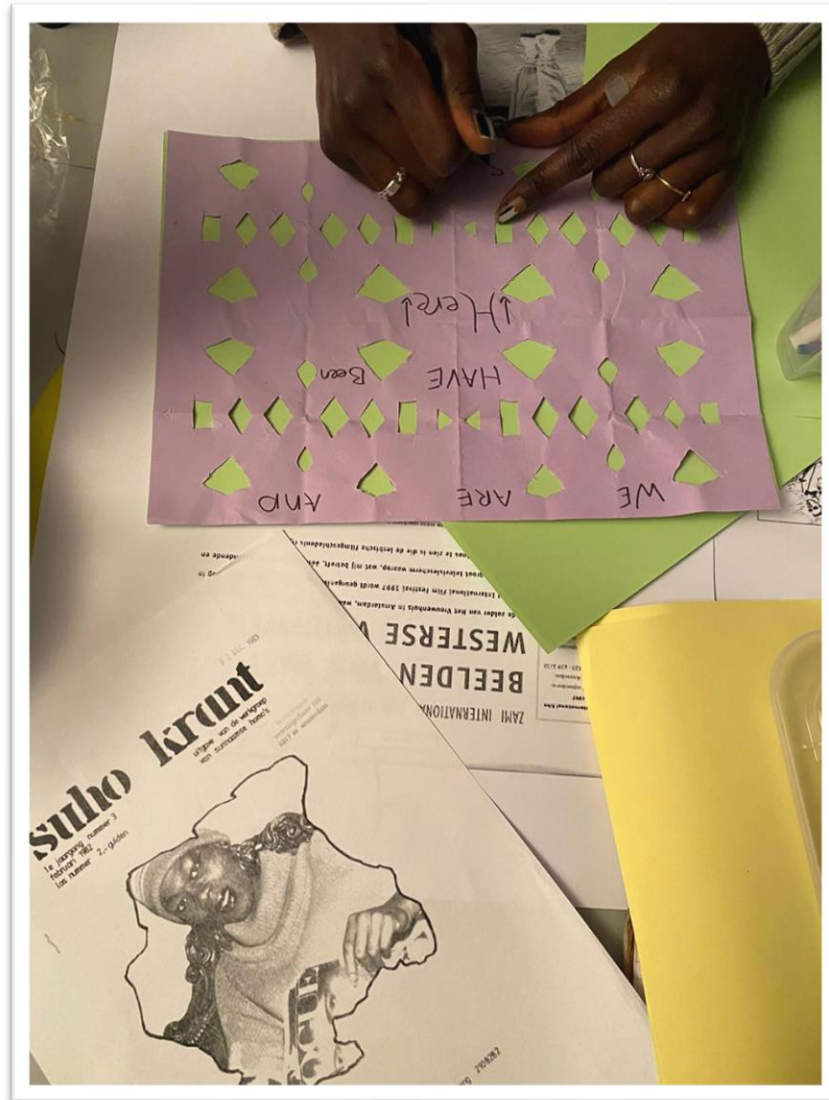


Figure 8: Session at *KIOSK*. Picture taken by me. 'We are and have been here but scattered'

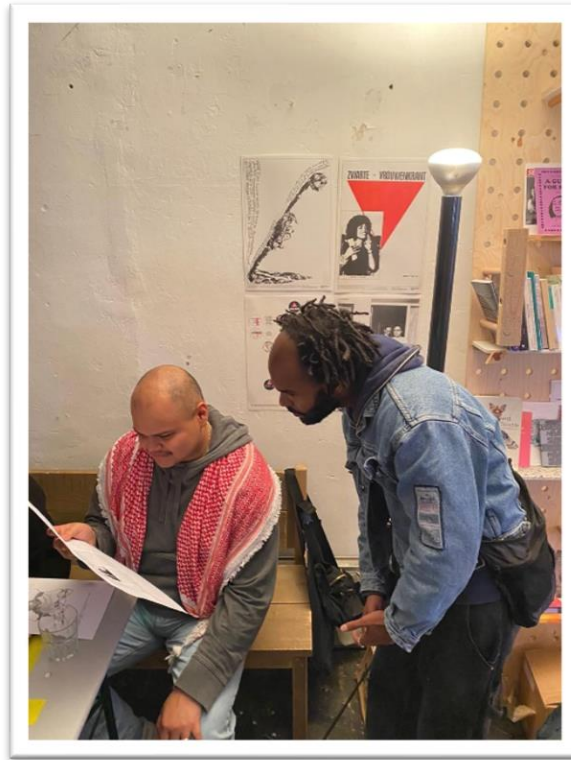


Figure 9: Session at *KIOSK*. Picture taken by me.



Figure 10: Session at *KIOSK*. Picture taken by me.

Conclusion

The exploration of how an archive re-imagines and preserves the narratives of Black queer life in the Netherlands reveals a profound and intricate tapestry woven through archival practices, arts, and postcolonial dynamics. These elements collectively illuminate the resilience, creativity, and transformative power of Black queer communities, offering a nuanced understanding of experiences and contributions.

Carnival, as discussed in the session on the film *Marival*, emerges as a living archive, preserving and celebrating the cultural heritage of Black queer individuals in the Netherlands. The personal reflections underscore the emotional connections and the sense of belonging that carnival fosters. These narratives, rich with memories of non-heteronormative figures and intergenerational connections, highlight the importance of preserving diverse stories within the Black queer community. It becomes a site of resistance and reinvention, where we navigate and reinterpret cultural practices, asserting our identities in spaces often dominated by heteronormative norms. This aligns with bell hooks' notion of queerness as a space of constant reinvention, challenging and transforming existing structures.

Art and cultural productions play a pivotal role in shaping and documenting Black queer narratives. Poetry, films, and other artistic expressions offer powerful means of celebrating and preserving these experiences. Audre Lorde's view of poetry as a form of illumination is particularly relevant here, as these artistic expressions bring clarity and foster kinship within the community. Authentic representation in arts and media provides a sense of validation and belonging. The reactions during the session, after talking about art without the filter of mainstream Western media, underscore the transformative impact of these cultural productions. They create spaces for voices that have long been marginalized, offering platforms for expression, celebration, and resistance.

The postcolonial dynamics influencing Black queer narratives reveal the ongoing impact of colonial histories on present-day identities and experiences. The reflections during the session on conservatism in their home countries and the challenges of navigating their identities in the Netherlands underscore the enduring influence of colonial values. Archiving these stories becomes an act of resistance, challenging dominant narratives and validating the experiences of Black queer individuals. This archival work honors the past while creating a space for voices in the present, enriching the understanding of Black queer life in the Netherlands. The concept of ungendering, as proposed by Spillers, becomes particularly

poignant in this context, as Black queer individuals navigate spaces historically designed to exclude and marginalize them.

Engaging with archival materials from Black queer collectives in the Netherlands reveals the emotional impact and sense of connection felt by participants. These materials not only serve as a testament to the resilience and creativity of Black queer communities but also offer blueprints for contemporary activism. The historical continuity provided by these archives fuels current efforts, offering strategies and insights into organizing, and creating strong community networks. The discussions underscore the importance of community as a lifeline and provide a platform for collective resistance. By creating and engaging with archives, Black queer individuals ensure that their voices are not only heard but also remembered for generations to come.

The transformative potential of archival engagement in reshaping perceptions of history and community is evident. The reflections of people involved in this project, on the deeply personal and empowering nature of archival work highlight its role in reclaiming and celebrating Black queer histories. By retrieving and reinterpreting historical records, we counteract the historical narratives that have sought to render them invisible. This practice of archiving is not just about preserving the past; it is about actively shaping the future. It aligns with “re-membering,” involving an active reconstitution of the past to inform and shape the future. By documenting and archiving these experiences, we contribute to a broader understanding of identity and existence beyond colonial and heteronormative constraints.

In conclusion, the practice of archiving Black queer life in the Netherlands is more than a mere act of preservation; it is a radical and transformative process that reclaims, redefines, and celebrates identity. Through arts, cultural productions, postcolonial reflections, and the exploration of ephemeral traces, we see how these narratives contribute to a richer understanding of Black queer experiences. The archival practice challenges dominant narratives, offers blueprints for contemporary activism, and fosters a sense of belonging and community. It is a testament to the resilience, creativity, and enduring spirit of Black queer individuals, ensuring that their stories are not only preserved but also celebrated and remembered.

To further illustrate the essence of this thesis, I conclude with a poem by Lorde (2000), which poignantly captures the struggle and resilience that define Black queer experiences and the importance of preserving these narratives:

A Litany for Survival

For those of us who live at the shoreline
standing upon the constant edges of decision
crucial and alone
for those of us who cannot indulge
the passing dreams of choice
who love in doorways coming and going
in the hours between dawns
looking inward and outward
at once before and after
seeking a now that can breed
futures
like bread in our children's mouths
so their dreams will not reflect
the death of ours;

For those of us
who were imprinted with fear
like a faint line in the center of our foreheads
learning to be afraid with our mother's milk
for by this weapon
this illusion of some safety to be found
the heavy-footed hoped to silence us

For all of us
this instant and this triumph
We were never meant to survive.

And when the sun rises we are afraid
it might not remain
when the sun sets we are afraid
it might not rise in the morning
when our stomachs are full we are afraid
of indigestion
when our stomachs are empty we are afraid
we may never eat again
when we are loved we are afraid
love will vanish
when we are alone we are afraid
love will never return
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.

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CHECKLIST ETHICAL AND PRIVACY ASPECTS OF RESEARCH

INSTRUCTION

This checklist should be completed for every research study that is conducted at the Department of Public Administration and Sociology (DPAS). This checklist should be completed *before* commencing with data collection or approaching participants. Students can complete this checklist with help of their supervisor.

This checklist is a mandatory part of the empirical master's thesis and has to be uploaded along with the research proposal.

The guideline for ethical aspects of research of the Dutch Sociological Association (NSV) can be found on their website (http://www.nsv-sociologie.nl/?page_id=17). If you have doubts about ethical or privacy aspects of your research study, discuss and resolve the matter with your EUR supervisor. If needed and if advised to do so by your supervisor, you can also consult Dr. Bonnie French, coordinator of the Sociology Master's Thesis program.

PART I: GENERAL INFORMATION

Project title:	The Art of Preserving Black Queer Stories: Archival Practices in the Dutch Context
Name, email of student:	Manon Zamblé, mas.zamble@gmail.com
Name, email of supervisor:	Rogier van Reekum, vanreekum@essb.eur.nl
Start date and duration:	January 2024, 6 months

Is the research study conducted within DPAS

YES

If 'NO': at or for what institute or organization will the study be conducted?
(e.g. internship organization)

PART II: HUMAN SUBJECTS

1. Does your research involve human participants. YES

If 'NO': skip to part V.

- If 'YES': does the study involve medical or physical research? NO

Research that falls under the Medical Research Involving Human Subjects Act ([WMO](#)) must first be submitted to [an accredited medical research ethics committee](#) or the Central Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects ([CCMO](#)).

2. Does your research involve field observations without manipulations that will not involve identification of participants. NO

If 'YES': skip to part IV.

3. Research involving completely anonymous data files (secondary data that has been anonymized by someone else). NO

If 'YES': skip to part IV.

PART III: PARTICIPANTS

1. Will information about the nature of the study and about what participants can expect during the study be withheld from them? NO
2. Will any of the participants not be asked for verbal or written 'informed consent,' whereby they agree to participate in the study? NO
3. Will information about the possibility to discontinue the participation at any time be withheld from participants? NO
4. Will the study involve actively deceiving the participants? NO
Note: almost all research studies involve some kind of deception of participants. Try to think about what types of deception are ethical or non-ethical (e.g. purpose of the study is not told, coercion is exerted on participants, giving participants the feeling that they harm other people by making certain decisions, etc.).
5. Does the study involve the risk of causing psychological stress or negative emotions beyond those normally encountered by participants? NO
6. Will information be collected about special categories of data, as defined by the GDPR (e.g. racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data for the purpose of uniquely identifying a person, data concerning mental or physical health, data concerning a person's sex life or sexual orientation)? YES
7. Will the study involve the participation of minors (<18 years old) or other groups that cannot give consent? NO
8. Is the health and/or safety of participants at risk during the study? NO
9. Can participants be identified by the study results or can the confidentiality of the participants' identity not be ensured? NO
10. Are there any other possible ethical issues with regard to this study? NO

If you have answered 'YES' to any of the previous questions, please indicate below why this issue is unavoidable in this study.

Information about special categories of data will be collected (question 6) because this thesis is about archiving Black Queer life in the Netherlands, which means that the racial/ethnic origin and sexual orientation/gender identity of participants are relevant

What safeguards are taken to relieve possible adverse consequences of these issues (e.g., informing participants about the study afterwards, extra safety regulations, etc.).

Asking for consent to record, the possibility to withdraw from the project at any time, asking if there were any specific elements during the data collection that they prefer to exclude during the analysis, and informing participants about the study afterwards.

Are there any unintended circumstances in the study that can cause harm or have negative (emotional) consequences to the participants? Indicate what possible circumstances this could be.

No

Please attach your informed consent form in Appendix I, if applicable.

Continue to part IV.

PART IV: SAMPLE

Where will you collect or obtain your data?

The data will be collected through collaborative sessions conducted with individuals identified as key figures Black Queer life in the Netherlands. These sessions will take place in-person.

Note: indicate for separate data sources.

What is the (anticipated) size of your sample?

The anticipated size of the sample is 10 individuals who are actively engaged in the archiving or representation of Black Queer life in the Netherlands

Note: indicate for separate data sources.

What is the size of the population from which you will sample?

The population from which the sample will be drawn consists of individuals who are key figures in Black Queer communities in the Netherlands. The exact size of this population is not readily available but encompasses those actively involved in relevant academic, activist, artistic, or archival work within the Black Queer community in the Netherlands.

Note: indicate for separate data sources.

Continue to part V.

Part V: Data storage and backup

Where and when will you store your data in the short term, after acquisition?

The data will be stored securely on encrypted digital devices, such as my password-protected computer and external hard drives

Note: indicate for separate data sources, for instance for paper-and pencil test data, and for digital data files.

Who is responsible for the immediate day-to-day management, storage and backup of the data arising from your research?

I, the researcher, am solely responsible for the immediate day-to-day management, storage, and backup of the data arising from this research.

How (frequently) will you back-up your research data for short-term data security?

Research data will be backed up every other week to ensure short-term data security. This frequency allows for timely updates and mitigates the risk of data loss.

In case of collecting personal data how will you anonymize the data?

Because the individuals involved in my research are public figures within Black Queer communities in the Netherlands, achieving full anonymization is unattainable. However, I will place a strong emphasis on securing informed consent. This approach acknowledges their visibility while respecting their autonomy and ensuring they are fully aware of how their data will be utilized in the research process.

Note: It is advisable to keep directly identifying personal details separated from the rest of the data. Personal details are then replaced by a key/ code. Only the code is part of the database with data and the list of respondents/research subjects is kept separate.

PART VI: SIGNATURE

Please note that it is your responsibility to follow the ethical guidelines in the conduct of your study. This includes providing information to participants about the study and ensuring confidentiality in storage and use of personal data. Treat participants respectfully, be on time at appointments, call participants when they have signed up for your study and fulfil promises made to participants.

Furthermore, it is your responsibility that data are authentic, of high quality and properly stored. The principle is always that the supervisor (or strictly speaking the Erasmus University Rotterdam) remains owner of the data, and that the student should therefore hand over all data to the supervisor.

Hereby I declare that the study will be conducted in accordance with the ethical guidelines of the Department of Public Administration and Sociology at Erasmus University Rotterdam. I have answered the questions truthfully.

Name student: Manon Zamblé

Name (EUR) supervisor: Rogier van Reekum

Date: 24/03/2024

Date: 15-04-2024

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Zamblé', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Rogier van Reekum', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

APPENDIX I: Informed Consent Form (if applicable)

Informed Consent Form

Research Project Title: The Practice of Archiving Black Queer Life in the Netherlands

Researcher's Identity and Contact Details:

Name: Manon Zamblé

Affiliation: Erasmus School of Social and Behavioural Sciences, Erasmus University
Rotterdam

Email: mas.zamble@gmail.com

Phone: +31 6 31 68 47 01

EUR Data Protection Officer Contact Details:

Email: privacy@eur.nl

Purposes of Data Processing:

The research project aims to investigate the creation of an archive with key figures within the Black Queer community in the Netherlands to contribute to re-imagining and preserving the narratives of Black Queer life in the Dutch context.

Legal Basis for Processing Data:

Your unambiguous consent is the legal basis for the collection, storing and analyzing of these data.

Access to Data:

Access to the data will be limited to me, the researcher, and the supervisor.

Data Storage Duration:

The data will be retained for the duration of the research project and will be securely stored. Upon completion of the project, data will be anonymized and stored for future reference.

Data Subjects' Rights:

You have the following rights regarding your data:

- Access to your data
- Rectification, erasure, or restriction of processing of your personal data
- Withdrawal of consent at any time
- Lodging a complaint with a supervisory authority

Explicit Consent for Special Categories of Data:

By participating in this research, you consent to the collection and processing of *special categories of data* related to your racial or ethnic origin, sexual orientation, and any other relevant categories.

Participant's Signature:

Date:

[Date]

Researcher's Signature:

Date:

[Date]