

Trying to formulate conditions for a genuinely alternative and radical practice with respect to the creation, access and management of archives, I presented my practice-led research around cultural piracy (The Piracy Project, London, with Andrea Francke, 2010 – ongoing).

The panel "Socializing and Accessing Archives", to which I contributed, explored access policies focusing on common knowledge strategies which subvert privatization and reification, as well as technological disobedience problematizing the concepts of authorship and copyright.

I discussed selected cases of The Piracy Project, a collection of 200 copied and modified books we gathered through an open call and own research exploring the ways these cases question the concept of originality, common sense assumptions of authorship and ownership, and the implications policy development has had on the current debate around intellectual property.

A specific focus was on the question, how implicit ideologies of framing and cataloguing shape the way archival material is been read, perceived and activated. In order to explore the contestations around cataloguing in a historic context, I am drawing on key critiques articulated by the US radical librarian movement (Sanford Berman, Celeste West 70s/80s). Based on our practical experiments introducing context-specific categories and subject headings into the organization and display of The Piracy Collection I discuss contemporary approaches to cataloguing that point towards the often invisible or hidden agendas (colonial, patriarchal, racist) in the organization of knowledge.

Thirdly I reflected on experiences connected to politics of place and context, i.e. observations on how the project shifted when moving out of the initial interventionist context at the art university in order to be hosted by various art institutions.

The Piracy Project is a research project exploring the philosophical, legal and social implications of cultural piracy and creative modes of dissemination. Through research and an international call for entries the project has gathered a collection of about 150 modified, appropriated and copied books from across the world. The books in the collection show a wide range of motivations and strategies: from creative, playful copying, modifying, re-interpreting already existing work to acts of civil disobedience by unlawfully circumventing enclosures such as censorship or market monopolies to acts of piracy generated by commercial interests.

The Piracy Project is initiated in 2010 by Andrea Francke and Eva Weinmayr as part of AND Publishing's research program.

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