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Amy Marshall Furness & Paola Poletto

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Extending the Conversation: Art Gallery of Ontario Artists in Residence and the Edward P. Taylor Library & Archives

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ABSTRACT

Over the dozen or so years of its existence the Artist in Residence (AiR) program at the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO) has brought numerous emerging and established artists into the daily workings of the museum, inviting resident artists to explore and engage with the AGO's collections, staff and public programs as they develop their projects. Support for a process of research-creation is fundamental to the opportunity offered by the residency. As a foundational component of the museum's research infrastructure, the AGO's Edward P. Taylor Library & Archives has played a key role in the residency program, allowing strategies of reading, citation and documentation to emerge as central themes in the cumulative body of residency projects, and allowing in turn for the possibility of project documentation to enter the archival record of the museum. Drawing on interviews with selected past artists in residence, this paper will provide an account of how the involvement of librarians and archivists, and the availability of library and archival resources in the museum have shaped the trajectory of the AiR program at the AGO.

Keywords: Artist in residence programs, Research-creation, Museum libraries, Museum archives, Museum education

INTRODUCTION

This paper explores the question of how the Artist in Residence program at the AGO has been shaped by the presence in the museum of the Edward P. Taylor Library & Archives, and the involvement of its staff. Drawing on interviews with the artists of five key residencies, it will reveal the diverse ways in which resident artists have informed and transformed the role of the library and archives within the museum. Both its collections and its staff function as critical support for artistic creation and for the ability of resident artists to enter into and engage with the institution. We argue that it is the particular synergy of the library and archives operating within the museum that gives the AGO's AiR program its strength.

The paper is written as a collaboration between Paola Poletto, the AGO's Director of Engagement & Learning, who has overseen the program for most of her 11-year tenure at the

AGO; and Amy Furness, an archivist with a long-standing specialty in visual arts archives, on the staff of the Edward P. Taylor Library & Archives since 2001, and Head of Library & Archives since 2017.¹ Both authors have been deeply invested in the success of the Artist in Residence program. To frame and give wider relevance to our account of five of the residencies over the years that have had the deepest relationship with the Edward P. Taylor Library & Archives, we offer context for the residency program, looking at both the literature and the wider environment of institutions and artist residencies. This paper does not aim at objectivity – we, the authors, are deeply embedded in our case study, and it is essential that we acknowledge that context and remain aware of its implications for our research. Our relationship with the AiR program and the resident artists equips us with unique knowledge and perspectives, but it also acts inevitably as a set of biases that shape our conclusions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The integral place of artist residencies in the networks of contemporary art is reflected in numerous written accounts and mentions of individual residency placements. Many of these writings are focused on the particularities of a given residency rather than the phenomenon of residencies in general. The literature on artist residencies as a discrete topic for analysis and reflection is smaller but growing. In 2001, the artist Ernesto Pujol wrote a short critical essay on the politics of museum-based artist residencies, noting that residencies have had some success in opening up museums to artists from marginalized communities, but this work has primarily been an effort of education departments rather than curators, creating a double standard in the museum world (Pujol, 2001). A residency program at the City of Portland Archives & Records Center was the subject of a research paper by Carbone (Carbone, 2015), who relates the idea of residency in the context of a public memory institution to the traditions and conceptual frameworks of public art, including “social practice; interactivity; the forging of connections between community, people, and objects; the constructing of opportunities for individuals to gain new perspectives; and the creation of dynamic responses to current issues.” In contrast, a study by Nishimura et al argues for the value of international residencies in neutral “third spaces” where artists can work in an environment that is relatively free from cultural traditions (Nishimura et al., 2017). More recently, Dziekan's essay on Monash University's artist residency in Prato, Italy reflected on the significance of archival documentation to achieving successful outcomes from a residency program, noting the importance of documentation to the “networks, connections and narratives” that he identifies as key to the success of residencies (Dziekan, 2020).

Two recently published books may signal a growing interest in analysis and synthesis of thinking about artist residencies: *Contemporary artist residencies: reclaiming time and space* (Elfving et al., 2019) and *On care: a journey into the relational nature of artists' residencies* (Mendrek et al., 2023). The work by Elfving et al. is a collection of essays on various aspects of artist residencies, written by curators, artists and theorists. Of note is the introduction to the

¹ Poletto is part of a core team of program curators including Danah Abusido, the Artist-in-Residence program's current Curatorial Associate, responsible for the coordination of the artist projects and broader program; colleagues on the Development team who closely manage the institutional relationship with the program's signature sponsorship partner, RBC; and colleagues and museum visitors across the museum engaged in the formation and presentation of the artists' projects.

volume, which provides a basic history of artist residencies which serves as vital context for articulating the nature of the AGO's program. From origins in the artist colonies of the nineteenth century, the artist residency has become established as a mechanism that provides artists with time-limited support and structure to focus on their work away from the struggles and distractions of everyday life. In the contemporary world, most residencies have a strong social component which may take the form of peer-to-peer support from fellow artists or may integrate the artist into the workings of a wider institution. Residencies can be thought of as "temporary communities... [with] emergent relationships built on trust and generosity rather than on competition or exchange" (Elfving & Kokko, 2019).

Florian Schneider's essay in the same volume delves into the topic of artistic research and knowledge-creation in the context of residency. He proposes that residency-based artistic research projects can serve to forge connections between past and present practices: "In a sense that a residency never emerges for its own sake, but connects various different spaces of creative production, it proposes an understanding of innovation in artistic research that is no longer constituted by the disruptive character of the new, but by its capacity to reinvent connections between disconnected spaces across different layers of time" (Schneider, 2019). This conceptualization of residency as a mode of building continuity and integrating knowledge across time is an idea that we have pursued through our research interviews with former AGO artists in residence.

The work by Mendrek et al. is a collection of more impressionistic essays from practitioners in the field, including both artists and arts workers. As its title suggests, this book is important for foregrounding the relational aspect of artist residencies, an ingredient the authors identify as key to the special nature of being in residence. In their introduction, the authors identify "trust, openness and a great deal of empathy, as well as the readiness to share one's resources" as essential characteristics of a successful residency (Mendrek et al., 2023). They note the "exhausting, invisible female care work" that often sustains artist residency programs (p. 10). It is worth acknowledging the overwhelmingly female presence among the resident artists featured in this paper (not to mention its authors). At the same time, we wish to note that at the AGO this caregiving function was not performed exclusively by female staff members – librarian Donald Rance and former Education and Programming Curatorial Associate Johnson Ngo were mentioned by resident artists as particularly caring and supportive members of the team.

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

To give further context to the AGO's AiR program, we surveyed the landscape of residencies in similar institutional settings. There are organized networks focused on facilitating and supporting artist residencies; of note, *resartis* and *TransArtists* are large, globally focused organizations whose websites provide some guidance, context and history of artist residencies, along with directories of hundreds of residency programs.² Museum-based residencies are common across

² Resartists, based in Australia, is the worldwide professional body for organizations hosting residencies (<https://resartis.org/global-network-arts-residency-centres/>, accessed 11 March 2024); TransArtists, based in the Netherlands, is an information platform with the goal of making information about artist residencies more accessible to artists (<https://www.transartists.org/en/artist-residence-history>, accessed 11 March 2024).

the museum field.³ They function as strategic vehicles in which contemporary artists bring new readings into older works in the collection, potentially engaging younger and emerging audiences and connecting artists, museum workers and audiences into new ways of looking and reading. Many major museums across the globe have residency programs, including the Guggenheim Museums and New Museum in New York; SAM Residencies at The Singapore Art Museum; and Artists in Residence at the Victoria & Albert Museum Archives, to name a few. A notable example is the residencies at the Louvre initiated by Donatien Grau, the museum's Head of Contemporary Programs. A philologist by training, Grau observed in a 2022 interview with Alain Elkann that the acts of reading and conversation are modes in which he can move and make things within the museum (Elkann, 2022). This idea of reading and conversation as a common ground – or at least a starting point for reaching common ground – is a promising foundation for considering the pivotal role of the museum library within residency programs.

There are numerous artist residencies in libraries; the public library systems of major urban centers including Toronto, New York, Chicago and Los Angeles have active residencies or fellowships for artists.⁴ Residencies in archival institutions are also a noted phenomenon.

In a Canadian context, while the AGO was the first to launch a museum-based residency program in Canada, there are currently dozens of others at venues including The Gardiner Museum for Ceramic Art, Aga Khan Museum, Canadian War Museum, MOCA Toronto, and Banff Centre. The large, federal grant-funded Archive/Counter-Archive project (2018-2025) has included some twenty artist residencies at archival institutions including Library & Archives Canada, the ArQuives and Urban Shaman (*Artists in Residence | Archive/CounterArchive*, n.d.). The overarching goals of the A/CA project are focused on the preservation and activation of vulnerable Canadian audiovisual heritage, centering on archival audiovisual recordings by Indigenous peoples, Black communities, People of Color, women, LGBT2Q+ and immigrant communities. Many such significant materials are held in the collections of traditional archival institutions but are not necessarily optimally discoverable; others are held by community archives and individuals and may need support for preservation. The A/CA residencies are funded by the project grant but are administered and hosted independently by partner institutions. Within the context of the research project, the residencies are intended as a mechanism for centering archival material with significance for marginalized peoples, revealing what is hidden in institutional collections and rendering it more visible to communities. One of the intended outputs of the project will be a book of case studies that includes documentation of the residency projects (J. Marchessault, personal communication, October 23, 2023).

In a recent conversation for this paper with Haema Sivanesan, Director of Leighton Studios and Program Partnerships at the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity, we discussed the uniqueness of our respective institutional settings and the role of the library within each. The Banff Centre, situated in a sublime mountainous environment, is a residency-focused institution which hosts

³ In the TransArtists directory of artist residencies, a search for “museum” finds over 100 museum-based residencies (<https://www.transartists.org/en/find-ta?search=archive>; accessed 28 November 2023)

⁴ A search for “library” or “archives” in the TransArtists directory turns up dozens of hits, with libraries and archives typically appearing as resources available to artists as part of a residency.

multiple residency programs across genres (dance, music, literary, visual arts). Initiated in 1983 and internationally renowned today, Leighton Studio's visual arts stream currently operates on a competitive open-call juried model for 2-to-8-week studio-cabin residencies. Asked how relevant the archive and library at Banff is to their program, Sivanesan reflected on how in Banff, the exchange between artist and the institution is "about reciprocity and gifting." Sivanesan sees how living on the Banff campus, where everything is taken care of (from mountain views to hotel-like service, etc.), where the feeling that one is given time to be fully immersed in their work in a special environment, a spirit of generosity and reciprocity and giving back develops (H. Sivanesan, personal communication, September 22, 2023). This theme of resident artists giving back to the host institution is one that we considered in our interviews.

THE AGO'S ARTIST IN RESIDENCE PROGRAM: BACKGROUND AND STRUCTURE

The AGO's Artist-in-Residence Program (AiR) was established in 2011 as the first of its kind in a Canadian museum. Coordinated within the Education and Public Programming Division, the program's founding goals were "to connect artists with visitors in unique and intimate ways; to inform and transform the museum and its everyday processes and programs through artists; and to support Toronto-area artists in their innovative practices and ideas" (Koke & Poletto, 2017). The relationship between the AGO and Toronto's arts communities would also be strengthened through the involvement of local artists. Collaborations with other institutions within the city and internationally could be facilitated through the residencies.

Foundational to the AGO's AiR program was the renovation of the museum's Weston Family Learning Centre (WFLC) in 2011. The design includes a dedicated artist-in-residence studio space situated on the central hallway, accessible to the public and with a glass wall that allows a clear, ample view of the creative work taking place in its interior. The WFLC's open-concept learning space was conceptually inspired by the Walker Art Centre's "Open Field" approach, in which the museum and its surrounds is envisioned as a commons for community-based creativity, both spontaneous and facilitated. The Edward P. Taylor Library & Archives occupies a space at the south end of the WFLC, adjacent to a public park that functions partly as an outdoor component of the AGO museum campus.

AGO residencies are typically three months in duration. For the first eight years of the program, residencies were invitational; they transitioned to an open call, juried model in 2019. The invitational aspect of the program in its early years meant that the selection of artists grew from the knowledge, acumen and connections of the AGO's education and curatorial management team. Some of the connections and resonances between the different residencies are therefore not coincidental. A public art dimension has been implicit in the program from the outset, with the expectation that resident artists will engage the AGO's audience directly through the outputs or processes of their residency, in a sense bypassing the traditional mode of the exhibition as the vehicle for public transmission of the artist's work. This centering of audience is related to the fact that the residency's administrative home is the Education and Public Programming Division rather than the Curatorial Division. The orientation of the AiR program toward audience engagement has

also meant that there is a strong emphasis on socially engaged practice among the residency projects.

The concept of *research-creation*, which originally arose in an academic context to provide a framework for supporting and assessing creative work as a genre of output from academic degree programs in the fine arts (Loveless, 2019), has been embedded in the AiR program from the outset.⁵ Of course, the institutional context in an art museum is very different from that of an academic system; in a sense, it inverts the notion of research-creation in that creative work is the expected output of a residency, but the AiR program encourages artistic process, practice, performance and research much more than the creation of tangible art objects. The program therefore could be considered a mode of expanding or troubling the established ways of thinking about research creation. There is a strong academic dimension to the artists whose residencies we discuss in this paper; most of them have pursued advanced university degrees or worked as university faculty. The AGO AiR program is also notably multi-disciplinary; most residents identify as visual artists, but among those discussed in this paper are a choreographer, a scholar of dance, and a collaborative working group that includes art historians, curators and art writers as well as visual artists.

At the AGO, the involvement of the Edward P. Taylor Library & Archives in the AiR program developed gradually and organically out of the interests and research needs of specific resident artists. In the setting of Toronto, a city of nearly 3 million inhabitants and a major center of the Canadian art world, the Library & Archives has a strong relationship with the city's visual artists. Artists represent a significant portion of external users of the library, and the library and archival collections contain rich documentation of exhibitions and other activities of the city and province's visual arts communities. The availability of the Library & Archives staff and collections to artists in residence was implicit from the very beginning of the program.

⁵ Research-creation is defined by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada as “[a]n approach to research that combines creative and academic research practices, and supports the development of knowledge and innovation through artistic expression, scholarly investigation, and experimentation” (see <https://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/programs-programmes/definitions-eng.aspx#a22>, accessed 28 November 2023)

Selected residency projects: Five case studies

Ame Henderson (August 5 – October 9, 2014)



Ame Henderson: *rehearsal/performance* at Nuit Blanche, 2014. Photo © AGO

Description

Henderson, a choreographer, focused her residency project on histories of performance in the AGO. In advance of Henderson's residency period, dance writer and curator Victoria Mohr-Blakeney undertook preparatory research in the AGO Archives to identify the documentary record of performances in the museum. Because of the informal way that performances had generally been organized and administered, it was a challenging search which yielded many scant traces such as memoranda and contracts. Henderson used the fragmentary record to scaffold a series of public rehearsals with her artist collective Public Recordings in AGO gallery spaces, displaying the research photocopies and foregrounding the act of rehearsal. These events culminated in a 12-hour durational performance in the AGO's Anne Tanenbaum Gallery School, a public rehearsal at Toronto's Nuit Blanche in September 2014. Following the conclusion of the residency, Henderson compiled the documentation of her project and donated it to the AGO's Archives.

Findings

In an interview with the authors in October 2023, Henderson described the jumping-off point for her residency project as the problem of understanding how her own lineage as a choreographer and performer could fit meaningfully into a residency at the AGO (A. Henderson, personal

communication, October 6, 2023). Questions about archives were implicit in the historical aspect of her project, but the preliminary research by Mohr-Blakeney really opened up the possibility of the AGO's institutional archives playing a central role in the residency.

Henderson had minimal awareness of the archives prior to her residency and had imagined finding a relatively complete audiovisual record of performances. She found the gaps in the archives "shocking" at first, but the incompleteness proved to be central to her project:

The shock was, one - there's been hundreds of performances. Two was - there's no time-based media. There's no record of them other than all this peripheral documentation. Which is what I found in the archives, was the... contracts, the letters, the memo from one department at the AGO to the other to like, move chairs. [A]ll these things that may have been considered by someone to be, you know, pretty flimsy at best in terms of trying to understand the history of performance.

Her public rehearsals reflected an embodied process of learning how archives can be reanimated through research, and how practices of repetition and citation can function to repair or reinforce the historical record. "We read [the documents] in public and through that iterative process of tracing around these performances... we proposed... that in the absence of the performance, this is still the performance. That... the archive and how we activate it then reanimates what isn't there in a way... and the more we did that, the more we actually found." Rehearsing in public was a way to foreground the intensive archival work that the project entailed, helping to ensure that it would be witnessed and documented for the future. The culminating performance at Nuit Blanche brought Henderson's work into the scholarly discourse of archival studies when it was the subject of an exhibition review in *Archivaria* (Litvack, 2015).

Looking back, Henderson cites the receptiveness and research support of library and archives staff, in particular AGO Archivist Marilyn Nazar, as an important ingredient in the success of the residency. Nazar's enthusiasm for the project and openness to receiving Henderson's own records of the residency helped to bring the project full circle and establish an archival foothold for future research on performance in the institution. Henderson found answers to the question of artistic lineage that connected her to wider histories of experimental performance and interdisciplinary practice in Toronto, paradoxically contained in the archives of an institution that had seemed, at the outset of the project, to be a difficult context for a performing artist to work.

FAG Feminist Art Gallery (February 16 – April 24, 2015)

FAG collaborators Allyson Mitchell (left) and Deirdre Logue (right) with a collaborator at the AGO's Art+Feminism Wikipedia Edit-A-Thon, 2015. Photo © AGO

Description

FAG is the collaboration of artists Deirdre Logue and Allyson Mitchell. The focus of their residency was the creation of the video work *Hers is Still a Dank Cave*, a production involving green screen technology (produced with the assistance of AGO videographers) with giant sculptures including over-life-sized naked stocking-doll granny figures and papier-mâché books representing items from the artists' library. FAG's residency was busy with related events, including inviting in other artists and collectives as a kind of sub-residency, hosting an "unconference" titled *Radical Acts*, and holding a public game of critical art theory table tennis. The AGO's first Art + Feminism Wikipedia edit-a-thon took place in the library and archives in the middle of the residency, with FAG in a feature role.

Findings

The core projects of the FAG residency were rich in thematic connections to books and processes of research and citation, as the artists observed when we interviewed them (D. Logue & Mitchell, Allyson, personal communication, October 27, 2023).⁶ In our interview, Logue reflected that the way the residency functioned to bring people together and facilitate the exchange of ideas was to

⁶ Natalie Loveless discusses *Hers is Still a Dank Cave* in depth as a key example of research-creation work in a Canadian context (Loveless, 2019).

her a kind of "archive of participation": "this living archive of people who were brushing up against, coming in contact with, ideas, each other and... feminist reattachment to the museum, to the gallery as places of possibility, as opposed to... sites of resentment or sites of exclusion or sites of impenetrability."

The most direct connection to the AGO library at the time of the residency was the Wikipedia edit-a-thon, to which the artists brought significant energy and enthusiasm, helping to inspire huge attendance.⁷ The goals and values of the Art+Feminism project were well aligned with those of FAG and their residency, and were enacted in the collaboration, mutual support and knowledge-sharing that characterized the event. In retrospect, though, the significance of the library and archives to FAG's residency had more to do with the receptiveness of the library staff to the artists' overall strategic aims, which were, figuratively speaking, "to throw a brick in the back door of the rest of the gallery and let as many people in as we could" through invitations that intervened into the power structures of the museum. Education staff, librarians and archivists, they found, were paying attention to the residency, more so than the museum's curators. This insight into the place of residencies in relation to museum politics echoes Pujol's observations (Pujol, 2001).

⁷ To give further context to the excitement around the event, the Art+Feminism project was only a year old in 2015, and the AGO's edit-a-thon was the second largest in the world that year, with 72 editors participating. See <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Meetup/ArtAndFeminism/Outcomes2015> (accessed 18 November 2023).

EMILIA-AMALIA Working Group (May 1 – August 4, 2017)

Pamila Matharu (left) and Vera Frenkel (right) speaking at the Artist File Fair in 2017. Photo © Tom Legrady

Description

The EMILIA-AMALIA Working Group's residency came out of an initial invitation to filmmaker and group member Annie MacDonell, who brought in the rest of the group. The members of EMILIA-AMALIA include artists, curators, art writers and academics, joined in an experimental collective according to feminist principles of intergenerational care and entrustment. Members of the group collaborate on projects including reading and writing groups, screenings, public talks and publications, using the core strategies of citation, annotation and autobiography. At the time of the AGO residency, the members of the group were Cecilia Berkovic, Yaniya Lee, Gabrielle Moser, Zinnia Naqvi, Leila Timmins, and cheyanne turions. Inspired by the precedent set by FAG, they used their residency budget to support guest residencies by emerging artists Oreka James, Camille Rojas, and Shellie Zhang. The group also collaborated on the production of a video interview with the AGO's curator of modern art, produced a series of published chapbooks, and initiated the first Artist File Fair at the Library & Archives.

Findings

We interviewed a subset of current group members for this paper: Gabrielle Moser, Yaniya Lee, Zinnia Naqvi and Shellie Zhang, who joined following the AGO residency but was present during it as a guest resident (EMILIA-AMALIA Working Group, personal communication, September 28, 2023). Much of the residency involved the project of interviewing the curator, which was

structurally fraught because it centered on his recent reinstallation of a central room in the AGO's suite of modern galleries with work exclusively by male artists. EMILIA-AMALIA was asked by the museum's interpretive planning staff to do the interview as a sort of feminist intervention, and the ensuing friction was a troubling aspect of the residency. In contrast, the group's intervention into the library's artist file collection was remarkably generative.

EMILIA-AMALIA had been exploring the practice of asking questions in public as a strategy in their recent projects, and they were intrigued by the artist biographical questionnaires that form the nucleus of the Library & Archives' artist file collection. They were also surprised to find, in the artist file collection, a kind of archive that was open to documenting emerging artists in a way that resonated with their own principles and practices as a group but was little known in Toronto's artist communities. Group member Yaniya Lee described the opportunity:

Looking at the questionnaire it became very evident that a lot of the questions that were on there assumed a lot about the kind of artist practice that the person might have who was going to be asked to come in there. And so the intervention that we decided to do ... was to open it up because ... anybody could bring their file at any time and we thought it was wild that people didn't know that. So we wanted to find a way with the sub-residency to open this space.

Working in collaboration with library staff, they staged an intervention into the artist files collection, editing and expanding the artist biographical questionnaire to include questions about systemic barriers to art-world success and the role of community organizing in artistic practice. To bring attention to the questionnaire and the artist files collection, the Artist File Fair functioned as a public invitation to artists to visit the collection and contribute documentation to the files. Emerging artist Pamila Matharu and senior artist Vera Frenkel were invited speakers at the event; each reviewed their own file and reflected on the contents as incomplete records of a life and career (a markedly incomplete record in the case of Matharu, who had come of age in the inner suburbs of Toronto and whose early creative work had been almost entirely missed by the passive documentation practices of the AGO library at the time). The idea of a "fair" was important to EMILIA-AMALIA, an event that functioned as a kind of festive public performance of inviting underrepresented artists into the museum and infiltrating the museum's power structures. The Artist File Fair has become an ongoing collaboration between EMILIA-AMALIA and the Edward P. Taylor Library & Archives, with subsequent fairs held in 2019 and 2021, and a fourth iteration in the planning stages at the time of writing this paper.

Seika Boye (August 1, 2018 – February 1, 2019)



Seika Boye with components of *This Living Dancer* in the Artist-in-Residence studio, 2019. Photo © AGO

Description

Seika Boye is a scholar, curator and educator with a background in dance, who came to her AGO residency with research questions about blackness, dancing and the archive. The central project of her residency was entitled *This Living Dancer*, a work that involved the creation of a kind of personal archive for Boye, including careful selection of its contents, rehousing and preservation of the materials under the guidance of AGO conservation and archives staff, and the writing of a finding aid. Boye invited 30 friends and colleagues to visit the archive by appointment and respond to questions about its contents and presentation. Her residency also included taking jazz dance lessons from Natasha Powell, a Toronto-based dancer and choreographer who had learned the dances through a lineage of Black social transmission originating from dancers in the Savoy Ballroom.

Findings

Reflecting on her residency, Boye recalled that a starting place for her project was her questions around the politics of Black people performing in the museum, particularly in relation to recent activism by Black Lives Matter Toronto (S. Boye, personal communication, October 27, 2023). One of her strategies to explore this territory involved taking for herself all the resources that would be given to a material artwork in the museum: conservation care, cataloguing and professional photographic documentation. In so doing, she attempted to invert the power structures of the

museum in which racialized performers traditionally receive basic compensation for their presence and their time, but the institution garners considerable reputational benefits from the way that images of these performances are shared freely on social media. For the artist to build and represent a personal archive in this context was a political act:

The gallery comes away with so much because they have this, you know, barrage of things that are shared on social media, of people and performance, of racialized people of color in performance, and so there's a lot in that transaction for the gallery, and not necessarily for the performer. And so I wanted to think about ... what happens if *I'm* processed in this way instead of as a dancer in that exchange? And I said I wasn't going to perform. I wasn't going to dance as part of my residency. I don't really do that anymore and haven't in a long time. And so I had all of my items photographed.

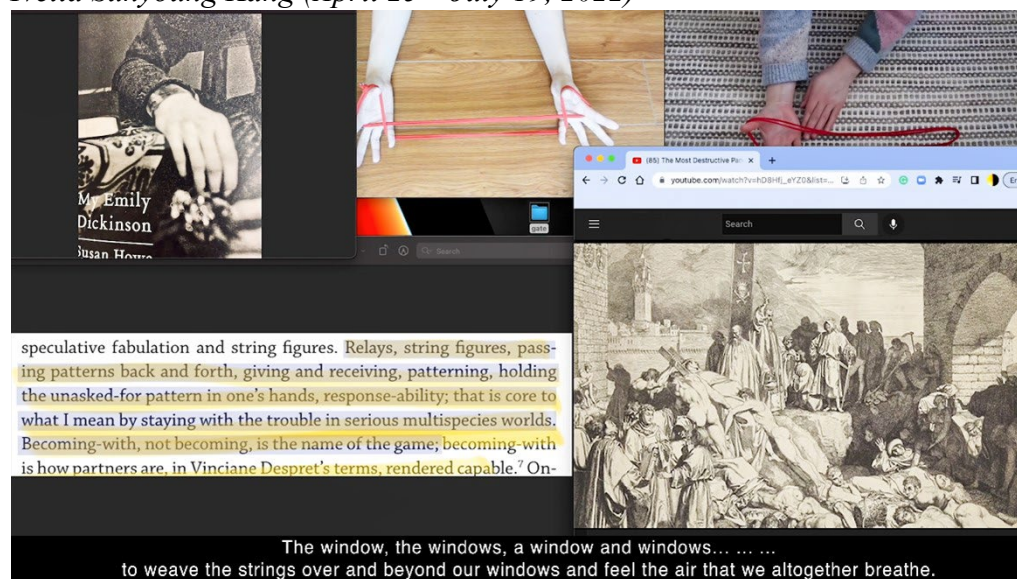
Boye's residency also incorporated biweekly personal lessons in jazz dance from Natasha Powell, a Toronto-based choreographer and dancer who had learned the dances through social lineage from dancers at the Savoy Ballroom in New York. Boye's childhood dance education had been divorced from the racial and cultural history and context of the dances to which Powell was connected. The lessons took place in the space outside the AGO library, an embodied transmission of culture that addressed the museum's historical lack of connection to community social dances that had once taken place outside a neighboring community center.

Even as she worked in opposition to museum structures, Boye developed warm and supportive collaborative relationships with AGO staff in the education, conservation and library and archives departments who enthusiastically provided advice and assistance. She was adamant that the human resources of a library are at least as important as the physical collections, a belief which she continues to reinforce for her students:

The finding aids are always insufficient without the librarian or archivist, who can fill in the gaps and tell them all of the other things that they can't find on the website or in the finding aid, or in the materials in the collection itself, and so, you know, that's my battle cry.

In her academic career following the residency, Boye has continued to collaborate with conservator Sherry Phillips and with Furness.

Ivetta Sunyoung Kang (April 25 – July 19, 2022)



Still from the multi-channel video component of *Proposition 3: String Figure*, 2022. © Ivetta Sunyoung Kang

Description

Of all the artists featured in this paper, Ivetta Kang's practice perhaps maps most closely to the visual arts. Her residency was a project entitled *Proposition 3: String Figure*, a process-based work in which the artist invited six geographically dispersed friends into a series of conversations about their lives and personal associations with a widely known string game. Each participant received a string loop and instructions, and shared documentation of their enactment of the string figure and associated experience. The isolation and travel restrictions of the Covid-19 pandemic were a key context for both the project and the residency proposal, which were conceived as taking place remotely. Towards the end of her residency Kang was able to spend time on site at the AGO in the library and in the artist-in-residence studio.

Findings

In 2021, the AGO's residency program changed from an invitational residency to an open call juried competition. Kang recalled in our interview that she felt like an early-career artist at the time she applied for the residency, and her goals included learning from museum staff and refining her own understanding of the research-creation process (I. Kang, personal communication, September 26, 2023):

The residency at the AGO really helped me sort of navigate and guide and find what I really want to do as an artist. ... I had... wanted in my practice to do more research-based [work] and ... one of my common questions I asked a lot to the staff and the curators at the AGO was what is the research-based practice, and then from this, gathering their answers, their responses, I was able to find my own definition.

Kang had only general awareness of the Edward P. Taylor Library & Archives and had not expected that it might be available to her as a resource for her project. Although the library was

still in the process of slowly reopening after pandemic closure, Furness ensured that Kang was able to meet with reference librarian Donald Rance, who identified Fluxus publications and other artist books in the collection for her consultation. As they discussed Kang's interest in syntax and expressive punctuation, he recommended that she read the poetry of Susan Howe and Emily Dickinson, which Kang now considers to be "really important" to her practice. Furness suggested connections to other artists who had explored string figures in their work. The result of these library encounters was that Kang began to find her place in a "genealogy" or lineage of artistic and literary practice, discovering the possibilities of connecting with past artists' ideas through their published output and feeling "seen" in the process. Following the residency, the Library & Archives purchased a copy of Kang's artist book for the collection, an acquisition that gave her work a sustained connection with the library holdings that had inspired her.⁸

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Making sense of the role of the Library & Archives in the AGO's Artist in Residence program involves understanding the broader institutional goals of the AiR program and the wider art world context in which it has operated. There are several themes that emerge through the interviews with the resident artists that can be connected back to ideas in the literature and wider environment.

The Library & Archives can function to extend socially engaged artistic practice through time and space. The residencies discussed in this paper were all collaborative and generative; none was focused on the individual artist and their solo view of the world. Each of the artists also considered the question of artistic lineage in some way and found in the Library & Archives a mode of continuing that lineage into the future, echoing Dziekan's findings (Dziekan, 2020). Henderson's research was motivated by questions about artistic lineage and was supported by the collaboration of both Mohr-Blakeney and Nazar. Going beyond the social connections engendered by her immediate project, she considered future artists and researchers when she undertook to gift her project research back to the AGO Archives. Both Feminist Art Gallery and EMILIA-AMALIA explicitly sought to bring other, more junior artists into the museum through their residencies, attempting to leverage the residency project to lift up other artists and pay forward the opportunity they were granted through their residency. Projects such as the Wikipedia edit-a-thon and the Artist File Fair were oriented to this kind of intergenerational support, helping to write other artists into histories of art and contributing to a public resource for future generations of artists and researchers. EMILIA-AMALIA's use of citation as a feminist strategy encapsulates this effort. Boye's project, too, was concerned with lineage and the ways in which archives can function as life narratives within the complex political environment of colonial institutions. The collaborative work entailed by her project took place largely within the institution and included the substantial involvement of an archivist. Kang's official residency project was explicitly concerned with forging connections across time and space through the enactment of her string figure work, but the outcomes of her residency included her research discoveries in the library. Kang was able to discover threads of an artistic lineage she had not realized she was seeking, encountering her predecessors through their published work in the library collection and through the verbal recommendations of librarians and archivists. The act of citation as a social strategy runs as a

⁸ Kang I. S., Bréard-Anderson, Alexia, Berndt C., Ijo I. & Morrow S. (2022). *Tenderhands* (Second edition). Artist.

theme through each of the projects, not merely an academic convention but a way of paying tribute to, and affirming connection with, the artists and thinkers who have gone before.

The memory-keeping function of the Library & Archives provides an opening for artists to engage in institutional critique. Implicit in the artists' questions about lineage is the related question of their relationship to the art museum and its politics, which emerges as a critical issue in many of these residencies. FAG and EMILIA-AMALIA's projects were perhaps the most explicitly concerned with institutional critique. These artists found a receptive partner in the Library & Archives. In EMILIA-AMALIA's case, the Artist File Fair project was a welcome counterpoint to the more contentious project of engaging with the content of the AGO's modern art galleries. Librarians' readiness to engage with questions of documentation and art-world exclusion amounted to an open door into part of the museum's collection. In FAG's case, the Library & Archives was a dimension of the "back door" of the museum that the artists sought to open. Henderson began her residency with considerable doubts about how she as a performing artist belonged in the setting of the art museum, an institution that has not traditionally been a welcoming environment for performance. The AGO Archives functioned as more than a research resource in this case; its openness to Henderson's questions and receptiveness to her own research output amounted to an entry into the museum for the artist and her work. Boye's project was partly motivated by similar concerns around the place of the performer in the museum. Her resistance to the potential exploitation that she sees as inherent to the performer/institutional relationship was a driving force of her residency. By inviting the collaboration and support of key staff members, including Furness, Boye found a way to take her resistance into a generative territory, opening the possibility of future collaboration.

The helping role of librarians and archivists can form an integral part of the reciprocity and caregiving that helps to sustain a successful residency program. The Library & Archives has functioned in many cases as a kind of "glue" that supports the integration of residency project into the museum and helps to sustain relationships, as observed by Mendrek et al. This has in part to do with the orientation of librarians and archivists towards helping resident artists in the same way that they would help any user of the collection. The Library & Archives tends also to be a neutral party in the give and take of museum politics, an environment which can sometimes place education staff at odds with curators and their powerful role in the museum. Often the simple demonstration of care and interest in a resident artist's project can be a crucial ingredient in the success of the residency. Each artist we interviewed spoke warmly of their connections to Library & Archives staff, among other key players in the Education division and other parts of the museum. The eagerness of the artists to participate in research interviews for this paper reflects the friendly relationships that have continued between the artists and the authors. Artists have also given back to the museum via the Library & Archives, most concretely in the case of Henderson and her archival gift, but also through ongoing collaborations in the case of EMILIA-AMALIA and Boye.

An artist residency is an invitation into the museum for a finite period of time, but ideally its temporary nature is only a beginning. The value of a residency over time – both to the artist and to the host museum – depends on the possibility of some aspect of the project and the relationship enduring. By helping to weave the threads of residency projects into the larger fabric of the museum and into the literature and documentation of art, a library and archives can foster that very possibility.

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