# Introduction

## Sustaining care for performance

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> When we ask about how to conserve performance-based art, what are we asking? If we think of performance as itself a mode of conservation, what are we thinking? What is at stake in conserving changeability?
>
> Rebecca Schneider and Hanna B. Hölling[1]

These contemplations profoundly influenced the trajectory of the research project "Performance: Conservation, Materiality, Knowledge," a transformative four-year endeavor that placed performance and conservation as the focal points of its interdisciplinary investigation.[2] The project approached performance as a complex socio-material assemblage, emphasizing both the affective and effective dimensions of conservation and care efforts. Among the central themes of the project was a reevaluation of the very notion of the 'object' of conservation. It prompted reflection on the distinction between documentation and conservation, challenging the malleability of time and the complexities associated with terms like 'ephemeral.' The project also explored the concept of performance itself as a mode of conservation and advocated for a reformation of institutions, encouraging thinking beyond them towards communities, cultures, families, and more. Moreover, the project extended its inquiry to encompass performance conservation practices that reached beyond the realms of conservation and art, particularly focusing on embodied practices such as ritual, dance, and music. It considered artists' performance practices as potential models for conservation strategies, viewing performance not as a 'poor' medium but as one that both exhausts and transcends other media it interacts with. Additionally, the project expanded the understanding of 'performance' as a term that could be applied to reevaluate more 'traditional' art objects, fostering a comprehensive and holistic exploration of conservation and its intersections with the world of performance. Throughout its duration, the project was consistently guided by the central notions of care and care ethics.

The first volume, *Performance: The Ethics and the Politics of Conservation and Care* (2023), aimed at mapping the field, always collaboratively, as a way of thinking-with (others, our subjects, and 'objects'). It provided

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glimpses of the answers to our initial queries and painted a vivid picture of the dimensions that would unfold in response to the questions that remained. Most importantly, however, it pursued a global view of performance conservation, not only drawing from Western (often institutional) perspectives, but also sub-Saharan performance of heritage, issues of racial justice, political conservation in the shadow of the state, and contemporary Black performance. In our project and this volume, artists' and makers' views on performance conservation have been of central importance.

Performance-based works are often identified by their elusive qualities: they are transient, responsive to their surroundings, and intricately connected to the artist's body. Consequently, they have traditionally fallen beyond the purview of conventional conservation and restoration practices, which, at least until recent decades, concentrated on static objects rather than dynamic, moving expressions. In our investigations throughout the project's duration, the juxtaposition of conservation and performance presented an intriguing avenue for both theoretical and practical exploration. Through the lens of conservation, performance took on a new definition, prompting us to question its nature and behavior. Concurrently, this novel perspective offered insights into conservation itself.

When we viewed performance through a conservation framework, we began to unravel aspects of its nature that are often overlooked or even disparaged in museums, conservation laboratories, and art-historical discourse. Simultaneously, through our investigations, conservation became an ever-changing practical-theoretical paradigm, capable of bringing objects and experiences into our conscious awareness. By extending the concept of conservation to encompass performances, the definition of what might be preserved and sustained evolves—a fact that finds evidence in the contributions to our project's second and final volume.

Thus volume II builds upon the theoretical framework established in volume I, which proposes that integrating conservation and performance can offer new insights into both fields. Even more, it provides an innovative methodology for performance's possibilities in the realms of art, conservation, museums, and beyond. The second volume encompasses diverse disciplinary and artistic perspectives from various geographical, thematic, and philosophical angles. It presents an ambitious and multifaceted view of what performance conservation can and should entail. The book delves into areas such as ritual, music, community traditions, contemporary museum practices on different continents, and experimental art forms like fragrance.

The volume serves as the culmination of the editors' research project, offering readers access to the results, including chapters written by project team members Hanna B. Hölling, Jules Pelta Feldman, and Emilie Magnin. Alongside our own contributions are chapters from interlocutors, advisors, and friends of the project, which explore performance conservation in the context of diverse cultural and artistic practices.

**Performing care ethics**

Our project centered on the development of networks designed for knowledge building, dissemination, and exchange. Within these networks, we embraced the concept of 'care' as a guiding principle, a notion that influenced both the actors involved and the objects under investigation. In this collection of essays, each author has their own relationship to care (for performance), and it is therefore worth taking a moment to discuss definitions.

Although the term 'care' is frequently used in conservation-related discussions, a systematic definition or approach to it in the context of conserving contemporary art is lacking. In practice, and drawing parallels from observations in medical science, care holds a dual significance as a psychological attitude of concern and the practical actions that stem from such concerns. For instance, when a conservator cares for an artwork, this involves both attentive and empathetic qualities, as well as tangible actions like planning and recommending a treatment.[3] However, unlike in medical science and related care discourses, prevailing discussions on care in conservation often tend to overly emphasize its role as mere practical activity, overshadowing its profound emotional and intellectual dimensions.

A thesaurus offers several alternatives or synonyms for the concept of 'care,' such as 'attending,' 'cherishing,' 'fostering,' and 'watching over.'[4] Etymologically, the noun 'care' also carries connotations of sorrow, distress, or concern, which are still preserved in its present meanings (as in 'careworn').[5] Ethics delves into the logical foundation underlying our moral assessments, exploring concepts of what is right or wrong, just or unjust. It extends its scope to encompass human relationships with nature and other beings, contemplating aspects such as freedom, responsibility, and justice.

The terms 'care' and 'ethics' have undergone critical reevaluation in recent times, in particular through the lens of social and political feminist philosophers, such as Virginia Held, Eva Feder Kittay, and Joan C. Tronto. Held advocates for the uniqueness of care ethics as a moral framework, setting it apart from Kantian, utilitarian, and virtue ethics. She argues that care plays a foundational role in human institutions and behaviors and is essential for our very existence.[6] Kittay looks at care from the vantage point of disability studies, combining it with feminist philosophy, ethics, and social and political theory. Kittay's key contributions lie in emphasizing the inescapability of human interdependence and the need to integrate dependency and dependency work into ethical and political theories, with a particular focus on cognitive disability in the emerging field of philosophy of disability.[7]

The 'ethics of care' proposed by political scientist Joan C. Tronto further deepens our understanding of these concepts.[8] Tronto and Bernice Fisher define care as "everything we do to maintain, continue, and repair our world so that we may live in it as well as possible."[9] In their analysis, they identify attentiveness, responsibility, competence, and responsiveness as the four ethical elements integral to care.[10] Drawing on this scholarship, Anna Woodham,

Rhianedd Smith, and Alison Hess interpret care as the collective activities we engage in to uphold, sustain, and mend our world. This notion encompasses care for our bodies, ourselves, and our environment, which includes the material objects that shape our understanding of the world.[11] In general terms, care operates on a principle of reciprocity, where all human beings both require and receive care, variously assuming roles as both caregivers and recipients of care. This underlying logic challenges the power dynamics within personal relationships, groups, and organizations that may not recognize their role in either needing or offering care.[12]

One perspective on care involves viewing it as a type of labor (either in health care or in domestic care) where an individual or a collective takes responsibility for and supports another. As architectural theorist Kim Trogal points out, in the realm of care, we encounter interconnected relationships in which the question of "who is caring for whom?" becomes a significant political inquiry. Following Tronto, this is because the provision of care in human societies has frequently led to the establishment of rigid hierarchies (such as castes or classes) where some individuals can demand the services of others, resulting in care often being disregarded by those in positions of authority.[13] The exclusion of care from political discourse stems from a reluctance to examine care in its own right. Care is a multifaceted process that ultimately mirrors power structures, economic systems, the division between public and private spheres, and our conceptions of autonomy and equality.[14] According to Trogal, we bring to light these hierarchies, dependencies, and exclusions when we place "who is caring for whom?" at the center.[15]

Returning to the concept of caring viewed as a species activity that sustains our world, we might ponder the notion of "thinking care-fully," an imperative for co-habitation with other beings as proposed by Bernhard Stiegler—and present in the introduction to our first volume[16]—or "care-thinking" as proposed by Renée van de Vall.[17] For van de Vall, who draws on Tronto and other feminist care theorists, care ethics highlights the interdependency of people and all beings, emphasizing their reliance on relational webs for existence and meaning. In conservation, care ethics and care-thinking translate into a practical and situated approach. Rather than formulating rigid ethical rules, the focus shifts to understanding how care is practiced in unique and concrete situations. The affective and sensory aspects of care play a crucial role in the conservation process. We will say nothing new if we contend that emotions, encompassing both positive and negative feelings—such as whether we have a fondness or even a deep affection for the object under our care, or if it is a source of dislike or even repulsion—come into play during decision-making and practical actions. (And yet, while well known in conservation practice, these aspects have been overseen in conservation discourse.) For van de Vall, care ethics also extends beyond the micro-level of caring for individual artworks to encompass society as a whole. The philosopher calls on communities to look beyond established practices and engage with neglected artistic legacies, address under-explored problems, and work

in open-ended collaborations with other fields and groups. Attending to one another and fostering mutual resonance become essential to bind the conservation community together in its shared task of caring for the world.

In museums, care has evolved into 'collection care,' a concept that encompasses a range of practices involving conservation, registration, collection management, and curation. With the exception of the public display of objects that *nota bene* constitutes just a fraction of a museum's holdings, this care primarily takes place behind the scenes and involves the protection and preservation of objects within the collections, done on behalf of the public.[18] Under the umbrella of 'collection conservation,' care encompasses a spectrum that spans from merely 'looking after'—the latter term encompassing a less affective or invested mode of attending to things—to genuinely 'caring for' the works entrusted to the care of museum professionals.[19] Connoting the emotional dimension of caring, this distinction between caring and looking after has been drawn by Trogal, who builds on economic injustices in social relations in claiming that care itself is in the stasis of crisis.[20]

Museum professionals, including conservators, curators, and collections managers, have traditionally been responsible for caring for museum objects, and, more recently, for works that entail elements of performance or installation. While such care generally remains behind the scenes—indeed, museums are often loathe to make public any information about the condition or restoration of objects in their collections—volunteers, communities, and external specialists are nonetheless increasingly involved in the care and stewardship of museum artifacts.[21] The concept of shared guardianship has attracted attention as museums move away from being sole stewards and instead foster collaborative relationships with external groups and individuals—an aspect addressed by Emilie Magnin in Chapter 6 of this volume. This approach to caring for collections prioritizes the connections and relationships that the objects foster, embracing diverse perspectives and expertise.

Indeed, museums are often perceived as organizations primarily concerned with the care of objects in their collections, which tends to overshadow the care of the people who interact with these institutions. However, in the context of performance conservation, the concept of care necessarily encompasses living bodies—artists, producers, and performers—and their environments. Care, in this context, must become an embodied principle that acknowledges the interconnectedness of the artworks with the individuals involved in their creation and presentation. It must recognize the physical and emotional well-being of the artists and performers, ensuring that their health, safety, and creative needs are met throughout the production and preservation process. We expand on these ideas below in the section "Caring for performers and personhood."

The caring relations within museums, even in well-funded institutions, often rely on under-remunerated—or, even worse, unremunerated—staff and are disproportionately dependent on volunteers and assistants.[22] Though they generally take their mandate to care for objects quite seriously, museums are

more reluctant to claim responsibility for the wellbeing of their workers—as was made clear in the United States by a recent spate of unionization drives among museum workers and the sometimes shockingly callous retaliation of management.[23] The bitter irony of the art world's notoriously low salaries is that staff are expected to 'do it for love'—that is, to *care* so much about their work as to render the question of compensation irrelevant. Yet this form of care, when neither reciprocated nor appropriately paid, is exploitation. Caring for performance therefore teaches us that caring for people is not an optional or extraneous aspect of the contemporary art world. Developing a more comprehensive understanding of care within museums requires acknowledging the inequitable distribution of power and resources. This reality is reflected in the conditions under which delegated performance occurs, utilizing human resources subjected to undercompensated labor or degrading work conditions.[24] An inclusive and ethically informed approach to care is urgently needed to foster a deeper understanding of the roles played by various stakeholders, both within and outside museums. This entails valuing and supporting the labor of all museum staff, providing fair compensation, and ensuring that care extends to the wellbeing of those who contribute their time and expertise to these cultural institutions. Here, art, artists, and cultural practices from beyond the West can suggest new relations of care in their disruptions of standard museum practices.

Caring is undoubtedly a complex political process that entails identifying, understanding, interpreting, and addressing specific needs—a process inherently tied to unequal access to power.[25] On the other hand, care is primarily hindered, not by a failure to identify what is needed, but rather by indifference or callousness. In museums as elsewhere, the *will* to care becomes crucial.

Caring for works of art can be both inclusive and exclusive. Selecting a material object or a performance for preservation is a political act, requiring human and technological effort. However, this selection leaves other works unattended—works, perhaps, with limited public appeal and unrecognized significance.[26] For every preserved work, thousands have vanished. Due to their characteristics—short temporal frame or limited duration—being incompatible with collection care systems and thus having less representation in physical collections, performance and performance-based works are particularly sensitive to 'disappearance,' despite their power to return and remain.

Preservation (collection care) and historicization (intellectual care) are intertwined in the process of canon formation. This means that material considerations are by no means the only threat to an artwork's longevity: works by artists from marginalized groups, as well as works that are (through content or form) resistant to the mechanisms and dominant narratives of art history, are likely to fall away regardless of their materiality. (Both of these characteristics apply to the art of Ron Athey, whose archives Amelia Jones plumbed for the retrospective she discusses in this volume.) In other words,

loss occurs not only due to the failures of collection care but also through failures of historicization, often due to sexism, racism, anti-queer biases, and other forms of discrimination.[27]

Care is not always synonymous with conservation (if conservation denotes an attempt to keep things intact), and conservation does not always encompass care—which is why we chose to include both notions in the title of this anthology. The acceptance of the impermanence of vital matter—vanishing, degradation, decay—should not immediately be linked to a lack of care, nor even, necessarily, to loss. Certain items should not be kept preserved according to Western museums' standards when the culture or individual that created them sees such preservation as inappropriate. In other cases, this may be because there is a positive value in transformation, as a work is released into other states and conditions.[28] Moreover, an acceptance of impermanence might be seen in innumerable examples of performance—such as those discussed by Urmimala Sarkar Munsi in Chapter 13 or by Hölling, Magnin, and Pelta Feldman in Chapters 1, 6, and 11 respectively—in which no iteration resembles the other, but rather is, as Schneider puts it, "reconstituted in and through relation, in and through the negative spaces that preserve the condition for encounter."[29] By paying attention to a work's emerging, rather than preordained, character (Tim Ingold) and embracing the precarious nature of material changes as the positivity of the *changing same* (Schneider, after Amiri Baraka), the work is cared for and sustained in its infinite potential.[30]

Lastly, care—whether embodied in 'thinking care-fully' or 'care-thinking'—cannot be limited to the Western modalities that often dominate conservation and museum practices. Vocabularies of 'preventive conservation,' 'conservation science,' and 'restoration' often imply a social-technological perspective rooted in Western epistemology, reinforcing subject/object binaries and ignoring or suppressing other paradigms. Drawing from Maria Puig de la Bellacasa's speculative philosophy of care, we must consider care as an obligation that transcends the nature/culture divide, avoiding the reestablishment of binaries and anthropocentric moralism. Engaging with care can help us rethink ethical "obligations" within human-decentered cosmologies.[31]

## Respecting performance

Michael Slote has pointed out that respect is often seen as separate or even opposed to the notion of care: "Concern for wellbeing and respect are often thought to clash when issues of paternalism arise." Such clashes can be resolved, he argues, by recourse to empathy:

> There is a lack of empathy in most, if not all, cases where a putative concern for wellbeing is accompanied by a failure of respect, and if we enrich the notion of caring so as to make it include empathy, then the ethics of caring will be in a position to account for respect.[32]

The Kantian concept of respect means respect for the autonomy of others; what might it mean to respect the autonomy of, and even to extend empathy to, performance? If respect is indeed part of care, then caring for performance means respecting its form *as* performance, its fundamental autonomy from other mediums, even those that are often used to define it. If we fail to respect performance's autonomy, we will tend to see its fundamental characteristics—its particular relationship to time (its so-called 'ephemerality'), its adherence to bodies rather than what are often deemed inanimate objects (its so-called 'immateriality')—as problems to be fixed. Indeed, the conservation of performance too often consists of quite literally 'fixing' it in place, as one pins a winged insect. These are precisely the solutions that pioneering performance scholar Peggy Phelan rejected as incompatible with—we might say, borrowing Slote, disrespectful of—performance's needs.[33]

The premise of our project is that performance can be conserved; here, we may go so far as to suggest that this is a statement not only of possibility but also of ethics: any treatment of performance not only can but should proceed from the assumption that performance has the power to endure. To ignore performance's strengths, often out of a well-intentioned effort to counteract its perceived weaknesses, is actually to misapprehend the medium entirely, casting it as a faulty object—perhaps an unsatisfactory video piece, a folder of digital photographs, a defective sculpture—instead of celebrating and exploiting its failure—better, its refusal—to be captured in these forms.

Respecting performance does not entail dismissing its complex relationships to other mediums, but it suggests caution in approaching them, lest they become excuses for dispatching performance's difficulties by turning it into an object. Throughout the project, we have been fortunate to interrogate these relationships in our conversations with the many interlocutors—artists, conservators, and curators, as well as scholars of art history, anthropology, music, and theater—who have shared their time and ideas with us. When we spoke with Marilyn Arsem, an experienced practitioner and teacher of performance, she expressed her categorical wariness of the documentation that has become standard, perhaps even mandatory, in contemporary performance art. While we are well familiar with distrust of photographs and films—an old topic in performance discussed in the introduction to our first book, as well as in the conversation with Philip Auslander in this one (Chapter 5)—Arsem's perspective presented a new wrinkle that cannot be ironed away. As soon as an effort is made to document a performance, Arsem noted, "suddenly that work is for someone in the future, for a future audience," a shift in perspective that "takes it away from the immediacy of the situation."[34]

Phelan has similarly argued that "the spectator's response cannot alter the pre-recorded or remotely transmitted performance, and in this fundamental sense, these representations are indifferent to the response of the other." Live performance uniquely allows "the potential for the event to be transformed by those participating in it."[35] Indeed, Arsem's belief that documenting a performance transforms it into something else echoes Phelan's defining

argument, that to turn a performance into a photograph or video is to lose it. Phelan's perspective is that performance is always destined to be lost, and she argued influentially that preservation is anathema to it.[36] Though many theorists and thinkers have opposed this view since Phelan first outlined it, its skepticism of attempts to capture and fix that which wants to be mutable and mobile remains trenchant and important. In particular, Phelan saw such attempts as compromising performance's radical power to resist commodification.[37] It is therefore not surprising that performance has most often entered museum collections in the guise of documents. While we necessarily disagree that performance is destined to disappear—our fundamental position, following Rebecca Schneider, is that "performance remains"[38]—we firmly believe that conservation 'treatments' of performances must go far beyond converting them into documentation or other (more or less) static, material traces, instead marveling at performance's own power to conserve. We also challenge the assumption that caring for performance is the sole province of museum professionals.

Art historian Heike Roms and conservator Amy Brost shared with us their dissatisfaction at the way sound—a crucial aspect of performance—is distorted by or even absent from historical accounts and many forms of documentation. Both Roms and Brost are working to develop new tools that will allow scholars and museum professionals to better care about and for sound.[39] (In Chapter 3, musicologist Thomas Gartmann explores an abundance of methods and instruments that have been used to conserve music and that suggest a wealth of untapped techniques for performance art.) In conversation with anthropologist Rivka Eisner, we gained the insight that overreliance on recording media can obscure or devalue the body's own capacities for preservation. For Eisner, memory itself is a medium, the body its playback device.[40] Anthropologist Kate Hennessy's concept of "anarchival materiality," developed together with Trudi Lynn Smith, allows the physical failures and decay of archival media—loss of color, fidelity, data—to remind us of the archive's biases and limits.[41] Hennessy and Smith pay attention to a document's form and physical substance as a way to identify and conceptualize the implicit gaps and losses in the document's content and meaning. In particular, anarchival materiality is a tool for questioning the authority and durability of the forms of documentation that have long underlaid both the field of anthropology and art history's conception of performance's afterlife.

As this volume and its predecessor testify, writing, too, can contribute to performance's longevity and care. Phelan's concept of "performative writing" eschews the clinical and specious objectivity of ethnological description, instead seeking to perpetuate the feelings that a performance inspires: "Rather than describing the performance event in 'direct signification,' a task I believe to be impossible and not terrifically interesting, I want this writing to enact the affective force of the performance event again."[42] The contributors to this book ask an astonishing array of cultural techniques to bear witness to performance and to bear its weight into the future.

**Perpetual care**

It is clear that performance demands different approaches and tools from those typically employed by conservators. Yet this does not always mean inventing new methods. In fact, emphasizing performance's newness as an art medium not only dismisses the depth of performance traditions in various cultures—which are rarely so irrelevant to contemporary performance art practices as the art world tends to assume—but also ignores an abundance of tools and techniques for preserving performance that have long been in operation.[43] We are inspired by efforts to connect the conservation of contemporary art to that of so-called 'ethnographic collections'; as Stephanie E. Hornbeck has observed, "the ethnographic object conservator's wide knowledge of materials, tendency toward minimal intervention, and a philosophical approach—which seeks to preserve, though not restore, original materials—can contribute to the debates and decisions affecting the conservation of contemporary art."[44] Yet the knowledge and philosophies of the people who made such objects, or perhaps their descendants, may be more valuable still. When it comes to performance, what counts as unfamiliar or avant-garde in the disciplines of conservation and museology can often be found in traditions that reach back decades, centuries, even millennia.[45] As we have learned, performance has been conserved both by means and in spite of religious dance traditions (as in our conversation here with dancer and anthropologist Sarkar Munsi, Chapter 13, and our discussion with archaeological scientist Shadreck Chirikure in Chapter 5 of the first volume); in the renewal of history found in critical artistic practice (see the contributions by Kongo Astronauts [Eléonore Hellio and Michel Ekeba] and Dread Scott in our first volume); and through the bonds of friendship that inspire a community to rally around the archives of an artist whose work has been neglected by institutions (as in Jones's account of curating Ron Athey, Chapter 4).

It is important to note that performance has been both supported and wounded by the 'safeguarding' efforts of museums and official preservation bodies such as UNESCO, which struggle to reconcile their existing tools—indeed, their very concepts of culture—with the dynamic realities of performance traditions both very old and very new (sometimes at the same time—as in the example of Rosanna Raymond, who discusses her contemporary approach to her ancestors' culture in Chapter 12). There are risks to intervening on behalf of performance, as is made clear by Michaela Schäuble's and Sarkar Munsi's contributions (Chapters 2 and 13): what can be transmitted and revitalized can also be distorted, commercialized, and propagandized. And yet while performance's inherent fluidity and contingency may sometimes facilitate such exploitation, these also help to ensure its durability. While intervening in objects can cause irreversible changes—however much conservators strive to avoid them—performance allows for potentially unlimited new versions that might exist in conversation with each other, obviating the need for finality.

**Caring for performers and personhood**

Conservators are often wary of too-pat metaphors drawn from medicine. Such comparisons not only distort the stakes of conservation treatments but may also misleadingly tie an artwork's vulnerabilities and capacities to those of the human body.[46] Even fragile materials may last much longer than a human life; conversely, most artworks cannot heal the way a person can. Yet the relationship between the vulnerable body and the fragile artwork leaves the realm of metaphor when we seek to care for performance. Briefly put, meaningfully caring for performance demands caring for performers—the people who create, hold, and transmit the work and are thus also necessarily involved in its care. Art-historical discourses that tend to consider performance a 'dematerialized' practice not only deny the insistent materiality of the body, but also undermine the body's need for care. Understanding performance's longevity through the framework of conservation, with its longstanding focus on the material, can perhaps help us tether the performance work back to its corporeal home.

At the same time, performance's uniquely contingent materiality—the way it jumps from body to body, inheres in different items and formats—helps us understand conservation as care beyond the object. Salvador Muñoz-Viñas has argued that "the ultimate goal of conservation as a whole is not to conserve" the physical substrate of an object, "but to retain or improve the meaning it has for people,"[47] an idea also championed by Miriam Clavir, Jane Henderson, and many other conservators. Nina Owczarek further notes that, while ethics has always been central to conservation practice, it is sometimes too narrowly applied to the treatment of artifacts.[48] She instead urges conservators to "approach our concept of ethics from a human-centered perspective, rather than one that focuses on the object," so that "we are no longer bound by the physical object, and we can connect our work to its impact on people and beyond our narrow field."[49] Most conservators and other museum professionals are not used to providing care for people in the context of their professional practice. But this is not only indispensable for performance's survival; it should also, as Owczarek proposes, be folded into the ethics of conservation. Therefore, caring for performance can help us reconsider whether the care of human beings should not play a greater role in the conservation of other types of artwork or cultural heritage.

This work is already happening. Puawai Cairns, Brandie Macdonald, and Kelli Morgan (Chapters 7 and 9 in this volume; Chapter 9 in the first) have pushed museums to treat their responsibilities to living communities as seriously as their efforts to maintain their collections. These efforts seek justice for marginalized groups, who may have had their heritage stolen from them, just as much as they support conservation, by helping sustain the living traditions that created museums' collections and keep them meaningful. Such efforts are slow to reach art museums—Cairns and Macdonald both work

in historical/anthropological museums—but perhaps performance can help mediate these approaches. As Virginia Held has noted,

> There can be care without justice: There has historically been little justice in the family, but care and life have gone on without it. There can be no justice without care, however, for without care no child would survive and there would be no persons to respect.[50]

It is possible to care for performances without caring for the people and communities responsible for their instigation and/or continued existence—indeed, this is still how most museums that own performance works approach their conservation—but Held's logic indicates that it cannot be done justly.

Through performance, we can trouble the "Cartesian ontology" that insists on strictly separating the animate from the inanimate.[51] Anthropologist Aaron Glass reminds us that

> for many Indigenous people, objects—or at least certain objects and materials—have never been thought of as static in the first place, but rather as both active subjects and as subject to interconnecting webs of animating force and relationality.[52]

Perhaps the Greek notion of metaphor, analogizing artwork and body, may be an inappropriate framework for describing the types of care needed by items from non-Western cultures and contexts. While items crafted by human hands usually require different types of care from the craftspeople themselves, in many cultures, special items like masks and sacred statues may be imbued with personhood. Glass recounts what happened when collections care staff at Seattle's Burke Museum learned that an 'object' in their collection, Stone T'xwelátse, was actually a living ancestor who had been turned into granite. After consulting with his descendants among the Stó:lō people, museum staff began a protocol "of putting him to bed every night and waking him up every morning by speaking to him and covering and uncovering him with a muslin blanket."[53] Acknowledging the difficulty of reconciling this particular Stó:lō perspective with the beliefs and practices of other cultures caring for Stone T'xwelátse, Glass looks to "anchor notions of cultural alterity not in abstract essentialisms but rather in concrete 'infrastructures' (like museums and conservation labs as sites and social fields) that mediate ontological difference in actual moments of social and material transaction."[54] This approach, at once pragmatic and ontologically expansive, suggests optimistic possibilities for performance's conservation in multiple modalities.

While Indigenous traditions provide important guidance for the care of artworks that involve both human and non-human elements—and thus frequently challenge Western museums' collection care strategies—it would be a mistake to assume that such discourses are foreign to Western cultures. In his essay "The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as Process,"

often cited in contemporary conservation discourse, anthropologist Igor Kopytoff cautions against the commonly held assumption that 'person' and 'thing' are clearly distinguishable, non-overlapping categories.[55] He notes that "one can draw an analogy between the way societies construct individuals and the way they construct things," and asks: "How secure are the Western cultural ramparts that defend the human sphere against commoditization?"[56] Indeed, this aspect of Kopytoff's argument, which has been less emphasized in conservators' discussions of it, is particularly relevant in considering the practicalities of caring for performance in art settings. Museums and other spaces for art are often ill-equipped to care for the human beings that are indispensable 'parts' of performance works, unable or unwilling to offer performers and other collaborators (designers of costumes, lighting, and sound, for example) fair compensation or sometimes even appropriate working conditions. (Dancers, for example, are increasingly asked to perform in museum spaces, but there is no 'backstage' for them to prepare and rest; they are not infrequently directed to use public bathrooms for these purposes.)

Particularly in the context of contemporary art conservation, performance may constitute an extreme example of the necessity to care for people as part of a conservation practice. But once it is accepted that such care is essential for performance's preservation—as noted, museums continue to struggle with or simply reject both the ethics and pragmatics of this fact—it becomes difficult to justify why caring for people should not also be relevant to other holdings in museums' collections. Just as we have seen performance transformed through the lens of conservation, we also see performance's potential to change conservation itself.

## Chapter overview

Following the idea that caring for performance also encompasses caring as knowledge building, dissemination, and exchange, our project facilitated four colloquia, along with various research seminars and project meetings. During these events, artists, scholars, and practitioners came together to engage in thoughtful discussions about performance conservation. These inspiring encounters have shaped both the content and format of this second volume, which includes not only scholarly essays, but also a diversity of interviews and performative formats such as conversations, manifestos, and artistic statements.

To help the reader navigate the variety of contributions, we have arranged them around three main topics: "Expanding scholarly approaches to the longevity of performance," "Confronting institutions," and "Conservation through artistic and embodied practice."

The first part of this volume looks at various approaches to the perpetuation and longevity of performance that stem from various horizons and fields of study and reflect the transdisciplinary nature of our ongoing research. Here, and similarly to the methodological and disciplinary diversity represented in

the approaches to performance conservation, the very notion of performance ranges from ultra-conceptual works of recent art through the performance of rituals and live art to the performance of music.

Opening this part, Hanna B. Hölling delves into the artistic project of Florence Jung. Deliberately avoiding personal presence in her works, Jung creates situations that embody uncertainty and instability. Her works often lack tangible elements and documentation, blurring the lines between staged events and reality, which leads to narratives and rumors becoming the primary means by which Jung's work exists. This raises questions about how to handle Jung's performative ultra-conceptualism, which often operates in the realm of thoughts, shifting contexts, and oral transmission. Ultimately, Hölling argues that Jung's conceptual works can be conveyed through storytelling, rumors, and tales, providing a unique way to experience and safeguard them.

In another take on heritage transmission and reinterpretation, socio-anthropologist Michaela Schäuble examines the revival of the centuries-old spider possession rituals of Apulian tarantism in Southern Italy. She analyzes select examples of artistic interventions and cultural (re-)appropriations engaging with past audiovisual documentation of tarantism, arguing that they promote a stylized iconicization and often contribute to an essentialized "heritagization" of ritualized performance. Her essay raises questions about conserving cultural meaning versus contemporary reinterpretations, the ethics of transforming historically marginalized rituals into heritage for celebration, and issues of cultural ownership over representing intangible heritage.

Moving from the performance of heritage to the performance of music, in "Can we conserve music?" musicologist Thomas Gartmann describes the inherent challenges in conserving musical performance across different genres, from classical to improvisational and conceptual music. Gartmann questions assumptions that musical works reside solely in scores, arguing that performances add ephemeral but essential interpretive dimensions. Recordings also pose their dilemmas, freezing improvisational processes and performance contexts, while strict adherence to documentation risks distorting the radical openness of conceptual works like John Cage's *4'33"*. This chapter emphasizes the importance of preserving musical works in a balanced and genre-specific manner that respects music's various forms and contexts.

Following the idea of interpretation into the realm of curatorial practice, Amelia Jones reflects on curating a retrospective of performance artist Ron Athey as a form of conservation. She argues that live art can never be fully represented or 'conserved' in an exhibition, but that curatorial practice can be a place to experiment with alternative ways of historicizing live art. Acknowledging her personal investment as Athey's friend, Jones describes living with Athey's messy, incomplete archive in her home for years before curating his retrospective. She aimed not to "contain" Athey's queer, communal performance practice, but to suggest its complexity by displaying materials from different creative queer communities he helped nurture. Jones argues

that the show acted as conservation by caring for Athey's legacy across generations and mediums.

The significance of documentation is maintained in the final chapter of this part. Performance scholar Philip Auslander argues in conversation with the editors that documentation can enable the reactivation and conservation of performance but is not interchangeable with the work itself. In line with Amelia Jones, he sees conservation as using documentation to recreate an experiential sense of the performance for audiences (even if only in imagination).

The book's second part, "Confronting institutions," critically examines conservation care in the institutional context as well as in the broader social context in which conservation operates. Here, performance and performative practices are often invoked as vectors of change and as a critical part of cultural heritage continuity that should not be severed from objects and documents held in museums.

Opening this part, Emilie Magnin's essay explores how live performance resists the standard processes of musealization upon entering institutional collections. For her, performance art calls for alternative models of care that include collective stewardship and a shift from museums' usual cycle of storage and exhibition to allow regular activations. To illustrate how performance could be cared for collectively and to suggest how this art form could endure differently, Magnin uses the image of mycelium: a distributed, resilient, and living system that can survive and expand in various ways, much like performance itself.

If mycelium can be grasped as an eternal biological network of sustenance, its image persists in the next chapter of this book in the form of communities of care and support. In conversation with Jules Pelta Feldman, Puawai Cairns, Director of Audience and Insights at Te Papa Tongarewa (Wellington), shares insights on how museums struggle to represent and sustain Indigenous culture. She stresses that culture should come from the people that sustain a museum, not just the objects within it, and that the way forward is to increase Indigenous representation within museum staff and leadership to ensure museums truly serve their communities. Cairns advocates for collection access enabling ceremonial use, prioritizing cultural continuity over material integrity. In this sense, she contends that performance creates new moments, reconnecting objects to living heritage and empowering communities to become participants in cultural preservation.

Community-centered approaches are also valued by conservators Valinda Carroll, Kayla Henry-Griffin, Nylah Byrd, and Ariana Makau, who come together under the auspices of the group Black Art Conservators, which was founded in 2020 in response to the Black Lives Matter movement. Together, they discuss challenges around preserving Black art, including the lack of institutional resources and art-historical biases that overlook contributions of Black artists. They advocate for emotional connections and oral traditions, which may convey aspects of performance or cultural heritage not

present in documentation. Like Cairns, the conservators urge the inclusion of specialists from associated cultures for equitable, contextualized preservation embracing diverse perspectives.

Sustaining discussion of decolonization and decentering Western preservation discourses, Brandie Macdonald argues in a conversational chapter with Magnin that museums should not be experts on communities' cultures but should collaborate to shape conservation practices aligned with their values. Reflecting on her work as Senior Director of Decolonizing Initiatives at the Museum of Us (San Diego), Macdonald discusses strategies for decolonizing museum conservation to foreground Indigenous epistemologies, ethics, and ontologies. She envisions museums evolving into spaces hosting cultural practices, with conservation adaptively respecting communities' needs. Macdonald also urges obtaining consent before documenting knowledge meant to be transmitted orally, and expands on the role of oral traditions and storytelling both in culture transmission and for her own practice.

Lastly, and offering a twist to the geographically and conceptually diverse forms of institutionalization of performance, the essay by lawyer and art historian Sandra Sykora offers an introduction to international copyright law relating to performance art. Sykora examines the permissibility of common strategies for conserving and disseminating performance artworks employed by art institutions. She argues that performance poses particular challenges due to its unfixed and various forms and unpacks the complex copyright implications of different conservation strategies, including documentation, dissemination, and the preservation of relics. Enriched by many concrete examples, her contribution advises gathering information from artists to guide conservation and avoid legal concerns.

The essays in the third part, "Conservation through artistic and embodied practice," suggest that (re-)performance, (re)interpretation, or other creative forms of artistic intervention—such as olfactory documentation of an ephemeral moment—belong to an expanded definition of conservation practices.

Jules Pelta Feldman discusses the work of Davide-Christelle Sanvee, who re-performs and reinterprets past works by Swiss artists as a living archive and as a way to insert her own perspective and presence into the history of performance art. Pelta Feldman argues that rather than simply reviving past works, Sanvee's re-performances transform them through her own body and identity as a Black woman, questioning notions of authenticity and origin. Sanvee is presented here as an active historian who conserves past works not through strict reproduction but by making them her own, embodying a form of "living preservation" that keeps ephemeral artworks alive through reinterpretation.

In an interview which resonates with the claims made in Part 2 (Cairns, Chapter 7; Macdonald, Chapter 9), New Zealand-born artist Rosanna Raymond narrates how she engages with her Pacific cultural heritage through contemporary performance. Raymond aims to bring stories, deities, and ancestral connections alive through "visual storytelling" and sharing embodied space

with the past. She describes challenges in conveying the essence of her performance to Western institutions fixated on objects and physical remains, and she offers strategies for conserving intangible elements, using her idea of the "*Vā* Body" as a way to create tangible experiences of intangible heritage. Above all, Raymond argues that relationships must be central in cultural conservation—what she calls putting the "*vā* in conser.VĀ.tion."

The thread regarding the erasure of specific histories persists in the narrative provided by social anthropologist and dancer Urmimala Sarkar Munsi. In a lively conversation with this book's editors, Sarkar Munsi delves into the complexities surrounding the preservation of Indian dance traditions, particularly when these traditions involve marginalized communities. Sarkar Munsi underscores how institutional preservation efforts can lead to the erasure of certain histories, and therefore advocates for an ethical, context-sensitive documentation respectful of practitioners' perspectives. She expresses the importance of understanding and preserving dance history while respecting the evolution of the art form. Resonating with Raymond's account of Pacific performance, Sarkar Munsi also delves into the importance of embodied preservation, where the continuity of dance is transmitted across generations within human bodies. From one generation to another, as social norms differ, the performance changes. Sarkar Munsi emphasizes the need for unlearning traditional norms and perspectives, encouraging a critical evaluation of cultural constructs and gendering over time.

The transitory nature of performance resurfaces in an artistic contribution in Chapter 14, authored by the artist duo Dorota Gawęda and Eglė Kulbokaitė, although now through the fragile aspect of scent. The artwork documented in *RYXPER1126AE* is a fragrance created by Gawęda and Kulbokaitė. This is the synthetic molecular recreation of the scent that could be experienced during their performance *SULK* (2018) at the 6th Athens Biennial. This olfactory creation serves as a poetic memory of shared collective experiences and explores smell as a method of documenting performance and space. As an artistic "conservation intervention," *RYXPER1126AE* raises questions about the transition from the virtual to the real and the evanescent nature of scent, which influences our perception and memory in ways that elude easy explanation.

As if wanting to tackle performance's fleeting character by sharing the responsibility of its creation, performance artist Gisela Hochuli returns in Chapter 15 to the necessity of creating and keeping performance documentation. In conversation with the editors, Hochuli dissects her series of performances *In Strange Hands*, for which she enacts instructions from others (including registrants to the project's annual colloquia). She explains how instructions offer the possibility of different executions and authorships, which sparked her interest in incorporating them into her work. In this context, Hochuli also emphasizes documentation's importance for understanding diverse approaches and inspiring future reinterpretations, as also seen in Sanvee's work (Chapter 11).

Like Hochuli, Joanna Leśnierowska, the author of the conversational Chapter 16 (with Hölling), engages practically with the sustenance of performance. As a choreographer, visual dramaturge, and light and space composer, with a majority of her work devoted to the sustenance of performance in Poland and in the former 'East,' Leśnierowska underscores the political nature of performance preservation and curators' and artists' responsibility to select what to preserve and what to omit. Leśnierowska highlights the significance of preserving dance traditions and gestures to reclaim them from political agendas and return them to the realm of the body. She also describes how her work as a choreographer revolves around reactivating and layering performances, fostering an ongoing artistic lineage rather than aiming for static preservation.

Confirming our belief that performance conservation is not static—in fact, it cannot ever be—this part, and our volume, ends with a manifesto by artist Ido Feder, calling for "ex-spectacle events" that imagine alternatives to art's absorption into capitalist spectacle. Feder critiques art that serves neoliberal agendas and fails to address urgent social and environmental crises. He advocates instead for "conservative performance" that returns art to a mythical social function. Feder argues that performance focused only on individual experience severs artists' private vision (*privilogos*) from service to a community (*mythos*). Through "ex-spectacle events," artists can create "conservative" art worlds that foster collaboration toward shared futures, conserving human imagination rather than objects, as an evocation of an extreme form of changeability.

The tendency towards change, flexibility, and flux, addressed so often in this volume, reflects the greater web of invaluable thoughts, reflections, and exchanges that have animated our research these past few years. In this vein, neither our project, nor this book, present themselves as inflexible documents; rather, they acknowledge their own temporality and, already, their historicity, anticipating implications that may surface in the future.

## Notes

1 Rebecca Schneider and Hanna B. Hölling, "Not, Yet: When Our Art Is in Our Hands," in *Performance: The Ethics and the Politics of Conservation and Care*, vol. I, ed. Hanna B. Hölling, Jules Pelta Feldman, and Emilie Magnin (London: Routledge, 2023), 50–69, https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003309987. Quotation from the abstract.

2 "Performance: Conservation, Materiality, Knowledge" (2020–24) has been funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation research grant no. 189245.

3 Joan C. Tronto, "An Ethic of Care," *Generations: Journal of the American Society on Aging*, special issue on "Ethics and Aging: Bringing the Issues Home," 22, no. 3 (Fall 1998): 16, drawing on Richard Hugman, *Power in Caring Professions* (London: Macmillan, 1991).

4 "Care," Thesaurus.com, accessed October 7, 2023, www.thesaurus.com/browse/caring%20for.

5 Merriam-Webster Dictionary, "Care," Merriam-Webster (website), accessed July 26, 2023, www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/care. Heidegger's notion of *Sorge* encompasses both; for him, care is the ontological structure that underlies and makes possible Dasein's existence. Care is not simply worry or concern, but rather the foundational way that Dasein is oriented toward its own being. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (Malden: Blackwell, 2007), 225–44.
6 See, for instance, Virginia Held, *The Ethics of Care: Personal, Political, and Global* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).
7 Eva Feder Kittay, "The Ethics of Care, Dependence, and Disability," *Ratio Juris* 24, no. 1 (March 2011): 49–58, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9337.2010.00473.x.
8 Joan C. Tronto, *Who Cares? How to Reshape a Democratic Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015); Joan C. Tronto, *Caring Democracy: Markets, Equality and Justice* (New York: NYU Press, 2013); Joan C. Tronto, "A Discussion of Care—Interview with Professor Joan C. Tronto" (Access Minnesota, The Minnesota Broadcasters Association, July 15, 2014), YouTube, accessed July 28, 2023, www.youtube.com/watch?v=H-utAjZ_obc&t=102s&ab_channel=minnesotabroadcaster.
9 The authors continue: "That world includes our bodies, ourselves, and our environment, all of which we seek to interweave in a complex, life-sustaining web." Bernice Fisher and Joan C. Tronto, "Toward a Feminist Theory of Caring," in *Circles of Care*, ed. Emily Abel and Margaret Nelson (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1990), 40.
10 Tronto, "An Ethic of Care," 18.
11 Anna Woodham and Shane Kelleher, "What's in a Name? The Ethics of Care and an 'Unloved' Collection," in *Exploring Emotion, Care, and Enthusiasm in "Unloved" Museum Collections*, ed. Anna Woodham, Rhianedd Smith, and Alison Hess (Leeds: ARC Humanities Press, 2020), 65.
12 Woodham and Kelleher, "What's in a Name?," 66.
13 Joan Tronto, *Caring for Democracy: A Feminist Vision* (Utrecht: Universiteit voor Humanistiek, 1995), 12, quoted in Trogal.
14 Tronto, *Caring for Democracy*, 12.
15 Kim Trogal, "Caring: Making Commons, Making Connections," in *The Social (Re)Production of Architecture: Politics, Values and Actions in Contemporary Practice*, ed. Doina Petrescu and Kim Trogal (London: Routledge, 2017), 160.
16 Hanna B. Hölling, Jules Pelta Feldman, and Emilie Magnin, "Introduction: Caring for Performance," in *Performance: The Ethics and the Politics of Conservation and Care*, vol. I, ed. Hanna B. Hölling, Jules Pelta Feldman, and Emilie Magnin (London: Routledge, 2023), 3–4.
17 Renée van de Vall, "Caring for Contemporary Art: Reflections on Ethics and Esthetics in Precarious Times," unpublished lecture, Maastricht University, 2023.
18 This notion of the 'public' or 'society' has been put under pressure by ICOM's recent efforts to redefine 'museum.' International Council of Museums, "Museum Definition," ICOM (website), https://icom.museum/en/resources/standards-guidelines/museum-definition/, accessed July 30, 2023. For the critique, see "What Is a Museum?" (Museum Association), YouTube, accessed July 30, 2023, www.youtube.com/watch?v=eGvE9lrusAI&ab_channel=MuseumsAssociation.
19 While scientific conservation might involve an emotional relationship with an object of analysis, collection care's general connotation of custodianship does not pair well with scientific enquiry.
20 Kim Trogal, "Crisis and Care: Ethics in Changing Times" (Theory Forum, Sheffield School of Architecture, 2013), YouTube, www.youtube.com/watch?v=BjvkP-Qezrs&ab_channel=SheffieldSchoolofArchitecture.

21 Woodham and Kelleher, "What's in a Name?," 65–66.
22 This has itself been addressed by artists who use conceptual and performative projects to intervene in the art world's labor systems, for example A. L. Steiner or Maria Eichhorn. See Jules Pelta Feldman, "Activist and Action Painter: On Politics in or as Art," *Texte Zur Kunst*, no. 130 (2023): 100–9.
23 Tom Seymour, "State of the Unions: Why US Museum Workers Are Mobilising Against Their Employers," *The Art Newspaper*, February 2, 2022, www.theartnewspaper.com/2022/02/02/state-of-the-unions-a-new-renaissance-at-us-museums; Zachary Small, "U.S. Museums See Rise in Unions Even as Labor Movement Slumps," *The New York Times*, February 21, 2022. For a historic take on this issue, see Lawrence Alloway, "Museums and Unionization," *Artforum* 13, no. 6 (February 1975): 46–48.
24 See, for instance, Dorothy Dubrule, "What I'm Doing When I'm Selling Out," Open Space/SFMOMA (website), April 25, 2019, https://openspace.sfmoma.org/2019/04/what-im-doing-when-im-selling-out/; and Sarah Wookey, "Open Letter to Artists from Sarah Wookey," The Performance Club (website), accessed March 1, 2024, http://theperformanceclub.org/2011/11/open-letter-to-artists/.
25 As Tronto explains, we often mistakenly view the domains of care and politics as disconnected, wrongly assuming that care is solely about compassion and kindness, while politics is seen as a ruthless arena of competition. Tronto, *Caring for Democracy*.
26 On this subject, see also the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council-funded initiative "Who Cares? Interventions in 'Unloved' Museum Collections," and a conference held in 2015 at the Dana Research Centre, Science Museum, London.
27 MoMA's 2022 exhibition related to the JAM Gallery (Just Above Midtown) focused on experimental Black artists' fragile and performative pieces. Having caused a sensation, the museum subsequently acquired JAM's archives—thus canonizing a gallery that only few in the art world had previously heard of. Alex Greenberger, "MoMA Establishes Just Above Midtown Archive Through Mellon Foundation Grant," *Artnews*, February 22, 2023, www.artnews.com/art-news/news/moma-just-above-midtown-archive-linda-goode-bryant-1234658521/.
28 On the positive value of decay, see Caitlin DeSilvey, *Curated Decay: Heritage Beyond Saving* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017); Caitlin DeSilvey, "Observed Decay: Telling Stories with Mutable Things," *Journal of Material Culture* 11, no. 3 (2006): 311–32; and Hanna B. Hölling, "Notation and Eternity in Symphonie No. 5 and Liberation Sonata for Fish," in *Nam June Paik: I Expose the Music*, ed. Rudolf Frieling (Leipzig: Spector Books, 2023), 113–14.
29 Schneider and Hölling, "Not, Yet: When Our Art Is in Our Hands," 62.
30 Tim Ingold, *The Perception of the Environment: Essays on Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill* (London: Routledge, 2000), 113; Schneider and Hölling, "Not, Yet: When Our Art Is in Our Hands," 57.
31 Maria Puig de la Bellacasa, *Matters of Care: Speculative Ethics in More than Human Worlds* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017), 13.
32 Michael Slote, *The Ethics of Care and Empathy* (London: Routledge, 2007), 55–56.
33 Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (London: Routledge, 1993).
34 Conversation with Marilyn Arsem, June 15, 2021.
35 Peggy Phelan, "Performance, Live Culture and Things of the Heart," *Journal of Visual Culture* 2, no. 3 (December 2003): 295, https://doi.org/10.1177/1470412903002003002.
36 Phelan, *Unmarked*.

37 Peggy Phelan, "Marina Abramović: Witnessing Shadows," *Theatre Journal* 56, no. 4 (2004): 569–77, https://doi.org/10.1353/tj.2004.0178.
38 Rebecca Schneider, *Performing Remains: Art and War in Times of Theatrical Reenactment* (London: Routledge, 2011).
39 Conversation with Heike Roms, January 27, 2022; Amy Brost, "A Documentation Framework for Sound in Time-Based Media Installation Art," *Journal of the American Institute for Conservation* 60, no. 2–3 (2021): 210–24, https://doi.org/10.1080/01971360.2021.1919372.
40 See Rivka Syd Eisner, "Living Archives as Interventions in Ea Sola's Forgotten Fields," in *Performing Archives/Archives of Performance*, ed. Gunhild Borggreen and Rune Gade (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2013), 27–42.
41 Trudi Lynn Smith and Kate Hennessy, "Anarchival Materiality in Film Archives: Toward an Anthropology of the Multimodal," *Visual Anthropology Review* 36, no. 1 (2020): 113–36, https://doi.org/10.1111/var.12196.
42 Peggy Phelan, *Mourning Sex: Performing Public Memories* (London: Routledge, 2009), 11–12.
43 Jules Pelta Feldman, "Notes on Conserving Rituals: Reconsidering the Past and Future of Performance Art," under review; Hanna B. Hölling, Jules Pelta Feldman, and Emilie Magnin, "Performance Conservation: A Condition Report, or a Para-Ethnography in Three Acts," in *Revolving Documents: Narrations of Beginnings, Recent Methods and Cross-Mappings of Performance Art*, ed. Sabine Gebhardt Fink and Andrej Mirčev (Zurich: Diaphanes, 2024), 167–69.
44 Stephanie E. Hornbeck, "Intersecting Conservation Approaches to Ethnographic and Contemporary Art: Ephemeral Art at the National Museum of African Art," *Objects Specialty Group Postprints* 20 (2013): 224.
45 Pelta Feldman, "Notes on Conserving Rituals." See also Renata F. Peters, "The Parallel Paths of Conservation of Contemporary Art and Indigenous Collections," *Studies in Conservation* 61, no. 2 (December 2016): 183–87, https://doi.org/10.1080/00393630.2016.1200839.
46 For counterexamples, see Rachel Rivenc and Kendra Roth, eds., *Living Matter: The Preservation of Biological Materials in Contemporary Art* (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2022).
47 Salvador Muñoz-Viñas, *Contemporary Theory of Conservation* (Burlington, MA: Elsevier Butterworth-Heinemann, 2005), 213.
48 Nina Owczarek, "Introduction: Purpose and Theory of Human-Centered Ethics in Conservation," in *Prioritizing People in Ethical Decision-Making and Caring for Cultural Heritage Collections*, ed. Nina Owczarek (London: Routledge, 2023), 15.
49 Owczarek, "Introduction," 16.
50 Held, *The Ethics of Care*, 17.
51 Aaron Glass, "What Are Indigenous Ontologies?," in *Conserving Active Matter*, Bard Graduate Center (website), 2022, https://exhibitions.bgc.bard.edu/cam/. On the expansion of care and conservation by non-Western epistemes, see the edited collection *Museums & Social Issues: Contested Conservation*, ed. Noémie Etienne and Lotte Arndt, forthcoming.
52 Aaron Glass, "For the Lives of Things—Indigenous Ontologies of Active Matter," in *Conserving Active Matter*, ed. Peter N. Miller and Soon Kai Poh (New York: Bard Graduate Center, 2022), 225.
53 Glass, "For the Lives of Things," 222. For more about Stone T'xwelátse, see the website for the 2011 exhibition "Man Turned to Stone: T'xwelátse," accessed October 20, 2023, www.srrmcentre.com/StoneTxwelatse/07Introduction.html.
54 Glass, "What Are Indigenous Ontologies?"
55 Igor Kopytoff, "The Cultural Biography of Things: Commoditization as a Process," in *The Social Life of Things*, ed. Arjun Appadurai (Cambridge: Cambridge

University Press, 1986), 64–91. Kopytoff offers the example of human organs and ova, which may be transferred or even sold. The cryopreservation of embryos, an even blurrier example and one that is the subject of furious social and legislative debate, was mostly still experimental at the time Kopytoff published his essay.

56 Kopytoff, "The Cultural Biography of Things," 89, 85.

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