

BITS AND SEGMENTS
OF MEMORY FROM

*Kitchen @ the
Granary 3*

12.04.2022





As we embark on building
archives of our beings
what's relevant?

On the 12.04.2022, we came together to cook, eat, drink and share. Pork sizzled, the blender roared, matooke steamed, cutlery and wine glasses clinked, and faces beamed with satisfaction.

It was an atmosphere of calm, gratitude, curiosity and appreciation to our host, Stacey Gillian who had made sure every detail was taken care of for our utter satisfaction.

Care, care, and care

Food was savoured

Collectivity, patience, excitement and calm dominated
the space

Happiness...the sound of cutlery and crockery

And then came the generosity, uncertainty, learning,
questioning and gratitude.

We took a break from all the delicious food and straight away delved into the discussion on building our archives. We each introduced our practices and ourselves and there, at that point a lot of information was missing. A few people spoke about their practices in a manner that allowed others to delve in and imagine what it is they spend their time doing. The other introductions gave the impression that we've got to learn to speak, tell or share (if interested of course) in the briefest of ways and with precision. A pitch you might call it. But then again, is that inherent in us? Is that the way we are geared to tell?



As we experience a number of environments we pick up influences, likings and dislikes. Things we would like to emulate and (I assume) be better at. Studio Byangwe's co-founder Lydia mentioned that they hope their enterprise will one day be an equivalent of the African IKEA. While listening to this my imagination immediately went to the workings of studio Byangwe being tailored to meet the continent's design needs from a home based perspective. Not replicating western solutions. With the extremely flexible material that they have chosen as their muse, the possibilities for experiments and design explorations are limitless. We can happily wish them every success along this journey.



We're more alike across the tropics than we know. When Juan mentioned Colombian Tamales being a similar dish to our Kiganda Matooke, (steamed that day by the wonderful Nakitende), I couldn't help but show my delight and ask an array of curious questions in relation to the recipe (or was it the ingredients?).

Archiving is personal... what is important and what is not is your decision.

Anti archiving...

Institutions decide what of your life is important...shouldn't this decision be left to the 'subject'?



When Pamela speaks of stones she collects as memories of places she has been, it takes me to rock paintings such as the Nyeru rock paintings in Kumi district, which have existed for thousands and thousands of years as a memory of possibly rainmaking ceremonies. It also takes me to the placement of stones as landmarks. Such is the notorious 'Tooth can lost' rock in Arua west Nile, which was written as a warning sign at one rocky road. The ability of an object to take one back in time just by an encounter with it. This rock being in this place over 100s of years has witnessed a lot and someone probably decided it could do more than sit and wait. What troubles me however is that in a place where Lugbara is the most widely spoken language it attempts to communicate in English.

While listening to BBC, Microsoft's project silica caught my attention...
digital files in glass and then putting them away with the hope that some
humans will find them thousands of years to come.

<https://news.microsoft.com/innovation-stories/ignite-project-silica-superman/>

'The body as an archive, the body does not forget trauma so it keeps repairing and repairing and repairing', Pamela reminds us. She speaks about her scars and how each one pertains to a memory. A happy memory, an exciting memory, a sad one. As soon as our bodies are exposed to this world at birth, we get our first scar, the umbilical cord and from there onwards the process of growth brings with it many more scars. Scarification practices among the Dinkas and some of my old Lugbara aunties bear memories of rites of passage.

Recipes as archives, passed down from generation to generation. Brad Bird's Ratatouille the animation took me back to dishes prepared by grandmothers that have a distinct taste and smell from the firewood and cooking pot. These recipes embody methods, laughs, jokes, rebukes, lessons, burns over the years and changes too as our world continues to evolve. Ingredient textures and compositions are altered due to environmental factors (herbicides and fertilizers) increasingly used to appease the capitalist world.



VJs. These men live translate movies from all over the world (Hollywood, Nollywood, Bollywood) into Ugandan local languages in make shift cinema halls. As they do their thing, members of the audience bring advertisements to them for marketing. They record these translated versions and sell them rather cheaply. The films are usually action packed with hints of romance, which I can only assume, is what appeals to the target audience. These are archiving agents and the very embodiment of relatable story telling within the local context.

After creating an archive whom is it intended for? Who
has access to it?

Among other topics the sustainability of our practices
as artists and ways in which artists have had to find
ways to practice and exist is key...

Édouard Glissant...speaks of opacity...ephemeral
memories. Places and the confidence they build in
containing memories. (A good and mind-unravelling
read would be the Poetics of relation by this
philosopher)



How can we build an archive of movements?

Archiving is also a question of power?

Who tells the story, who keeps the story and decides how it should be told?

Raisa reminds us of a manifestation of memory that's commonly with us. The act of dancing to a familiar tune. A rhythm, melody that tells certain parts of one's body to move in a particular way.

One can record a dance, but it's never the same as actually performing it... telling its story with the body.

Oral story telling and its ability to morph and change... Pamela- boxes can only take so much... so the western mode of archiving and telling isn't always the ultimate much as oral archiving traditions are frowned upon.

Knowledge is not dead. It keeps on changing and evolving. Knowledge is to entertain, educate, challenge and in the moment of telling it's most times directed towards a particular challenge. The ability to add characters... what's real?

To Immy's conjecturable query; how would people access the knowledge that we have shared currently if we disappeared in a blip? Suubi responds with 2 vital questions.

1. What is enough?

2. Does one need to know what was happening before?

Bits of Memory compiled by Immy Mali for Iraa-the Granary
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Thank You



IRM-THE GRINERY

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