

Who Holds?

(Annotations on the Notes Involving a Story of Possession)

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alejandro t. acierto

Abstract

Contextualizing the scripted language for a(n always-in-progress) documentary work, this project offers a consideration of the stakes at play when thinking about the violence(s) of possession. Looking to online marketplaces that extend the reach of colonial affectations, I am interested in how these overlooked sites not only underscore the concerns of material culture's physical holding patterns but how they are also always entangled with the digital systems that support their movement and migration as material objects poised for sale. In effect, the violence of possession is conditioned upon the embedded violence of the infrastructures that enable its ongoing decontextualization. Working from a set of reflections written by Emilian Maria Ignacio Silang on the Archive of Constraint, I situate their story alongside these larger concerns to frame the conditions of power, ownership, and property enfolded within archival and collections-based work. Highlighting the consequences of digital culture's capacity to alter how an object-image may be indexed or accessed, these critical annotations offer an expansion of Silang's thought and extend the necessary considerations when dealing with material culture online.

Included here are:

1. a critical set of annotations that help frame a series of notes written by Emilian Maria Ignacio Silang; and
2. stills from test footage shot as part of a collaborative documentary short about the *Archive of Constraint*.^[1]

Featuring a repository of materials that underscore the violence of US occupation in the Philippines, these written notes were meant to serve as voice-over recordings to help situate the care work Silang is tasked to do. As chief archivist for the *Archive*, I had asked them to recount a particular story around the acquisition of a set of objects obtained from eBay, unfolding key moments and questions that were embedded within the economies of possession. As a documentarian, I have been interested in collaborating with Silang to not only better understand how archivists handle the material legacies of history but to gain a better sense of the kinds of care work that archivists do particularly in an era in which material culture is increasingly migrating into digital culture. As Silang notes, questions of ownership, possession, and even the notion of holding are further complicated as the internet develops into a platform that is increasingly more reliant upon machine learning,

blockchain technologies, and data surveillance that systematically remove human control.

Across contemporary discourses of archival practices and material culture, scholars have noted the asymmetrical power dynamics at play within traditional archives. In a speech from the 1970 Society of American Archivists' annual meeting, Howard Zinn talked about a larger concern that helped move archives toward an acknowledgment of their complicity in the guarding of history:

The collection of records, papers, and memoirs as well as oral history is biased toward the important and powerful people of the society, tending to ignore the impotent and obscure: we learn most about the rich, not the poor; the successful, not the failures; the old, not the young; the politically active not the politically alienated; men not women; white not black; free people rather than prisoners; civilians rather than soldiers; officers rather than enlisted men.^[2]

Following this line of thought, Lae'l Hughes-Watkins contends (as would Silang) that "mainstream archives are steeped in a tradition that makes decisions about the existence, preservation, and availability of archives, documents, and records in our society on the basis of the distribution of wealth and power." She continues, "It is this inequity that has created a systemic defect within traditional archives that has led to the marginalization, erasure, and oppression of historically underrepresented communities."^[3] Managing an archive primarily composed of visual media (photographs, postcards, advertisements, etc.) that document the overtly violent histories of US colonialism in the Philippines, Silang is particularly attuned to the imbalances of traditional archives and their practices. This is, in part, what informed the establishment of the *Archive* itself. Often responding to the impact that the internet has upon histories of colonialism, materials held in the *Archive* are frequently acquired through donations or purchases from online auctions, marketplaces, or retailers able to distribute images of death on a global scale. Fraught with conditions of violence, these materials-turned-objects-turned-images highlight the tensions of ownership and viewership, not to mention the myriad states in which objects become transformed across display and access strategies.^[4] Within these complications, historically situated material culture is suddenly thrust into the contemporary moment, shifting the temporal frame of the colonial event into an ongoing reiteration of violence that has taken on new forms.^[5]

While the items housed within the *Archive* are physical, material objects, the collection reminds us that their persistence and presence across online marketplaces renders these images into much more complex objects. Developed as jpegs of abjection that circulate across global markets, images are housed in servers that threaten the already precarious condition of our Earth. As packets of data, image files move through vast telecommunication networks where representations (read images) become easily accessible outside of institutional or community-centered archives. Often decontextualized from the already fragmented collections from which they originated, image-objects are flattened from the experience of their tangible utility where accompanying detailed images merely highlight physical damage and online listings across platforms like eBay and Amazon reduce our capacity to fully understand the crevices of violence.

Of course, images of objects tend to privilege the contents of the material while offering detailed pictures of blemishes, scratches, or indentations across worn surfaces. Yet nowhere across the image-making practices of online sellers is there a recognition of a material's utility. I should note here that this isn't to say that digital experiences of physical objects are useless or that the experience of digital archives cannot allow for critical engagement with material history. Instead, what I hope to consider is a different strategy for the imaging of material culture; one that highlights how one might hold the object or how an object could have been distributed

during its intended lifecycle.^[6] The image of violence can never be a substitution for the act itself, which is to say, if there is no index for how objects made under colonial conditions were used, they are replicating the conditions of violence from which these objects were removed. Abstracted into the distributed ether of co-located server stations and signal boosters, these digital assets and their metadata replace the tactile sensorium with an ocular hegemony, shifting the frame from the material to its content.^[7]

Across the litigious Western hemisphere, where copyright laws outline conditions of ownership, it is important to first name the capacities under which we can engage in this conversation in the first place. As part of the gesture toward reconciliation and decolonization, it is important to state that I write these notes from a settler perspective on the contemporary and ancestral homelands of the twenty-three Native Nations that have inhabited this land for centuries in the area now known as Phoenix, Arizona, in the United States. Further, I must acknowledge the care and nourishment for this land and its waterways made possible by the Pee Posh, Tohono O'odham, and Akimel O'odham in the Salt River Valley and Nuwu of Lake Havasu, all of whom have sustained and nourished the desert homeland that I now call home. Given the nature of the devices that enable access to these notes as well as the conditions under which they are offered, I also need to acknowledge other forms of spatial occupation that this online format is dependent upon. Using an online IP geolocation tool, I have found that *PARSE Journal's* particular URL uses IP addresses that are routed through the ancestral, ceremonial, and contemporary territories of the Ute people who were subjected to numerous relocations following a series of broken treaties between 1848 and 1940. As the signal continues across Indigenous land in North America through international waters, it is further distributed through *PARSE Journal's* servers across Europe and accessed largely in the lands cared for by the Sámi people, who maintain vital and vibrant cultural legacies across Sápmi today.^[8]

It is important to also include that this recognition of infrastructures, resources, and systems situates the development of the internet through histories of extraction, while streams of data deftly meander across global networks. Beneath floors and behind walls, these privileged technological capabilities further challenge ways in which we can adequately acknowledge the land and to whom it shares history. Consistent with the conversations around the distribution of digital and material assets, the internet's physical imprint intensifies the necessity to realign our relationships with the land, listen to Indigenous leaders who have been actively shut out from conversations around infrastructure, and shift our patterns of global communication strategies so that they are intentionally aligned with Indigenous praxis. Gesturing toward Indigenous reparations, these acknowledgments allow for more nuanced understandings of power where we recognize settler colonialism as a framework that underscores and complicates the logics of ownership, property, and possession overall.

It should further be noted that these acknowledgments are also inherently performative without an explicit ability to give land back to the Indigenous peoples upon which settlers have built. Without developing or strategizing ways to return lands stolen from Indigenous communities, these rhetorical deliveries merely act as signals that cannot replace actions of retribution that are necessary components of actual decolonization.

Within a US context, property is often relegated as a condition of ownership. To possess something is to imply an owner, which in turn marks it as having value.^[9] Property is therefore inherently valuable, often treated as an asset that can appreciate or depreciate its value depending on the flows of the market. Housing is one such example, as are ephemera across global marketplaces. Joseph William Singer questions the viability of possession from a US legal standpoint, arguing that "possession is plausible as a source of title only if you are not taking something that already belongs to someone else."^[10] Given the history and legacy of US colonialism as a foundational aspect in the formation of the US nation-state, Singer reminds us that "conquest denies the rights

of first possessors,” particularly in a system where “first possession” marks the origin of “property” as a category. Across the archival diaspora of ephemera made, maintained, and collected on Indigenous land, both in the US and abroad (such as the Philippines), Indigenous, Native, and First Nations people have frequently lost properties (whether land, personal property, or both) under a slew of treaties, unjust pillaging missions, and resource extraction that systematically denied them ability to remain sovereign.^[11]

In considering the complexities of ownership with regard to value and property, Robert Nichols historicizes the concepts of possession and dispossession as they relate to land acquisition of Indigenous lands in the United States. Used as a strategy to seize property for the “common good,” the condition of eminent domain often continues to impact Indigenous people’s claims to their land and “remains the dominant way to express the idea of compulsory seizure of private assets for the public good in the United States.”^[12] I bring up the conditions of eminent domain here under the auspices of a land acknowledgment in part to recognize the ways settlers leveraged governmental power toward colonial and state-led annexation of lands, but also as a way to underscore the conditions of how internet infrastructures have been developed and maintained. As Ingrid Burrington notes, the internet was largely built alongside railways across the US, mostly constructed on the backs of Chinese American labor across Indigenous lands ceded or stolen under the pretense of eminent domain.^[13] Whether or not we fully understand the internet’s development as complicit in the ongoing invasion of Indigenous land, we must also recognize that Native peoples have systemically and continuously been denied access to high-speed internet and other digital infrastructures despite these cables being laid across their lands.^[14]

Central to this larger conversation, I introduce this acknowledgment to foreground how questions of power, ownership, and property become entangled within the development of digital infrastructures and signal communications. Embedded within these networks of information transfer are the concerns of spatial organization (or built environments), where new locations of power are moving away from institutions toward massive warehouses of silicone tubing, metal, and glass. In effect, questions around the acquisition and management of Indigenous cultural history, violence, and terror are merely a differently scaled version of land cessation, cultural dispossession, and systematic erasure reliant upon the degradation of traditions, stories, and the real impacts of colonialism. No longer subject to the violence of the sword or the gun, movements localized to the wrist and hands have become the new choreographies of power, where fingers press upon screens and plastic that finalize and sustain transactions of ruin. It is here, online and behind glass, that I introduce Silang’s contribution to the beginning of this project.

PART I

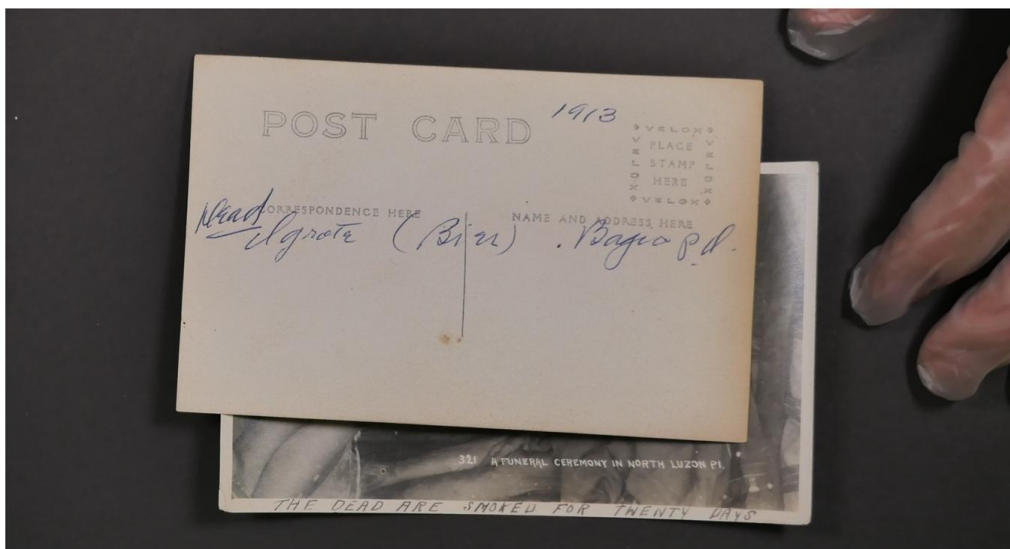
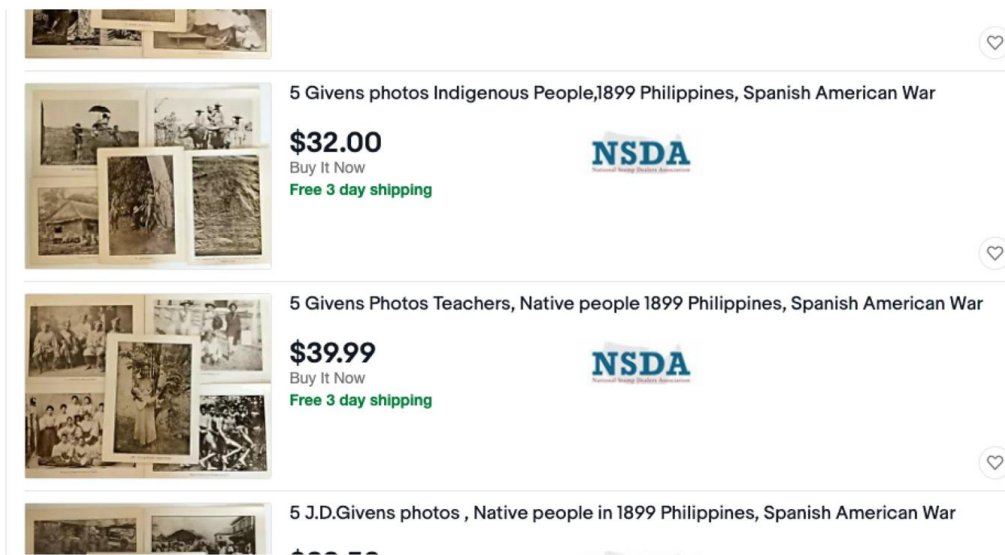
To hold | To hang on | To capture | To squeeze

Several weeks ago, I had the opportunity to pick up two sets of items recently purchased as new acquisitions from eBay. I could have had them packed and shipped, but I was curious to know more about the sellers and the store itself. Their eBay store was filled with several thousand objects, primarily stamps and coins, though there was a smattering of items that fell out of those categories. Both sets of items I purchased were completed as auctions, each a set of 5 images, totaling 10 images excerpted from a larger collection of 187 photogravures.^[16]

On both eBay listings, the seller titled each respective lot with the same nomenclature: “5 casualties of war prints from J.D. Givens ca. 1898 Spanish American War.” Each set of five sold for US\$37, totaling US\$80.36 with tax, though other separated sets from the Givens collection were marked higher or lower, depending on the nature of the content or the number of photos included in each set. It was not possible to purchase the whole collection of 187 from this seller, in part because it wasn’t complete, but also because certain images in that collection could easily market higher when separated from the rest of the collection. To them, as I would find out later, it was more advantageous to fragment the collection to guarantee higher sales than sell the collection as was, partial, incomplete, and weathered.

It seems, then, that the business of acquisition is based on fragmentation. Ricky Punzalan writes about the conditions of archival dispersion that are prevalent in material culture. As he points out, “Archivists have long established provenance through the lenses of custody and by tracing lineages of ownership of collections... The various dimensions of dispersion can illuminate and provide profound understanding of the context and value of archival photographs beyond claims of uniqueness and originality.”^[16] For Punzalan, the scattering of histories and stories of collection acquisitions are as important and integral to the objects as is the content of the materials themselves.

In these moments of fragmentation of the Givens collection at the coin store, we see the conditions of dispersion unfold as grouped photos are sold to anonymous buyers across the world over time, shaping a different kind of narrative around the lives of these objects. While it remains unclear where these images might end up, or even how they might be used, it traces one of several scenarios under which collections cannot adequately contain the full complexity of historical moments, underscoring a violence of possession that is contingent on the inability to locate the full conditions of its purchase.



When I called to see if I could make an appointment to retrieve the things I paid for, the woman on the phone mentioned that the items were no longer available: "There must have been a glitch with the listing," she said, "but you are welcome to look through the bins to see if there is anything similar that you might want. Or who knows, maybe we have them somewhere else, you'll just have to look." I made my way to their storefront space on the ground floor of a strip mall, just between a pool supply company on one side and a sushi restaurant on the other.

Unassuming with blacked-out tinted windows and a doorbell with a sign stating, "appointments only," I remember reading online that the Stamps and Coins shop "serves an international client-base to include expertise for all levels of collectors" to provide "prompt and discreet service," posted prominently on their website. Walking in through the tinted doors, I recall being flanked by large counter-height glass display cases that separated me from the four staff members studiously working.

"Hi, do you have an appointment," one woman asked as she glanced over her glasses falling down her nose. I told her that I was there to look through their items, that I had called earlier to set an appointment after they couldn't

locate what I had purchased. She promptly asked a coworker to retrieve a bin that was sitting on a shelf along a wall of metal storage units. Each of the bins had taped pieces of paper on the short side labeled with a black marker, organized hastily and without the systematic rigor that libraries and archives would have.

I wasn't surprised that I wasn't able to find what I needed, yet I was curious to know more about the inner workings of this ephemeral repository, of this strange purgatory for material history that most likely moved between deceased collectors and estate sales to other anonymous buyers or collectors. Or maybe even curators and directors of institutions like myself.

Much of the Archive had been acquired through purchases in online marketplaces or auction sites where transactions were often conducted anonymously. The only remnants of human engagement were occasionally found in the notes from sellers that were included with shipped items. Small Post-its with handwritten remarks that said "thank you for your purchase," or short strips of printed paper including "we look forward to your positive feedback" signed by the sellers became a strange counterpoint to the violent material history that was included in the packaging. I could only imagine what the woman to my right would have written for me.

Each time I receive another acquisition, I can't help but consider if these sellers know what it is that they are selling, if they even care about the content and its impact on the people represented across ephemera. On the one hand, I can look at the listing itself, many of which leave out the context. Staring at the stacks and piles of objects waiting to be processed and valued at the coin shop made me think that these sellers probably don't have the time to do much research, or even care to after they've discerned the market value.





PART II

To push | To puncture | To press | To punch

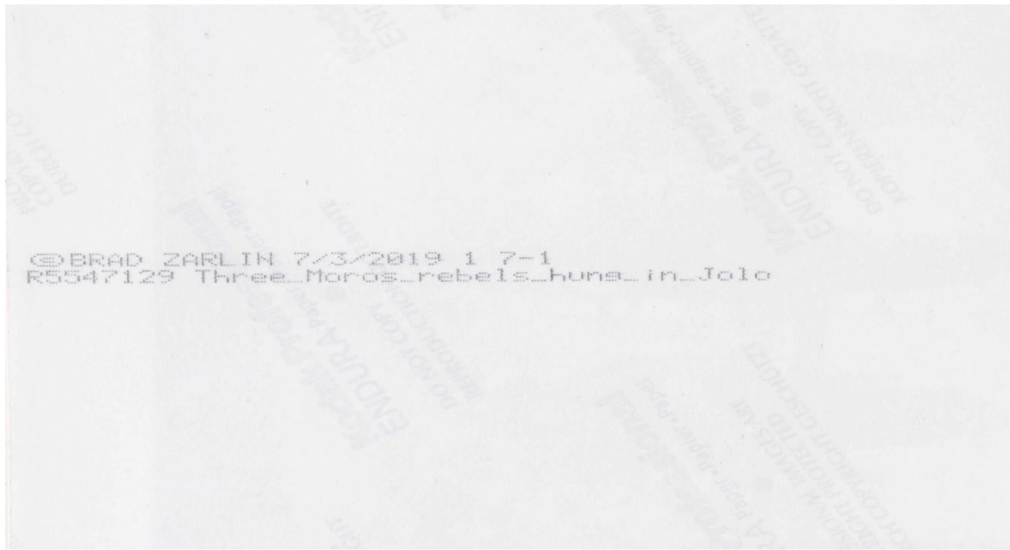
I remember another listing where there was a reproduction of a photo depicting an execution of Moros from 1911 on eBay. In what I could only assume was a gesture by the seller to remain neutral, the description of the item itself didn't reveal much about the context of the photo, who was in it, who took it, where it was taken, or even why it existed in the first place. Instead, the listing reads: "Photo. Philippines. Execution of Moros. 1911." I know there is no specific word limit in eBay's templates for descriptions, so why is there no mention of US imperialism in the Philippines? Why is there no discussion of the ongoing targeted attacks toward Muslim people today that began around 1906 and has lasted since? In a letter written by military governor General Pershing a man who assumed control of the southern region in 1909 he wrote, "During the slow process of evolution leading up to civilization, the Moros must be kept in check by the actual application of force or by the moral effect of its presence."^[17] For Pershing, violence was a colonial tactic necessary for the ongoing project of manifest destiny, only to be developed and reinvented later as FM 3 24, the famous counterinsurgency manual written by General David Petraeus and James Amos as part of the US war in Iraq. This image, even in its duplication, traces a legacy

of violence that has become muted by the flat explanation of the item itself.

Following the six-word description of the listing, the seller begins the next paragraph with plain and objective language. In it, they write, “You are purchasing a digital reproduction of the original image. It has been produced using professional scanning equipment and skilled digital production technicians to optimize image quality.” Mechanical, and almost robotic in tone, the seller distances themselves from revealing any kind of politics or intention around the sale of these objects. There is no mention of an intended audience, or even the use of persuasive language to convince us to buy this print. Do we care that they’ve already sold 4 copies and have more than 10 still available for sale?

In what seems to be clinical and neutral language, the seller further reiterates the violence of erasure, remaining complicit in the legacies of violence that emerge from image-making practices while profiting from its sales. Instead of strategically using the space provided for a description to offer context, we are faced with an intentionally formatted portion of HTML that masks the larger conditions of violence that this sale signifies. Using white text over a textured background, we are faced with a kind of descriptive erasure that denies the people represented in the photograph any agency, flattening the complexity and nuances of how the image was produced.





PART III

To frame | To extend | To write | To mend

Returning to the coin shop, I find myself in a similar position, where fragmented images are thrown into plastic bins with similarly sized media regardless of context. I know this space is not meant to be a library where staff might be asked to provide research guides or collection descriptions. No one here has time for that. There are too many piles and stacks and mounds and things to file, and orders to send, and people to call, and items to post and to cross-list and update and organize and put away in the safe, but make sure there's still room for other things so that less valuable things can still lay under other mountains of accumulated material. Instead, this shop exists largely for those who are already in the know, for invested collectors who understand the value of what's in stock.

After my visit, the woman who owned the store issued me a full refund, creating an automated email from eBay

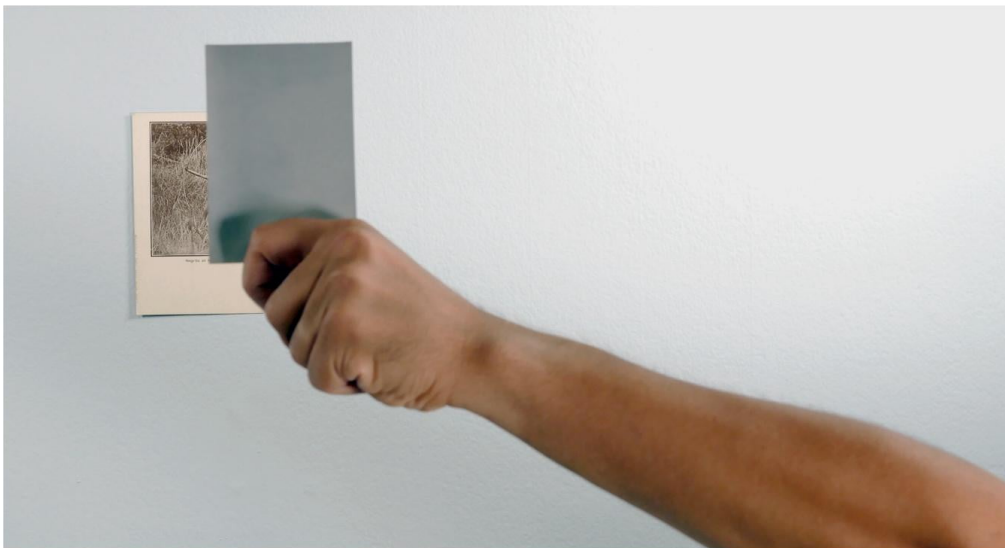
that included the title and images of the original listings that were part of my initial purchase. Common with listings that are no longer for sale, eBay notifies interested parties with similar things, things I might like. Images of death, execution, and violence that matched the algorithms are duplicated and displayed without my consent. Ultimately, I deleted the email. I couldn't help but wonder if the remnants of the image created ghosts of an incomplete or mistaken sale. What happens to the data doubles of violence? Can their metadata perpetuate harm across the digital landscape?^[18]



I am compelled to consider Neema Githere's idea of "data healing," or the need for communities impacted by digital trauma to relinquish control of their information on their terms. Across these online marketplaces, data turns into trauma, creating triggers that exacerbate the memories and realities of colonial rule.^[19] With each listing, I am haunted by the case of Tamara Lanier who is navigating a long legal battle over ownership of images of her enslaved ancestors held in a collection at Yale University.^[20] According to US copyright law, images remain under the possession and ownership of the photographers who took the image, leaving no room for possession or co-

ownership of a photograph by those depicted or represented within it. I imagine what the act of holding those images might do for her, her well-being, and her community. I wonder how possession, or even merely feeling the surface of these images, might be a form of healing, a way of navigating the trauma related to their troubled past. Ruminating on this idea, I wonder what it means to tend to an image, to care for it even as it roams in a digital afterlife, and to ask it for its needs. How might we begin to listen to images, as Tina Campt suggests, to allow them to rest or exist on their own terms?^[21] If we as humans can be laid to rest along with the archives of our lives, can we also ask our photographic remnants to do the same?

When is it appropriate to finally bury an image? To allow for a kind of closure from the violence of my life? To allow for that memory to dissipate and dissolve like smoke into the sky?



All images are courtesy of the artist 2021 22.

Footnotes

1. This project remains and will continue to remain in production. It does not yet have a title.
2. Quoted in Hughes-Watkins, Lae'l. "Moving Toward a Reparative Archive: A Roadmap for a Holistic Approach to Disrupting Homogenous Histories in Academic Repositories and Creating Inclusive Spaces for Marginalized Voices." *Journal of Contemporary Archival Studies*. Vol 5. Article 6. 2018. p. 3.
3. Ibid., p. 2.
4. Though focused on the dispersion of photographic materials attributed to Dean Conant Worcester, a US official integral to establishing a colonial archive of Indigenous Pilipinx people during US occupation, Ricardo L. Punzalan discusses the various complications and implications dispersed collections have within multiple archival spaces. As he writes, the archival diaspora actively challenges colonial frameworks of categorization and identification that ultimately necessitate a reorganization of collections and their markers. Thinking along Punzalan, I would also further argue that while objects in diaspora challenge the ways we discuss them, it is also important to consider the transference and translation of these media between analog and digital formats. For continued discussion, see Punzalan, Ricardo L. "Archival Diasporas: A Framework for Understanding the Complexities and Challenges of Dispersed Photographic Collections." *The American Archivist*. Vol. 77. No. 2. 2014. pp. 326–49.
5. Queer, Jewish, settler professor and Indigenous studies scholar Mark Rifkin writes on the continual portrayal of Indigenous people as relegated to the past. Citing (another settler professor) Kevin Bruyneel, Rifkin notes that "this making of Indians into ghostly remainders enacts ... [the] "colonial time" in which "temporal boundaries" are constructed between "an 'advancing' people and a 'static' people, locating the latter out of time" (p. 5). In removing Indigenous people from the temporal present, or as contemporaries to settler time (what Rifkin and others call "temporal sovereignty"), Indigenous people have systematically been removed from decisions regarding the safekeeping of their cultural heritage (p. 34), often held in collections and institutional repositories. Rifkin's discussion continues to illuminate the complexities and conditions of temporality in regard to Indigenous world-making across his book. See Rifkin, Mark. *Beyond Settler Time: Temporal Sovereignty and Indigenous Self-Determination*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. 2017.
6. Along these lines, I wonder if retailers have the capacity to index their own possession. I am reminded of Sarah Ahmed's question-as-provocation in *What's the Use?* where she discusses emergent relationships from the word itself. She asks, "Who gets to use what? How does something become available to use? Can something be available as a public facility—like a well from which we can draw water—without it being usable by everyone? One use question leads to others" (p. 7). Considering her conditions of utility, what happens when those questions are replaced with the word "image"? To engage further, see Ahmed, Sarah. "A Useful Archive." In *What's the Use? On the Uses of Use*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. 2019.
7. This conversation would be remiss if I didn't also discuss Ariella Aïsha Azoulay's critique around the nature of studying collections. In her work *Potential History: Unlearning Imperialism*, she writes on how critiques within the disciplines of anthropology and art history are frequently confined by the areas of study their approaches to the content are embedded within. For her, "as long as the conversation [around collecting] is pursued without the participation of those whose worlds were destroyed and their objects were taken, collecting can continue to be described as 'complicated' and looting considered external to the meaning of art that was shaped by it." She continues, "once [they are] acknowledged and

even described to a certain extent, it is put aside to move to the essence—in this case, the study of collecting art objects.” What emerges is a broader critique of how conversations such as this one become complicit in the legacies of colonial affectations, where elongated conversations about the objects of study (and their collections) only further perpetuate colonial traditions that helped shape the discipline itself. Throughout the short segment on collections that she offers in this work, looting is a central component in the formation of modern art that has frequently been sidelined as a secondary narrative, “enable[ing] a much simpler story of plunder to be told.” See Azoulay, Ariella Aïsha. “Plunder, Objects, Art, Rights.” In *Potential History: Unlearning Imperialism*. London: Verso. 2019. pp. 48–154.

8. Similar to other Indigenous territories worldwide, the traditional lands of the Sámi people are not reflected in the current areas in which they live. Historically, Sámi homelands stretched across large portions of what are now defined as Nordic countries, though the area of Sápmi has encompassed portions of four nation states including Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia. For a further details about these distinctions see Nordregio, “Sámi Areas Defined by National Law,” February 24, 2015. <https://nordregio.org/maps/sami-areas-defined-by-national-law/>. Other resources on the Sámi can be found through Native-Land.ca. “Sápmi (Sámi).” Accessed November 2, 2022. <https://native-land.ca/maps/territories/sapmi-sami/>.
9. Running parallel, though frequently intersecting into this conversation of ownership is Ariella Azoulay’s discussion of the civil contract of photography, in which she destabilizes the notion of photographic ownership. For her, photographs establish “an encounter that always and inescapably involves a measure of violence” that is “neither the product of a single person” and instead should be relegated to the “public” as its true owner. She continues: “A photographic image, then, can at most be entrusted to someone for a certain time. It is a deposit, temporarily given to whomever has it for safekeeping, but such persons are never its owner.” Azoulay, Ariella. “The Civil Contract of Photography.” In *The Civil Contract of Photography*. Translated by Reza Mazali and Ruvik Danieli. New York, NY: Zone Books. 2008. pp. 89–127.
10. Singer, Joseph William. “Original Acquisition of Property: From Conquest and Possession to Democracy and Equal Opportunity.” *Indiana Law Journal*. Vol. 86. No. 1. 2011. pp. 1–2.
11. Another set of conversations emerge from the display of definitions on Cornell Law School’s website, specifically the word “chattel.” While rarely ever used in American vernacular in regard personal property, its troubled past holds a relationship to (chattel) slavery in the US, where humans—largely Black and Indigenous people—were bought and sold. Those definitions are available at “Personal Property.” *LII / Legal Information Institute*. Available at https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/personal_property (accessed 2022-06-27).
12. Nichols, Robert. “That Sole and Despotism Dominion.” In *Theft Is Property!: Dispossession and Critical Theory*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. 2020. pp. 16–51.
13. Burrington, Ingrid. “How Railroad History Shaped Internet History.” *The Atlantic*. 2015. Available at <https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2015/11/how-railroad-history-shaped-internet-history/417414/> (accessed 2022-06-27).
14. Marisa Elena Duarte writes extensively on the conditions of information and communications technology, internet, and infrastructural access across North American Indigenous land, particularly as it pertains to life on the reservation or across rural swaths of land mostly inhabited by Native people. It is important to consider too that, within a US historical and colonial framework, Native people were allotted parcels of land (property) based on a series of treaties under the conditions of recognition. Put another way, only federally recognized tribes were able to stake claims to land that could accommodate for the development of infrastructure projects (such as power, telephone lines, broadband access, etc.), if they were able to garner the funds, rendering whole populations of Indigenous people across North America without access to public projects because they did not have federal recognition. For a more

- thorough conversation, see Duarte, Marisa Elena. "Reframing ICTs in Indian Country." In *Network Sovereignty*. Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press. 2017.
15. Further archival research indicates that the seller's information regarding the source of these images is much more complicated. One image in the listing marked with the caption "109 Burying a Filipino" is also found in a similarly titled publication *Scenes in the Philippines, Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Hawaiian Islands and Scenes Relating to Soldiers* by Henry H. Stratton from 1902. While the content of the images is identical, the image found in the Stratton publication has a written inscription on the photograph reading "copyrighted" in white, while the Givens photograph is marked "J.D. Givens S.F." in black handwriting, suggesting Givens purchased the rights to print the photos attributed to Stratton for his publication ten years later. There are two other inconsistencies: a box set of 150 photos, including the same images in the listing, can be found under the same title and dimensions but are attributed to Stratton, whereas the bound publication attributed to Givens is found under a different title with edits in the content, according to holdings in the Southeast Asia Visions collection at Cornell University Library. That string-bound publication is listed under *Scenes taken in the Philippines, China, Japan, and on the Pacific, relating to soldiers* and can be found in their archive or online. Available at <http://seasiavisions.library.cornell.edu/catalog/sea:205> (accessed 2022-03-22).
 16. Punzalan, Ricardo L. "Archival Diasporas: A Framework for Understanding the Complexities and Challenges of Dispersed Photographic Collections." *The American Archivist* 77, no. 2 (Fall/Winter 2014): 326-49.
 17. John J. Pershing. *Annual Report of Brigadier General John J. Pershing, U.S. Army, Governor of the Moro Province, for the Year Ending August 31, 1910*. Zamboanga, 1910.
<https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/000055153>.
 18. I should mention that images attached to past listings can be located though eBay tends to remove all affiliated content from completed sales shortly after the transactions have been finalized. Despite this removal from their servers, it is common for other third-party websites to continue publishing visual and textual material from original listings. Tracking eBay sales data, sites like Worthpoint.com and Shelftrend.com duplicate listings to help subscribers accurately price their possessions to market value. Across this extractive economy, jpegs (digital assets) reappear with newly inscribed metadata made available to anyone interested in saving the image(s) to their desktop. No wonder certain sellers on eBay intentionally break image upload policies by including watermarks on their images. Maybe the seller of the Moro execution found his image from another seller's listing? It would explain why the photograph is a little grainy.
 19. I am reminded of Lauren Berlant's notion of "slow death." See Berlant, Lauren. "Slow Death (Sovereignty, Obesity, Lateral Agency)." *Critical Inquiry*. Vol. 33. No. 4. 2007. pp. 754-80. For more on data healing, see Githere, Neema. "What Is Data Healing?" *Data-Healing-Mania-Monologue@findingneema.Pdf*. 2020. Available at <https://www.are.na/block/6038861> (accessed 2022-10-20).
 20. Drake, Jarrett Martin. "Blood at the Root." *Journal of Contemporary Archival Studies*, Vol. 8, no. Art. 6 (2021): 1-26. <https://elischolar.library.yale.edu/jcas/vol8/iss1/6>.
 21. Camp, Tina. "Listening to Images: An Exercise in Counterintuition." In *Listening to Images*, 1-12. Durham, VA: Duke University Press, 2017.