

Week8-Further Confirm The Archival Artworks In The Exhibition.

This week's course content reminded me of the blog post from Week 4 on "curatorial archives." It got me thinking: if my project is meant not only to present authentic history but also to translate historical materials into the language of an authentic exhibition, how should I select artworks?

I ultimately chose Carolyn Sutton's *Witches in Word, Not Deed*.



Sutton, C. (2026) *Witches in Word, Not Deed*. Available at: <https://carolynasutton.crevado.com/witches-in-word-not-deed> (Accessed: 8 April 2026).

Hal Foster, an American art historian and critic, argues that

“the archive” in contemporary art is not simply the presentation of existing documents. Instead, artists collect, reorganise, and recontextualise different materials. Through this process, they produce new historical relationships (Foster, 2004, p. 5).

Finally, the work in question is archival since it not only draws on informal archives but produces them as well, and does so in a way that underscores the nature of all archival materials as found yet constructed, factual yet fictive, public yet private. Further, it often arranges these materials according to a quasi-archival logic, a matrix of citation and juxtaposition, and presents them in a quasi-archival architecture, a complex of texts and objects (again, platforms, stations, kiosks . . .). Thus Dean speaks of her method as “collection,” Durant of his as “combination,” Hirschhorn of his as “ramification”—and much archival art does appear to ramify like a weed or a

Screenshot of page 5 from Hal Foster’s article An Archival Impulse (Foster, 2004).

As a result, I realized that archival artworks can use various media to bring oppressive historical language back into the present.

Carolyn Sutton’s work resonates deeply with my theme. She prints the accusations and misconceptions directed at women during witch hunts onto skirts, transforming this violent language—which originally existed only in history—into a visual form. For viewers, this form is easier to grasp, as they see not merely historical documents, but how language has actually been imposed upon women’s bodies.

However, archival artworks still have certain limitations.

Giovanna Zapperi, a professor of art history (2013, p. 23),

argues that while feminist archival art makes suppressed women's histories visible again, this reconstruction is not an objective presentation of history; rather, it is a rewriting imbued with the artist's stance and desires (2013, pp. 26–27).

experimental. Each work is based on the archival reconstruction of a woman's life through a combination of historical investigations and fictional narratives. Despite their focus on a single woman, none of these works is a biography: the documents are edited and assembled in order to shape a series of possible narratives, and the archival fragments emerge as traces of forgotten stories. Through the process of montage, these artists reconsider the role of sexual difference in historical narratives, while excavating histories marked by differences inscribed into gender, sexuality and race. Time and history intersect: since they

Screenshot of page 23 from Giovanna Zapperi's article *Woman's Reappearance: Rethinking the Archive in Contemporary Art—Feminist Perspectives* (Zapperi, 2013).

The process of assembling images and texts strongly involves the artist's subjectivity in ways that constantly recompose possible narratives across associations between disparate fragments. Thus, each image/text is displaced towards the uncertain terrains of interpretation, appropriation and invention. The formal operation of editing or montage is crucial to the ways these artists shape a different type of temporality.

Screenshot of page 27 from Giovanna Zapperi's article *Woman's Reappearance: Rethinking the Archive in Contemporary Art—Feminist Perspectives* (Zapperi, 2013).

This makes me worry that viewers might focus more on the form of the *Witches in Word, Not Deed* skirt, thereby diminishing their understanding of the cruelty of history. The text on the skirt has a strong visual impact, but viewers may not

necessarily stop to read it. Drawing on the methodology proposed by Reesa Greenberg (2012, p. 166) in her analysis of [Telling Histories](#), I decided to design a way to help the audience gain a deeper understanding of this history. For example, by presenting historical materials through an interactive interface and curating the content so that viewers see the key points first.

logical system arranged by exhibition. Bethónico also created an interface for the public, thereby making the history of the three case studies as well as that of the institution available in the exhibition space, literally by including exhibition files, catalogues, photographs and press clippings, and virtually with a computer station. As Maria Lind describes it in the exhibition files for the case studies, Bethónico edited certain documents so that only fragments could be seen: '[t]his approach encourage[d] associative rather than rational readings of letters, contracts, lists and so forth' (Lind [2004] 2010: 321).

Screenshot of page 166 from Reesa Greenberg's article *Archival Remembering Exhibitions* (Greenberg, 2012).

In practical terms, this work has already been on tour and has been exhibited at several venues across Scotland.

Dress dedicated to Orkney woman convicted of witchcraft to be unveiled at Orkney Library and Archive

Date: 18 April 2025
Time: 11:00 AM

A specially created dress dedicated to the memory of a local woman, Marjorie Cooper who was found guilty of witchcraft and condemned to death by public execution and burning at Gallies Hill in 1664, will be unveiled next at Orkney Library and Archive.

Carolyn Sutton is the creator of 'Witches in Black, Not Dead' an exhibition commemorating 35 British women accused and condemned to witchcraft during the 16th and 17th centuries into the

last decade of the 1970s. The full exhibition of 10 dresses has appeared at Central Library in Edinburgh, Green Exchange in Ayr, Ebor Court in Inverness, Wall Institute in Glasgow, and Dalmeida Carnegie Library and Gallery. Several other related appearances and events have been held around Scotland. Richard here to read from one of these dresses.

Carolyn is bringing a specially created dress to Orkney, based on Marjorie's story, which she is donating to the county. It will be unveiled at The Orkney Library and Archive on Saturday 28 April at 1pm. This will be followed by a lecture on witchcraft.

Spaces for both these events are limited and can be booked via Eventsite as follows:

- 1pm - 2pm Event: Talk about 'Witches in Black, Not Dead' from Carolyn Sutton presentation about the Orkney Marjorie (based on Dr Margaret Lonsdale and Helen Macdonald-Cook's story) by Patsy McEneaney. Coffee, tea, and biscuits provided. Seating limited to 40 participants. <https://www.eventsite.com/orkney/witches-in-black-not-dead>
- 11am - 1:00 pm Lecture: Lecture on 'Witchcraft in Scotland' by Carolyn Sutton. Seating limited to 40 participants. <https://www.eventsite.com/orkney/witches-in-black-not-dead>



Screenshot of the Orkney Islands Council news webpage, 'Dress dedicated to Orkney woman convicted of witchcraft to be unveiled at Orkney Library and Archive' (Orkney Islands Council, 2025).

This indicates that the work has a degree of portability and experience with touring exhibitions. It has already been adapted for various spaces, such as libraries and archives, and does not rely solely on large international art museums. Furthermore, since the artist is based in Edinburgh, I believe the logistics of transportation and installation are relatively manageable.

At the same time, Carolyn Sutton's longstanding engagement with public cultural institutions demonstrates her commitment to education and public discourse, which extends beyond

large institutions. Based on this, I believe a collaboration with her is feasible.

Bibliography

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Zapperi, G. (2013) woman's reappearance: rethinking the archive in contemporary art–feminist perspectives. *Feminist review*. [Online] 105 (105), 21–47.

Greenberg, R. (2012) Archival Remembering Exhibitions. *Journal of curatorial studies*. [Online] 1 (2), 159–177.