Museum and its Afterness

Ofri Cnaani

This story begins with an error. In six short hours in September 2018 a fatal fire brought to an end two centuries' worth of treasures in Brazil's Museu Nacional. Only a handful of artifacts of the 20 million items that were housed at the museum survived this colossal disaster. To give a sense of perspective, the collection of the British Museum holds eight million items.

The fire that wiped out the nation's archive was like 'a lobotomy of the Brazilian memory.'[1] An image of the nation, its lands, and its cultures, the immense encyclopedic collection included priceless archives of pre-Columbian and Indo-American cultures, the oldest human remains ever found in Brazil, and audio recordings of indigenous languages, many of which are no longer spoken and may now be lost forever. Also, five million butterflies and other arthropods; a 12,000-year-old fossil human remain; thousands of ceramics from indigenous Brazilian cultures; sarcophagus from Egypt; and a fresco from Pompeii that had survived the eruption of Vesuvius. A meteorite that hit Earth in 1785 survived the fire, no problem.

It feels almost unimaginable that so many valuable objects were simply wiped off the earth without leaving any digital trace. One would hope that contemporary technology would offer its most treasured artifacts a better survival rate than the Library of Alexandria. At the age of algorithmic reproduction, when the automatic backup is the default standard on most digital devices, many commentators have argued for the right to be forgotten. At the same time, there are still many faults with the politics of digital memory. The story of the National Museum's loss suggests that the technical practices of saving and deleting are still entangled by the geopolitical biases and cultural struggle for the right to be remembered.

What remains when a collection is lost? A fragmented and rather eclectic digital collection survived from the ruins. Next to small collections that were digitized by specific

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[1] Dom Phillips, 'Brazil Museum Fire: "Incalculable" Loss as 200-year-old Rio Institution Gutted', *The Guardian* (September 3, 2018.)

interest groups,[2] is a sporadic collection assembled by users via Wikimedia Commons and includes photos of the collection captured by visitors on their personal devices. There is also a virtual tour, a product of Google Arts & Culture where one can easily visit the no-longer existing museum. In the absence of a systematic digitization effort at the museum, the fragmented collection that remains poses a challenge to the kind of fixed taxonomies and epistemic frameworks traditionally designed by the state. It looks sporadic or marginal, but this eclectic digital collection presents a new amalgamation and offers new qualities. This kind of hybrid collection, or digital recollection, can be an invitation to look at the ways different layers of data systems intermingled and refused the canonic institutional order and its indexing system, industry standards, and the forms of governing these orders represent.

As the case of the Brazilian museum unfolds, it brings to focus the collapse of multiple systems and governance rationales as they are manifested in the model of the national museum. I suggest that observing the 'digital residues' of the Museu Nacional gives us a sense of a collection as it had been viewed, understood, and mediated not by museum scholars, but by new documenting entities. The study of the collection aftermath shows how the removal of the object leaves behind the multiplicity of its conditions. I propose that although the museum's objects no longer operate within their inherited institutional orders or colonial indexes, some of their constitutions, temperaments, and affordances are "dragged" with them from their original matter to the digital and information realm. The residues form an ecology of leftovers that habituate the space in-between eras and orders. Museums' residues don't have form, like objects. They are the surplus of affects, tools, and affordances that arrive with the objects. They are active formations. Can the museum's residues of body, data and matter be approached not in an object form but as an active form? In this article I argue that the residual state not only stands for what comes after the institution, but can potentially represent knowledge based on continuity of transformation between technical systems, matter formations, and biological life forms and represent a set of modalities, and practices stirred up in the wake of the museum.

The article starts by contending with the museum 'digital residues'. The first, Google's tour of the museum, is a large-scale, semi-automated digitization system that is developed and owned by mega corporation using the same devices and mapping techniques to document cities, tourist sites, and museums. It reflects on the ways

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[2] The surviving digital images were either digitized by small interest groups, like different indigenous cultural archives; available via different Google service ; other material digitized by museum employees or fellow researchers

collections are advanced by ubiquitous computing and new forms of algorithmic governmentality. The second is a user-generated documentation system that represent the institution and its holdings via the eyes of museum visitors. The images from the collection captured by visitors are stored on their personal devices or their cloud services and shared via social media. They are a portal to other data they have been slowly aggregating other images they saw, texts they read, locations they checked in at, a personal library organized by geolocation or facial recognition software, social networks, and other data points. I argue that the two modes of digital remains also reflect two greater shifts: a shift in the visitor's identity, from an identity of the citizen into an identity of the user, and a shift in the abstraction of the 'collection' within the era of planetary-scale data aggregation. An (institutional) 'collection' no longer needs to be understood as a closed system that can be indexed but rather as a set of interfaces between many collected artifacts that are forming a new set of relations, often activated by the visitor/ user.

The analysis of digital remines is accompanied by a discussion of *Leaking Lands*, a video work that contends with the errors that brought the National Museum to its end and recognizes the digital remains as a site of artistic intervention. This is a third mode of engagement that takes an artistic and speculative approach toward an event. By engaging with performance practices, I reflect on the new species of spaces that emerge in this current techno-political environment, where objects melts into ether, and clouds materialize as institutional infrastructure, where boundaries between experts, users and non-human cognition keep disintegrated and redefined, and where vertical institutional hierarchies and horizontal network entangle in a new political mesh. I conclude the article by focusing on the incomplete state after the institution, which I have termed a state of "Afterness". In it, the museum as a known space no longer exists, but lives through its residues that are no longer the museum, still not yet something else. Afterness is an infrastructural condition. It is both durational and spatial framework. Time wise, it is located in the uncomfortable, incomplete space, after the institution but 'not yet' in a different era.

The story of the fragmented digitized collection from the Museu Nacional can do a lot more than help index the insects pinned in a drawer, or those fish in a jar. It presents an opportunity to look at the diffused processes of mass digitization and the techno-political standardization, or the lack thereof, that is associated with these processes. A mapping

of the digital residues produces several observations regarding access to knowledge, shifting models of national narratives, and the priorities of major tech companies as well as local government. The fragmented and non-coherent collection that 'survived' the fire is preserved in different formats, hosted by a variety of data services, and indexed separately as each followed a different logic and motivation.

From Collection to Recollection: User-generated documentation

The analysis of the digital remains of the Museu Nacional through Wiki Commons' ghostly collection allows us a sense of a collection as it had been viewed, understood, and mediated not by museum scholars but rather via the eyes of its subjects. Here is a stray cat purring between two columns with peeling paint, there a photo of an indigenous hunter—the very low-angled photo, clearly taken by a child, exposes a leak in the upper corner that was fixed with layers of brown packing tape. The museum's lawns in the winter, the same lawns in the summer, and multiple copies of the same shot that was never deleted. Some young students who belong to a current generation that never deletes, uploading multiple images of the same shot, offering a personal testimony against institutional amnesia. It is a faster, non-selective, direct impression that does not recognize the institution and its collection as a defined category. To use André Lepecki's understanding of audiencing, it is a form of becoming an audience by moving from being a witness of the institution to offering a testimony to others by becoming a narrator of a personal experience: 'Their memories, because experiential, because personal, become both profoundly emotional-singular as much as they become also profoundly lucid-social.'[3] The act of recollection is formed by sharing impressions with others—other stories, and other histories.

Large museums follow the same standard guidelines when they digitize objects in their collections: a single item per image, either a solid color or a black to white gradient background, and two light sources to avoid massive shadows. The images of objects from the National Museum on Wiki Commons fail in each of those categories.

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[3] André Lepecki, *Singularities: Dance in the Age of Performance* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 173.

In one image, an Egyptian mummy is captured looking directly at the camera through its glass cabinet. On the surface of the reflective glass, the cabinet's light fixtures blend with the reflections of some parts of the neighboring vitrines, and the back of the mummy is reflected back from the mirror in the back of the cabinet. Also in the frame: a flipped image of a woman's flip-flop and the shadows of her hands, both of which probably belong to the person who took the picture. A disorienting collage made of multiple reflections. By looking at the image we can also know it was daytime, and it was summer. The amateur photo was poorly taken by a nonprofessional and contains a lot of visual 'noise' that makes it hard to look at the object.

In another image, thirteen butterflies from the Brazilian Amazon are pinned in three rows onto white cardboard. The white background is neatly framed and boxed in a plexiglass crate. A large window is reflected on the glass box, letting in the Brazilian lush greenery, which leaks back into the colorful taxidermy wings, while the silhouette of the

photographer's hand joins the final collage. These are local images, dictated not only by the time of day and the season, but also by the technical skills of the photographer, as well as their physical and cultural perspectives.

The only recorded survivors of an enormous collection are subjective, partial, and disorienting—the front and back of the object are seen together, up and down merge into a new collage caused by amateurism. By failing to perform' the standard museum image, they expose the discomforts of museum practices like ordering, displaying, and safeguarding of culture which are reflected in its sanitized images that are also technically out of reach. I suggest that the dispossessed images represent political unrest and become a site of struggle. The user-generated images are individual accounts of those who visit the museum and share their own images as they are: partial, anecdotal, broken, but also connected to other friends, families, places and spaces, as well as to other phones, IP addresses, and portals. The images are emancipated through their connection to living once lived, to ancestors once occupied. They are silent images of languages once spoken. In their technical and social images they form an 'unordered' collection that operates as a kind of personal and social recollection. The documentation process acts as post-production center, where the images constitute a montage of memories. The images' partiality, uncertainty, and high level of subjectivity encapsulate them as 'living archives' that provide a space for erased, forgotten, neglected, and new memories.[4] The information they contain is carried over multiple surfaces and the final result fails to split subject and object. The resulting media represent a struggle to remain, an urgent need to share—not merely as an act of broadcasting but as a deep act of being in touch with a place, its people, and its cultures. By refusing to split subjects from objects and by sharing images that are as unsorted and unprofessional as lives are, multiple collections represent a form of coming together as a relational mode that is a constant act of belonging and un-belonging.

The file names in the scattered collection are all different. Each file, named by its contributor, represents a subjective order and methodology of organizing knowledge. One is named 'Bivalve mollusks shells.jpg,' the other 'Sofia and Dino11.jpg.' Who was Sofia? Whether her parents were data activists, museum employees, responsible

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[4] The Uncertain Archives research group originates at the Department of Arts and Cultural Studies, University of Copenhagen, and is dedicated to thinking critically about the unknowns, the errors, and the vulnerabilities of archives in an age of datafication, see https://artsandculturalstudies.ku.dk/research/focus/uncertainarchives/.

archivists, or nostalgists, the primary-school-age Sofia and her purple stuffed monkey with long arms are now main protagonists of the national Brazilian collection, with a few dozen images named after her. The remaining collection erases and highlights simultaneously, remembers and forgets at the same time, and offers its own logic as a site of collective witnessing. The personal file system goes against any grand attempt at classification and joins a whole media archaeology of failed classification, whether the failure is acknowledged or not. The surviving digital collection encapsulates an emancipatory potential that refuses known indexing and offers an 'uncivilized' body of images.

This incidental digital collection produces its own relational interpretation—the sporadic and rather chaotic collection shift into the realm of representation as viewed by their own viewing subjects. Media archeologist Jussi Parikka notes that the 'double meaning of remain is that which is left behind as enduring legacy that is archived but also that which is left out of the classification or the archive. In other words, to remain and the remainder can paradoxically refer to what is being left as acknowledged but also as the unacknowledged.'[5] These are vulnerable images, as they emerge from a life lived and experienced, and therefore they 'split' the collection's original context and produce a new form of collection that is about heterogeneous multiplicities that bleed out of cumulative lists. As such, the act of bringing (the collection) 'back to life' is a process of hands-on epistemology[6] The act of recollection is an active work of fabulation of gaps and uncertainties. Crafting a documentation of the collection from the eye of its visitors is a process that is always in a state of multiplicity, a document that is formed by circulation technologies and is distributed, not set in place. This form of 'speculative documentation' is relational and operates more like an environment than a system of categories, a political-aesthetic event of shared experience. Thinking with Andre Lepecki's understanding of the act of witnessing as the capacity to share, transmit, and narrate an event that one has lived,[7] the act of collecting documents becomes an act of collective witnessing.

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[5] Jussi Parikka, 'Remain Scattered' in Ioana B. Jucan, Jussi Parikka, and Rebecca Schneider, ed, *Remain* (Lüneburg: Meson Press, 2019), 5.

[6] Ibid, p. 25

[7] André Lepecki, *Singularities: Dance in the Age of Performance* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 175.

From Collection to Correlations: Corporate documentation

Alongside the grassroots digitization efforts at the Museu Nacional, one can also visit the museum digitally using the Google Arts & Culture (GA&C) tour, which invites users to 'revisit or discover the museum digitally by experiencing the treasures that once adorned its galleries and use Street View to walk through the majestic space.'[8] A close study of the relationship between Google's art initiative and museums, raises a series of concerns regarding the ways corporate documentation sustains existing power structures, replicated colonial knowledge formation, and even amplified capitalist-colonialist data systems by a new ruling class of information capitalism.

In the Brazilian case, the lack of internal means joined a somewhat low priority for big tech companies like Google, who have invested in mass digitization in the past (Google Books) and who in the last couple of years partnered with over 1200 museums to host and sort their digital collections. The current nature of the partnership between Google and the museums it works with delineates that the institutions themselves are responsible for the digitization efforts[9]. Since the collection has to first be digitized by the institution—a long, labor-intensive, and costly process—further partnership, beyond the tour, did not materialize at the Museu Nacional. If the ownership and control of information represents the current state of economic, social, and political superiority, then the partnership offered by Google presents for many museums the opportunity to adjust to a new power structure by joining forces with the tech giant to provide infrastructural solutions for storage and access[10]. It allows them to be seen (and distributed) by

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[8] GA&C's section on Museu Nacional: https://artsandculture.google.com/project/museu-nacional-brasil.

[9] In 2016 Google released a camera that is tailored for documentation of collections in a super-high resolution gigapixel images. The product is titled the Art Camera. Google isn't charging organizations that want to use the camera, encouraging them to take advantage of it but makes indirect revenue from processing the images using Google tools and adding them to Google art collection.

[10] The terms "digital colonialism" and "digital imperialism" are used in variety of contexts; it is important to explain that the aspects of classic colonialism like dispossession from land and property, exploitation of labor, and exercising extraterritorial governance are being replicated and often amplified by a new ruling class of information capitalism. The notion of digital colonialism in relation to cultural heritage has been explored in depth by artist Morehshin Allahyari http://www.morehshin.com/digital-colonialism-2016-2019/. A similar term, techno colonialism, has been used by artist Geraldine Juarez in her specific writing and artistic project dealing with the implication of Google A&C: https://geraldine.juarez.se/publications/Intercolonial.pdf).

power[11]. Such a partnership model offers a new set of entanglements between power, knowledge, and institutions. Since the responsibility for digital collections is left to the institution and considering the lack of mutual understanding of what museum is, it is not surprising that of the 1200 museums that already partnered with Google, only 169 are in the Global South.

The skewed representation of art and of the history of arts can be unpacked in more than one way. It is situated within a wider field of critique of digital governance that studies the ways data is collected and processed. The Eurocentric aspect of Google's collection, as well as the aspiration to become a 'global museum' can be understood on several levels. First, the already existing biases in museum collections are amplified by collaborating with European museums, many of which hold vast collections, backed by solid infrastructure and archive methodology that supports digitization, maintain a high symbolic capital, and host large number of annual visitors. Google's collaboration with encyclopedic museums like the British Museum in London or the Metropolitan Museum in New York is not only a nod of agreement with the colonial traditions they represent, but also an opportunity for these biases to be transferred on to the digital realm. The terms 'digital colonialism' and 'digital imperialism' are used in variety of contexts; it is important to explain that aspects of classic colonialism like dispossession from land and property, exploitation of labor, and exercising extraterritorial governance are being replicated and often amplified by a new ruling class of information capitalism.

The tech ecosystem has replicated the technical and architectural infrastructure of colonialism with contemporary technologies based on data extraction, exploitation, and dispossession. These corporations use proprietary software, corporate cloud services, and centralized internet services to control and trade for their own profit. But postcolonial computation concerns go beyond the infrastructural and into the imaginative. They also involve aspects of participation and intelligibility, in the contexts of cultural encounter,

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When looking at the cultural arena, we can identify the prioritizing of Western collections whose holdings are based on colonial history, as well as the clear preference for Western museums as first partners. Google's collaboration with encyclopedic museums like the British Museum in London or the Metropolitan Museum in New York is not only a nod of agreement with the colonial traditions they represent, but also an opportunity for these biases to be transferred on to the digital realm. A nuanced example of GA&C's digital colonialism can be seen in Google collaboration with the British Museum. Together, they presented a new digital platform titled The Museum of the World, which invited users/visitors to have an "interactive experience, featuring some of the most fascinating objects in human history."[11] https://britishmuseum.withgoogle.com/—note how the URL itself reflects the legal bond between the two entities. A carful study for the project suggests a skewed sense of geography as well as a vague sense of past or future that run under the so-called "global museum."

particularly in terms of contemporary globalization and its protocols.[12] When looking at the cultural arena, we can identify the prioritizing of Western collections whose holdings are based on colonial history, as well as the clear preference for Western museums as first partners.

We should pay careful attention to the slow process of colonization of the digital sphere. If we step for a minute into the realm of the near future, we can draft a scenario where a privately owned nonphysical entity that provides storage services to millions of artifacts from around the world actively uses them as relational data points. As some museums are currently in the theoretical, legal, and logistical process of returning looted object to their original cultural heritage, the digital images of their entire collection are being captured by privately owned American companies that are slowly holding everything out there—and public knowledge is slowly coded into a private data.

It is important to preface that unlike the Museu Nacional's highly subjective surviving ghostly collection of photos, the digital collection that is integrated into models of capitalized information aims to operate on the basis of objective measurements. The data that being collected is appreciated through statistical measures that identify correlations and ultimately produce data that can be capitalized. In other words, if the former is based on relation, the latter is based on correlation. Even if a company like Google does not plan to collect direct profits from its cultural initiatives, digital collections constantly interact with other technical and social systems with distributed interfaces.

Leaking Lands

The media that remains does not retain a steady form. Parikka describes the remains as 'the unruly movement of bits and bops, of fragments and residues that do not remain in their place,'[13] but instead escape, slip, vanish. Residues are never clean. Limitations and affordances from other lives are always dragged with them on the supposedly revolutionary present. Through the analysis of the main two examples, I argue that the state of the residues consists from visible and hidden entanglements, temporal

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[12] Paul Dourish, Lilly Irani, and Kavita Philip, 'Postcolonial Computing: A Tactical Survey,' *Science, Technology, and Human Values*, vol. 37, no. 1 (2012): 3–29, 5.

[13] Jussi Parikka, 'Remain Scattered', in Ioana B. Jucan, Jussi Parikka, and Rebecca Schneider, ed, *Remain* (Lüneburg: Meson Press, 2019), 5.

configurations, data, affects, and values that are informed by changes in orders, but now can't get 'unhinged'. I would like to conclude with a third proposition, where the mode of documentation is shifting away from appearance, towards an artistic method that aim to rethink the residues *with* performance. It approaches the digital residues not as object form, but as an active form.

Leaking Lands is a video project that acts like a "digital séance," and approach the non-physical site of the surviving digital collection from the Museu Nacional as a site of intervention, using performance as a way to observe a sense of hybrid spatiality under the conditions of algorithmic rationality. The work intervenes in Google's virtual tour and Wiki Commons' collection and proposes a way to rehearse witnessing through conversations and collaborations with many stakeholders, from former employees to data activists and dance makers. Through their personal lenses, re-lived via digital space, the museum is mediated less as a site for art and ethnographical objects and instead as a memory palace riddled with memory holes. *Leaking Lands* emphasizes the capacity for remembering, organizing individual and collective memory not through a capitalist temporality that fragments and valorizes any experience, but instead by finding potentials for resistance in this moment of new production as act of collective witnessing.

The video piece takes an artistic

and Leaking Lands, Ofri Cnaani, 2021, video installation   rt of the project, I collaborated with

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engaging with the digital objects. Pleasure practice is an embodied method which was created from a practice of being in the pre-knowing state of pleasure. achugar's approaches the body in its prelingual state, when sensations don't have names yet. For our collaboration, I worked with a number of digital objects, searching for the point where the objects are too closed to be known. Using the 3D models, I started to wander through the back of the objects and "crawl" into their inner spaces. With achugar's guidance, the inner spaces of the objects became a landscape of caves and digital grottos, or bodily passages, like veins or a digestive system. I zoomed-in to the point the objects lost their shape. It is important to tote that these extreme zoom-ins were not scanned through the process of 3D modeling, but 'speculative spaces' calculated by machine. Like luciana's practice that aim to heal bodies from a transgenerational trauma of colonialism by reconnecting to the state of pleasure, I think of exposing the machine-made imaginary spaces as processing of healing, where objects can no longer be 'looked at' from a critical distance. Objects can no longer be 'known' or 'utilized' to a specific set of indexing or 'put to work' for a specific ideology. Objects are too partial, too closed, or too far away to be captured through a system of categorization, which makes them harder to possess. Such a process accepts the screen as a social agent that can transmit closeness. The performative dimension presents a collection that not neatly placed or linear, but a form of multiple temporalities: personal, institutional, technological times. In such third approach to documentation the objects are subjected to a methodology of movement, to a practice of pleasure. The residues no longer be displayed, instead they dematerialized into a collective arrangement of bodies, matter, and technology, not as a split, but as a temporal alliance. This is a performance-data-matter space that is yet known.

Museum and its Afterness

How are the digital leftovers to be understood, engaged with, and entered into a relationship with? Can we think of the museum's residues of body, data, and matter not in an object form? I argue that the residues are much more than their former material status and should be understood as an active network. They exist as matter: ashes, dust, meteorite, carbonized bones, mollusks collection in glass boxs, heated metals, vitrines covered with soot, 780 old Brazilian coins found in the debris after the fire, smoked pottery, and dead hard-drives. They live through

the flesh and the social body: burned skin, smoked lungs, tears, Indigenous ritual, ancient medicinal practices, the security personnel's routines, staff encounters, lost jobs, ad-hoc communities, and the paid museum maintenance which is undocumented labor of love. And finally, they are extant also through data: metadata of lost items, JPEGs and mp4s, documentation on personal devices, 3D scans, technical protocols, IP addresses, and digital platforms. The residues are the actual and virtual post-error form of the body-data-matter, which is always unstable.

Can these residues act as placeholders for what has yet to collapse and that which cannot yet manifest? The fire in 2018 is used as a departure point, but I wish to expand on questions that arise from it rather than discuss the museum's specificity. This essay annotates the digital leftovers and their complex relations to times and spaces that are plural and nonhomogeneous in an attempt to rethink the matter and temporality of remains in a way that goes beyond the specific conditions the Brazilian case exemplifies. My writing about the residues crucially avoids the nostalgic longing of colonial order and is equally pessimistic about the technological solution of "digital care" (or violent care) provided by Google Arts & Culture, which in and of itself is a colonial project that posits a problematic future for lost archives. Just as absence can sometimes be more meaningful than a presence, the invitation of being with the lacunae and presences of the residues holds a possibility of becoming an audience of the state of incompleteness. Residues survived after the museum, but could not adapt to the platforms they are hosted on. Their migration between orders is not complete.

The residual state, where everything is touching everything else, offers a different form of continuity between matter, technological infrastructures, embodied knowledge, political platforms, and social systems. The residues no longer respond to an inherited index produced by the violence of colonial thought. They represent a state of inseparability because they are incomplete, they fail to fit within systems of ordered value, and don't belong to a new model of systematic data reasoning. Denise Ferreira da Silva argues that inseparability has the capacity to release the thinking "from the grip of certainty and embrace the

imagination's power to create with unclear and confused, or uncertain impressions."[14] The residual state underlines the uncertainty and vulnerability that characterize contemporary modes of existence and can become an account of epistemologies that transform the standardization of knowledge as it is currently carried out by museums and archives as well as by technologies, digital media, algorithms, and data.

The residues don't have form the way objects do. They are the surplus of affects, techne, and affordances that are dragged with objects. They are active formations, the carriers of the know-how. In the case of the fire in the national museum, the objects were heated, melted, or burned, and the residues, whether physical or digital, aren't only what appears to have survived but their inherited agencies, entangled histories, and potential affordances. In their "leftover" form, apart from their material form, the residues are fragments, but they hold the potential of wisdom and access to the unknown. Rage is a residue. Fear is, too. Despair is a residue. The air quality after the fire is a residue, as is the hum of the broken air conditioner that short-circuited and started it all. The throb of exhausted tools that represent a greater system on the verge of collapse. The residues are the multiple communities that are drawn together, within unequal power relations, around collections. Residues are not dead but exist in a level of silence. A silence that systems of accumulation want to control. Although spectral, they resist. They are misfits of greater societal shifts.

Reading the end of the museum through the potential of its afterness marks a possible emergence of new kinds of connectivity that go against the classic system of indexical order, and instead open up to infinite variety. Such a reading marks a possible movement of the collected objects out of the museum and into the environment. The state of the residues forms an ecology of visible and hidden entanglements, temporal configurations, events, affects, and values. As the objects stay behind, limitations and affordances from other lives are always

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[14] Denise Ferreira da Silva, "On Difference Without Separability," *32nd Bienal de São Paulo – Incerteza Viva. Catalogue.*, eds. Jochen Volz and Júlia Rebouças (São Paulo: Fundação Bienal de São Paulo, 2016), 59.

dragged with them to the present. Their non-autonomous state acknowledges mutually intelligible discourses across differences in material, energy, and inheritance. The lack of stable form makes them impossible to measure, index, or order, instead calling for experimental forms of sensing and composing. The residual state not only stands for what comes after the institution, but can also represent knowledge based on continuity of transformation between technical systems, matter forms, and biological life forms. The residues are matter that becomes digital through us, but we are not saving them, the active residues can save us.