

# Creative Approaches to Archives

## PGCFAV1008

### MODULE DESCRIPTOR

<b>ECTS credits<sup>1</sup></b>	5	<b>Programme</b>	MLitt, MRes and PhD Professional Certificate in Creative Approaches to Archives Professional Diploma in Art & Design Research
<b>NQF level</b>	Level 9	<b>School</b>	School of Visual Culture
<b>Stage</b>	1	<b>Module Co-ordinator</b>	Dr Lisa Godson
<b>Trimester</b>	2 or 3	<b>Module Team</b>	School of Visual Culture staff
<b>Contact</b>	Neasa Travers, School Secretary: <a href="mailto:visualculture@staff.ncad.ie">visualculture@staff.ncad.ie</a>		
<b>Responsibility</b>	The NCAD Academic Council and School of Visual Culture Board have responsibility for this module.		

## 1. Introduction

This module offers opportunities to engage with a variety of archiving tools and practices that have grown in importance in art, design and visual culture research since the 1980s and remain a matter of considerable interest and intellectual energy.

Drawing on new thinking and methods in the digital humanities, archival practice as well as related fields such as oral history, participants in this module will develop a critical perspective on the interests and concerns which have shaped archives.

- What defines an archive?
- What makes something worth archiving?
- What effects does classification have on understanding?
- What effects has digitisation have on the organisation and distribution of knowledge?
- What is the relationship of the archive to history and memory?
- What claims do archives make on the future?
- What kind of inexistent archives are needed?

Participants will examine how contemporary artists and designers have made significant creative use of existing archives in artistic research and exhibition practices, or by organising documents and records of various (often, through self-archiving practices).

<sup>1</sup> European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System, where 60 ECTS credits equate to the workload of a full-time academic year (two trimesters)

By undertaking this module, participants will be encouraged to think through the ways different research tools and sources shape knowledge and practice, developing skills in criticality and responsibility in relation to research.

A number of classes offered in this module will take place *in situ* with, thereby acting as an introduction to key archival sources in Dublin as well as insight into the professional interests and concerns of archivists in institutions such as the Irish Folklore Commission Archive in UCD (the largest collection of folklore in Europe). The National Irish Visual Arts Library (NIVAL), based at NCAD, will form the setting for a workshop.

## **Indicative Content**

### *Creative Practice in the Archive*

An introductory overview of different kinds of sources, and a variety of creative research practices through a series of case studies exploring how different practitioners have utilised specific and different kinds of sources and tools to produce innovative artwork and design. Particular focus will be placed on lacunae: What kind of role can art and design play in creating a site for that which does not survive or has been forgotten or perhaps never existed (such as Jennifer Walsh's *Aisteach: Historical Documents of the Irish Avant-garde*)?

### *Archives*

An examination of the nature of different kinds of archives and archival knowledge, gaining an understanding of certain key local archives and their contents including the Irish Architectural Archive, Irish Film Archive, the National Archives and NIVAL. We will engage with key critical debates about the use of archives and archival research in different contemporary practices including moving image, fashion, graphic design and craft. This class will feature a workshop in NIVAL where students will engage with the materiality of this specific archive and undertake specific searches, gaining insight into ways they might mobilise it in their own practice.

### *Data*

In this class, students will consider some of the experimental methodologies developed in the Digital Humanities for the creative use of digital data. This will include established practices such as data visualisation and , as well as new phenomena such as the sonification of data sets (images, statistics and texts).

### *Testimony*

In this class creating, using and interpreting interviews and other forms of testimony will be considered. Students will explore the ethical, practical and technical aspects of undertaking interviews including recording, transcribing, editing as well as particular interview techniques. Focus will be placed on the question of the use of sensitive materials relating to intimate or traumatic experience: what obligations and responsibilities attach to such materials, particularly when in different forms of art and design practice?

### *Community and Self-archiving practices*

This class will examine archives connected to experimental and marginal cultures, social movements, and their histories. Self-archiving has been a means of self-representation for many such

communities. Opportunities to engage with new thinking and practice undertaken under the aegis of NIVAL's research project "Archiving Plurality: A Collaborative Process" will be explored.

## 2. What will I learn?

On successful completion of this module students will have achieved the following:

1. UNDERSTANDING of the interests and operations of archives and other forms of organised knowledge.
2. UNDERSTANDING of the impact of new technologies and thinking on archival practice.
3. CRITICAL ASSESSMENT of the ways in which art and design have engaged with archives.
4. SELF-REFLECTION on the ethical and political dimensions of their own practice as art or design researchers using archival material.

## 3. How will I learn?

This module will be taught in six 3-hour sessions. Students will prepare for these classes by reading set texts in advance.

Learning tool	Hours
Tutorial support	18
Specified Learning Activities	18
Autonomous Student Learning	64
<b>Total Workload</b>	<b>100</b>

## 4. What learning supports are provided?

Students will have access to a suite of workshops and tutorials provided by Linked-In Learning; the full facilities of the library; and a dedicated Canvas classroom. Classes will be supported with bibliographic materials, reading lists, etc.

## 5. Am I eligible to take this module?

### Module Requisites and Incompatibles

Pre-requisites	None
Co-requisites	None
Incompatibles	None
Prior learning	None
Recommended	For MLitt, MRes and PhD students, it is recommended that one of the following modules is also studied: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PGVC1001 Introduction to Research Methods</li> <li>• PGCFV1005 Intro to Research Methods for Art &amp; Design</li> </ul>

## 6. How will I be assessed?

Participants will write and research a 2000 word text that will take the form of a case study of an archive employing one or more of the themes which have been raised in the classes in this module.

Assessment tool	% of final grade	Timing
Assignment	100%	At the end of the module
Total	100%	

Assessment tool	Learning Outcomes assessed
Assignment	All learning outcomes

## 7. Feedback, results and grading

The assignment which constitute this module will be assessed on a pass/ fail basis. Written feedback will be supplied.

## 8. What happens if I fail?

### Resit Opportunities

Students will be given resit opportunities at the next available opportunity (typically the next trimester).

## 9. When and where is this module offered?

The module is delivered during Trimester 2 (January to May) in School of Visual Culture lecture rooms and seminar rooms, as well as online.

## 10. How will I have the chance to evaluate the module?

It is important to NCAD that students inform the development of teaching and learning at It is important to NCAD that students inform the development of teaching and learning at NCAD. We encourage all students to communicate their concerns and their observations about their study to members of staff so that any changes can be made in a timely manner.

About two-thirds of the way through the year, a student forum will be convened to gather students' comments about their study and the delivery of the programme. In addition, at the end of Trimester 2, students have the opportunity to complete an online evaluation of their study and experience at NCAD. These evaluation events are important to current and future students, to ensure we can enhance the delivery of programmes at NCAD.

In addition, you are invited to discuss your experience on the module with your lecturers at any point during the year. You can also relay your comments to the class student representative who will communicate your comments to the staff.

**For further details on the content of your module and teaching arrangements,  
consult your Programme or Module Handbook**