

CALL FOR PAPERS

## Special Issue of *Theatre Survey*

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### Special Issue on “Archiving: Who, Why, What, and How Do We (Re)member?”

Call for Papers, *due by 15 May 2025*, to be published as a special issue (67.1) of *Theatre Survey* in January 2026.

ASTR Conference 2023 had a marvelous working group on archival procedures that raised any number of political questions about who gets archived, how archival processes shape the field, why some performance materials get archived whereas others don't, who makes the decisions about how and why some materials are deemed worth saving, and how the digital age has changed and will continue to determine the who, why, what, and how of archival procedures.

This Call for Papers starts where that group left off. Questions were raised, and we are now looking for possible answers from scholars who use theatre and performance archives for historical research, production dramaturgy, authentic directing, acting that ghosts previous approaches, or design that pushes the boundaries of what archived shows tell us has come before. Our goal here is scholarship about practice rather than practice as scholarship. We invite any, and all archival research modalities to question the purpose of, need for, and procedural methods regarding how textual and performative theatrical artifacts are stored and retrieved.

Archiving demands funds, effort, both literal and metaphorical space, and of course the desire to hold onto the past(s). There is an inherent politics to who, why, what, and how a production gets archived. Thus, this Call for Papers invites scholarship on both well- and lesser-known archival locations and their means for material collection. Following a heavy reliance on libraries and museums as literal archival bodies in the past, possible topics for an expanded sense of “archive” include the following:

- What has changed about archival methods in a technological era?
- Are resources easier or harder to record, who gets to make these archival decisions, and what happens when a performance goes live with no way to record it?
- Where do oral histories fit into a highly technological age of archiving?
- What ethics are involved in recording and providing commentary about these performances?
- How is theatre history responsible for storing theatrical representation in ways that invite researchers, rather than dismiss their pursuit of archival representation?
- Are there living archives, and how do we historically honor their messages?

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These and many more questions are welcome for perusal.

Please send inquiries as to this special issue's topic to incoming Editor-in-Chief Telory Arendell at [tdarendell@missouristate.edu](mailto:tdarendell@missouristate.edu) for further clarification.