

As Per Our Last

In an archive, the veil between moments in time wears palpably thin.

miranda firmston
Leo Martinez

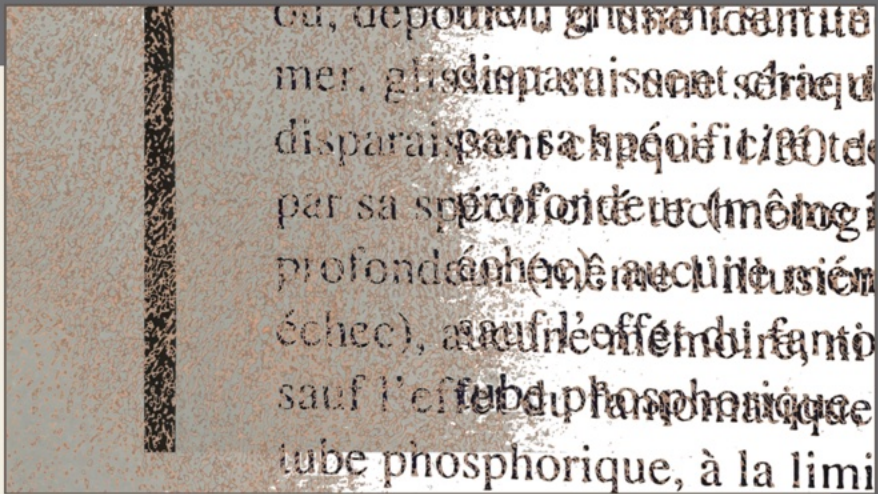
Performance: May 29, 2026 | 7 pm
Research: October 10, 2025 - May 29, 2026



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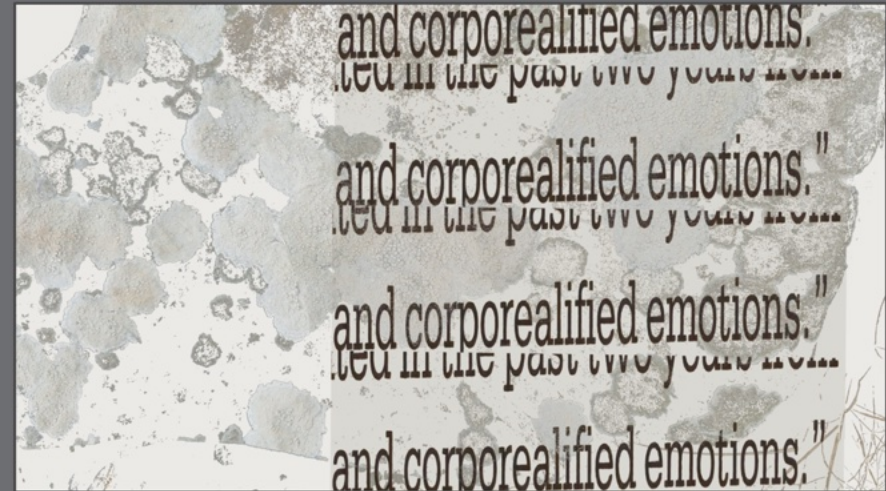
As Per Our Last explores the temporal reanimation of archival materials, approaching the **Crista Dahl Media Library & Archive** (CDMLA) not as a static repository, but as a collection of dynamic rearrangements of time. Here, reanimation occurs in relation: archival materials come alive when they encounter other contexts, other moments, other hands. Working among the boxes of the CDMLA, **Leonor Martinez** and **miranda firmston** inhabit this complex existence through performance, sound, and text, exploring VIVO Media Art as an archiving entity that continues to grow and shape itself as it has done for over fifty years.

Central to this exploration is the hidden scaffolding of VIVO's archival activity; artist correspondence files and organizational logbooks. These texts, which exist to support the foreground of archival activity, reveal the very conditions that have enabled VIVO to continue to evolve. Because of their casual, fragmentary, and relational nature, these materials do not fully recede into the past; they are particularly effective at rendering time thin. A grant application is filed, tapes are rented out, the door is left unlocked; these small, repetitive acts and documentation of maintenance become the heartbeat of the institution. They preserve the immediacy of their moment while leaving a referential space for other moments to coexist alongside them.



Meaning emerges through relation, allowing moments separated by years to overlap, brush up against one another, and be experienced together. By attending to these supporting materials, this project foregrounds the (often invisible) labor and relational networks that sustain archival practices, revealing how the past continues to resonate in the present. Things change but the gestures stay the same; through a network of interdependent performative interfaces, archival texts are spoken, circulated, degraded, and returned to the space in reanimated forms.

Sound, as a time-based medium, functions as the primary way these temporal relationships are made perceptible. By layering, looping, and distorting fragments of spoken text from the archive, multiple histories are allowed to occupy the same present moment. Performance brings these materials into the here-and-now, rendering them wholly immediate and allowing witnesses to experience these archival moments as active, alive, and turbulent.



To engage with these fragments, the project utilizes a set of complementary interfaces, or appendages, that maintain a mutually dependent relationship. This digital system models the patterns that transform the archive as it lives and breathes; text is spoken, layered, and transformed between the appendages, mimicking the entropy of tape-looping and the natural dissemination and decay of information over time. Through this embodied interaction, the archive's temporal structure — its repetitions, resonances, and inherent biases — becomes a physical pressure in the room. The past does not quietly stay behind us; it repeats, reforms, and continues to circulate through the hands and voices of the present.

Credits

Artists/Researchers: miranda firmston and Leonor Martinez
VIVO Archive Manager: Karen Knights
VIVO Program Manager: Lauren Marsden
Archivist: Syr Reifsteck
ECUAD Project Lead: Peter Bussigel
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Citations

— “ — [T]ransitory thoughts and corporealized emotions.

SVES fonds, Video Out files, Correspondence, “Exhibition promotional material from Shirley Bear at Urban Shaman Gallery to Video Out,” c. September 2003.

— “ — Work that looks at the interface of the body and the city (the body as race, the body as sexuality, the body as signifier of economic status).

SVES fonds, Video Out files, Correspondence, “Letter from Karen Knights at Video Out to Karen Wong at Videographe” August 10, 1996.

— “ — Alas, I don’t know when the board meeting is! I suspect IFVA doesn’t know either! If you hear wind of a date, do let me know.

— “ — I hope you’re well. Vancouver is steaming with heat, I work in a muggy crowded office, and escape to the air conditioned edit-room to work on my video as much as possible. In less than a week I flee to the mountains and the rivers....Do you get some holidays?

— “ — Hope to hear from you soon, all the best,

SVES fonds, Media Artists and Activists Documentation (MAAD) files, “Letter from Marusya Bociurkiw,” c. 1997.

— “ — The Video Out collection addresses issues of racism, feminism, sexuality, human rights, the environment and the media, genres ranging from educational documentary to experimental narrative, and 70’s conceptual video to 90’s media.

SVES fonds, Video Out files, “Video Out bio,” c. 1995.

— “ — We have wine and talk and talk.

— “ — The manager is a 19 or 20 year old guy.

— “ — Cable, cable, cable, everyone’s dream.

— “ — Video women, video women, video women—7 video tapes on women.

SVES-GB-A044, The Bus Book: Newfoundland or Bust, June 12, 1975(?), p. 4.

— “ — We get up Shawn views tapes, Karyn takes bath, Andy plays with bus. Late Karyn + Andy phone contacts. Shawn still views tapes.

SVES-GB-A044, The Bus Book: Newfoundland or Bust, June 14, 1975(?), p. 7.

— “ — The series was abysmally attended, except for the march 29/96 gay and lesbian night at which we had a total of 19 people in the audience. Sigh... So I had fun personally, but am annoyed professionally.

SVES fonds, Video Out files, Correspondence, “Letter from Sue Donaldson at Open Space to Karen Knights at Video Out,” April 15, 1996.

— “ — This is a very rushed proposal, coming in the last ten minutes of my shift, but here goes-

SVES fonds, Video Out files, Correspondence, “Letter from Video Out to curators meeting at Western Front,” c. September 1997.

— “ — Violet letters strike keys with violet letters; fingers with black letters strike keys with black letters; fingers with blue letters strike keys with blue letters.

SVES fonds, Media Artists and Activists Documentation (MAAD) files, “Promotional material for Oh Pen! Poetry Reading at Western Front,” November 21, 1985.

— “ — Streets covered in snow, sun shining, customers waiting when I arrive at 11:02 am. Andy returns early from Nevada after being robbed by one-armed bandits.

SVES-GB-A043, Day Book 18, December 27, 1982, p. 1.

— “ — Apparently uneventful day, although everybody who’s anybody was here at one point. Editing room is thrashed - ... a mess.

SVES-GB-A043, Day Book 18, January 17, 1982, p. 8.

— “ — Don’t know why... but it’s 9:30 am and here I am.

SVES-GB-A043, Day Book 18, January 29, 1982, p. 13.

— “ — One phone call after another, phenomenal.

— “ — Leak still leaking called plumber. Plumber fixed leak.

SVES-GB-A043, Day Book 18, April 8, 1982, p. 36.

— “ — An old policy which has been stated + re-stated + has now been restated again.

SVES-GB-A043, Day Book 18, April 11, 1982, p. 37.

— “ — Good morning. How fortunate are we that nothing seems to be missing. I walked inn here without having to use my key. The (front) door was not locked!!!

SVES-GB-A043, Day Book 18, August 5, 1982, p. 74.

— “ — Came inn, asked a few questions.. I lied through my teeth...

SVES-GB-A043, Day Book 18, August 19, 1982, p. 77.

— “ — Scored a half track for half price. (...) We’ll get it when we pay for it.

SVES-GB-A043, Day Book 18, October 14, 1982, p. 89.

— “ — Things are so depressing that I’m in a good mood. One way to go from here.

SVES-GB-A043, Day Book 18, October 2, 1982, p. 91.

— “ — Dirty dishes swimming in cold pools of dark greasy water

SVES-GB-A043, Day Book 18, October 24, 1982, p. 91.

— “ — Busy day.

SVES-GB-A043, Day Book 18, June 3, 1982, p. 55.