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Cheryl Sim's Un jour, Un jour: Imagining potential futures in the fragmented archives of Expo67

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In the summer of 2017, the city of Montréal was transformed into a living archive: all the public spaces were filled with posters, billboards and photographic displays using archival records to advertise various events related to the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Montreal's World Fair of 67, also known as Expo67. The Fair had quite an impact on the city starting from the mid-60s: in the years prior, the province of Quebec, where Montreal is located, had just left a socio-political era called "La Grande Noirceur" (The Great Darkness), an era marked by religious and social conservatism as well as cultural void, so the years leading to the Expo felt like a new sort of excitement, a becoming-modern of a city that had just left the yoke of its patriarchal father. From 1962, the year the Expo was announced, to the actual event in 1967, the city was able to transform itself at an unprecedented pace and many saw this as an opportunity for Montreal to finally synchronize to the rhythms of modernity<sup>1</sup> that most of the surrounding urban centers had already been enjoying for a few decades. In 1967, the Expo, with its 38 national pavilions, 7 provincial pavilions and 24 sponsored pavilions, attracted more than 50 million paid admissions (The Canadian Encyclopedia). These numbers had a quite significant impact on the economic and the cultural standing of the burgeoning city.

But at the same time, Montreal has always been a contested territory on many levels: it sits on traditional and unceded Kanien'keha:ka (Mohawk) territory, is part of the (Francophone) province of Québec which has the contentious history of wanting to claim its independence from (Anglophone) Canada, while also being considered one of Canada's most urban and important economic center. These tensions, coupled with the always-already problematic colonial histories of World Fairs (Richman, 2010) are not, however, part of the dominant, national narrative that surround the mystic of the Expo.

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<sup>1</sup> I use the term modernity as the ensemble of particular socio-cultural norms, attitudes and practices that are understood to bring a society from traditional to modern. This term is often associated with theories of globalization, and while its use is highly debated amongst scholars, I believe that it useful to convey the story that "modern" World's Fairs aspire to tell.



*Figure 1.* Subway ad for *Rêver le monde* (Dreaming the World), the summer exhibit at Musée Stewart, Montréal’s history museum. The image depicts three significant structures that were constructed for the Expo: Habitat 67 (a state-of-the-art apartment building in Montréal’s Old-Port), the biosphere (the American pavilion), and a Calder sculpture entitled “Terre des Hommes,” along with an image of the moon landing. Inserted into the figure of a human, this poster, designed in 2017, is a throwback to the visual imaginary of the Fair. © Musée Stewart Museum, 2017.

The celebratory archival images on display all over city in the summer of 2017, then, were meant to throw us right back into a certain apolitical idealization of the 1960s: groovy typographies, retro images, eye-catching historical representation of buildings and bold colors. A mixture of technological and architectural awe, along with a festive strand of nostalgia united all these billboards together and proposed a very self-serving look at what the Expo67 still means to Montreal today. Indeed, the success of the Expo was quickly associated to a certain idealization of a united and solid Canadian nation, or rather, it became the idealized site where the nation could enact the imaginary process of becoming a homogenous and harmonious monocultural community. Because of all the socio-

political complexities underlying the Fair, many stories simply had to be forgotten to transform Expo67 into this straightforward dominant narrative about national social harmony and economic excellence.



Figure 2. Promotional image for *A la Recherche d'Expo67*, Montréal contemporary art museum's summer exhibit, taken in June 2017 in downtown Montréal.

But this seemingly unified nostalgic aesthetic was disturbed by one particular image: that of a young woman of color, wearing the official "hostess" outfit of the Expo, and standing in front of the Biosphere (the American Pavilion, one of the last remaining buildings from the Expo67), looking down. Offering a more intimate look into the Expo, the image greatly contrasted with the large-scale, impersonal photographs that were spread out across the city (Figure 2).

Upon investigation, I discovered that this particular image, a still taken from Cheryl Sim's 2017 video installation *Un jour, un jour (One day, one day)*, was the promotional poster for "*A la Recherche d'Expo67 (In Search of Expo67)*," a contemporary art exhibit at Montréal's public contemporary art museum, curated by Expo67 scholar Monika Kin Gagnon. The museum, itself

located in downtown Montreal, on Place des Arts (Plaza of the Arts), used this poster to promote the exhibit all around the city, allowing Cheryl Sim's imagined contemporary image to circulate alongside the rest of the historical images. Thinking about my own reaction to seeing the image for the first time, I could not stop to wonder what it was about this particular image that made it so arresting? Why did it strike me as so different from the rest of the commemorative imagery across the city? This paper is an attempt to answer these questions by looking at one artist's response to the problem of (under)representation in the archival legacy of Expo67 as well as her quest to imagine alternative forms of national belonging.

The rest of this paper, then, focuses the archival imaginaries put forward by artists participating in the exhibit but most specifically on Cheryl Sim's video installation *Un jour, un jour (One day, one day)*. Not only did the work of the artist caught my attention as I was biking around the city, but her work gives voice to a community that has historically been largely erased from the legacy of the Expo: the immigrants, more specifically the Sino-Filipino immigrants. In this particular piece, the artist also highlights the value that affect has on remembrance. In *Un jour, un jour*, Sim rediscovers and reassembles her family's photo album in a multi-screen video work that imitates the multi-screens and immersive environments often associated with the Expo. The artwork represents the distinctive medial disorder prominent in the Expo's archives by offering counter narratives: a video installation in search of its story and still-images seeking for their lost voices.

In order to provide a critical reading of this artwork, I apply Anne Gilliland and Michelle Caswell's (2016) framework of the archival imaginary and of the impossible archival imaginary, as articulated in their article, "Records and their imaginaries: Imagining the impossible, making possible the imagined." Imaginary, in this case, is presented as a productive force in the sense that the processes of imagination do not solely serve to represent absences as much as they participate actively in articulating these absences and holding responsible the institutional power that help to create them (Gilliland & Caswell, 2016). Sim uses the imaginary to actively remake the social through an imagined archival narrative. In such a way, the

imaginary in her work becomes the structure of what is possible and the impossible archive represents the voices that are missing. Impossible archival imaginaries, Gilliland and Caswell argue, “are archivally impossible in the sense that they will never result in actualized records in any traditional sense, although they may exist in some kind of co-constitutive relationship with actualized records” (p. 61). These imaginaries can “provide a trajectory to the future out of a particular perspective on the past and may build upon either actual or imagined documentation and narratives” (p. 61). Sim’s work is particularly well-suited to talk about impossible archival imaginaries, as her futuristic alter-ego digs into an old photo album in order to reestablish her family’s modest history within the larger legacy of the Expo by presenting their story as a time-travelling one. Throughout the rest of this article, I argue that the records, imagined and actual, chosen by Cheryl Sim for her video, “offer important affective counterbalances and sometimes resistance to dominant legal, bureaucratic, historical and forensic notions of evidence that so often fall short in explaining the capacity of records and archives to motivate, inspire, anger and traumatize” (p. 61).

### **Ephemerality in the Archives:**

Jennifer VanderBurgh (2014) is right when she says that ephemerality is often a question of value: “that which is valued tend to be saved<sup>2</sup> while everything else is left to entropy, deterioration and other forms of degradation and loss” (p. 210). Monika Kin Gagnon, the lead researcher and co-curator of *A la Recherche d’Expo* exhibit at the Musée d’Art Contemporain (MAC) knows this all too well. For more than a decade, she has been fighting against both physical decay and institutional resistance to preserve the memory of her late father, Charles Gagnon, a filmmaker whose immersive film *The Eighth Day*, caused major drama when it premiered at the Christian Pavilion during the Expo. The multimedia production amazed fans of new

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<sup>2</sup> The evaluation of archival materials (appraisal) still remains a widely disputed area in the field of archival studies: it varies between understanding archivists as simple custodians of information to seeing them as active decision makers that shape local, national and global histories.

technological thrills but its positioning of religion as the cause of most wars and human suffering shocked many observers who contested the pavilion and its depiction of religion (Gagnon, 2010, p. 145). The filmic material was later left to decay in the archives from which Monika Kin Gagnon was only able to partially reconstitute its narrative using the various fragments that she was able to find in diverse repositories across the country (p. 145).

It is with that in mind that Gagnon decided to get involved with the MAC's exhibit curator Lesley Johnston to collectively reimagine and offer new perspectives on the legacy of the Expo67 by using its fragmented and scattered archive in a similar fashion. The summer-long exhibit (from June 21, 2017 to October 1, 2017, roughly covering the original calendar of the Expo) presented the work of 19 Canadian artists and offered a rather diversified and inclusive series of voices, from local and pan-national artists, as well as artworks in four different languages. Out of these nineteen artists, sixteen proposed new artworks and while there was no official theme for the exhibit, most of these 16 artists engaged critically with archival records, highlighting losses and absences while simultaneously celebrating the creative legacy of the fair.

In an interview between Gagnon and Lesley Johnston (2018), the co-curator of the exhibit, they mentioned how "the fragmented archives" that surround the historical legacy of the Expo was both a source of inspiration and of disorientation for the artists. The co-curators used the term "fragmented archives" to describe not only the set of complex rules that govern archival access and use, but also to express the multiplicity of archival sites that constitute the Canadian archival system, where artists and users alike can find themselves confronted by continually incomplete narratives. And while the theme of the "archives" was not imposed, many artists directly took on those archival tensions between the dominant discourses and ideologies that surround the national imaginary of the Expo and the more localized and personal experiences that had often been ignored by these dominant historical investigations.

While this paper devotes most of its focus to Cheryl Sim's video, I will begin this article by highlighting some of the other contributions to the exhibit in order to demonstrate what sort of archival research and use was performed by some of the other

artists. Art practices centering around archival records are often historicized by looking at the archival turn in visual arts that happened during the 1960s. Previously understood to be a documentation of an artist's work, as something external to the creative process, archival records slowly became part of the material or conceptual components of artwork (Benichou, 2009). This brief overview proposes to look at the multitude of ways artists engage with, question and critique archival records and archival institutions. I argue that such undertakings can help develop a critical view of national memory while simultaneously inciting action.

### **A la Recherche d'Expo67**

As Jerome Delgado (2017) confirmed in the daily French newspaper *Le Devoir*, one of the most talked about works during the *A la recherche d'Expo67* exhibit was the restoration of *La Vie Polaire* (Polar Life) and its concurrent three-screen reconstitution. Directed by Graeme Ferguson, who is attributed with being one of the co-inventors of IMAX technology, the original film made use of the spatial complexity of an early IMAX prototype and was screened in a room with a rotating sitting area, where spectators could lounge and find themselves immersed in the eleven screens on which the film was simultaneously projected (Les Archives de Montreal, 2014). Telling the story of a group of urban ethnographers going into the northern communities across the world (most of the film focuses on Canada's indigenous communities, but the filmmakers also go to Lapland, Siberia and Alaska), the film uncritically embodied the colonial and imperial discourses implicit to the larger theme of the Expo (and of World's Fairs in general). Often mediated through modern technologies, these stories of foreign and/or distant land were fundamental to the imagined globalism implicit to World's Fair.

This time, however, the restoration of the film does not have the same technical complexity: exhibited in the basement screening room, this three screens projection of *La Vie Polaire* showcases how difficult it is to restore old films, and that is if they are preserved and catalogued properly. After finding the unidentified eleven interpositive reels of the original film, Stephanie Cote, an archivist for the Cinémathèque, wasn't even certain that the necessary tools to salvage the reels even existed



(Lemay, 2014). And even with a quadripartite collaboration between the Cinémathèque Québécoise, the National Film Board of Canada, the CINEMAexpo67 research group and the city of Montréal, the project encountered many financial troubles and was almost left incomplete. This straightforward success story (lost, found, and restored) surrounding the restoration of *La Vie Polaire* plays out as a sort of archival fairy tale: overcoming the difficult limits of archival labor and coming into the world into its own, but not without exemplifying, at the most basic level, the complex relationship between archival institutions, archival practices, money and technology.

Also present in the exhibit was David K. Ross' beautiful homage to affective memories of the Expo, "Souveraine comme l'amour" (Sovereign Like Love). This piece plays into a very different emotional register than does the restoration of *La Vie Polaire*. Ross, an artist and an architect, worked with the architectural record of the Expo67 site, found at the Canadian Centre for Architecture in Montréal, to map out the trajectory of the monorail, the popular and futuristic mode of mass transportation during the Expo, to recreate its route using a drone camera. The emblematic itinerary is now empty, and Ross' piece juxtaposes archival memories with physical absence. But the monorail was not simply a straightforward way to get from one section of the fair to another: the route offered many vantage points, picture-ready curves and turns.

However, after not finding any personal photos of these "points of interests" in the architectural records he looked at, Ross explained, in an interview with co-curator Monika Kin Gagnon for Concordia University's "Thinking Out Loud" podcast (2017), that he chose drone vision to anchor his project in the contemporary and to give a view onto the site through a technology that has as much commercial appeal as Super8 (the commercial technology of choice on the site of the Expo in 1967) did back then. If 50 years later, the equivalence between the archival records (maps, drawings, and scale models) and the site is no more, Ross' work seeks to recreate the now-empty affective trajectory that more than a million visitors used during the original Expo. David K. Ross' critical and medial conception of urban memory and site-specific history proposes a resistance to a contemporary urbanization model that is amnesiac while resisting the urge to stay frozen into an understanding of the

urban space only through heritage (Benichou, 2009, p. 119). Ross' high-tech images engender the possibility of new records that "exist in some kind of co-constitutive relationship with actualized records" (Gilliland & Caswell, 2016, p. 61). Using the archive as a site that allows new knowledges to be generated, Ross' piece conveys that archival imaginaries have the potential to create new and concrete affective realities.

The final piece I will discuss in this brief thematic introduction is Duane Linklater's "Earth Mother Hair, Indian Hair, and Earth Mother Eyes, Indian Eyes, Animal Eyes." A reproduction of indigenous artist Norval Morrisseau's *Earth Mother and her Children*, a wood panel painting exploring "Anishinaabe's world view and a biocentrist solution for caring for our world" that was meant to be displayed on the exterior of the Indians of Canada Pavilion (Robertson, 2016, p. 80). On the online portal for *Canadian Art*, a magazine celebrating Canadian artists, Linklater's piece is described as examining the "institutionalization and historicization of indigenous bodies and artworks in the archives" (Canadian Art). The wood painting was originally massively censored, leaving Morrisseau disillusioned by the whole project of the Expo. Using records found at the archives of the gallery that represented Morrisseau, Linklater was able to (re)produce the original uncensored artwork. The project, then, becomes one that addresses "cultural loss and recovery as well as authenticity, appropriation and authorship." This constant struggle, this uneven fight between the Indigenous populations and institutional power in Canada, Linklater reminds us, is still experienced, witnessed and imposed today (Canadian Art). His project echoes Caswell and Gilliland's critique of Duranti's conception of the record as being only the by-products of "legal, administrative and historical constructions of evidence" (Gilliland & Caswell, 2016, p. 71) and, additionally, proposes to look at how the incorporation of records by or about Indigenous people into the national settler archival repositories (Ghaddard, 2016, p. 23) has been crucial for the constitution of a settler historical *archival memory* (at the expense of an Indigenous one), which transforms Canadian national shame and guilt into national glory and honor. In this particular case, it seems, Linklater's calls on the imaginary, "to instantiate the possibility of a justice that has not yet arrived" (Gilliland & Caswell, 2016, p. 65).

*A la recherche d'Expo67* proposes a critical reading of the fleeting, obsolete, or forgotten nature of our interactions with archival records, at times highlighting the economic obstacles, at other times, using documented institutional obstructions to propose criticisms. In a series of interviews conducted for Concordia's podcast "Thinking Out Loud," Gagnon (2017b) explained how important it was for her to not give too much instruction as to what and how artists could contribute while simultaneously helping them frame their contributions around the theme of the Expo. Her goal was to help the artists get involved with the "fragmented archives" of the Expo, and to let these encounters with archival records be the start of their creative fire. If these three pieces, by retracing known histories, serve to exemplify the tendency of archival institutions to erase and exclude certain types of records and communities from their collections, Sim's negotiations of these archival omissions are offering an even deeper critique of memory and archival institutions. Questioning the lack of productive space left in the archives for personal, ephemeral and affective records amidst the larger imaginary of the Fair, the artist proposes a very intimate counter-narrative that combines these absences with imagination to propose new visions for the future.

### **Un jour, un jour**

If most of the public programs seen around the city kept the records in the realm of a nostalgic historical past, Sim's work confronts the institutional history that have kept the memories of her community, and many like hers, out of the official story of the Expo, by putting affect and personal narratives at the forefront of her work. But her piece does even more. Not only does it highlight the contradictions imminent in the world-building discourse of the Expo (world building for whom? Who is able to participate in such a project? Who gets to speak?), it also uses the archives as a potential site of transgression, where imaginary, affect and subversive power can transform the future. Marika Cifor argues in "Affecting Relations: Introducing Affect Theory to Archival Discourse" (2016) that "recognizing and positioning affective value as an appraisal criterion calls on archivists and scholars to carefully consider the affect of records themselves in relation to their creators, subjects, users, larger

communities and systems of power” (p. 14). Once affective relations are recognized as core elements of how “we form, sustain and break social relations, differences and individual and collective identities” (p. 8) then maybe archives can participate in their valuations. Sim’s work, I argue, performs evaluative work of its chosen and imagined archival material and insists that they be recognized as valuable additions to a potentially more inclusive and complete national collection.



*Figure 3.* Image of the display of “Un Jour, un jour” at the Musée d’art Contemporain de Montréal. © CINEMAexpo67, 2017.

Cheryl Sim’s piece was not only the piece that welcomed every museum visitor into the exhibit, it was also the one that served as an invitation to the event itself. On display all over the city in the summer of 2017, the image of the artist, who plays her own alter-ego in the piece, disturbed the dominant narrative that the other billboards promoting the Expo’s 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary all seemed geared toward. The ambiguous temporality of the image, when put alongside a series of historical images all over the city, played in Sim’s favor. In a personal conversation I had with the artist (2018), Sim mentioned how she and Gagnon had many discussions about the implication of choosing her

racialized image as the main promotional image for the event, but ultimately decided that this type of strategic representation was what the exhibit, and Sim's work, was truly about. Questioning who gets to participate in the celebration of Montreal's history, of Montreal's modernity, of Montreal's nation-building, Sim's work thinks through archival legacy, collective memory, and national belonging.

The piece is a technically simple three-screen video installation, displayed on a hexagonal bench. The images on each screen, sometimes in synch, sometimes out of synch, alternate between waves, photos from a family scrapbook and images of the artist dressed in an Expo hostess outfit, posing in front of the remaining structure on the Expo island. The narrative is also simple: Sim's alter ego discovers an old scrapbook on the grounds of the Fair, featuring pictures of her parents' visit to the Expo during their honeymoon, thus allowing her to discover a whole new, previously unknown and alternate Expo history. The artist's Sino-Filipino's heritage is put at the forefront of the video with visual cues constantly reminding the viewer of the artist's and her parents' racialized bodies. While these images are not contrasted with anything within the artwork itself (Cheryl and her parents are the only individuals appearing in the video), the decision to use a still from the video as the promotional material for the whole exhibit articulates a desire to insert the brown body of the artist within the overtly White-dominant imaginary of the Fair. The video work is situated in the first room of the exhibit and if a visitor chooses to do so, they can sit on the bench, and listen to an electropop cover of the Expo67 theme song performed by the artist synchronized to the video.

### **Archival Imaginaries:**

Michelle Caswell (2014) defines the archival imaginary:

. . . the dynamic way in which communities creatively and collectively re-envision the future through archival interventions in representations of the shared past. Through the archival imaginary, the past becomes a lens to the future; the future is rooted in that which preceded it. Through the archival

imaginary, the future can be conceived through kernels of what was possible in the past. (p. 49)

Sim echoed that feeling in a conversation we had around her piece in Montréal in January of 2018. For the artist, mixing past and future was not only meant to present a contemporary narrative for women of color, but to imply a critique of the linear and dominant narratives of the archives. By adding new temporal layers to the archives, through her temporally-ambiguous alter ego interaction with the past aside concomitant images of her parents at the Fair, Sim not only complicates the viewers' relationship to their own social memory but also highlights the limits of archival institutions. By recasting historical events using both "real" and "imagined" images, Sims forces the viewer to wonder if the protagonist of the video was truly a part of the historical event and therefore deserves to be represented as part of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary festivities. By juxtaposing this imaginary cultural icon (part hostess, part immigrant) with the imaginary of a culturally constructed narrative (that of the city-state), Sim's project plays with this double-entendre of memory-making as fiction-making, but also as an aspirational form of future-making. The video, then, becomes a sort of fantastical work in which the artist randomly finds images reflecting herself and her community. Cheryl Sim's work is situated at the crossroad of these two realities: her work repositions immigrant narratives within Montreal's history of progress. It draws upon seemingly forgotten historical records and creates new ones, in order to recreate event that probably did occur but were never preserved as part of the larger nation's history.

As I hope to have convinced the reader by now, both World's Fairs and archival records are often associated with a dominant viewpoint and with the reinforcing of that viewpoint to a structural and ideological narrative. During our interview, Sim mentioned how aware she has been of the way these ideologies surrounding "official" narratives (either archival or historical) affect those who are excluded from them. In 2018, Sim told me how her father's own archival impulse was to juxtapose their personal honeymoon photos with "actual postcards from the pavilions they visited," as if their personal memories, their personal visual archives, were not legitimate enough to validate

their experience at the Fair. For Sim, it is precisely the photos of her parents that got her interested in the Expo itself, rather than the publically preserved visual records of the Fair; it was the private, familial records in the form of photographs that pushed Sim to create this character. Her artwork would therefore show her father that they, in fact, had been part of the official history all along, and that no one would contest the veracity of their images if she could reaffirm that her racialized body could be considered part of the Expo history. Through Sim's work, then, Gilliland and Caswell's (2016) critique of Duranti's conception of the record as being only "the by-products, essence or other forms of documentation of actions or acts that are evaluated, valued and employed according to legal, administrative and historical constructions of evidence (i.e., they are probative, dispositive, narrative or supporting with regard to an action or act)" becomes powerful and key. In *Un jour, un jour*, the "evidence" is located in her family's personal memories of their visit to the Fair and in the frailty she saw in her father's methodological crafting of these memories.

### **Representational Belonging:**

In "To Suddenly Discover Yourself Existing": Uncovering the Impact of Community Archives," authors Michelle Caswell, Marika Cifor, and Mario Ramirez (2016) establish a clear theoretical framework "for understanding several levels through which representational belonging operates in community archives" (p. 32). Representational belonging "denotes the ways in which community archives can empower people who have been marginalized by mainstream media and memory institutions to have the autonomy and authority to establish, enact, and reflect on their presence in ways that are complex, meaningful, substantive, and positive to them in a variety of symbolic contexts" (Caswell et al., 2018, p. 76). For the authors, "three levels of impact—epistemological, ontological, and social—together undergird our conception of representational belonging." (Caswell et al., 2016, p. 32). They go on to clearly explain how these three levels function within the archives:

On an epistemological level, community archives provide empirical evidence for a community to assert its existence in the

past. Epistemology, or the theory of how we know what we know, aptly describes the ways in which community archives enable communities to establish their histories through material artifacts. By collecting materials that document the previously unknown history of a community, community archives assert we were here. This epistemological impact also has an ontological effect. Ontology, or the study of the nature of being, examines how people exist in the world. On an ontological level, community archives affirm I am here. They reflect and assert identities in the present, allowing individuals “to suddenly see themselves existing” in ways they could not and did not previously. This epistemological and ontological impact, in turn, has a social impact. On a social level, community archives assert you belong here to members of the communities they serve. At the social level, our research showed how one community archives enabled both academics and their students to feel a sense of belonging and inclusion with each other through interaction with the archives. (p. 32)

While their research centers around a very particular type of archives, community archives, this framework applies perfectly to Sim’s story. For Sim, the ontological nature of the existence of her personal records allowed her to question the social narratives promoted by established archival institutions. When not finding anything that could testify to her and her family’s history in the “fragmented” archives, she decided to create her own narrative using what she knew to be true about the Expo: it is the place her parents went to start their new life together.

Sim told me that when someone inherits a memory, like the photo album she received from her parents, it transforms and transposes that memory into a site of potentiality for the present and the future. Sim’s piece is not only about the affect she found in her family’s personal history but it also serves as an appeal for the reinterpretation of national belonging. By inserting herself in the history of an event that continues to shape the idea of what Montreal was, is and can be, Sim asks what the absence of certain communities from this broad history means, questioning the neutrality and validity of memory-making institutions.

## **Conclusion**



Throughout this article, I've argued that Sim's piece *Un jour, un jour* becomes a site where archival records can be rearticulated and conceptualized in favor of those from marginalized positions, where tentatively rewritten history to include communities that lived within the proscriptive local of the governmental archival structure becomes a project of the future rather than an historicizing. By highlighting the works of some fellow artists from the exhibit, who all focus on reconstituting known histories that were inadequately preserved, I was able to emphasize how Sim's contribution not only critiques archival institutions for their lack of commitment to different communities, but also, how it recasts these absences as sites of new potentials. As an artist, Sim performs what Flinn, Stevens, and Shepherd (2009) assert as ". . . the endeavor by individuals and social groups to document their history, particularly if that history has been generally subordinated or marginalized, is political and subversive. These 'recast' histories and their making challenge and seek to undermine both the distortions and omissions of orthodox historical narratives, as well as the archive and heritage collections that sustain them" (pp. 3-4). But she also does much more. The artist also creates a response these archival absences or archival ruins and combats oblivion by recasting her history, her family's history as part of the official story of the Expo. She does so not only because this history is of personal interest to her, but rather, because these omissions represent the larger failure of mainstream society to correctly represent diverse cultural inputs. In *Un jour, un jour*, Sim creates her own flexible history to input into the larger official story of the Expo. This piece, I argue, follows what Joan Schwartz and Terry Cook (2002) suggest: "by treating records and archives as contested sites of power, we can bring new sensibilities to understanding records and archives as dynamic technologies of rule which actually create the histories and social realities they ostensibly only describe" (p. 7).

Similarly, Caswell et al. (2016) also conclude their research by taking about the dynamics of archival work and archival institutions by affirming that more than simply held for the evidential value, records also have affective value (p. 35). By doing her own uncovering work, Sim does not simply create new records but establish new rules for what is to come, and positions affective value at the forefront of that research and action. As I

argued throughout this article, Cheryl Sim works to uncover valuable photographic record that were until then not accessible to the public, while also testifying and adding important information to the larger history of the Expo, by adding records that were not seen as valuable at the time of preservation. What becomes so striking about the image, then, is that when it is put in contrast with all the other photographic records, all around the city, Sim's face demands the pluralization of the past and challenges us to take full responsibility of our collective futures.

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