



Rememory With Me:

An Inquiry Surrounding the Reconstructive
Process of African American Personal and
Cultural Narratives Through Craft

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Research Question

Why is it important to value craft [bookmaking] as documents of cultural memory in the context of the African American diaspora / experience?

Sub-Research Questions

How can the archival of temporal history reconstruct a shared narrative between members of the African American Diaspora?

To what extent is craft [bookmaking] a sustainable personal archive to document cultural memory?

How does creating a personal archive foster / reconstruct a shared memory within a family?



African American narratives and cultural artifacts have been largely lost as a result of the undervaluing of Black artifacts by archival institutions

Personal archives can serve to reconstruct the loss generated by the failure of past organizations to preserve Black history and culture.





I am particularly interested in this subject as it combines several of my interests: memory, cultural narrative, and craft making.

Methodology

01

Research

The analysis of archive institutions, scrapbooks, and the preservation of Black culture.

02

Gathering Artifacts

The collecting of narratives, recipes, and photographs from family members

03

Completing my Scrapbook


The sourcing, organizing, binding, and presenting of my practice-based self-study.



Literature Review

Value of Archives on a Larger Scale

Archives and the institutions that govern them are a considerable influence on the shaping of a cultural narrative.



As the personal archive is dependent on nonnormative stories, as seen in Tucker's later writing, we can extrapolate that the archive can be subliminally resistant, thus rendering them valuable

Personal Archives as a Valuable Source

Literature Review

Though archives are not immortal, through recreation and revitalization, archivists can engineer a relic that will withstand many centuries of study

**Sustainable
Archive
Preservation**

In the entirety of the book *Developing and Maintaining Practical Archives*, there are no references to non-traditional media such as crafts



Data Collection

I read and analyzed the participatory writings collected from various family members, identifying emerging themes such as Black culture/counterculture and whether it affected what the participant chose to narrate.



Data Collection



Black Counterculture

The act of sorting through photos and identifying patterns in the photography and biographies generated an assortment of themes related to the Afro-American counterhegemony



Memory Reconstruction

Reminiscence was a key theme that arose during this meditation, though it was not my own story being illustrated



Data Analysis

Scrapbooking in the African American Community, and in my African American Family

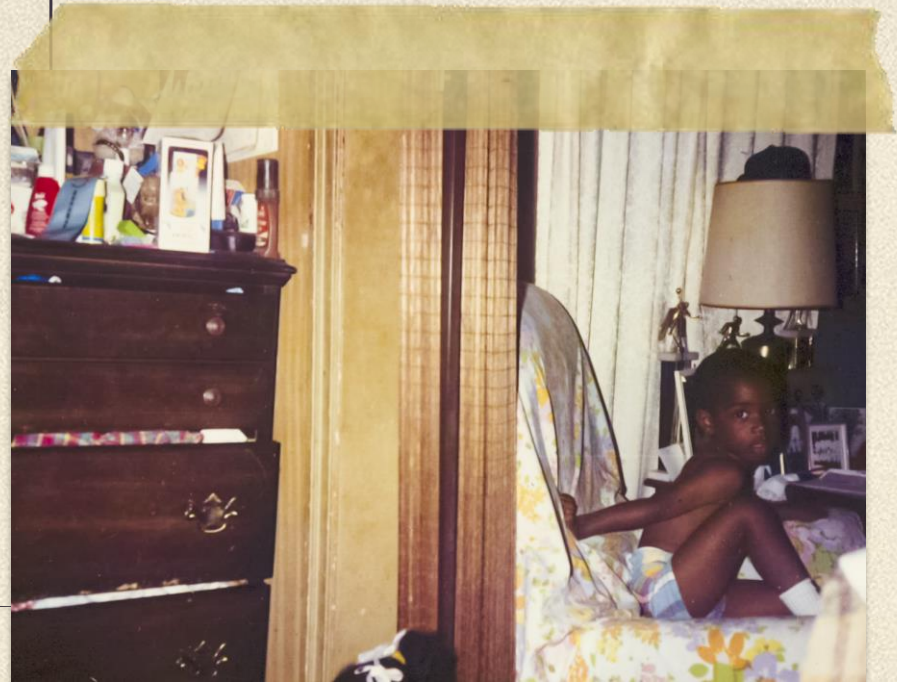
In understanding the relationship between race and leisure activities, it is important to note that there are perceived differences in Black and White Americans' use of leisure and how they take up space. Even in private, performing Whiteness is a conformity tactic to lessen anxiety in an unfamiliar space, which is the world of craft—this concept of conformity, even in private, circles back to DuBois' concept of double-consciousness.



Data Analysis

Developing a Fully “Sustainable” Personal Archive

Crafts tend to be inadequately researched and placed at a lesser value than standard forms of media, such as traditional art, book and scroll making, and other visual works that are deemed “valuable.” The absence of craft in archivist text made it difficult to determine how to create a sustainable archive focused on preserving nonnormative items; however, by dissecting relevant literature, developing a craft that will withstand time is possible.



Data Analysis

The Reconstruction of Personal and Cultural History

A unique reconstructive process emerged from genealogical research and sorting through countless photo albums and scrapbooks allowing for the formation of a perceived familial narrative. When generating conversation surrounding the preservation of narrative and memory while using this study's data as a case study, questions surrounding both oral narratives and temporal memory arise: How can we preserve memory through visuals?



Findings

With the completion of this study, it can be concluded that craft is a meaningful way to preserve cultural and genealogical memory sustainably. Scrapbooks are a tool for remembering and archiving memory that creates a shared narrative through an implied relationship between the author and viewer.



Conclusions

These findings are presented to advance research on the effects of craft in an archival context and the strength of tangibility on memory construction. Though we know there is value in craft as a tool to uncover personal narratives, we can use this knowledge to acknowledge craft as a useful archival tool in large-scale institutions. Therefore, I petition for craft to be integrated into art and archival academia as a way to incorporate the practice into regular research regarding the subjects. I want to continue researching the effects of personal archives on memory and I as a viewer how I can continue to preserve and create new narratives.



Interested Further?

Explore the book and read the
writing at:

<http://rememorybook.com>



Thank
You

