

Special Section on Archives and Culture



Note from the Guest Editors

Canada has a vibrant cultural scene, reflected in contemporary works ranging from the writings of international literary stars like Margaret Atwood, to the comic buffoonery of Randy and Julian in the television program, *Trailer Park Boys*. Between such highly visible cultural producers lie a host of other creators, including authors, dancers, artists, photographers, actors, producers, directors, and choreographers who struggle for recognition. The responsibility to capture and preserve the enormous creativity of Canadian cultural producers falls to the nation's archives, and it can be a challenging duty with special implications at every stage of archival endeavour.

When a recent edition of the *Journal of Canadian Studies* devoted an entire issue to studying the intersections between literature and archives, we were inspired to look at the challenges of archiving other areas of Canada's dynamic cultural output. This has clearly been an interest for readers of *Archivaria* over the years, as numerous past articles have touched on facets of culture and their impact on archives. However, there has never been a special section dedicated to the topic of archives and culture. It thus seemed even more timely to turn to the topic directly and wrestle with some of the questions at hand.

How best to acquire and preserve something as ephemeral as a pirouette or a perfectly executed soliloquy? How do we determine the best record? How do we make such records accessible to an increasingly demanding public? How do we keep up with the whirlwind changes in audio, digital, and film technology, and how do we capture that evolution in an archives? How do we ensure that the role of archives as the source of provenance for artwork is not corrupted? The authors in the next pages struggle with these questions and larger issues, such as the extent of cultural value and the nature of performance, as they examine small slices of both the Canadian and the international cultural scene. It is our hope that these articles will provide a starting point and inspiration for a more extensive examination of archives' role in documenting and preserving culture.

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