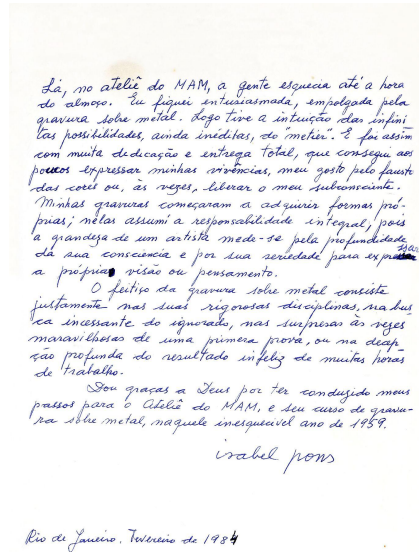
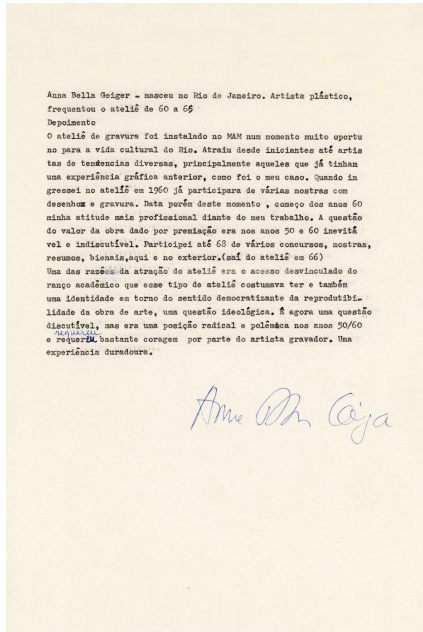




Why did the artist decide to preserve so many items, and to such an extent that they would occupy the spaces of his intimacy? Had Rossini anticipated the historical value of these materials in a way that not even the MAM-Rio itself could? Or was there a fear concerning the destiny that the institutional archives would give to these materials?



Letters addressed to Rossini Perez by his former student artists (Anna Bella Geiger and Isabel Pons) at the Museu de Arte do Rio, August 1960. Source: Rossini Perez's holdings.

Archives are spaces of power. In theory, they hold the key to indicate what or who will be remembered by history. But let's not forget: history is inevitably constructed in light of the questions posed by the present time. In the field of contemporary art, although the interest in archives dates back to the 1960s and 1970s, it was at the turn of the 20th century that the relations between art and archiving were expanded in the wake of critical narratives to art history canon. Interested in the historian's work, many artists turned to digging archive, facing their own archival impulse, and allowing new readings on what would be previously considered a simple accumulation of items. In the midst of this process, curators such as Ingrid Schaffner have dedicated their work to analysing the intersections between institutions, archives, and artists' collections.

In the exhibition *Deep Storage: Collecting, Storing, and Archiving in Art* (1997-98), Schaffner demonstrated how such spaces reify artwork's existences. "Anxiety and dust provoke the archiving impulse. In the museum – the mausoleum most artists still aim to enter through their work – the recesses of the storeroom simultaneously beckon and bar access to history," Schaffner (1998) states. If such archival efforts refer to a relentless struggle against time, they also indicate how an artist would have accessed himself, his time, and his work.

Reporting on her visit to Louise Bourgeois' former residence in 2019, US journalist Thessaly La Force says she was astonished to find the space just as the artist had left it. Perfume boxes,

glasses, diaries, and books positioned on the shelves gave her the strange feeling that Bourgeois, who died in 2010, could reappear at any moment. "If survival was her goal, then this act of total preservation is a strange, sometimes overwhelming success," La Force (2019) states. Accordingly, the preservation of random items would indicate a certain fetishism, in which the artist's life becomes a repository of fragments that, perhaps one day, may occupy a place in art history.

From these readings, this paper asks: To what extent can an artist's archival practices be read as a vigorous expression of his/her work? Do these holdings differ from institutional spaces of artistic knowledge production and dissemination? How can art criticism and art history integrate these extra-institutional collections into their methods and practices?

## **BIO**

Sabrina Moura is a researcher and curator from Brazil. She is currently a fellow researcher at the Global Dis:Connect/Käte Hamburger Research Center (Munich). Moura holds a Ph.D. in Art History from the University of Campinas (São Paulo). She is the author of *Arcqueologia da Criação* [*Archeology of Creation*, Ed. Vatso/Mireveja, 2022] — a book on the work and the archives of Brazilian artist Rossini Perez, and the editor of *Southern Panoramas: Perspectives for other geographies of thought* (Ed. SESC/Videobrasil, 2015), which presents historical and artistic perspectives on the concept of Global South. Her essays and articles have been featured in publications such as Mousse Magazine, Zeitschrift für Kulturwissenschaften, Stedelijk Studies Journal, African Art, Critical Interventions, 3rd Text Africa, among others. In 2016, Moura was a visiting researcher at the Institute of African Arts (IAS) at Columbia University. Moura is currently finalizing a book manuscript on the contentions of contemporary art and identity politics.