

ARCHIVE AS CATALYST

...ended, all fifty three of them.
...the lip of the rock, and not a useless life time. Coal is
I believe that my father enjoyed every one of his struggles with the lives of past ages.
that he accepted the profession of mining as the one great challenge to his
being. He often spoke about "home coal", but, then, coal is never dull,
never without life, never without the life it has lived within its own ageless
fastnesses. It is so alive that it gives its own voice to its own pains and
its own raptures whenever it is dragged out of its own layered imprisonments.
It is as if somewhere its forests. The earth weighs upon it with all the



Summer — Winter 2025

Archive as Catalyst
Summer — Winter 2025

These projects represent the first stirrings of exploration and experiment. Their public offerings will take place between July and December 2025.

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INTRODUCTION

We wrote impossible letters. We talked about music and poetry; housing justice and abolition. Clustered around tables in the huge main hall at the Bishopsgate Institute in London, organisers from different social movements mapped our connected struggles as kids ran in circles around our tables. Members of the Empire's Endgame collective had structured three days of workshops around a 'daily reminder' from the historian Robin Kelley: 'Love, Study, Struggle'. Inside that hall, in the summer of 2023, we explored what archives of resistance could make possible.

Archive as Catalyst was inspired by those workshops. From Summer to Winter 2025, Platform will bring artists and organisers together to explore movement histories.

Platform's first action was Addenbrookes Blues in 1983, a public performance in support of hospital staff on strike against privatisation. Since then, we've assembled a huge archive — over 300 boxes. Now housed at the Bishopsgate Institute, our collection contains photos of oil pipelines in Iraq, Azerbaijan and Türkiye; flyers from strikes by dockers, doctors and teachers; plans for a steel sculpture honouring the Ogoni 9; banners calling for a Free International University, an end to war and climate chaos, and the release of political prisoners; minutes from meetings of community energy companies; Freedom of Information requests; play scripts, music scores, hand-drawn maps...

These materials are our seeds. Over 6-months, artists and organisers will experiment with documentary, performance, screenprinting, ceramics, oral histories, song, curation and collage. We'll learn from movements in the UK, Nigeria, Syria, Palestine and the Philippines. Moving beyond institutional confines, we'll trace histories of resistance through communities, housing estates, woodlands and waterways. Our archives will be sites of provocation and promise.

From here, where the past meets the present, *Archive as Catalyst* will ask: what's lost, what's left, and what's next?

temptuous glance at the fall when he passed by.

Coal is a tenacious mineral when it stands within its nativity. The earth weighs upon it with the enormity of the aeons, pressing relentlessly until the excavations are unable to forbid the consummation of marriage of the floor and the roof. The pressures remain incestuous and formidable. The nether world protests vociferously against all the agonies it is compelled to endure. It avows continuously its deep disapproval. One listens and one is manfully afraid. The seams of coal, dipping in their eternal oblique planes, rising sun, gleam in all the light which men shine upon them, and all that is actually happening is that coal is being mined.

The North
PEACE
LOVE
UGLY

THE HEART OF THE COAL

Lake

power

RECLAIM
MIGRANT
DOMESTIC
WORKERS
RIGHTS

U
D
W
A

Fight our
Rights

BE
BRAVE
Am
STRONG

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HISTORY FROM BELOW

How can activist and community archives point us
toward a just future, a history against history?



COMMON SCRIPTS

Leonie Rousham

Common Scripts is a performance-led workshop series by the arts group at Dorchester Court Tenants' Union. Their DIY archive – documenting care and creativity in a building long neglected by its landlord – will be the foundation for public performances, posters, balcony actions, and walking tours.

Dorchester Court is a 96-flat block that has been going through an ongoing process of 'Managed Decline' since the 70s. Plans have been submitted by Manaquel Co Ltd to build luxury penthouses on top of the building, which is already being held up by wooden scaffolding. Dorchester Court Tenants' Union have been engaging in a prolonged legal fight against redevelopment, which could lead to the demolition of this art deco building and the community who have made it their home.

The Tenants' Union argues for retrofit over rebuild. Demolition drives up carbon emissions and displaces communities, when what we need is care and repair. This is climate justice from below: rooted in how we live, house, and support each other. By activating housing archives, tenants will explore how environmental justice is always tied to land, labour, and collective survival. *Common Scripts* asks what lessons past movements offer for resisting the dispossession happening now.

Gather for role-play, mapping and storytelling workshops that rehearse alternative futures for Dorchester Court. These activities will culminate in a public event and short film. *Common Scripts* will ask: how do archives help us resist managed decline? How can imagination and memory become tools for transformation?

DORCHESTER COURT TENANTS' UNION ARTS GROUP recognise that our fight isn't just about bricks and mortar – it's about protecting a living legacy, preserving a community of heart and history, and ensuring safe, warm homes. The collective blends community archiving, performance, and housing activism. LEONIE ROUSHAM is an archive researcher and arts facilitator. Together, their practice is rooted in collaborative storytelling and resisting narratives of abandonment.

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ITO ANG AMING MGA KEWTO
THESE ARE OUR STORIES
Francesca Humi

The Philippines is one of the most climate crisis-impacted countries in the world and has a national Labour Export Policy which pushes citizens to migrate abroad to support the domestic economy. Many Filipino migrants come to the UK to work in the healthcare sector and have subsequently been at the frontlines of austerity and Covid-19. The climate crisis also generates constrained migration, in particular for Filipino women. Some men in the UK deliberately seek out Filipino women from typhoon-affected areas because of their poverty or their prior experience of sex work. Many migrant domestic workers come from regions severely impacted by the climate crisis. This pattern has been under-documented, especially by community members themselves.

Francesca Humi will conduct oral history interviews with Filipino women who have come to the UK as domestic workers or as partners of British citizens. Narrators will reflect on their relationship to nature and climate through creative, nature-based workshops and zine-making. The project will provide a creative space for Filipino migrant women in London to construct their own movement archives.

FRANCESCA HUMI organises and writes on migration and border violence — rooted in her work in the Filipino migrant community. She organises with United Domestic Workers Association (formerly Filipino DWA), supporting their fundraising, political education, and creative work. She also leads Kanlungan's participation in the Covid-19 Inquiry to ensure the experiences and views of Filipino migrants during the pandemic are heard. Francesca is writing her first book, a feminist history of Filipino migration to Britain, drawing on oral history interviews with Filipino nurses, carers, domestic workers, and spouses.

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SHADOWS OF INDUSTRIALISATION

Tanya Rideout

Early industrialization still casts shadows. The skeletons of gasholders across the UK await their fate: they're dismantled, gentrified, transformed into arts spaces and luxury flats – even illegally climbed by local youth, scrambling through the dark to reclaim what's theirs. In the disused spaces of gasholders and mines, the more-than-human world moves in, ignoring the 'Danger and Keep Out' signs, raising questions about who or what industrial heritage belongs to. Who owns this history?

Archives of mining communities stretching back over a century show how questions of collective ownership and protection of the natural world overlap. Harold Heslop, a Durham miner born in 1898, longed for the river to 'recover most of its lost joys', for birds that didn't need to fear drinking the water at its edges. And yet: 'How we gloated over the possibility of the mines being nationalised', he continued. 'How we dreamed. How we stretched out our hands to the pit head gearing to take it and all it signified into our own dear keeping.'

Shadows of Industrialisation uncovers the memories of the working class people who lived, worked and died in mining communities. In a creative workshop, we'll explore materials from the Burnett Archive of Working Class Autobiographies, the Working Class Movement Library and the Glasgow Mechanics' Institute. Together, we'll unearth new possibilities for ownership, dreaming and 'dear keeping'.

TANYA RIDEOUT grew up in the shadows of (de)industrialisation. The shadow of her dad's foundry, which closed in 1982, plunging her family and community into poverty. The shadows of the men she knew from that time who congregated in their kitchen loudly talking about union politics. Her dad became a shadow of himself after a stroke, caused partly by a decade of night shifts cleaning out the foundry ovens, his lungs overloaded with the particles of industry. Tanya has recently completed a PhD on the history of the coal gas industry and its impacts in working-class communities, in collaboration with the Future Societies Programme at Anglia Ruskin University. She has spent two decades helping charities create more democratic workplaces and now works for Platform as People and Process Manager.



RESISTANCE

How have social movements mounted creative resistance
to corporate and state power?



THE CONTRACT

Christina D. Bartson

The Contract is a short archival film tracing the speculative fictions of oil, finance, and empire through the lens of the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline. A forensic excavation of one of the most ambitious oil pipeline projects of the 21st century, *The Contract* interrogates how the invisible architectures of corporate and state power shape our world – and what that legacy means for us today.

Platform's BTC archive sits at the core of the film. It documents the pipeline's construction, predicted impacts and the voices of those directly affected. The film also draws on the archive of fossil fuel giant British Petroleum and the late nineteenth-century cinema of Alexandre Mishon, a Russian-French photographer and cinematographer who lived in Baku during the first oil boom.

The Contract is not just a film about a pipeline – it is a film about power, corporate imperialism, and how oil infrastructure shapes our futures. Through a forensic, poetic, and investigative lens, the film uncovers what was hidden in plain sight when the BTC pipeline was conceived, and what we must reckon with today.

CHRISTINA D. BARTSON is a filmmaker and archivist based in London with roots in the Midwest. Her projects consider the political economy of media and how narratives about conflict, social movements, and land are mobilized through archival materials. Her work has been supported by If/Then Shorts and Field of Vision, Video Consortium Allies Programme Fellowship, 2024 NBCUniversal Original Voices Accelerator Fellowship, 2023 Global Research Initiatives Fellowship (New York University), 2023 Moore Research Fellowship (Swarthmore College), and more.

WWW.CHRISTINA-BARTSON.COM



WOUNDED LAND: STORIES OF COMMUNITY
RESISTANCE AGAINST A COAL MINE
Floor van der Hout & Simone Rudolphi

Wounded Land: Stories of Community Resistance Against a Coal Mine explores the experiences of people who fought an opencast mine in County Durham.

Pont Valley protectors will be invited to take part in a workshop to reflect on their embodied responses to the destruction of the landscape, and to share their memories of what it felt like to resist. The community will collectively grieve what was lost and celebrate what was saved. The project will draw on photos, objects, and news articles from the occupation, and the sounds and silences of the scarred and wounded land. We'll share stories of community members who, together with climate activists from other countries, stood up against corporate power to protect their beloved valley.

Archive materials and recordings will be shared in an exhibition at Consett, close to Pont Valley, then in Newcastle and Teeside, inspiring local resistance to the loss of urban green spaces and the construction of an incinerator. The project celebrates community resistance against ecological destruction whilst highlighting intimate stories of what it means to resist.

FLOOR VAN DER HOUT is currently working on a sound-project with environmental defenders in Bolivia, exploring themes of natural resource extraction and human-nature relations.

SIMONE JIMENA RUDOLPHI is a documentary photographer. She tells stories related to our human interaction with the environment and social justice. Her first major story documents the Campaign to Protect Pont Valley in County Durham from 2018 onwards, up to the last coal ship leaving the Port of Tyne.

the only mineral mined in quantity that glitters with the lives of past ages. Coal is I believe that my father enjoyed every one of his struggles with coal, and being. He often spoke about "bonnie coal", but, then, coal is never dull, never without life, never without the life it has lived within its own ageless fastnesses. It is so alive that it gives its own voice to its own pains and its own raptures whenever it is dragged out of its own layered imprisonments. It is as if it remembered its forests. The earth weighs upon it with all the



PEACE
LIBERTY
RIGHTS



IMAGINATION

We can't build the new world in the shape of the old.
How can creative approaches to movement histories
spark dreams of liberation?



CULTIVATING HOMELAND

Yasmina Seifeddine

The systems of colonialism and racial capitalism that drive our ongoing climate collapse are the same systems responsible for the manufactured ‘slow death’ of genocide, ecocide and memoricide — the destruction of memory.

As livelihoods, communities and ecosystems become de-futured, acts of remembering and connecting to the land are central to enacting decolonial trajectories and resisting disaster capitalism. Cultivating Homeland draws its name from Rheim Alkahdi’s *Templates for Liberation*. It will explore archives of decolonial justice in South West Asia and North Africa, in particular: a family digital archive of the Syrian revolutionary Sultan al-Attrache, the endangered flower of the iris damscena and anti-sectarian poststamps from The Palestine Museum Digital Archive.

Artist Yasmina Seifeddine will design and screenprint poststamps to use for an intergenerational letter-writing and future-making workshop and create a series of vases collaged with English and Arabic transcriptions and archival motifs. Her work will be shared through an accessible exhibition and screen-printed zines.

YASMINA SEIFEDDINE belongs to the Lebanese diaspora and has settler citizenship. As a community organizer, researcher, and emerging visual artist she experiments with tangible strategies and (minor-)theory towards decolonization. In all her work, she attempts to ‘messily’ conceptualize a situated, creative and spatial practice that can support the visions of communities who are stewarding movements in the name of liberation and care-oriented worlds. In tackling the de-futuring realities of colonialism and racial capitalism, her current research interests explore the extent to which methods for drawing from can sustain the opening of redirective, prefigurative and decolonial trajectories.

WWW.YASMINA-SEIFEDDINE.COM



CLIMATE CHORUS

Emilian Isibo

Climate injustice is experienced doubly for communities in the diaspora: through ancestral lands ravaged by neo-colonial extraction and through present-day urban inequality. As we approach the 30th anniversary of the execution of the Ogoni 9, *Climate Chorus* traces resistance from the Niger Delta to diaspora life in Southeast London.

Environmental injustice reverberates across geographies. Rooted in Thamesmead — home to the UK's largest Nigerian community — young people and elders will gather to create a speculative sound archive through remixing oral histories, lullabies, protest chants and ambient recordings from Southmere Lake and Lesnes Abbey Woodlands. Through our living archive, we'll imagine climate resistance led by diaspora and working-class youth.

Sound, memory, and community can resist extractivism and erasure. Our future relics will combine in a pop-up sonic installation — a listening garden — and a digital zine, sparking intergenerational and intercultural reflections on resistance, migration, and what it means to belong on London's rapidly changing edge, rooted in ancient wetlands.

EMILIAN ISIBO is an artist and producer based in London, working across policy, youth organising and cultural production. Emilian's practice often brings together sound, memory and place. She has recently been developing work with a range of organisations including Tiata Fahodzi and is interested in archives as working tools and the ways they can mark shifts in community and who gets remembered. She draws on her own experiences to explore how histories are held, and who holds them, especially in places being reshaped by both gentrification and climate crisis.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

These projects represent the first stirrings of exploration and experiment. Their public offerings will take place between July and December 2025.

Archive as Catalyst participants were selected via an Open Call. We received 162 outstanding submissions and want to thank everyone who considered our provocations and dreamed new ways to bring movement histories into the present. We're grateful to Tanya Rideout for contributing an additional workshop to the programme as part of her role at Platform and to Sinead Solomon for production support.

Radhika Jani, Farah Ahmed and Marianne Brooker sat on our selection panel, and Ceri Littlechild provided support and guidance during the commissioning process. Robbie Blundell designed our programme.

Sara Salem (co-curator of Archive Stories), artist Jack Young and director Elinor Lower (from Haunting Ashton Court) and poet Alycia Pirmohamed launched our call with a creative workshop: 'When History Wakes'.

We're grateful to the Bishopsgate Institute for housing Platform's archive, and to Jane Trowell for finding the materials a long-term home and for her early research and development toward an archive programme.

Platform brings workers and communities together for climate and social justice.

FIND OUT MORE:

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What could a people's history of climate justice look like; what grows there?
Who could create such a place; where?