

RETHINKING  
CONTEMPORARY  
ARCHIVAL  
PRACTICES:

towards a participatory  
and accessible  
approach to the Oude  
Kerk's open archive

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research  
report

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## **Abstract**

The postdigital era has changed how museums deal with their collections and records, but it has also altered their way of connecting with the public. Within this context, institutions have started improving the access to their collections for the audiences, meaning that heritage organizations have begun to understand their collections as a public and valuable interest for individuals. One of these organizations is the Oude Kerk, in Amsterdam, which is the oldest building/church in the city and, at the same time, it is a space in which contemporary art installations are exhibited. The Oude Kerk is currently developing an *open archive*, which is a digital platform/website that will make the museum's archive and collection accessible to the public, and it will make visible both tangible and intangible heritage linked to the institution; this includes the inventory of the church, performances, contemporary art exhibitions, and concerts among others. This intervention represents an innovative project for the contemporary art and archival fields while, at the same time, the Oude Kerk also aims to establish participatory practices linked to its open archive. With this premise as a basis, this report describes the two-month research that has been conducted at the Oude Kerk with the objective of encountering ways of adding participation to the museum's upcoming open archive. In this regard, this report will explore the development of the Oude Kerk's intervention and theories related to participation and participatory archiving, and as a conclusion it will offer diverse recommendations for the establishment of participation in the open archive.

**Keywords:** archive, participation, digitality, audience(s), Oude Kerk.

## Introduction

“From the earliest days of public museums in the eighteenth century, classification was an important influence on the organization and documentation of scientific specimens and other material” (Jones 2018, 5). Still in the postdigital age—which is a term that refers to the “tipping point” in which the use of digital technologies has become a normative practice in museums (Parry 2013, 24)—documentation and classification in the museum field are extremely relevant in order to preserve and organize institutions’ collections and properties. However, digitality has changed the strategies and ways of working in the archival sphere, meaning that documentation systems have been transformed from physical to digital documentation software, collections have been digitalized, and concepts such as Linked Open Data or digital archives have been explored.<sup>1</sup>

In this regard, the postdigital era has changed the way in which museums deal with their own collections and records; digitality offers a complementary environment that institutions can explore and, in this sense, “digital media can support accessibility and visibility, facilitate user participation through social media platforms, as well as provide feedback and evaluation through the use of software designed to support museum analytics” (Wellington and Oliver 2015, 577). Thus, this has also offered a new and complementary way in which museums deal with their audiences in relation to their archives; institutions have recently—in the last decades—started improving the access to their collections and archives for the audiences, which means that heritage institutions have begun to understand their collections as a public and valuable interest for individuals. In other words,

The post-custodial reorientation of archives over the past few decades has exposed issues of trust and hospitality with respect to institutional record-holding. The primary response to these issues has emerged as community archiving initiatives that seek to establish alternative keeping-places for records; however, it is only in the last 10 years or so that the term *participatory archiving* has begun to be used by theoreticians, researchers, and practitioners (Rolan 2016, 196).

In this sense, museums are becoming more accessible towards their audiences by sharing their materials and knowledge in the digital environment, but at the same time, they are working with concepts such as participation or inclusivity to interact with and involve the public. Nevertheless, participation is not a recent concept; it has been the center of many interventions and practices in the heritage and art field for many decades, and institutions strive for fostering and creating participatory practices that allow individuals to be involved in diverse ways with the museum’s work and interventions. The issue of participation has been approached by many theorists and

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<sup>1</sup> Linked Open Data (LOD) is a “way of publishing structured data that allows metadata to be connected and enriched, so that different representations of the same content can be found, and links made between related resources” (Europeana n.d.).

academics throughout time in many diverse disciplines, with cases such as Sherry L. Arnstein's "A Ladder of Citizen Participation" (1969) or Nina Simon's *The Participatory Museum* (2010).

However, participation has not only been explored in the theoretical sphere, but also with an applied approach by many institutions and organizations. Many museums deal with participation in their daily tasks, and some of them work under the umbrella of the *Faro Convention* (2005), which is a convention promoted by the Council of Europe that works as a framework for democracy, inclusivity and participation in relation to society and cultural heritage; in this regard, it "recognizes that rights relating to cultural heritage are inherent in the right to participate in cultural life" (Council of Europe 2005, 2), and places cultural heritage as a valuable and meaningful topic for people and communities. At a European level, the convention has been ratified by 23 countries, while at a national level, the convention has not been signed yet, but the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands (RCE) works closely with the Faro program, which "aims to make citizens' initiatives and participation a natural and self-evident part of heritage practice" (Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands n.d.). With this purpose, the RCE is currently researching the convention to achieve its ratification, which represents a symptom of the benefits that participation offers in the cultural heritage paradigm.

Amid this context, the Oude Kerk in Amsterdam is currently carrying out an intervention that deals with both archiving and participation. The Oude Kerk (Fig. 1) is the oldest building in Amsterdam; it is a church that was built in the center of the city in the 13<sup>th</sup> century and, since 2016, it became a museum for contemporary art in which artists create site-specific art installations.<sup>2</sup> In this sense, the Oude Kerk exhibits its collection, mainly related to religious objects and its history, but its main activity is to exhibit contemporary art installations and to carry out live events such as performances or concerts. Therefore, it is an institution that plays with the tension between the past and the contemporary, and it "invites artists and musicians to create new works in relation to the building's history [...] an installation can adapt to the space or contrast with the historic environment" (Oude Kerk n.d.). The museum has exhibited installations of artists such as Ibrahim Mahama or Giorgio Andreotta Calò, and it is becoming a reference for contemporary art in the city. Since 2020, the Oude Kerk has been working with the concept of *open archive*, which is an intervention that will be released in 2026 and will consist in a digital platform/website that will make accessible the institutions' archive and collection, with both tangible and intangible heritage—including the inventory, the graces, performances, the contemporary art exhibitions and events, among others—.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The Oude Kerk's website offers an interesting description of the institution: <https://oudekerk.nl/en/about-the-oude-kerk>

<sup>3</sup> For privacy reasons, the link to the Oude Kerk's open archive will not be revealed since it has not been released to the general public yet.

In the current context, “strategies of collecting, storing, cataloging, organizing, searching, retrieving, and re-presenting –archival strategies– have been extensively discussed and documented within contemporary art over the past half a century” (Jolly 2014, 61). In this sense, contemporary art practices have been engaging with the archival context by rediscovering it and rearticulating it (2014, 79), and rethinking the structures, power and values of the archiving tradition. The Oude Kerk, then, is immersed in this contemporary trend of transforming the conception of archiving and offering new perspectives and engagements to the field; many cases in the current sector work with the idea of making their collections accessible, such as the Amsterdam Museum or the Stadsarchief Amsterdam,<sup>4</sup> which are local organizations close to the Oude Kerk that work with this approach. In this regard, their collections are accessible through their websites and their materials can be consulted by the general online public. However, the Oude Kerk aims to take a step forward in this context by giving access to the audiences to its complete archive, which also stores the intangible heritage of the museum and the materials of the processes of creation of the different installations, events and performances.



Fig. 1. Exhibition “Garden of Scars” by Ibrahim Mahama at the Oude Kerk. Source: Oude Kerk’s website, <https://oudekerk.nl/nu-te-zien/tentoonstellingen/ibrahim-mahama-garden-of-scars/324>

Moreover, together with the creation of the open archive, the institution aims to introduce participation of its audiences in the intervention, and plans to create participatory practices related to the implementation of the open archive. With these two factors in play —access to the archive and participation— this intervention represents an innovative way of approaching archiving and

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<sup>4</sup> Link to the Amsterdam Museum collection and to the Stadsarchief: <https://am.adlibhosting.com/search/simple> and <https://archieff.amsterdam/>

accessibility to the museum’s knowledge and materials; in this regard, the Oude Kerk ’s unique conditions of exhibiting contemporary art and historical heritage create the suitable environment in which to develop an open archive that condensates and visualizes the relations, connections and tensions between the contemporary, the past, the tangible and the intangible. This concrete topic is the one that this report will explore: the ways in which the Oude Kerk can establish participatory approaches linked to its innovative open archive; this issue is directly tied to the previously discussed context, in which digitality in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and participation in the museum environment play a central role.

Furthermore, and taking as a reference the “intervention cycle” (Fig. 2) developed by the European Commission, the Oude Kerk’s open archive can be located in the “design” phase. During the years 2019 and 2020, the stage of “programming” took place since it was the period in which the intervention was starting to be conceptualized. From the end of 2020 on, the intervention moved to the “design” phase, because the digital platform of the open archive was created and it is still a work in progress since there are many bugs and flaws. However, the intervention is also located in the “implementation” stage since the institution is currently syncing its documentation system (Adlib) to the website and is already uploading materials and documents to it. In this regard, the current situation of the intervention is identifiable between the design and implementation phases of the intervention cycle, but it will finally move to the implementation phase by 2026 when the open archive will be made accessible to the public.

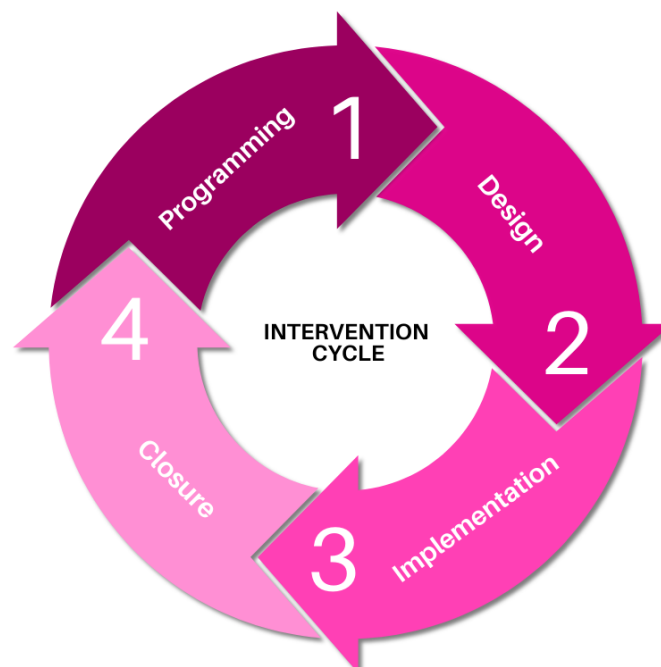


Fig. 2. Intervention Cycle. Source: European Commission’s website, <https://wikis.ec.europa.eu/display/ExactExternalWiki/Intervention+Cycle+Methodology+Guide>



From a more theoretical perspective, this research also approaches the three topics of inclusivity, digitality and sustainability at the same time, in an interrelated way. In the first place, the intervention presented here deals with inclusivity since it seeks to add participation into the institution and to involve audiences in this project. In this regard, “inclusivity is a way to add voices, actors, and agents into the workings of the museum” (Ariese 2021, 38), and the Oude Kerk’s mission is to include its audiences in practices linked to the open archive through participation. In the second place, digitality is an important concept in this intervention since it represents the core of it; the open archive is a digital intervention, so it is directly influenced by that category, but participation is also immersed here since the participatory practices related to the archive will also take place in the digital environment.

In the third place, sustainability is also a relevant topic in this intervention; in this specific case, it is possible to state that “the functional sustainability of a repository is highly dependent on the activity of archive users and the emergence of a culture of collaboration, integration into daily practices, and a critical mass to sustain necessary level of contributions, which obliges others to contribute” (Huvila 2008, 30). In this regard, since the open archive is a big project for an institution like the Oude Kerk, it is important and necessary to come up with long-term and sustainable proposals for participation that foster a strong bond with the audiences and, therefore, engages users in a long-term period.

### **Research question(s) & objectives**

As previously mentioned, this work has the mission of researching which are the steps that the Oude Kerk has been taking and will have to take in order to execute its archive as an open practice with a participatory approach. In order to do so, and given the organization’s needs and interests, this research will aim to answer the following main research question: *How can the Oude Kerk create participatory practices tied to its (upcoming) open archive?* Since the open archive platform is already designed and is currently being developed, the investigation is mainly focused on approaching participation through the open archive; in this regard, the main research question will provide an answer on how to create participatory elements in the intervention and how to open the archive to its audiences through participation. This question also fills a knowledge gap in the heritage field since few theories deal with participation in archives, so it will provide a focused perspective to a very recent topic.

Furthermore, and with the finality of deepening this research, this report will answer four sub-questions that will help to find a sustained and founded answer to the main research question. The secondary research questions are:

- (1) *Which is the Oude Kerk’s motivation behind the development of an open and participatory archive?*

- (2) *How is the open archive designed and executed?*
- (3) *What are the target audiences of the Oude Kerk's open archive and how can it be more focused towards them?*
- (4) *What can the Oude Kerk learn from current practices in participatory archiving?*

These questions cover a wide range of topics that need to be researched in order to have a solid knowledge foundation to answer the main research question, and to provide diverse recommendations to the Oude Kerk related to the development of participatory practices for the open archive. Therefore, the discovery of the Oude Kerk's reasoning behind this intervention, the current design and execution of the archive, its target audiences and the references and inspirations that can be found in the current archival context will allow to discover necessary and relevant information that can help to provide a well-founded, complete and concrete answer to the Oude Kerk's needs. Lastly, this research will also have three main research objectives:

- ❖ *To research the current and next steps of the Oude Kerk's development of an open and participatory archive*
- ❖ *To find out what are the potentials and the obstacles to participatory and open archiving in the current practices of the Oude Kerk*
- ❖ *To investigate how issues of participation, accessibility and inclusivity can be addressed/integrated in contemporary archiving practices*

These objectives describe and delimit the topics that will be investigated, but they also set the mission and purposes of this research; in this regard, the Oude Kerk's internal perspective on the development of the open archive will be researched, but broader issues —such as the possible obstacles and opportunities of participatory archiving or topics related to inclusivity, participation and accessibility in the archiving practice— will be investigated and will help to discover a bigger picture of the topic concerning this research: participatory practices in contemporary archiving.

### **Theoretical & conceptual framework**

Diverse central concepts to this research have been presented through the main research question and its correspondent sub-research questions, so this section will explore and discuss the different meanings of these terms and the different academic theories that surround them; this will have the mission of providing an extensive theoretical framework that sets a foundation for this investigation and for the discussion of the findings. Therefore, this chapter will be divided along two main thematic axes: definition(s) of *archive* and definition(s) of *participation*. They are presented as two separate topics but, in this report, they will be closely connected since it deals with participation within archives; the connections between them can be observed in Fig. 3. The topic of participatory archives will be further addressed in the results section, more concretely in a special sub-chapter dedicated to the method of literature review.

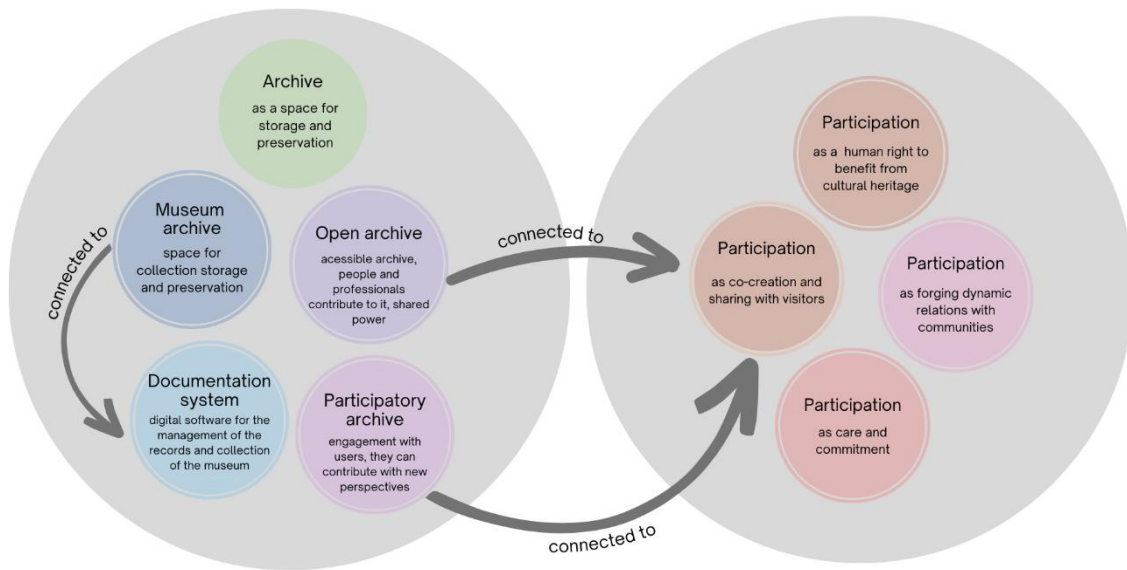


Fig. 3. Conceptual framework mind map. Source: own creation

### Definition(s) of *archive*

This section discusses the different concepts related to archiving that will be present throughout this report. First of all, it is relevant to mention that there are diverse uses of the term *archive* as reflected in Fig. 3, and all of them designate different conceptions that are addressed in this report. More concretely, five main concepts related to archiving will be discussed here: *archive*, *museum archive*, *documentation system*, *open archive* and *participatory archive*. The traditional understanding of an *archive* is the following: “archives are most commonly perceived as spaces destined for the storage and preservation of records. These records are arranged following the rules of an elaborate classification system, and they are left in a state of stasis until someone accesses them for research purposes” (Zografos 2019, 19).

In a broader sense, an archive collects, organizes and stores materials, but more concretely in this report the term *museum archive* will be used; therefore, a museum archive is the space destined for the documentation of a museum’s collection and anything related to it; as opposite, the museum’s collection represents the objects, materials and artworks that are property of the institution, while the archive is the space destined for the documentation of that collection. In the case of the Oude Kerk, the collection represents and includes both tangible and intangible heritage, but with the rise of the interest in archiving intangible materials, museums now face a challenge of how to document their immaterial heritage since it is an uncommon practice that does not have a fixed strategy as it does with the documentation of the tangible collections.

At the same time, archives in the heritage and museum field are managed by systems that arrange and organize their collections, which are named *museum documentation system* or *collection*

*management system (CMS)*.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, in the digital age the older analog systems of documentation are converted into digital systems. The following definition given by ICCROM and UNESCO in their Guide for Documentation Work for Museums in Developing Countries (2009), provides an interesting overview of the term:

Documentation is thus the organization of information [...] A museum's documentation system is a set of elements (Accession number, Accession register, manual or computerized files, etc.) that are related to each other and to the museum environment and which are organized in order to manage the objects in the museum's collection. The different information media of a museum's documentation system are interdependent and enable cross-reference searches to be carried out (ICCROM and UNESCO 2009, 2).

Therefore, the main function of a museum documentation system is to manage the cultural heritage of an organization; normally these systems have strict categories and structures that limit the documentation of intangible heritage. In addition, it is important to mention that “*cultural heritage* is a group of resources inherited from the past which people identify, independently of ownership, as a reflection and expression of their constantly evolving values, beliefs, knowledge and traditions. It includes all aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time” (Council of Europe 2005, 2). This definition is important because cultural heritage —composed of the contemporary art and the church's collection— is the core of the archive at the Oude Kerk, and this conception of cultural heritage as an important value for individuals and communities is the adequate one that will be addressed and used here; however, and more specifically, *intangible heritage* will be mentioned in this report since the Oude Kerk is currently archiving it in relation to their contemporary art installations and performances. Therefore, “the intangible cultural heritage means the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artifacts and cultural spaces associated therewith – that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage” (UNESCO 2003, 5).

Nevertheless, the first definition of archive previously presented, and established by Zografos (2019), refers to the traditional conception of archives, in which they are presented as spaces that store information. But, as stated in the introduction, the Oude Kerk's intervention aims to create an accessible and participatory archive that differs from the traditional conception of it and that is immersed in the contemporary archival trend, which aims to rethink the uses and structures of archives. In this regard, the concept that has been designated by the Oude Kerk to name its intervention is *open archive*, and it can be defined as “an organization, site or collection in which people other than archives professionals contribute knowledge or resources, resulting in increased

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<sup>5</sup> In The Netherlands, the most common collection manage systems are Axiell Collections, TMS or Adlib.

understanding about archival materials, usually in an online environment" (Huvila 2011). Thus, the traditional conception of archives is transformed and affected by accessibility, and the institution is no longer the only holder of the archive but users and audiences can also access it and contribute to it.

A complementary concept that suits the understanding that the Oude Kerk has of its open archive is the term *participatory archive*. As stated in *Participatory Archives: Theory and Practice* (2019), "participatory archives' origins are not limited to the technological developments of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, but are part of a larger postmodern movement. Through engaging users, participatory archives attempt to integrate new perspectives into their collections within description, development of new collections, archival funding and even outreach" (Benoit III and Eveleigh 2019, 4). In relation to this, an additional definition that also fits in the idea that the Oude Kerk has for its intervention is the one presented by Alexandra Eveleigh in the work *Currents of Archival Thinking* (2017), in which she discusses that "participatory archives is one of a number of shorthand phrases used in archival literature in reference to contemporary initiatives, which seek to engage non-archivists —generally through the medium of social Web technology— either to contribute to archives or to comment on archival practice" (MacNeil and Eastwood 2017, 299).

In this sense, both definitions reveal the importance of user contributions and participation in the archival environment. Nevertheless, the researcher thinks that it is necessary to differentiate the use that will be given to the terms "open" and "participatory" in relation to archives in this report; an open archive is accessible to the public, so users can browse and discover the museum's collection and insights, while a participatory archive can be accessible but at the same time gives space to users to contribute and to interact with the content. This distinction is important because, as it will be possible to see in the next sections, an archive can be an open archive, but it does not necessarily mean that it is participatory.

### **Definition(s) of participation**

In addition to archiving, *participation* is also a core topic in this report since the main aim of this research is to discover participatory approaches to the Oude Kerk's open archive. In this specific section, four conceptions about participation will be addressed: participation as *co-creation*, as a *right to benefit from cultural heritage*, as a *forger of relations with communities* and as *care and commitment* (Fig. 3). As mentioned in the introduction, participation is not a recent topic and it has been explored in many different disciplines; however, the references that will be addressed here are relatively recent, and all of them deal with the idea of transforming museums as spaces in which effective participation could take place with audiences. The first and most known is *participation as co-creation with users*, and the main theoretical reference is Nina Simon's *The Participatory Museum*, in which the author states:

I define a participatory cultural institution as a place where visitors can create, share, and connect with each other around content. Create means that visitors contribute their own ideas, objects, and creative expression to the institution and to each other. Share means that people discuss, take home, remix, and redistribute both what they see and what they make during their visit. Connect means that visitors socialize with other people —staff and visitors— who share their particular interests. Around content means that visitors’ conversations and creations focus on the evidence, objects, and ideas most important to the institution in question (Simon 2010, ii).

In this regard, participation promotes creation, sharing and connections with visitors, and Simon suggests a bottom-up approach in which audiences can contribute, discuss and share with the institution. Simon also presents diverse models for participation in museums that will be important for the discussion of the different levels of participation for the open archive; the most relevant one is a complete model of engagement and participation in relation to institutions (Fig. 4), in which she presents four approaches that museums adopt when dealing with participation and which represents four different degrees of participation.

	Contributory	Collaborative	Co-Creative	Hosted
What kind of commitment does your institution have to community engagement?	We're committed to helping our visitors and members feel like participants with the institution.	We're committed to deep partnerships with some target communities.	We're committed to supporting the needs of target communities whose goals align with the institutional mission.	We're committed to inviting community members to feel comfortable using the institution for their own purposes.
How much control do you want over the participatory process and product?	A lot - we want participants to follow our rules of engagement and give us what we request.	Staff will control the process, but participants' actions will steer the direction and content of the final product.	Some, but participants' goals and preferred working styles are just as important as those of the staff.	Not much - as long as participants follow our rules, they can produce what they want.
How do you see the institution's relationship with participants during the project?	The institution requests content and the participants supply it, subject to institutional rules.	The institution sets the project concept and plan, and then staff members work closely with participants to make it happen.	The institution gives participants the tools to lead the project and then supports their activities and helps them move forward successfully.	The institution gives the participants rules and resources and then lets the participants do their own thing.
Who do you want to participate and what kind of commitment will you seek from participants?	We want to engage as many visitors as possible, engaging them briefly in the context of a museum or online visit.	We expect some people will opt in casually, but most will come with the explicit intention to participate.	We seek participants who are intentionally engaged and are dedicated to seeing the project all the way through.	We'd like to empower people who are ready to manage and implement their project on their own.
How much staff time will you commit to managing the project and working with participants?	We can manage it lightly, the way we'd maintain an interactive exhibit. But we ideally want to set it up and let it run.	We will manage the process, but we're going to set the rules of engagement based on our goals and capacity.	We will give much time as it takes to make sure participants are able to accomplish their goals.	As little as possible - we want to set it up and let it run on its own.
What kinds of skills do you want participants to gain from their activities during the project?	Creation of content, collection of data, or sharing of personal expression. Use of technological tools to support content creation and sharing.	Everything supported by contributory projects, plus the ability to analyze, curate, design, and deliver completed products.	Everything supported by collaborative projects, plus project conceptualization, goal-setting, and evaluation skills.	None that the institution will specifically impart, except perhaps around program promotion and audience engagement.
What goals do you have for how non-participating visitors will perceive the project?	The project will help visitors see themselves as potential participants and see the institution as interested in their active involvement.	The project will help visitors see the institution as a place dedicated to supporting and connecting with community.	The project will help visitors see the institution as a community-driven place. It will also bring in new audiences connected to the participants.	The project will attract new audiences who might not see the institution as a comfortable or appealing place for them.

Fig. 4. Four models of participation and engagement in institutions. Source: extracted from Simon, Nina. 2010. *The Participatory Museum*. Santa Cruz: Museum 2.0, 190-191.

This approach is similar to the conception of *participation as a forger of relations with communities*, which has as a source the theory that Elizabeth Crooke proposes in her article “The ‘Active’ Museum: How Concern with Community Transformed the Museum”. In this article, the author states that “a museum must actively co-produce with its community, effect change, and forge dynamic connections. It is this active museum that is the antithesis of the disconnected museum of old” (Crooke 2015, 482). In this sense, co-production is the key to participation in relation to communities, and it will be a relevant concept in this report. In other words, and taking as a reference the *Faro Convention* (2005), “everyone, alone or collectively, has the right to benefit from the cultural heritage and to contribute towards its enrichment” (Council of Europe 2005, 2); therefore, the Faro Convention refers to the conception of *participation as a right to benefit from cultural heritage and life*, so museums and heritage institutions should ensure interaction with its audiences and co-produce together with them to achieve cultural wellbeing.

Moreover, the last perspective about participation is the one presented as *care and commitment*. This understanding of participation is introduced by Nuala Morse in her work *The Museum as a Space of Social Care* (2021), in which she presents museums as spaces dedicated to care in relation to communities and audiences. As Nuala states in the introduction,

the central aim of this book is to propose a view of the museum as a space of social care, where practices and relations of care are central. In this view, the work of the museum is purposefully re-oriented through ideas of care: care for things, care for stories, care for the issue, care for people, care for the community, care for staff, care for the present and the past and care for the future. Such an orientation to care opens up new ways of thinking about museum work, its aims and purposes and the skills and commitments required in practice (Morse 2021, 2).

From this perspective, participation and community engagement are oriented towards care, and the work in museums has the mission of caring for stories, people and societal issues. Morse takes into account the public and social function of museums and argues that social care has “the capacity to transform the institution’s ability to create value for society in the twenty-first century” (2021, 186). This is a pioneering perspective in the heritage field and it is different from the others presented in the sense that adds an emotional and human component to museum participation, so it is an interesting approach to participation that can be relevant for the creation of participatory approaches to the Oude Kerk’s open archive.

All these theories about participation are also applicable to the digital environment in this research; in the postdigital age, digitality has become normative in museums (Parry 2015, 24), so it offers a complementary environment to the physical museum setting in which to explore accessibility and participation. Within this context, and since the Oude Kerk aims to establish digital participatory practices in the open archive platform, all these perspectives must be also taken into account when developing and crafting the strategies. In this regard, digitality fosters

accessibility but, at the same time, it facilitates user participation through different media platforms (Wellington and Olivier 2015, 578), so it will be fundamental to consider the advantages and opportunities that the digital environment provides in relation to participation.

### **Researcher's positionality**

Before stating the methodology that has been followed, the researcher considers that it is necessary and relevant to describe her role as a researcher at the Oude Kerk to adopt an ethical and transparent attitude towards the research and its outcomes. From April to June 2023, she was conducting research as an embedded researcher at the Oude Kerk as part of the master's in Applied Museum and Heritage Studies. Her main task during that period was to collect information about a concrete intervention: the creation of participatory practices in relation to the still-in-development Oude Kerk's open archive. With the help of her supervisor at the organization, Marianna van der Zwaag, the researcher managed to collect all the necessary data for the creation of this report and to answer the previously stated research question(s).

However, the research and observation conducted during this placement can be defined as participatory since the researcher partook in many of the activities, meetings and tasks of the team, but specially in the ones related to the intervention that she was researching. This means that the outcomes of this investigation may be partially biased due to her active participation and collaboration with the organization, meaning that they be contextualized results because of her implication. She considers this factor as a positive aspect because it will allow to provide more valuable recommendations and conclusions since the perspective from which they will be created will be external—as a two-month embedded researcher from outside of the Oude Kerk—but at the same time internal—due to her participation during this period with the team and the tasks.

This close collaboration with the organization also involves another student who has been doing her master's internship at the Oude Kerk, that is Anne Huber from the Museum Studies master at Universiteit van Amsterdam. The two of them have been working with the same topic, more concretely with the open archive and with the conceptualization of participatory practices linked to it, but it is relevant to state that, even though they have been working together and creating proposals collaboratively for the conceptualization of a participation strategy for the intervention that could be applied into practice, they both also had differentiated and individual tasks. However, all the collaborative work will be acknowledged in this report and, therefore, the recommendations will be divided into two sections that makes this different work visible.

### **Material & Methods**

This section explores how the problem presented by the Oude Kerk has been researched; in this sense, this chapter states the methodology that has been followed in order to collect the data and



to analyze it, but it also discusses the materials used and the main stakeholders involved in the intervention, together with a section dedicated to diverse ethical considerations.

### Mapping the main stakeholders

Before presenting the methodology that has been followed during this research, it is important to map the principal stakeholders of this concrete intervention since they are the main figures that play an important role and are involved in the open archive, but they also have specific emotions, values and needs in relation to it.<sup>6</sup> As a consideration before describing the stakeholders involved here, it is necessary to state that they will be understood as Bruno Latour’s concept *actants*, and not only *actors*, since non-human stakeholders will also be mapped and relevant for this research. In this regard, the term “actant” refers to the Actor-Network Theory —also known as ANT— developed by the philosopher Bruno Latour in the early 80s.<sup>7</sup> In relation to the choice of this specific term, Latour argues: “since the word *agent* in the case of nonhumans is uncommon, a better term is *actant*, a borrowing from semiotics that describes any entity that acts in a plot until the attribution of a figurative or nonfigurative role” (Latour 1994, 33). In this report, the main actant will be *heritage*, and its agency will be acknowledged since it plays a relevant role in this research. Therefore, considering this, it is possible to map six main actants that play the role of stakeholders in this research, also in a power interest matrix (Fig. 5 and 6):

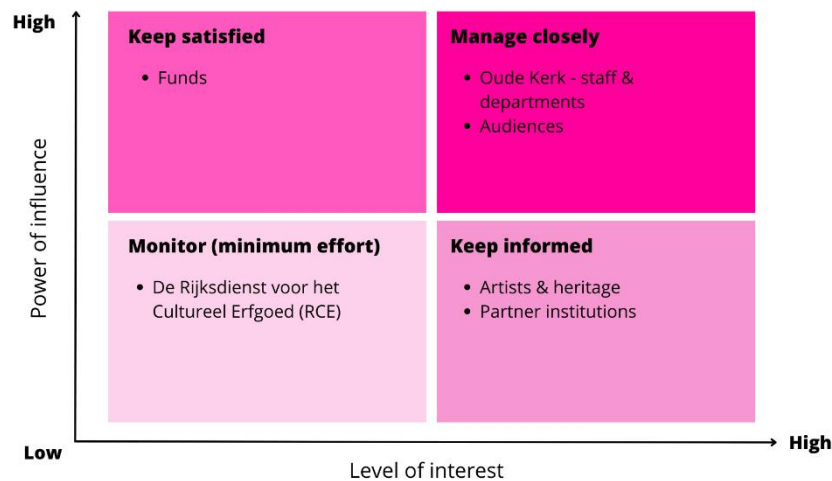


Fig. 5. Power interest matrix of the Oude Kerk’s stakeholders. Source: own creation.

<sup>6</sup> Stakeholders can be defined as “any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization’s objectives. Considering this framework, stakeholders are tightly connected to an organization. They are partners of various sorts, being in a direct relationship” (Zbuchea and Bira 2020, 96).

<sup>7</sup> To have an overview of the Actor-Network Theory, see Latour, Bruno. 2005. *Reassembling the Social – An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

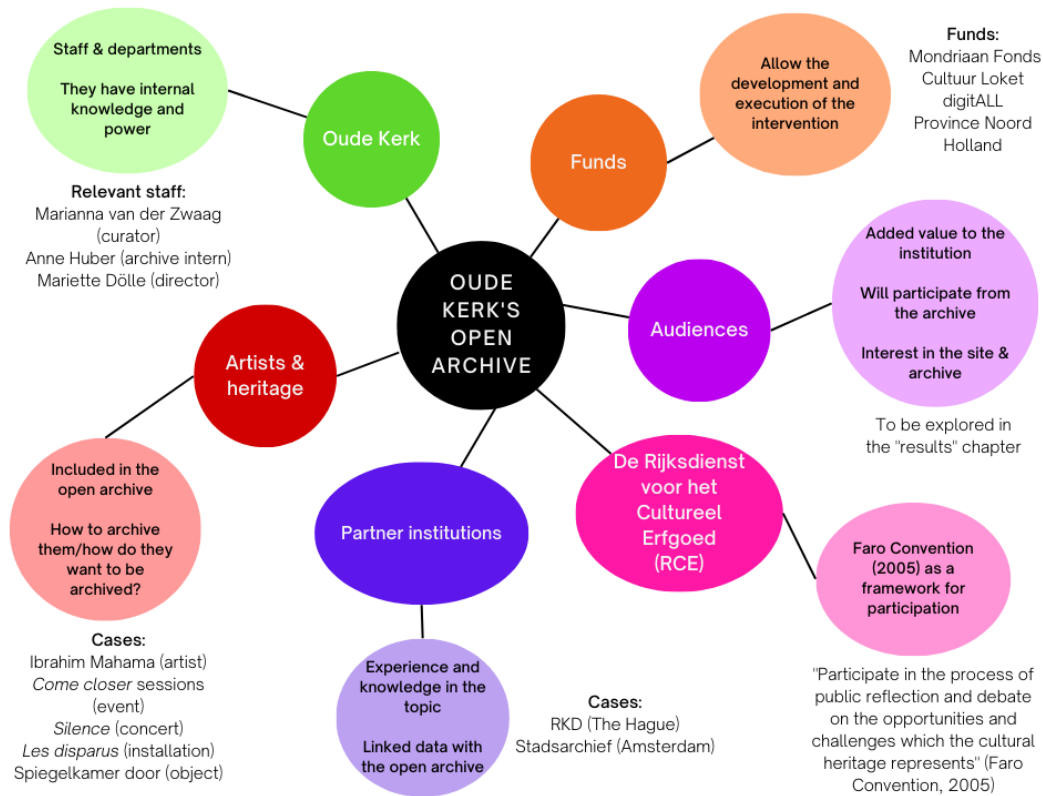


Fig. 6. Map of stakeholders. Source: own creation.

(1) *The Oude Kerk*, which is the researcher's host organization and the institution that is developing the intervention that has been researched here; it has high influence and high interest, so it is necessary to manage it closely in relation to the power interest matrix. The most relevant figures from the organization in relation to the intervention are Marianna van der Zwaag—who is the curator of the Oude Kerk but also is in charge of the archive and the collection—, Anne Huber—who is a master's student at the Universiteit van Amsterdam and is conducting her internship working with the open archive—, and Mariette Dölle—who is the director of the Oude Kerk and has the final decision-making power of the projects that are carried out at the organization—.

The rest of the staff of the Oude Kerk, considering also the *publieksmedewerkers*,<sup>8</sup> are secondary relevant stakeholders since they will be directly involved in the project when it is released. Furthermore, all of them have the mission and interest of successfully developing and releasing the Oude Kerk's open archive in order to make their collection accessible to their audiences, and they also have the necessary internal knowledge and skills to carry this intervention out. Their

<sup>8</sup> The *publieksmedewerkers* are the professionals that work with the public in the museum, in the front of house.

values are clearly related to creating dialogue, exchange, and reflection through contemporary art and historical heritage: “through the interplay between the centuries-old building, in which city and people reflect themselves, and contemporary art, the Oude Kerk aims to stimulate an exchange of ideas about the world around us and to (re)define changing values together (Oude Kerk 2023). Moreover, their needs are mainly tied to the willingness of creating participatory practices related to the open archive; this is also linked to making this participation not only accessible for the digital audiences, but also to offline target groups, the artists involved in the different installations, the staff or even the neighborhood surrounding the institution.

(2) *The funds*, that provide the necessary economic resources to the heritage institution for the creation and development of the intervention of the open archive, and which the Oude Kerk should keep satisfied since they have a high degree of influence in the intervention. The main organizations that the Oude Kerk is in contact with and that is applying to are Dutch culture-related institutions: Mondriaan Fonds, Cultuurloket DigitALL and Province Noord Holland.<sup>9</sup> These organizations are directly linked to culture, art, digitality, and also to the funding of local projects. The values of this group of stakeholders are related to finding common ground between the applicants and their own needs and mission. Furthermore, their needs are also tied to the just mentioned values since they have the necessity of finding potential projects to fund that satisfy their values and that are aligned with their purposes.

(3) *The audiences*, which can be understood as the main target groups that the Oude Kerk has in relation to the open archive, and they need to be managed closely since they have power and interest in relation to the open archive. The exploration of the different types of target audiences of the Oude Kerk’s archive is an issue that one of the secondary research questions tries to unveil, so it will be explored in broad detail in the results section of this report. Nevertheless, it is possible to describe the needs and values of this group of stakeholders; the audiences of the archive seek to be able to participate in the intervention and to have access to the collection and insights of the institution. The mission of the Oude Kerk in relation to them is to make the archive of the institution accessible and to create participatory practices linked to the open archive that directly involve the audiences. Moreover, this group of stakeholders also represents an added value to the open archive but also to the Oude Kerk since their different perspectives, contexts and backgrounds can add meaning and multivocality to the institution and to the intervention.

(4) *De Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed (RCE)*, which is the Cultural Agency of The Netherlands and is the national organ that deals with heritage and culture in the country. It is an

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<sup>9</sup> Websites of Mondriaan Fonds, Cultuurloket digitALL and Province Noord Holland: <https://www.mondriaanfonds.nl/> / <https://cultuurloketdigital.nl/> / <https://www.noord-holland.nl/Loket/Subsidies>

organization that is currently working with the Faro Convention—which is the framework for topics such as participation and democracy in the heritage field at a European level—; more concretely, the RCE is researching the convention to ratify it in the close future. In this regard, it is an important organization and convention for the Oude Kerk since it provides a broad framework from which it is possible to work with participation and cultural democracy, and it can become a relevant framework at a national level for the cultural context of The Netherlands. Since the RCE and the Faro Convention work now as a theoretical reference for the Oude Kerk, it is only important to monitor them.

(5) *Partner institutions* with which the Oude Kerk is closely working. At the moment, these institutions are the Stadsarchief Amsterdam and the RKD (Rijksbureau voor Kunsthistorische Documentatie), they have experience and broad knowledge about contemporary archival practices, and the Oude Kerk is collaborating with them by linking their databases to the open archive platform. In this regard, the Stadsarchief and the RKD are providing materials such as portraits or deeds to the open archive, and their needs are related to establishing and maintaining a sustainable bond with the Oude Kerk that facilitates the exchange of heritage and materials. Furthermore, their values are aligned with the Linked Open Data (LOD) movement, which promotes the interconnection of datasets to be freely used and shared.

(6) *The artists and the heritage*, which is a group that is included in the open archive and is related to the question: “how to archive them / how do they want to be archived?”. They are the main subjects of the archive and they can be approached with a participatory perspective by including them in the archival process; in this regard, artists could have the power of decision-making when they and their artworks/objects/installations/events are going to be included in the archive, and this is why they need to be informed of and involved in the steps taken. Their needs are related to finding a common ground between their interests and the Oude Kerk’s interests, and they also want to be present and visible in the open archive.

Some cases that are included in the archive and that are part of this group of stakeholders are artists (e.g., Ibrahim Mahama), events (e.g., *Come Closer* sessions), performances (e.g., *Silence* concerts), artistic installations (e.g., *Les Disparus*) and material objects of the church (e.g., Spiegelkamer door). Regarding the heritage as an actant, its needs and interests are also related to its archival process and to how to be visible to the audiences. In this sense, it is relevant to make the processes and the internal information accessible to offer a complete and deeper perspective of the heritage of the Oude Kerk to the public. More specifically in relation to the intangible heritage, a relevant need is to find a creative strategy to document it in Adlib and to make it visible in the open archive.

## Data collection & data analysis methodology

In order to conduct this research, an in-depth and qualitative methodology with new and existing data has been followed; the existing data that has been researched has been extracted from the Oude Kerk's internal documentation system, and it consists of unpublished reports and documents linked to the creation of the open archive. The research has concretely measured the current situation of the development of the Oude Kerk's open archive and different archival practices in the museum field with participatory approaches that can serve as inspiration for the intervention. This has been conducted through four different data collection methods that can be categorized as "method triangulation", because they have provided complementary data that has been useful for the understanding of the current context of the Oude Kerk's archive and, afterwards, for the creation of a proposal for the development of participatory practices related to the archive. These are the detailed methods:

(1) *Interviews* of relevant individuals that are linked to the intervention in the Oude Kerk or outside of it, but that are related in the sense that they are professionals that work with the topic of open archives and/or participation. They were semi-structured interviews of between thirty minutes and one hour of duration, and the main idea of them was to conduct a conversation with the interviewees with the help of some pre-planned questions that could lead and structure the interview, but the individuals were always free to ask questions and feel in a less formal environment. Furthermore, seventeen individuals and institutions were contacted because their approaches were relevant to the research, such as The Black Archives, Imagine IC or the Rijksstudio, but it was impossible to receive an answer or to get in contact with them; in the end, it was possible to conduct eight interviews with relevant professionals for this research; the rationale behind the selection of these individuals is their experiences and knowledge, since they are directly linked to the topics of participation and archiving. For privacy reasons, the transcripts of these interviews will not be available in this version of the research report and interviewees will be anonymized.

The interviewees were two individuals from the Oude Kerk, an expert in the topic of "participatory archiving", and individuals from If I Can't Dance, I Don't Want to Be Part of Your Revolution,<sup>10</sup> the Historisches Museum Frankfurt,<sup>11</sup> Landhuis Oud Amelisweerd,<sup>12</sup> the Badisches

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<sup>10</sup> If I Can't Dance – I Don't Want to Be Part of Your Revolution's website: <https://ificantdance.org/>

<sup>11</sup> Historisches Museum Frankfurt's websites to CityLab and the Library of Generations: <https://historisches-museum-frankfurt.de/en/stadtlabor?language=en> / <https://historisches-museum-frankfurt.de/en/bibliothek-der-generationen?language=en>

<sup>12</sup> Moving Stories' website: <https://landhuisoudamelisweerd.nl/movingstories/>

Landesmuseum<sup>13</sup> and The ArQuives.<sup>14</sup> All these professionals and academics provided valuable and relevant insights and perspectives from their own experiences working in the archival and/or participatory field. This method allowed to answer sub-questions number 1, 2, 3 and 4.

(2) *Desk research*, that is divided in two main sub-methods: on the one hand, literature review has been conducted, which consisted on reading and analyzing different articles and works related to the topics of archiving, participation and participatory archiving. This method was useful to discover what have other professionals and/or academics said about the topic of this research and to have a theoretical perspective of the issue. The kind of documents that have been researched were mainly academic papers and publications, museum/institutions publications, blogs and journals, and more concretely thirty works have been read, but due to the limited scope of this report, not all of them will be addressed here since some of them dealt with the topics of archiving but they were not aligned with the objective of this research; in this regard, only ten of these works will be used here. Furthermore, the works used for this research method have been written by relevant professionals and academics of the field of participation and archiving, such as Isto Huvila or Edward Benoit III among others.

On the other hand, website analysis as part of the desk research method has been used in order to find different existing open archives, participatory practices and participatory archives both in the digital and offline fields. During the two-month research, different projects that are relevant to the investigation have been found on the Internet, through the different interviews, and on social media platforms. In this regard, a total of fifty-three institutions, projects and interventions have been found and they have all been stored in an Excel list in order to create a database with all the references. Furthermore, the research of these interventions that can work as a reference for the Oude Kerk was not limited to a local level (Amsterdam) or a national level (The Netherlands), but an international scope was applied and interventions from Europe but also outside of it (Canada, Rwanda or the USA) have been found. The method of desk research allowed to answer sub-question number 4.

(3) *Secondary analysis* of existing data, which has been focused on re-using existing information from the Oude Kerk and the intervention that has been researched. This data was mainly located in internal reports and documents of the Oude Kerk, which have been selected from the institution's database. In total, there are fifteen documents that dealt with the intervention of the open archive and that have been useful for this research, but they are unreleased documents so special attention has been given to the use of these reports; the ethical strategy that has been

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<sup>13</sup> Badisches Landesmuseum's websites to the Creative Museum and the Museum x: <https://www.landesmuseum.de/digital/projekte-museum-der-zukunft/creative-museum> / <https://www.landesmuseum.de/museumx> (in German language)

<sup>14</sup> The ArQuives' website: <https://arquives.ca/>

followed was to double-check with the supervisor of the organization —Marianna van der Zwaag— if the data could be used in this report, so all the mentioned and used documents here have been approved by the host institution. The main obstacle encountered here was the language: many of the documents were written in the Dutch language, but an easy solution was found by translating the documents to English through a translating platform and with the limited knowledge of Dutch that the researcher had it was possible to understand the content of the reports. This method allowed to answer sub-questions number 1, 2 and 3.

(4) *Observation* was also conducted in diverse meetings and presentations that took place during the researcher's placement at the Oude Kerk. The type of observation was unstructured, direct and participative, and it was conducted in a total of 11 events and meetings; the participative component is important here, and it has been previously discussed in the researcher's positionality section. The observation was very diverse and it took place in weekly team meetings, team presentations about the open archive and internal meetings with Marianna van der Zwaag and Anne Huber about the progress of the intervention and next steps. After the meetings, the information was always summarized by the researcher in order to keep track of the data. Furthermore, observation was conducted in two local heritage institutions of the city of Amsterdam: De Appel and If I Can't Dance, I Don't Want to Be Part of Your Revolution. With a previous appointment with the archive curators —Nell Donkers and Anik Fournier respectively— it was possible to visit their physical archives, which was insightful to discover how they approach physical archiving and participation versus digital practices. This method allowed to answer sub-questions number 1, 2, 3 and 4.

After the data was collected, it was also processed by digitalizing it in different ways depending on the method. In the case of interviewing, the recordings and the notes were transcribed, while for the observation all the notes of the events were also digitally transcribed and organized by dates for its posterior use. Lastly, for the website analysis, all the information found was organized in a list in Excel and two of the cases have been analyzed in-depth in the discussion section of this report due to their proximity to the Oude Kerk. Following the data processing, data analysis has been conducted: taking all the presented methods into account, all the data collected has been analyzed through a qualitative methodology, more concretely through inductive coding and categorizing the information; the codes and categories are accessible in Appendix 1 (pg. 64). After this, it has been possible to map and reflect on the codes and the outcomes in order to discuss the information that has provided a solid answer to the research question(s).

### **Ethical considerations**

Before presenting the outcomes of this research, it is relevant to discuss the main ethical considerations that have been taken during the investigation and the creation of this report. In this

regard, while conducting the stated research, the researcher followed the *Netherlands Code of Conduct for Research Integrity* (2018), which presents the ethical principles that researchers must adhere to in The Netherlands. In this regard, these norms have been extremely relevant to conduct research with an ethical and safe approach. Moreover, the researcher also followed the codes of conduct and rules of the host institution in order to ensure an adequate working environment and an ethical and responsible attitude towards the organization and the research.

In relation to the ethics linked to the research of the intervention, this research has followed an ethical investigation; firstly, interviewees have had to sign a consent form that informed them about the implications of being interviewed for this research, and they were aware of the process and the use of the provided data. In this regard, they had to sign the consent form that the researcher created in order to be involved, which contained a brief explanation of the research, the intervention of the host organization and the implications that participating in it had, but also a space in which the interviewee gave explicit consent to the different implications.

Secondly, in the methods of secondary analysis and literature review, the work and investigations of other professionals and academics have been explicitly acknowledged in order to ensure an ethical and responsible use of the existing data and publications. Furthermore, when dealing with existing documents and of the Oude Kerk, special caution has been taken if they were unreleased and/or private reports; the strategy that has been followed in order to discover if they could be used for this research was to ask for the permission of the supervisor of the host institution, so the documents that have been re-used here have been previously approved by the organization. A similar issue happened when dealing with the website of the Oude Kerk's open archive, which is not accessible by the public yet —only by the staff that has access to it—; in this regard, and following the advice of the host institution's supervisor, the website link can be attached in this report for consultation purposes.

Thirdly, in the method of observation —both exhibitions/archives and internal meetings— there has been transparency in relation to the data collected and with the participants and colleagues that took part in those meetings; therefore, they have also been informed about this research and its implications, and there has been a consented agreement. Lastly, and as previously stated in the researcher's positionality section, Anne Huber —a student from the Universiteit van Amsterdam— has also been conducting research and working in the same intervention as part of her master's internship, so the co-creation with her will be acknowledged in this report, but also the researcher's individual outcomes will be differentiated from the collaborative work.



## Results

After describing the methodology that has been followed in this research, this section will briefly describe the data that has been collected during the researcher's placement at the host institution and its posterior data analysis through codes and categories.

### Observation

Participant observation was conducted in 11 meetings of the Oude Kerk tied to the development of the open archive. The most relevant meetings were the ones that happened at the beginning of the placement since they contained information about how the open archive works and all the necessary information to understand the current situation of the intervention. Therefore, the last meetings that took place were important for the development of the participation strategy that Anne Huber and the researcher had to create, but they did not provide any valuable information for this report. The most relevant information extracted was that since 2019, the Oude Kerk is working with the concept of "open archive" and, with this as a basis, a digital environment/website has been created in which the institutions' collection is accessible; it is a long-term project that will be developed until 2026, which is the expected release date of the open archive. In Fig. 7 it is possible to visualize the timeline of the intervention.

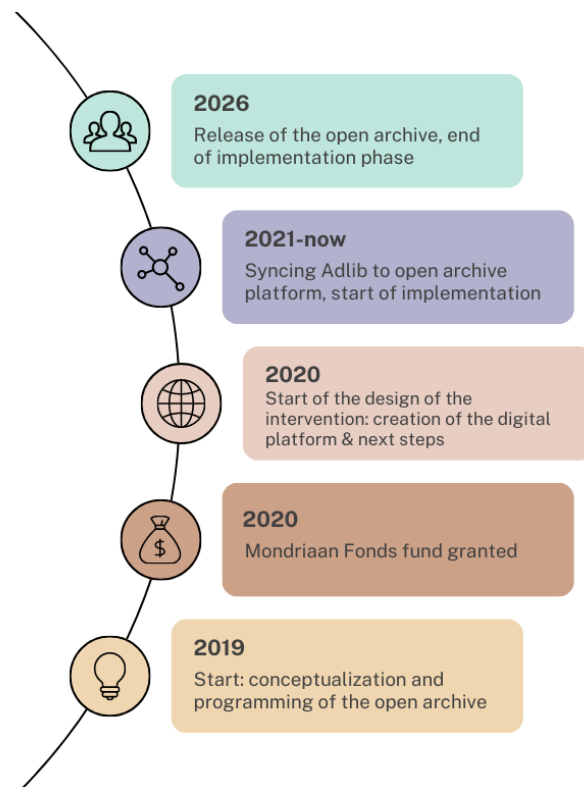


Fig. 7. Timeline of the open archive. Source: own creation.

It is relevant to mention that this platform is still unreleased and it is only accessible by owning the link to it. Since the start of the intervention, the documentation system of the Oude Kerk —

which is now Adlib but will change soon, in June 2023, to Axiell Collections— is being updated by including the contemporary art installations, diverse events that were not archived, and time-based events such as concerts or performances. More concretely, the Oude Kerk's collection is versatile and includes the tangible heritage of the church such as bibles, the graves of the site, the mirrors or the period rooms, but also the contemporary art installations and the intangible elements such as concerts, talks or performances; the religious tangible heritage of this collection is already registered in Adlib, and the material related to the contemporary art and the intangible is currently being archived in Adlib by creatively exploring the categories of the documentation system. Additionally, each record has an identification number in Adlib and diverse categories such as the object name, the title, the author, a description or associations are being filled in to have a rich and broad description of the record.

Diverse new and updated descriptions are also being added to each Adlib record and also documents related to them (such as sketches, reflections from the visitors, notes, videos or images) are being archived to make the processes visible in the open archive. In order to access the collection through the open archive website, there is a 2-layered data architecture: this platform and the Adlib documentation system of the Oude Kerk are synced, so what appears in Adlib is also translated into the open archive site with a standardized design. The platform is still under construction and, therefore, it has some pitfalls such as spelling mistakes or bugs.

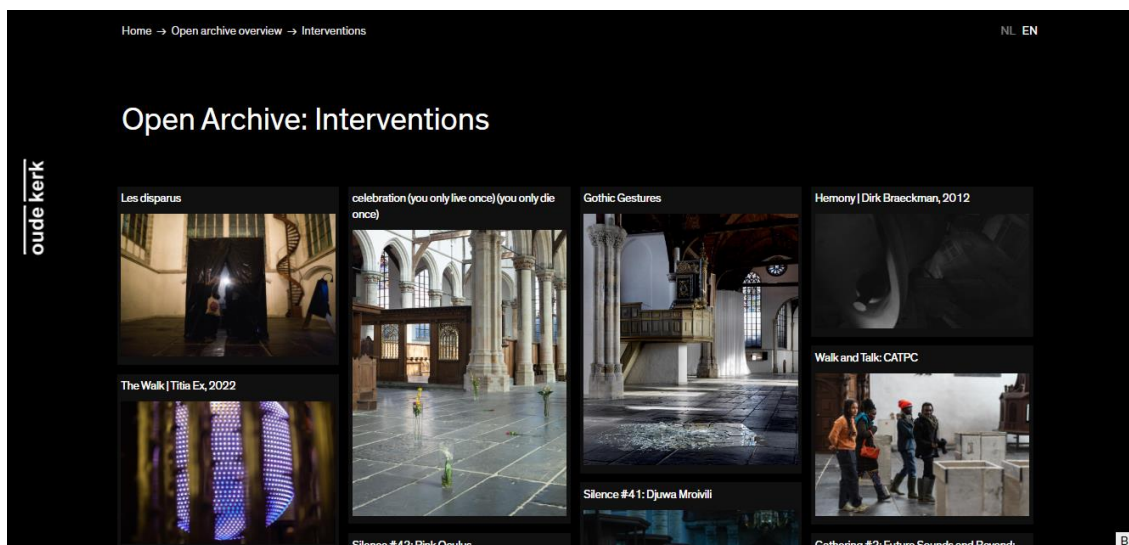


Fig. 9. Interventions section of the open archive. Source: own screenshot taken on the 23/05/2023.

Moreover, there are four main categories in this open archive: graves, people, inventory and interventions. The people section includes individuals that are connected to the Oude Kerk, that have been buried or married in the church, and the interventions section gives access to the contemporary art installations and the intangible heritage such as events and performances (Fig. 8). When accessing one of the different sections, all the records appear related to it and can be accessed too. When accessing a particular record, its title, the author/artist and a description

appear at first; the second noticeable item is a group of associations or categories that are Dutch verbs; these verbs describe the record and also create relations with other records that share the same categories (Fig. 9).

Next to the associations, there are the connections, which are visual maps that illustrate the connections that the accessed record has with other records of the open archive; these associations and bubbles are not interactive, meaning that if they are clicked, they do not redirect the user to the selected record. These connections can be compared to the Linked Open Data movement, which promotes the interrelation of databases and information; in this specific case, the maps do not show connections between external databases, but they visualize links between records of the same database. By the end of the page, it is possible to find images, related records that can be accessed, other materials linked to the item (such as notes, sketches, videos, floorplans, etc.), and the Adlib identifier (Fig. 10 and 11). In order to show the differences and similarities between Adlib and the open archive platform, Fig. 12 and 13 are screenshots from Adlib of the same record shown in the previous four pictures, and the features that appear in the open archive —such as the associations or the materials— are also visible in the collection management system (Fig. 14).

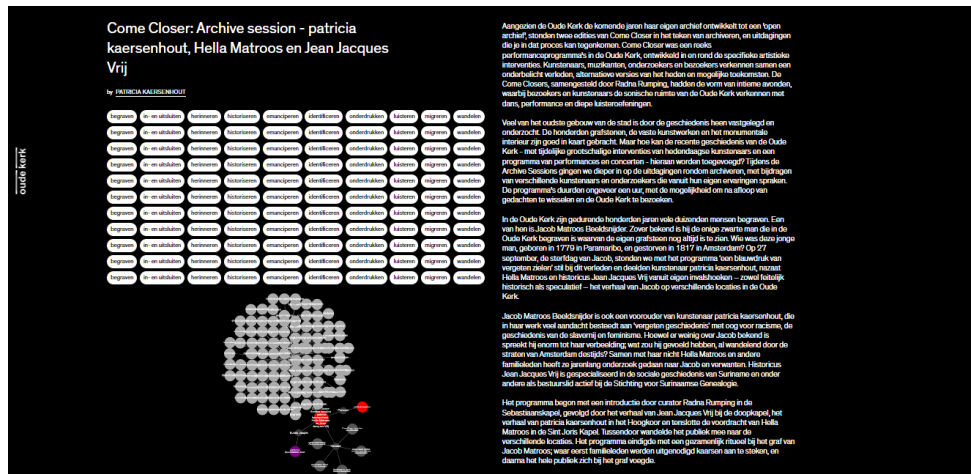


Fig. 9. Associations and connections in the open archive. Source: own screenshot taken on the 23/05/2023.

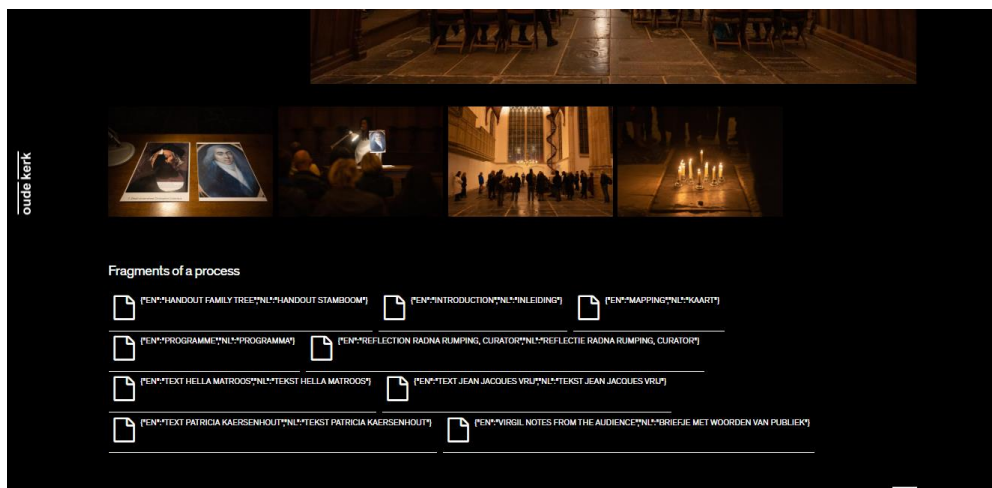


Fig. 10. Fragments of a process in the open archive. Source: own screenshot taken on the 23/05/2023.

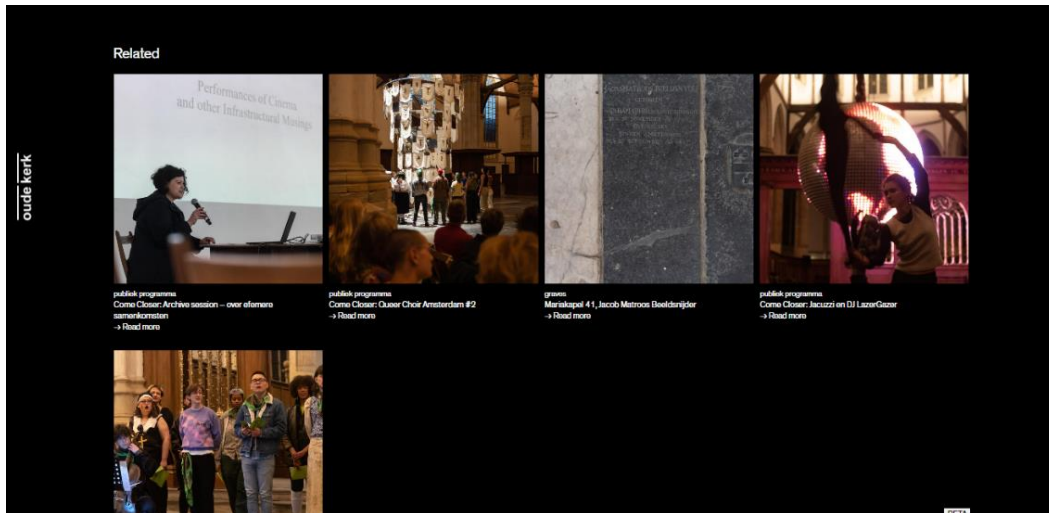


Fig. 11. Related records in the open archive. Source: own screenshot taken on the 23/05/2023.

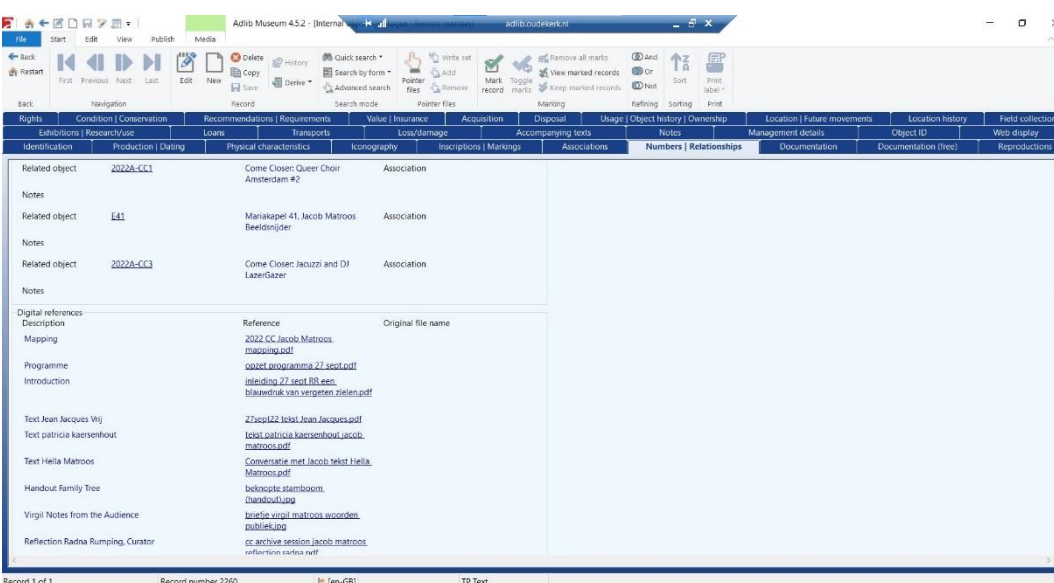
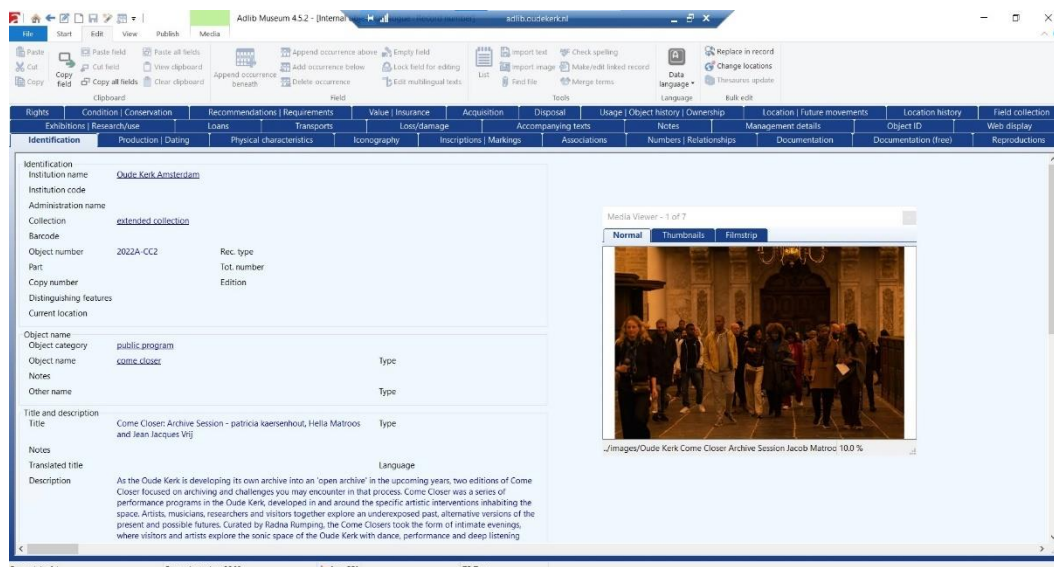


Fig. 12 and 13. Come Closer session Adlib record. Source: screenshot taken by Anne Huber on the 23/05/2023.

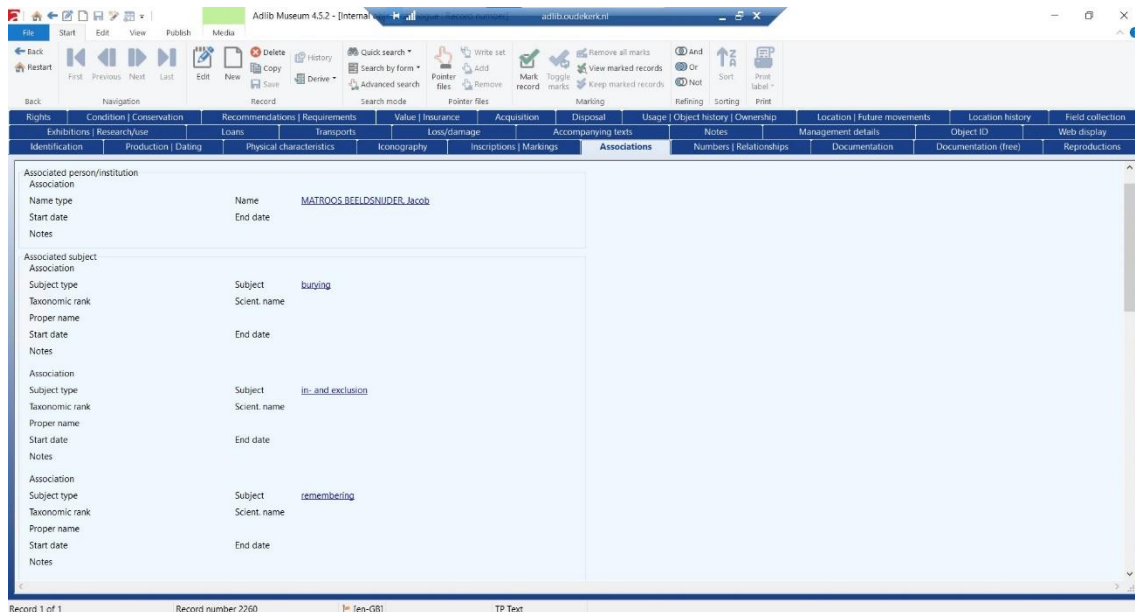


Fig. 14. Connections in Adlib. Source: screenshot taken by Anne Huber on the 23/05/2023.

## Secondary analysis

The method of secondary analysis has allowed to research 15 documents that were stored in the Oude Kerk's private database and that are unpublished. It is possible to classify them into four different groups: (1) documents created prior to the development of the open archive, (2) materials related to the functioning of the open archive, (3) funding applications for the development of the open archive, and (4) materials related to the creation of a participation strategy for the intervention. These documents have been useful to discover the start of the intervention and its evolution, from the first conceptualizations to real funding applications that present a clear idea about the project of the open archive. For instance, a Power Point presentation was found in one of the folders, which is entitled "Archive in Progress" and was created by the beginning of 2021, which was the start date of the intervention.

In this presentation, the initial ideas about the open archive are presented, and there is also an interesting timeline with three different phases and steps that had to be taken (Fig. 15). It is relevant to state that phase 1 is almost completed now, since the basic database structure and the connections to external archives have been achieved, but the task of archiving is still in process. Also, some tasks from phase 2 are being started, such as the path system. Nevertheless, in these initial documents nothing is mentioned about adding participation to the open archive, so it is possible to assume that it was an idea posterior to the design of the open archive platform. Moreover, and in relation to this, another material that was relevant to find in order to discover how the open archive platform works was a graphic that visually illustrates the relationship

between the website and Adlib, and which allows to understand the 2-layered structure of the project (Fig. 16).

Phase 1	Archiving past exhibitions, public programs and include them in AdLib	
	Developing visuals and prototype	
	Connecting to External archives (RKD+Stadsarchief)	
	Basic database structure, UI and connection to AdLib	31-08-21
Phase 2	Connecting to External archives (Rijksmuseum+Amsterdam Museum + Amsterdam Time Machine)	~
	Path system, navigation	~
	Linked open data	~
	Adding geolocation coordinates to floorplan	~
Phase 3	PDF files image & language processing	~

Fig. 15. Phases and priorities. Source: own screenshot of the Oude Kerk’s material “Archive in Progress” taken on the 19/06/2023.

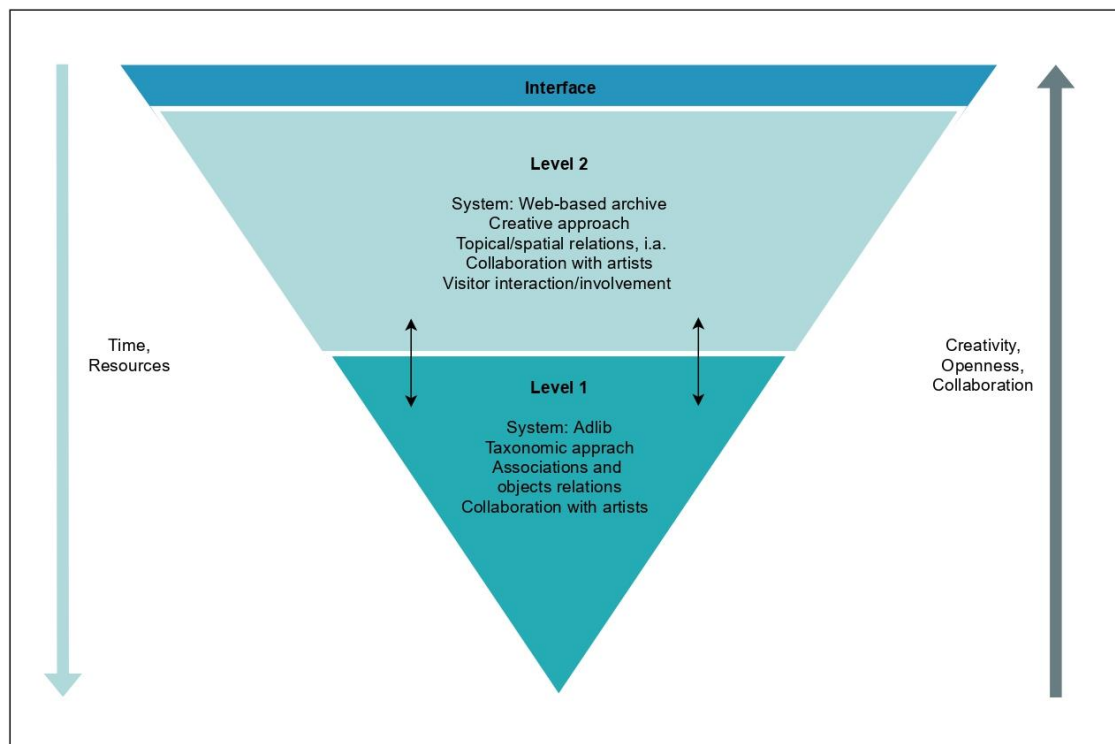


Fig. 16. Open archive structure. Source: Oude Kerk’s internal material “Archive Triangle”, accessed on the 20/04/2023

A last document that provided very insightful information was the funding application for the Cultuurloket DigitALL funds, which is currently being created by Marianna van der Zwaag and Sinja Bloeme, but also in collaboration with Anne Huber and the researcher. In this material, the reasoning behind the creation of the open archive is described, and some logistical information is provided, such as a detailed budget or future strategies for the development of the project. In

addition, the purpose of adding participation to the open archive is described in this document. Among all the valuable information for this research, which will be analyzed and discussed in the following sections, it is important to highlight that the target groups of the open archive are described in this funding application:

For the archive, we identify four target groups within which we give individuals and communities, local and (inter)nationals -digitally- a place: (1) Amsterdammers, fellow citizens and neighbors, (2) people with a non-Western background, unfamiliar with the Protestant church phenomenon, (3) communities tangential to urgencies and issues raised by the work of an artist or an installation, and (4) those interested in heritage and contemporary art. We are not the first and only ones involved in innovation in the field of archives; therefore, we would like to work together with collaborating partners to share and broaden both experiences and knowledge, and to link sources. To date they are: Rijksmuseum, City Archives, Rijksdienst voor Kunsthistorische Documentatie, Amsterdam Museum, The Black Archives and Amsterdam Time Machine (Bloeme and van der Zwaag 2023, 8).<sup>15</sup>

Therefore, these are the audiences that the organization aims to target, it is possible to state that they are diverse groups with different needs, interests and values, and that the aim of the institution is also to establish collaborative relationships with local and national partners.

## **Interviewing**

Interviews have offered diverse insights in relation to participation from different individuals experienced in the topic; at the same time, the method has also provided a clearer perspective of the motivations of the Oude Kerk about including participation in the intervention. Due to privacy reasons, all the information extracted from the interviews has been anonymized. On the one hand, the interview with the staff of the Oude Kerk offered a firsthand perspective of the evolution of the open archive, which they started around 2019, and they discussed the processes that they have gone through with the intervention, such as funding applications, creating the platform or working with interns. They also revealed that the current Oude Kerk website has a section named “Kunst & Erfgoed” (Fig. 17),<sup>16</sup> which compiles information and records of the archive and shares a similar aesthetic with the open archive, but it is incomplete and it has a difficult accessible interface, so its function is to highlight some items of the collection in the website. About this, before the update of the institution’s website that took place this year, there was a section named “Archief” that showed the graves and the material collection of the church, but the contemporary art installations were not visible there.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> The original text is in Dutch, it has been translated into English by the platform DeepL.com

<sup>16</sup> Link to the Kunst & Erfgoed website: <https://oudekerk.nl/kunst-en-erfgoed>

<sup>17</sup> The old website is no longer accessible, but it is possible to check it through the Internet Archive: Wayback Machine: <http://web.archive.org/web/20221205173759/https://oudekerk.nl/collectie/>



Fig. 17. Kunst & Erfgoed. Source: own screenshot from <https://oudekerk.nl/kunst-en-erfgoed> taken on the 24/05/2023



Fig. 18. Space of user contributions in Graven op Internet. Source: own screenshot from <https://www.gravenopinternet.nl/> taken on the 19/06/2023

Furthermore, and in relation to these websites, the Oude Kerk has a website entitled “Graven op Internet”,<sup>18</sup> in which all the graves of the church are documented and it is an interactive site, so there is an interactive floorplan of the graves, and users can also comment and add tags in the records (Fig. 18). This was a surprising finding since it means that the Oude Kerk already had participatory approaches implemented, but the organization decided to stop using the site in 2022 because “it was very blurry and not accurate anymore” (interviewee 2023), and the information that was provided by the users was not checked by the staff. On the other hand, the conversation with another individual from the Oude Kerk provided information about their direct contact with the open archive platform and Adlib. It was relevant to discover their perspective on the open

<sup>18</sup> Link to Graven op Internet: <https://www.gravenopinternet.nl/>



archive since they have been working with it since February 2023, and they have been developing a participation strategy for the intervention together with the researcher.

The other six interviews were conducted with external professionals to the Oude Kerk, more concretely with individuals working with participatory projects or archives; all of them provided insights about their projects and positions, which were very useful to understand how participation can work into real daily practice in a museum or a heritage site, both digital and physical. For instance, the interview *If I Can't Dance, I Don't Want to Be Part of Your Revolution* offered a perspective of a small institution that archives intangible heritage in Amsterdam, and has different ways of re-activating the materials of the archive. The talk with *Moving Stories* also provided insights of a Dutch project that is just starting to archive intangible heritage —stories— with a bottom-up approach. The interviews with the *Historisches Museum Frankfurt* and the *Badisches Landesmuseum*, both relevant museums in Germany, showed the importance of participation in the physical and digital environments, and their experiences were meaningful as a reference to draw recommendations for the Oude Kerk's open archive; also, both of them agreed that participation is layered and that it is important to trust audiences.

Furthermore, the story of *The ArQuives* was very valuable since it offered the perspective of a real community archive that exists for and by volunteers and people from the LGBTQ2+ community. They discussed that “community archives are inherently participatory because it is community members that make it happen, and then by engaging the community and doing those other types of participatory projects it is even further distributing the power to even more community members” (interviewee 2023). Lastly, the conversation with an expert about participatory archiving provided an academic and theory-focused perspective of participatory archiving, and they stated that a participatory archive is one in which users can contribute and the power of the institution is shared with them, even though participation is layered and there are multiple ways of doing so (interviewee 2023).

### **Desk research: literature review & website analysis**

The method of desk research was conducted through two different sub-methods: literature review and website analysis; even though they provided different results, both of them offered a clear perspective on how participation is applied into practice with different projects, interventions and theories. On the one hand, ten articles were analyzed for the literature review, and all of them revolved around the topics of participatory archiving, inclusivity and user participation. All these articles provided theoretical frameworks to understand the mentioned topics, but they also referred to real cases that dealt with participation and archiving.

A relevant remark is that the literature provided the researcher with knowledge about strategies for participation in the digital realm, which have been useful to understand the contemporary

context of the archival field. For instance, a concept that was present in the articles and that can be important for the Oude Kerk is *social tagging*: “no matter the technical term, social tagging, user-generated indexing, or user-generated metadata offers users the ability to engage collections on a very personal level, and it increases access points” (Benoit III 2017, 410). In this regard, it is a tool that allows users to contribute and it has already been used by the institution, more concretely in the website Graven op Internet, since users were able to contribute with comments or tags, and it is a strategy that could be taken into consideration again for the open archive, maybe with some limitations or boundaries.

On the other hand, for the website analysis, fifty-three interventions have been organized in a list in Excel, in which every case has been categorized following seven categories: the name of the institution, the link to the website, the name of the intervention, if it is participatory, if it is an open archive, a brief description and why is it interesting or inspiring for the Oude Kerk.<sup>19</sup> The interventions that have been compiled are very diverse: they have different geographical contexts, different purposes and target groups, and different ways of approaching participation and archiving. Furthermore, the cases documented in the list have been found during the placement at the host institution, and they were organized in a list in order to keep track of all the references that were being found while conducting the research; in this regard, it is a random and subjective selection of interventions since it is not an objective and representative sample, but the purpose of it is that it is a collection of interventions that have been found on the Internet, articles, social media and discussed in the interviews that provides interesting features and approaches for this research.

These interventions are diverse: open and accessible archives, community archives, participatory archives, exhibitions, participatory workshops or groups, or talks among others; moreover, the criteria for the selection of these has been if they had properties that could work as an inspiration for the Oude Kerk and its open archive. Two of these interventions will be analyzed in-depth in the discussion section, but with a general perspective it is possible to state that most of these interventions can be considered participatory since they involve in different degrees the participants; moreover, many of them use the expression “open archive” or “living archive” to refer to their accessible archives, and they are mainly digital sites rather than physical archives.

## **Data analysis**

After the data collection, data analysis has been conducted. As previously mentioned in the methodology section, a qualitative methodology based on inductive coding has been used to analyze the data; in this regard, the raw data has been inductively coded and, after, the codes have

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<sup>19</sup> The list can be accessed through the following link: <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/15OF75CRU2xPsFKKQSkddup74M6PSSoVI/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=106508605279135380927&rtpof=true&sd=true>

been grouped into categories and sub-categories that have allowed a better understanding of the coding. This way of coding has allowed to grasp a rich and broad understanding of the data, and it has also offered detailed and diverse topics to describe all the collected information due to its bottom-up approach. Also, this analysis has allowed to discover how the different methods have complemented each other when collecting information. Therefore, in total it has been possible to identify 419 codes among all the data collected, some of these codes have appeared more than once in the data analysis, and they have been grouped in to 3 main categories and 9 sub-categories:

- a) Oude Kerk's open archive
  - a. Development
  - b. Functioning
  - c. Target audiences
  - d. Reasoning & motivations
- b) Contemporary archiving
- c) Participation
  - a. Opportunities of participation
  - b. Drawbacks of participation
  - c. Participatory archiving
    - i. Tools & strategies
  - d. Cases & references

These categories and sub-categories have offered insights and detailed information about three topics that the research has dealt with: the Oude Kerk's intervention, contemporary archiving and participation; these categories and the codes can be accessed in Appendix 1 (pg. 64). The content and information of the coding will be discussed in-depth in the next section, together with the theoretical framework presented in the introduction part of this report. Furthermore, the coding and the categorization have been visualized in a mind map that illustrates the data analysis process and the codes related to their corresponding categories (Fig. 19).<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> To obtain a readable version of this mapping, it is possible to access it through the Miro platform: [https://miro.com/welcomeonboard/TEhmSWMwZjkzc2ZNYkp3ZUYzbVVkeGFNWWROWkZHRzVvNGlZOTdCc0g3bzZXTkRHZ2NLTFJFVng3emowWlByRHwzNDU4NzY0NTQ0NDQ3OTIzMjUwfDI=?share\\_link\\_id=56937776913](https://miro.com/welcomeonboard/TEhmSWMwZjkzc2ZNYkp3ZUYzbVVkeGFNWWROWkZHRzVvNGlZOTdCc0g3bzZXTkRHZ2NLTFJFVng3emowWlByRHwzNDU4NzY0NTQ0NDQ3OTIzMjUwfDI=?share_link_id=56937776913)

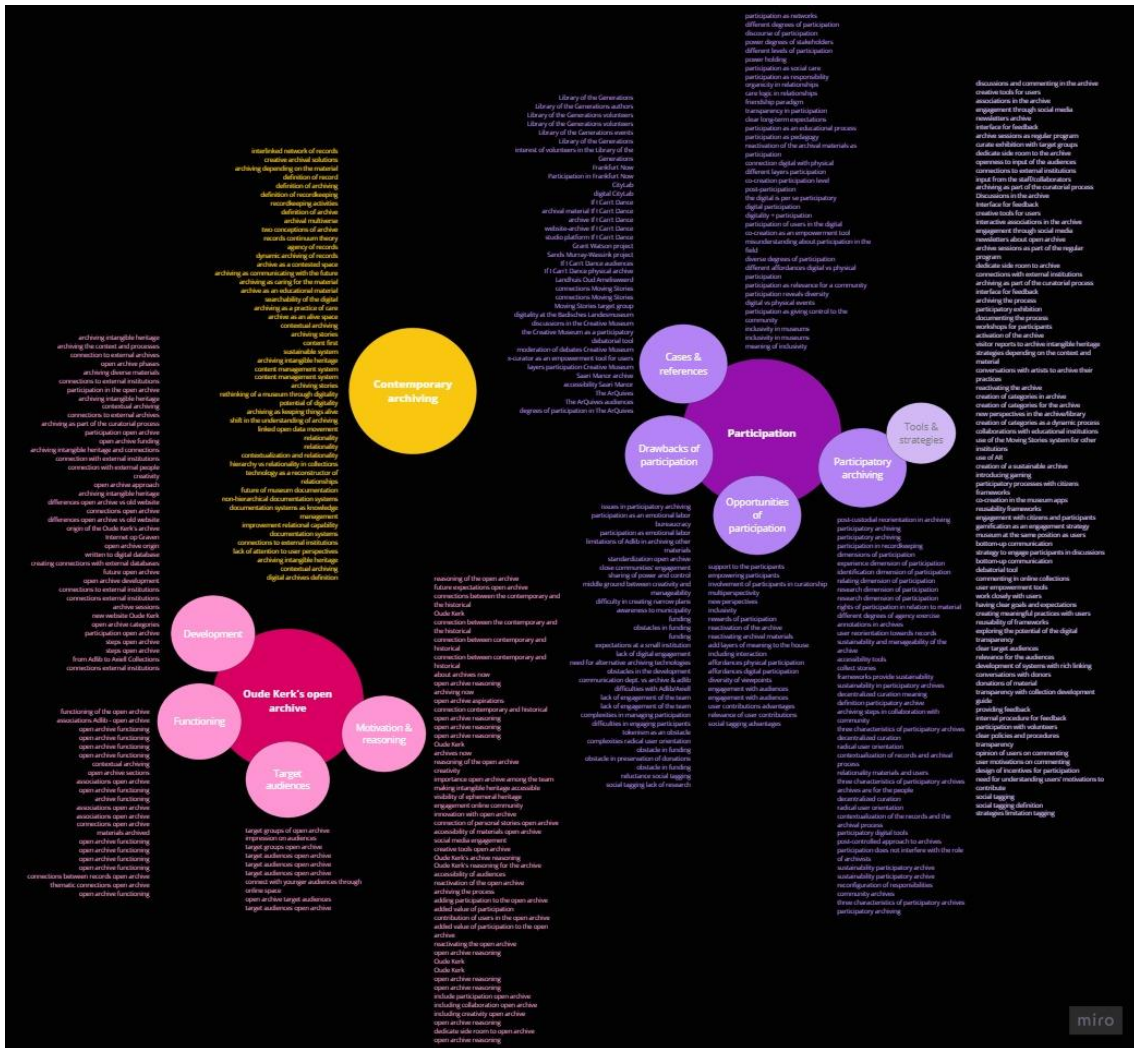


Fig. 19. Mind map of inductive coding. Source: own creation

## Discussion

This section will explore the discussion of the data analysis together with the theoretical framework detailed in the introduction of this report. Furthermore, this section will be divided into three sub-sections that correspond to the three main categories obtained from the inductive qualitative coding.

### Oude Kerk's open archive

#### Development of the open archive

As it has already been mentioned in the previous chapter, the development of the open archive started in 2019 with Marianna van der Zwaag and a fund from the Mondriaan Fonds was offered to the institution in 2020. From then on, the intervention of the Oude Kerk's open archive is still in progress until 2026, so it is a long-term project that is requiring time, dedication of part of the staff and economic resources. During this development process, the institution has already been

opening up the project to the public; for instance, two events named *Come Closer: Archive Sessions* were organized in April and September 2022, which invited audiences to reflect on the Oude Kerk's archive and current archival issues through two different performative events.

Another opening is the evolution of the different websites of the organization. Before 2023, the Oude Kerk had a website in which the inventory of the museum and the graves were accessible in a section named "Archief", but there was also a section entitled "past events" that made visible the different contemporary art installations, performances and events; therefore, it was separated from what was considered "the collection". After the update of the new website in 2023, the institution has created a section named "Kunst & Erfgoed", in which the public programs, the art installations and the inventory are shown together; this represents a step towards the goals of the open archive of creating interrelations between the complete collection, but the current website only includes some highlights and there is only a text created by the communication department, which differs from what is being developed by Marianna van der Zwaag. In relation to this, the Oude Kerk already had experience with participatory archiving; the website *Graven op Internet* stores information about the graves located in the Oude Kerk and includes an interactive map of them, but the most important aspect is that users can contribute to the archive and can add comments or tags. In this regard, the Oude Kerk has already experience with social tagging and, following Nina Simon's approach to participation, it reached the contributory degree of participation, which determines participation through users' contributions. In Nina Simon's words,

visitors' contributions personalize and diversify the voices and experiences presented in cultural institutions. They validate visitors' knowledge and abilities, while exposing audiences to content that could not be created by staff alone. When staff members ask visitors to contribute, it signals that the cultural institution is open to and eager for participation (Simon 2010, 203).

Therefore, the mentioned website had already a degree of participation, which is the mission to achieve with the open archive, but the staff decided to stop using the website because there was no way to mediate, filter or fast-check the comments of the audiences. Even though it is an abandoned site now, there are still individuals commenting and adding contributions to the website; for instance, the last contribution was created on the 6<sup>th</sup> of June of this year, which probably means that there is an engagement with the audiences despite the inactivity of the organization and, then, it is a meaningful site for the public.

On the side of the development of the archival tasks, the Oude Kerk is developing an intervention that defies conventional archival strategies; in this sense, the intangible heritage linked to the institution —such as site-specific installations, public programs, performances, etc.— is being archived in the Adlib system of the organization; despite the rigid structures and taxonomy that

the collection management system has, the Oude Kerk is succeeding in storing the immaterial side of its collection by exploring the categories of Adlib. Moreover, a task of creating connections between the tangible, the intangible, the contemporary and the historical is being done, which will offer new layers of meaning and interactions to the archive. In addition to archiving the intangible, a second task that is being carried out is to archive materials that offer contextual information to the users; in this sense, documents such as pictures and videos of set-ups, sketches or notes, e-mails or floorplans among others are made accessible through the open archive to show the development and evolution of the different exhibitions or events.

The organization has also been working on the concept of Linked Open Data, which promotes the linking and connections with other databases with the objective of creating a global network of data and information. With this idea in mind, the Oude Kerk has connected its archive to the Stadsarchief of Amsterdam and the Rijksbureau voor Kunsthistorische Documentatie (RKD) to add the portraits and deeds of the buried people in the “people” section of the open archive. This initial connection with external databases makes visible the interrelation and networks between institutions and their collections, and the Linked Open Data movement enriches collections and materials by showing their diversity. Furthermore, and with this work in progress, the Oude Kerk wants to take a step further and transform the open archive into a participatory practice, both in the digital and physical environments; some steps have been recently taken with the help of the two interns, and a participation strategy has been developed during the stay of the researcher at the host institution.

### **Functioning of the open archive**

The functioning of the open archive has extensively been described in the results section; however, it is relevant to remark that it has a 2-layered architecture since the open archive website is directly fed by the Adlib system of the organization. In this regard, the institution is archiving all its tangible and intangible collection in the collection management system and, at the same time, it is being exported to the open archive website in a standardized way. While it is still in development and many navigation tools are not working yet, the aim is to end up with a user-friendly, visual and interactive platform.

Among these navigation tools, one of the main developments is the associations or categories of the archive, which classify the records by topics. In the case of the Oude Kerk, the categories of the open archive are verbs that can relate to the collection of the museum; also, “the definitions of the associations are taken from dictionaries to limit the institutional authority and to allow for open, constant, and creative reinterpretation” (Díez and Huber 2023). The short-term objective is to make these categories interactive, so when accessing one of these verbs it would be possible to explore and organize the archive in different ways, and it would add new layers of value and

perspectives to the platform; in this regard, the archive has a big potential of becoming interactive and participatory before its public release.

### **Target audiences of the open archive**

The Oude Kerk's open archive is described as a project for curious individuals who want to explore the site or discover information about a concrete topic (Oude Kerk 2021). However, there is a need to find a more limited target group to which to direct the intervention; as found in diverse documents and as mentioned in some interviews, the Oude Kerk aims to target the following collectives:

- ❖ Digital (international) audiences
- ❖ In-person, offline audiences
  - Amsterdammers and neighbors
  - Individuals with a non-western background
  - Individuals unfamiliar with the protestant religion
  - Communities tangential to urgencies and issues raised by the work of an artist or an installation
  - Heritage and contemporary art lovers

These target groups seem at first sight very broad and very diverse, since they may have very different contexts, needs and values, but they can be seen as groups that are underrepresented in the current Oude Kerk's public, and the institution aims to target them in order to include them in the regular public and visitors with the mission of adding multivocality to the institution.

### **Reasoning & motivations**

The sub-category of reasoning & motivations has allowed to discover why the Oude Kerk is creating an open archive. First, the unique conditions of the institution, consisting of the tension and interrelation between historical heritage and contemporary art, create a special environment in which the development of this innovative open archive can be carried out. However, due to the complexities of Adlib the institution has had to find creative solutions to archive its complete material and immaterial collection, so one of the main motivations is making its intangible heritage accessible and creating connections of it with the rest of the collection. From a broader perspective, a second reason for the creation of the intervention is the willingness to open up the organization's knowledge, materials and processes to the public, so the aim is to become accessible towards the audiences by making its archive public and accessible. Therefore,

the Oude Kerk sees itself as the pulse of a slowly changing society: it is the repository of centuries of history and memory but open to constant reinterpretation and revitalization [...] We invite artists to read the past and add new layers of meaning to it, so this heritage can constantly expand and be reshaped by the present: a way of working that we call *interhistorical*. We have been working on

adding these artistic interventions to our archive to make these relations visible and the historical collection richer in meaning. Now we would like to go a step further and open this archive to the broad public. We would like to shape our archive to become collaborative, participatory, and creative (Oude Kerk 2022).

A third motivation, also mentioned in the previous quote, is to become collaborative; in this regard, the Oude Kerk aims to establish different degrees of collaboration: with other institutions and external databases with which to share their collections to be used in the open archive, with artists, researchers or external individuals that can reactivate and reuse the materials of the archive, and with its target audiences. This last group represents the audiences that the institution aims to engage through participation, which is another motivation for the creation of the open archive; in this sense, the Oude Kerk wants to establish participatory practices that can facilitate this close collaboration with the audiences. In relation to the future of the intervention, its main staff involved—Marianna van der Zwaag and Anne Huber—envision it as continuing to foster co-ownership and accessibility, but also as a growing project that will not end in 2026 when it is released, but that will keep being enriched with new perspectives and materials.

### **Contemporary archiving**

This category has offered an understanding of the context in which the Oude Kerk and its open archive are currently immersed; for the interviewees of this research, archiving is diverse and it means caring (interviewee 2023 and interviewee 2023), keeping things alive (interviewee 2023), and returning the power to the communities (interviewee 2023). In the first place, this report refers to the archival field in the digital environment, so a digital archive can be “defined and limited to curated online collections of digitized materials selected from a single or multiple existing physical archival collection(s) that adhere to the archival principles of provenance and original order and are, at a minimum, arranged and described following contemporary best archival practices” (Benoit III 2017, 411). In this regard, the digital offers searchability and it is a field that can be explored and shared with broader audiences. The contemporary archival environment is also rethinking conventional practices and concepts, such as the traditional recordkeeping activities, which are:

*appraisal* (defining which records should be created or brought under control and identifying those that have enduring value), *documentation* of records and recordkeeping activities in the form of metadata, *preservation* of records for as long as they are needed, enabling *access* to records and performing *disposal* according to negotiated appraisal agreements (Rolan 2017, 198).

Therefore, the activities of appraisal, documentation, preservation, access and disposal are central to archiving, but current interventions and projects in the field are exploring and rethinking the conventional conception of them. A case that defies these activities and that has been researched is The ArQuives, which is the largest LGBTQ2+ archive in Canada and which represents a



community archive. Their way of rethinking the archival activities is to share the power and knowledge of the archivists among the community members with a bottom-up approach, so they get empowered to conduct appraisal, documentation, preservation, access and disposal; as the staff mentions, “we hire community members to come in, even if they don't have archival experience, often we hire them to come in to help, do description for us, and sometimes they become archivists in the process” (interviewee 2023).

In the second place, there is a trend in the contemporary archival field consisting in archiving intangible heritage. However, due to the rigid structures of documentation systems such as Adlib, it is a complex task that requires creative and experimental solutions. One of these creative solutions is the creation of a content management system instead of a collection management system (CMS), which can be defined as a software that allows the creation, arrangement and accessibility of digital content. This way of archiving content does not involve the syncing of collection management systems, and the material can be archived directly in the system with complete freedom and depending on the nature and context of the material. For instance, the project Moving Stories of the Landhuis Oud Amelisweerd is using a content management system to create a living archive of stories, so the archiving of intangible heritage can be more dynamic and directly dependent on the records (interviewee 2023).

In the third place, relationality is a very important concept in the current context; it suggests the importance of networks and connections, also in the archival paradigm. In this sense, records are inherently relational and interlinked, but archival collections have remained hierarchical and do not take into account these properties (Jones 2018, 10). In other words, “the nature of collections-based knowledge is now complex, interconnected and often cross-disciplinary. Therefore, the relational capability of archival and museum collection documentation needs to be improved” (2018, 12). Thus, relationality aims to understand records as connected and interdependent networks, and a current movement that works with this idea is the Linked Open Data movement (LOD), which promotes the sharing and linking of databases with the purpose of enrichment and creation of global networks of information.

## **Participation**

A wide perspective of participation has been grasped with the analysis of the different data. Firstly, the interviewees of this research have described that participation means pedagogy (interviewee 2023 and interviewee 2023), relevance for a community (interviewee 2023), redistribution of power (interviewee 2023), co-creation (interviewee 2023) and emotional labor and care (interviewee 2023); this last perspective is extremely similar to the one presented by Nuala Morse in her work *The Museum as a Space of Social Care*, that has been presented in the theoretical framework section and in which the author also discusses the emotional implications of

participation in museums. It is something widely discussed in the interview with the Historisches Museum Frankfurt; as an attempt to offer advice, she discusses:

Really think about it, if you are willing to engage in this emotional labor, because it is an emotional labor and, you know, people also collaborate with you because you are a nice person and not because you represent the museum. So what happens when you leave? Also, what happens when you meet them in your free time? On the market, in the theatre... yeah, they really want to talk to you also in your free time, so they do not know that you are not on duty. So really think about it, are you able to bear the consequences? (interviewee 2023).

This is a very recent perspective in the museum field, that has been conceptualized by Morse, and it is relevant in this research to understand in depth the implications and opportunities that participation offers. In this regard, the relationships established through participation have to be organic and transparent, and have to take into account the emotional component that they have.

Secondly, participation is layered, in the sense that it has many different degrees. This is a question that has been mentioned by almost all the interviewees, and the interventions in which they are working also have different levels of participation. In this regard, participation can mean effective power-sharing with participants, but it can also involve individuals in small tasks or contributions, and both are valid ways of working with participation. This understanding of participation as layered has been approached by Nina Simon in *The Participatory Museum*, in which she presents four degrees of participation: contributory, collaborative, co-creative and hosted (Fig. 4); all of them represent different ways in which museums approach participation, and they have diverse levels of power sharing and interaction with the audiences. This question will be very relevant in the next paragraphs to understand the degrees of participation of different cases that will be described here, but also to create recommendations based on the literature for the open archive.

Lastly, digital participation is a central concept in this report since the Oude Kerk also aims to create participatory practices in the digital environment of the open archive. In this sense, physical and digital participation have different affordances;<sup>21</sup> while the physical provides a space in which intense participation can take place, the digital is a space in which broader audiences can be reached (interviewee 2023). Therefore, the combination of offline and online participation allows to complement the opportunities and advantages that both modalities have. However, “the culture of the digital is *per se* participatory, if you look at social media and all these things, it's not that we can be participatory, but we have to be” (interviewee 2023), and the concept of post-participation will be relevant for this research. Described by an interviewee, post-participation

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<sup>21</sup> An *affordance* can be defined as a feature that an item can offer in an action.

goes beyond participation and it is a kind of participation that is always there, characteristic of social media environments (interviewee 2023).

### **Opportunities of participation**

On the one hand, participation offers diverse opportunities and advantages to institutions and museums. These opportunities can be divided into two main groups: the advantages for the organization and the advantages for the participants. On the organization's side, offering participatory practices to the audiences can introduce a diversity of viewpoints and multivocality, which allows adding new layers of meaning and value to the museum. Another benefit is the reactivation of the material of the archive; by introducing participation, individuals (such as researchers, artists, or people interested in the institution's material) can reuse and rethink the archive by reactivating it.

A case that has been explored with this approach is *If I Can't Dance, I Don't Want to Be Part of Your Revolution*, which is an institution dedicated to performing arts in Amsterdam. As the interviewee described, there are multiple ways in which the institution reactivates the archive: research fellowships, reading groups, individual projects or exhibitions among others (interviewee 2023). These kinds of activities allow to keep the records of the archive alive and in constant reuse, which also offers new viewpoints and engagements to the organization. Furthermore, allowing users to contribute, in any kind of environment, promotes the democratization and accessibility of knowledge, but it also makes the right to participate in cultural life effective (Council of Europe 2005, 2). In this regard, "there is still a rather strong consensus that commenting and contributing is relevant both as a form of engaging in content-related interests and as a social activity" (Huvila 2019, 104).

On the participants' side, participation offers the possibility of being involved in a cultural institution and having shared power degrees with it; this is an empowering activity since it makes visible to audiences the importance and the value of their contributions. Participation can also offer inclusivity and interaction with the public, which also means that the engagement that the museums establish with them is valuable and important for their programs. Moreover, the possibility of contributing to the museum is a very relevant factor for the audiences, since it "allows users to contribute their knowledge or expertise actively to a project, thereby shaping the interpretation and ensuring cultural meaning" (Benoit III 2017, 410). In this regard, their active role in the institution is important for the understanding and co-ownership of cultural heritage.

### **Obstacles of participation**

On the other hand, the drawbacks and complexities of participation have also been explored throughout this research. The first complexity has been already mentioned, and it corresponds to the understanding of participation as an emotional labor, which can be perceived as a negative

aspect by museums and that requires resources and time to deal with it. This emotional labor goes hand in hand with the lack or struggle to achieve audience engagement, which can suppose a problem if there is no engagement at all in a project that has devoted resources and money to be developed. This is what an interviewee details, mentioning that while working at the Centraal Museum in Utrecht, the museum started a tagging game online but there was no engagement with the audiences (interviewee 2023), so it is a complicated matter for organizations. Similarly, the lack of engagement with the team can be a problem for the development of participatory projects, which is the case of the Oude Kerk; as already mentioned, participation requires resources, and therefore staff, so if the team does not have time to be involved it can be a problem for the development of the intervention.

Additionally, the most repeated obstacle in the eight interviews—in fact, every interviewee mentioned it—is funding. In this sense, there is a lack of resources that institutions can use to develop their projects, and it lowers the expectations of organizations, especially of the smaller and underrepresented ones. While discussing funding, an interviewee argued that “we're all out here trying to do an awful lot with very little because especially when you're working with the community, you know it is kind of relying on you in so many different ways... It's tricky because you want to be able to do so much, and you want to have these partnerships, and you want to engage with folks, but it takes time and it takes people to do that” (interviewee 2023). Therefore, the bureaucracy and the lack of economic resources limit the projects and actions that organizations can take and, thus, they also limit participation with the audiences and communities.

The last difficulty in relation to participation is the sharing of power and control that participation involves. This means that museums have to give up their control over their materials and their status to share them with their audiences, which can be considered a democratizing action, but many institutions perceive it as a threat or risk. This is partially the case of the Oude Kerk; as already mentioned, the museum decided to stop using the site Graven op Internet because they could not have control over the user contributions due to the lack of time of the staff there, meaning that there was nobody of the team that could filter and take care of the website. In a broader sense, institutions are reluctant towards social tagging and user contributions due to the sharing of control and the lack of mediation in these contributions. In other words, and as the staff mentions,

I think the biggest obstacle is just giving up control, just accepting that maybe if you want to be part of the massive online archive that is the Internet, then you have to give up on certain levels of control that you have [...] so that is a bit of a struggle to kind of define which level of control we want to keep or that the Oude Kerk wants to keep (interviewee 2023).

## **Participatory archiving**

Taking all these issues into account, the sub-category of participatory archiving condenses this information and translates it into the archival field. Firstly, the movement of participatory archiving arises from the post-custodial reorientation of archives that has happened over the last decades (Rolan 2017, 196). Participatory archiving means offering control and management to communities in an archival context in different degrees, with functions such as contributing, tagging, donating or commenting. In this regard, “participatory archives [...] advocate for user engagement in archival tasks, such as appraising, describing, and arranging records” (Hanbury 2014, 51). Nevertheless, one of the main theories about participatory archiving is the one introduced by Isto Huvila in his article “Participatory Archive: Towards Decentralised Curation, Radical User Orientation, and Broader Contextualisation of Records Management” (2008). The author introduces the concept of participatory archive and its three main characteristics: decentralized curation, radical user orientation, and contextualization of both the records and the archival process.

In the case of decentralized curation, “curatorial responsibilities are shared between archivists and the participants in an archive. For Huvila, it is not the individuals but the collective that has the most in-depth knowledge about the records or items, their contexts, and their uses” (Linn 2014, 59). About the characteristic of radical user orientation, the author states that the archive needs to be user-friendly, completely focused on the user, and based on findability and accessibility. As he mentions,

The motivations for adopting a post-controlled approach and emphasizing radical user orientation in a participatory archive by allowing the users to edit actual records is to capture richer descriptions and links between records, to accelerate the process of updating the archive, to engage users to collaborate actively within the archive, and to reduce the need for administrative interventions (Huvila 2008, 26).

In this case, being radically user orientated would mean, for instance, including accessibility tools to ensure that every user can access the archive despite any impairment; this is the case of *If I Can't Dance*, *I Don't Want to Be Part of Your Revolution*, which has incorporated this kind of accessibility tools in their archive. The third characteristic of participatory archives is the contextualization of records and the archival process, which acknowledges the relevance of the diverse contexts in which records are embedded; in this sense, the archival context is important, but other contexts such as the origin, the users, the creators or the curators have to be visible too (Huvila 2008, 25). Even though these characteristics may seem radical and erasing the power of archivists, Huvila clearly states that they do not interfere with or put at risk the value and the tasks of archivists since they are the fundament to develop a participatory archive, but there is a clear need to reconfigure the archival responsibilities in order to facilitate participation in the field.

In addition, and coming back to Nina Simon's model, these three characteristics can be related to the hosted level of participation (Fig. 4), because they provide an environment in which it is possible to "encourage visitors to creatively adapt and use the institution and its content" (Simon 2010, 281). Therefore, a participatory archive that would be strictly founded on these three characteristics would inherently be located in the hosted level of participation; however, and as previously mentioned, participation is layered and has different degrees, so participatory archives are diverse and can have different levels of participation. Furthermore, some of the strategies that participatory archives put into practice are the previously mentioned social tagging, co-ownership, co-management with communities, and collection of donations of community members, among others.

### **Cases & references for participation**

With the understanding of participatory archives as a basis, the sub-category of cases & references has compiled the different interventions that have been found during the research and that are aligned with the topic concerning this report. In total, only eight interventions will be analyzed here due to the limited scope of the report;<sup>22</sup> these interventions have mainly been mentioned in the interviews due to the implication of the interviewees with them, and two other local projects compiled in the Excel list will also be examined due to its proximity to and possible influence with the Oude Kerk. The approach to analyzing them will be through Nina Simon's model of participation since it provides a deeper understanding of the ways these projects work with participation; therefore, the first and higher level is the hosted degree, in which the museum shares the power with visitors and empowers them to use the content for their own purposes.

The main project with a hosted approach is the Creative Museum, developed by the Badisches Landesmuseum.<sup>23</sup> It is a tool for debate that has a similar approach to forums; in this sense, the museum provides a digital environment in which users can freely start discussions and contribute to the existing ones by commenting or voting comments. While interviewing one of the interviewees, she mentioned that it is a democratizing tool since it is a space for open discussions, and states that "our role is not quite as a moderator, like if I do a campaign I'm more of a host and we try to give impulses and open up discussions, and just see that if it goes into a direction that is not good, then maybe I open up a new topic or keep it going" (interviewee 2023). Therefore, the museum hosts discussions but does not moderate or filter them, they just open up a space in which users can express their opinions.

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<sup>22</sup> However, the interventions that have been collected during the research can be accessed in this database: <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/15OF75CRU2xPsFKKQSkddup74M6PSSoVI/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=106508605279135380927&rtpof=true&sd=true>

<sup>23</sup> Creative Museum website: <https://test.creativemuseum.landesmuseum.de/en>

The second case that represents a hosted project is The ArQuives, which has been introduced before.<sup>24</sup> The ArQuives is a community archive that collects and exhibits LGBTQ2+ materials, it is an institution that mainly works with donations from the community and they are fully dedicated to it; they work with volunteers that carry out essential tasks such as archiving, classifying or organizing events, so the control is shared between the community and the staff with a bottom-up approach. Moreover, this archive could be considered a participatory archive following Huvila's theory, since it contains the three characteristics: "decentralized curation, radical user orientation, and broader contextualization of records management" (Huvila 2008, 16). The last hosted intervention is the Rijksstudio,<sup>25</sup> which is a platform inside the Rijksmuseum's website that includes a creative tool with which users can create personalized collections and publish them; Fig. 20 shows an example of an archive created by a user. The Rijksstudio, then, is a clear digital hosted participatory practice since the museum makes the materials accessible and makes them available for the users for their own purposes, and users are able to create their own collections; in this sense, it is a way of creating new layers of meaning for the institution because users contribute with their perspectives and contexts to the collection.

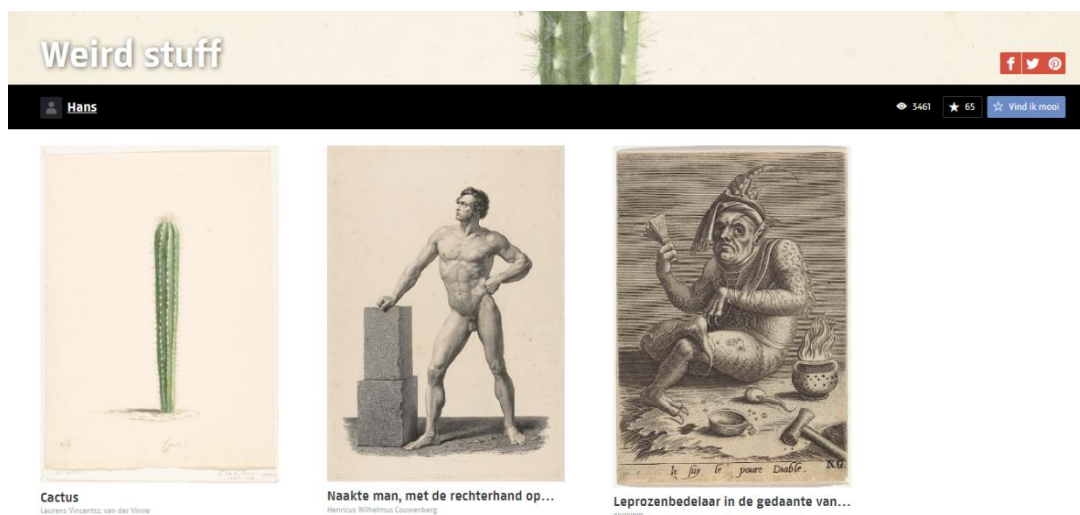


Fig. 20. Rijksstudio user archive. Source: own screenshot from <https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/nl/rijksstudio> taken on the 27/06/2023

The second participation degree is co-creation, in which the museum offers support and tools for the participants to create with their own purposes. The main co-creative project is the Historisches Museum Frankfurt, which is a pioneering museum in participation since they have broad experience in co-creating exhibitions with the citizens of Frankfurt. The museum has different participatory projects, such as the Library of the Generations and the CityLab; the Library of the

<sup>24</sup> The ArQuives website: <https://arquives.ca/>

<sup>25</sup> Rijksstudio website: <https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/nl/rijksstudio>

Generations is an artistic project initiated by Sigrid Sigurdsson that archives writings of different authors from the years 2000 to 2105, which will be the end date.<sup>26</sup> As one of the interviewees described, it is a project that has diverse layers of participation: it is possible to participate as an author that writes for the Library of the Generations, as a volunteer that collaborates with the organization, and as a visitor of events or the regular exhibition (interviewee 2023).

Moreover, the project of the CityLab involves audiences more directly and actively.<sup>27</sup> Since 2010, the museum is working closely with participatory approaches with citizens of Frankfurt, carrying out workshops and events to create exhibitions and projects together. The outcomes of these gatherings are exhibited in the permanent exhibition of the museum “Frankfurt Now!”; in this sense, participants are part of the curatorial processes themselves, and as the interviewee described, there is an important task of supporting and empowering the participants to get a central role in the projects through workshops that offer them different skills (interviewee 2023). In this sense, it is a co-creative intervention since the museum provides a physical space in which participants take control over the curatorial tasks with the support of the staff.

The second co-creative intervention is the Moving Stories project of the Landhuis Oud Amelisweerd.<sup>28</sup> It is still a project in progress, but the institution is creating a living archive in which stories related to the house can be archived and made accessible. One of the interviewees is closely working with volunteers to collect and archive these stories, but the aim is also to develop a user-friendly content management system so the volunteers can also take control over the archival tasks. In this regard, the institution aims to develop an accessible platform to reach a co-creative participatory approach with the volunteers and the individuals involved in the project.

The third and last level of participation that will be addressed here is the collaborative degree, in which the museum sets and establishes a project in which participants can actively have a central role. Two cases in Amsterdam that deal with this perspective are *If I Can’t Dance, I Don’t Want to Be Part of Your Revolution* and *De Appel*; in the first case,<sup>29</sup> the organization works closely with researchers and performers to reactivate the materials of the archive, and they develop together a product that can be an exhibition, an event, or a digital project among others. In the case of *De Appel*,<sup>30</sup> it is an institution that has a physical living archive, and they create different events and practices around the archive in order to reuse its materials. For instance, in 2022

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<sup>26</sup> Library of the Generations website: [https://historisches-museum-frankfurt.de/en/bibliothek-der-generationen?language=en#:~:text=The%20Library%20of%20Generations%20\(formerly,\)%2C%20the%20project%20is%20intergenerational](https://historisches-museum-frankfurt.de/en/bibliothek-der-generationen?language=en#:~:text=The%20Library%20of%20Generations%20(formerly,)%2C%20the%20project%20is%20intergenerational)

<sup>27</sup> CityLab website: <https://historisches-museum-frankfurt.de/en/stadtlabor?language=en>

<sup>28</sup> Moving Stories website: <https://landhuisoudamelisweerd.nl/movingstories/>

<sup>29</sup> *If I Can’t Dance, I Don’t Want to Be Part of Your Revolution* website: <https://ificantdance.org/productions>

<sup>30</sup> *De Appel* website: <https://www.deappel.nl/en/archive/499-intro>



Mariana Lanari curated an exhibition entitled “Catching Up In The Archive”,<sup>31</sup> in which the materials of the archive were moved to the exhibition space and visitors could engage with them. Therefore, both institutions explore the collaborative degree since they provide a set-up space in which reactivations and participation in relation to their materials can take place.

### Tools & strategies

Moreover, the sub-category of tools & strategies has allowed to collect the diverse strategies and approaches that the different institutions that have been researched use in relation to participation and participatory archiving. All of them can be considered references for the Oude Kerk since they provide frameworks from which to start working with participation. These strategies can be divided into two sections: digital and physical tools (Fig. 21). Some of these tools have already been described in the previous sections of this report, such as the social tagging present in Graven op Internet or the Creative Museum, the creation of user collections of the Rijksstudio or the co-creation of exhibitions with participants of the Historisches Museum Frankfurt.

TOOLS & STRATEGIES	
DIGITAL	PHYSICAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social tagging</li> <li>• Creative tools for users</li> <li>• Creation of sub-archives by users</li> <li>• Engagement in social media</li> <li>• Newsletters about the archive</li> <li>• Interfaces for user feedback</li> <li>• Connections to external databases</li> <li>• Forum for discussions</li> <li>• Interactive categories in the archive</li> <li>• Reusability of software and systems</li> <li>• Development of systems with rich linking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-creation of exhibition with participants</li> <li>• Connections to external individuals (researchers, artists)</li> <li>• Engagement with the staff/team</li> <li>• Workshops to engage participants in the creative processes</li> <li>• Reactivation of materials</li> <li>• Visitor reports to archive intangible heritage</li> <li>• Ask how artists want to archive their practice</li> <li>• Collaborations with educational institutions</li> <li>• Bottom-up communication with users</li> <li>• Transparency</li> </ul>

Fig. 21. Tools and strategies for participation. Source: own creation

<sup>31</sup> Catching Up In The Archive exhibition: <https://www.deappel.nl/en/events/2563-catching-up-in-the-archive-with-mariana-lanari>

Nevertheless, it is relevant to describe some of these tools more in-depth since they have not been addressed yet and they can work as an inspiration for the Oude Kerk. For instance, the reusability of software and systems is present in the Badisches Landesmuseum and the Moving Stories project, and it refers to the creation of structures that can be sustainable and, therefore, shared with other institutions. Moving Stories is working with this approach, and they are sharing their software with Rijksmuseum Muiderslot and Street Art Museum Amsterdam (SAMA), so these institutions can use the systems that they have developed for their own purposes (interviewee 2023). A second strategy that is worth mentioning is the creation of visitor reports to archive intangible heritage; this tool was described by one interviewee, and they explained that

one thing that we do here is to commission visitor reports. So for the live moments, we asked people who were there or we asked people to attend, who we know will relate to the practice on their own position, and they wrote a kind of subjective report. It's not like a critical review, it's really about how it was to be there and how was the encounter and how was the mood, yeah, how they experienced this (interviewee 2023).

This is an interesting approach for performances, because due to their nature they cannot be stored, but the opinion and perspectives of visitors can be valuable and relevant for the archival process. In this regard, it is also a strategy that adds a new layer of participation since visitors can be involved in the archival tasks of the institution by offering their reports to be stored. Eventually, this could also be considered by the Oude Kerk since many of their events are concerts or performances that are not recorded, just photographed.

### **Recapitulation**

Lastly, to conclude the discussion section of this report, the researcher considers that a SWOT analysis of all the information provided here can contribute to the understanding of the main ideas, and it will be useful for the recommendations section. Fig. 22 visualizes the main strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the intervention; the strengths are mainly focused on the potentials that the open archive can offer, and they are related to the opportunities for the establishment of digital participation, social tagging and the reactivation of the materials of the archive. Oppositely, the weaknesses refer to the gaps that the intervention has, which are the lack of time for the team to get involved, the rigidity of the structures of Adlib and Axiell, and the reluctance to share power with the audiences in the digital environment. Moreover, the opportunities and the threats refer to external potentials and risks that could affect the intervention, and among these it is possible to identify the ratification of the FARO Convention as a framework for participation, the establishment of fruitful relations with partner institutions (for collaborations and/or linking databases), insufficient funding and resources, and the lack of engagement with the audiences. This SWOT analysis will be useful, then, to develop concrete and feasible

recommendations that can fill the gaps identified here and explore the potentials and strengths of the open archive.

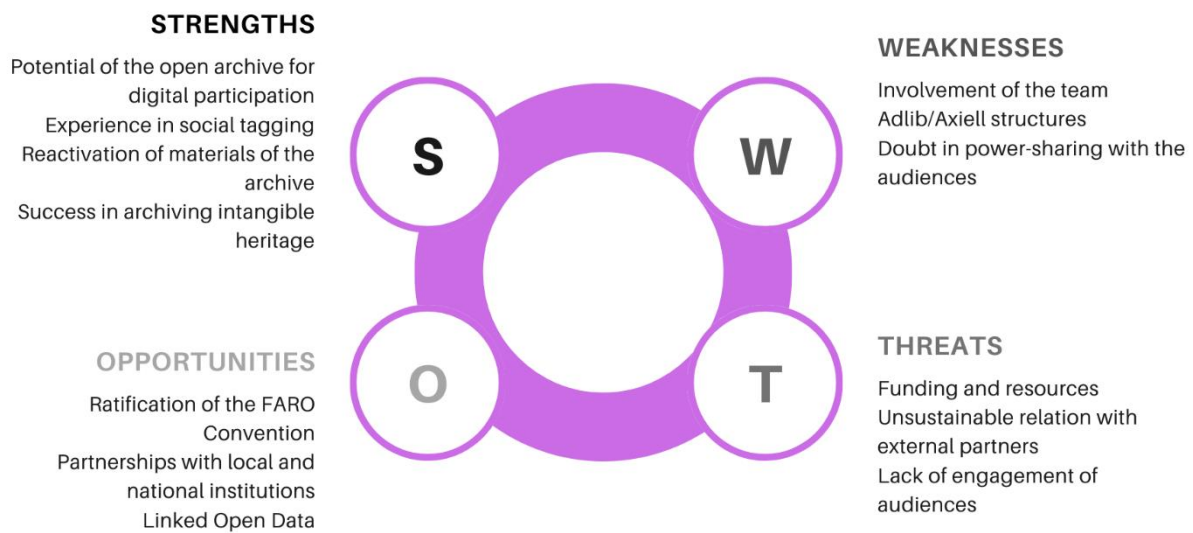


Fig. 22. SWOT analysis of the open archive. Source: own creation

## Conclusions

The aim of this research was to discover the intervention of the Oude Kerk's open archive and to investigate ways in which the organization could include participatory practices related to it. Therefore, the researcher's two-month placement at the Oude Kerk offered insights and valuable information for the investigation, but also the complementary research methods such as interviews or literature review provided external perspectives related to participation that have been fundamental for this study and report. The main objectives of this research were:

- ❖ *To research the current and next steps of the Oude Kerk's development of an open and participatory archive*
- ❖ *To find out what are the potentials and the obstacles to participatory and open archiving in the current practices of the Oude Kerk*
- ❖ *To investigate how issues of participation, accessibility and inclusivity can be addressed/integrated in contemporary archiving practices*

These objectives and the research questions have provided a deep understanding of the development of the Oude Kerk's intervention and have offered a broad perspective about the current participatory and archival contexts in the heritage field with the analysis of diverse relevant cases in the sector. Furthermore, and as it has been previously described, the main findings of this research suggested that the open archive has the potential of becoming

participatory and interactive for users, but this is a matter that has to be conceptualized by the organization together with the archive developer. In this regard, it is a feasible option to include digital tools that would allow user participation in the online environment, but the Oude Kerk is also skeptical about strategies such as social tagging, as seen with its past project Graven op Internet.

The fields of participation and archiving have also been explored, and the key outcomes show that participation is layered and it has multiple ways of being approached into practice, as seen with Nina Simon; in relation to this, and taking Nuala Morse's theory, participation also has a strong emotional factor in museums which has to be considered, and which has already been experienced by some interviewees. However, participation can offer many advantages, such as multivocality, engagement with diverse and multiple audiences, and empowering users by museums giving up control over their collections and tasks. Lastly, and embedded in this topic, the movement of participatory archiving has also been investigated, mainly through the theory of Isto Huvila and real cases that work with this approach. It has been discovered that, in participatory archives, the traditional archival functions are shared with communities or users, and they can contribute to them in diverse ways and through different tools such as social tagging. Taking all this information into consideration, the following paragraphs will explore the answers to the proposed research questions:

***(1) Which is the Oude Kerk's motivation behind the development of an open and participatory archive?***

As previously described, four main motivations have influenced the development of the open archive at the Oude Kerk. In the first place, there is a willingness from the institution to make the interhistorical properties of the Oude Kerk visible to the audiences; in this regard, the organization aims to show the value of the tension and the middle ground between the historical heritage and the contemporary art exhibited at the museum. In the second place, the staff intends to create an intervention that positions the Oude Kerk in the contemporary archival field with an innovative project that represents a new way of making cultural heritage accessible; this innovative aspect is also influenced by the motivation of archiving intangible heritage and including participation in the open archive, since both are quite pioneering factors in the archival environment.

In the third place, and in relation to this, a third reason is focused on making materials and knowledge accessible to audiences, which promotes the right to participation in cultural life (Council of Europe 2005, 2). This accessibility to the archive would allow to reactivate the materials and records with the influence of artists and visitors, which would add new layers of meaning and value to the institution and its collection. In the last place, there is an ambition to become collaborative in diverse degrees: with visitors by introducing participation, with external

databases by linking the Oude Kerk's archive to them, and with external institutions by creating partnerships and eventual collaborations. These collaborations will position the Oude Kerk in a rich network of relationships with diverse institutions and individuals of different environments of the heritage field —such as archiving, museums and contemporary art— that will enrich the archive and will help to the development and future positioning of the intervention in the national and international heritage environments.

### ***(2) How is the open archive designed and executed?***

The second research question, which refers to the functioning of the open archive, has been widely answered in the results and discussion sections of this report. As detailed, the open archive is still in development and it consists of a 2-layered structure platform, since the Adlib system of the Oude Kerk directly feeds and is synced with the open archive platform that is accessible online; in this regard, what is visible and archived in Adlib is also accessible in the open archive in a standardized way. Moreover, each record is defined by categories or associations, which are verbs that describe the item or object, and the Oude Kerk decided to approach it this way to limit its institutional authority over users. The open archive is also linked to external databases that provide material to it; more concretely, it is linked to the RKD and the Stadsarchief, which provide portraits and deeds of people buried in the church. Lastly, a task that is still in process is the archiving in Adlib of the intangible heritage such as the contemporary art installations or diverse programs such as *Silence* or *Come Closer*; additionally, materials that make the processes visible — such as floorplans, notes or sketches— are also being archived with the purpose of offering a wider and more complete perspective of the Oude Kerk's collection.

### ***(3) What are the target audiences of the Oude Kerk's open archive and how can it be more focused towards them?***

As previously described, the Oude Kerk has diverse target groups related to the open archive that have different needs and interests:

- ❖ Digital (international) audiences
- ❖ In-person, offline audiences
  - Amsterdammers and neighbors
  - Individuals with a non-western background
  - Individuals unfamiliar with the protestant religion
  - Communities tangential to urgencies and issues raised by the work of an artist or an installation
  - Heritage and contemporary art lovers

These audiences can be considered too broad and ambiguous since they target very different groups of individuals that have different contexts and interests in relation to the Oude Kerk. Besides these target groups, the organization also wants to establish collaborative relationships with external institutions that can provide value to the open archive, but there is also a need to engage with the team of the Oude Kerk, since there is a lack of involvement of some departments of the institution in the intervention. This secondary research question also poses the issue of how to focus the open archive towards the target, and this is an issue that will be explored in the recommendations section since it would be necessary to rethink the target groups of the open archive to be able to create concrete and relevant strategies to focus the open archive towards the audiences.

In the case of maintaining the stated target groups, it would be important to define them with more detail; for instance, it would be necessary to define what “non-western background” means and what does it add to the open archive, and the same should happen with other categories such as “individuals unfamiliar with the protestant religion”. After this, the archive could be more focused towards them by creating events that would directly target them, such as programming performances about decolonization in the Oude Kerk or talks about the protestant religion. This would allow to establish a first contact with these audiences and therefore, to establish a relationship that could be further extended to the open archive.

#### ***(4) What can the Oude Kerk learn from current practices in participatory archiving?***

The fourth and last secondary research question asks what the Oude Kerk can learn from current practices in participatory archiving. Since the organization’s objective is to establish both digital and in-person participation in relation to the open archive, the Oude Kerk can learn not only from the field of participatory archiving, which is currently quite limited, but it also can take inspiration from the broad participatory environment of the heritage and museum field. In this sense, participatory practices that are not necessarily linked to archiving have also been explored and have offered a wider and deeper understanding of how participation works in practice.

Therefore, the main learnings that the Oude Kerk can take from the current participatory sector are mainly related to existing strategies that museums are currently using to engage with audiences (Fig. 21); some of these strategies are transparency in the communication with users, the value and relevance of visitor’s contributions in both the physical and online environments, or the empowerment of the audiences by sharing control with them at any level. An outcome that is relevant to remark is that, as it has been demonstrated through the theoretical framework and the different cases explored, participation is layered and it can be approached in many different ways, so many different paths can be taken in relation to participation in the open archive that can offer multiple advantages to the institution.

***(RQ) How can the Oude Kerk create participatory practices tied to its (upcoming) open archive?***

With all the information that the secondary research questions have provided, it is possible to answer the main research question, which was related to the establishment of participatory practices tied to the open archive. First of all, it has been discovered that the open archive platform has considerable potential to integrate participatory user tools such as social tagging, the creation of user collections such as the Rijksstudio, or the transformation of the categories into interactive associations that would allow organizing the archive in different ways. This would be an effective way of putting digital participation into practice in the platform, and it would allow to explore the digital realm with a participatory perspective. Therefore,

the digital is still something very experimental and you can do things out of many reasons, one of them being that it's not like the proper museum, you know, so you have a little more room to do things. And also, it's quite nice to try things and make use of this potential of the digital (interviewee 2023).

In this regard, the creation of digital participatory practices tied to the open archive is a feasible next step that would require close collaboration with the archive developer, but that can be achievable by the end of the project in 2026. Oppositely to this, the Oude Kerk has already been exploring physical participation in relation to archiving, more concretely with the *Archive Sessions* that took place in 2022 and that invited visitors to gather and think about archival issues in the context of the museum. Therefore, these events could be extended to the open archive, and the *Archive Sessions* could become part of the regular program with different mediators, also external to the institution, such as students, neighbors or artists. Furthermore, co-creative processes, such as the ones implemented in the Historisches Museum Frankfurt or the Badisches Landesmuseum, could be taken into consideration in order to involve participants in relevant tasks of the institution, such as the curatorial processes. Therefore, the Oude Kerk should consider to which extent and degree they want to share their control over their main tasks and what consequences and advantages this would offer to the institution.

### **Recommendations**

With all these conclusions as a basis, this final section will collect diverse recommendations for the intervention that has been researched. It is important to make clear that there will be two subsections: one with individual recommendations, which are created by the researcher based on all the information collected during her placement, and another one with collaborative recommendations, which will include the participation strategy that Anne Huber and the researcher developed together during their stay at the Oude Kerk.

### **Individual recommendations**

These individual recommendations are based on the internal experiences that the researcher has had during her placement at the Oude Kerk. Since the proposal strategy that has been collaboratively created with Anne Huber—which is attached in Appendix 2 (pg. 81)—already contains feasible and concrete ideas for the introduction of participation in the archive, the researcher considered that these individual recommendations could be focused on other aspects that could be improved in order to enhance the development of the open archive. Therefore, and as already mentioned, the basis for these individual recommendations will be the discussed SWOT analysis (Fig. 22), and more concretely two weaknesses and one threat will be addressed to try to offer recommendations for them.

#### **❖ *Rethinking the target groups of the open archive***

The first recommendation is linked to the threat of lack of engagement with the audiences, and it would be focused on modifying the target groups of the open archive since they seem quite ambiguous; a suggestion could be to focus on the groups that are interested in the Oude Kerk, such as artists, students or researchers, or to base the selection of the target audiences in a theoretical framework that allows the institution to develop focused practices on them and their needs. A framework that could be useful in this case would be John Falk's visitor identities, which offers an overview of the different needs and perspectives of museum visitors. In his article "Museum Audiences: A Visitor-Centered Perspective" (2016), Falk discusses the visitor-centered approach to museums and investigates the motivations of audiences to visit these institutions; with this as a basis, the author provides five visitor identities (Fig. 23):

*Explorers*: visitors who are curiosity-driven with a generic interest in the content of the museum. They expect to find something that will grab their attention and fuel their learning. [...]  
*Facilitators*: visitors who are socially motivated. Their visit is focused on primarily enabling the experience and learning of others in their accompanying social group. [...]  
*Professional/Hobbyists*: visitors who feel a close tie between the museum content and their professional or hobbyist passions. [...]  
*Experience Seekers*: visitors who are motivated to visit because they perceive the museum as an important destination. [...]  
*Rechargers*: visitors who are primarily seeking to have a contemplative, spiritual, and/or restorative experience. They see the museum as a refuge from the work-a-day world (Falk 2016, 4).

In this regard, Falk establishes five types of audiences based on their motivations and needs when visiting a museum. This is a relevant approach for the reconceptualization of the target groups of the open archive since focusing on a particular group can offer more engagement than creating broad target groups based on age, ethnicity or religious belief. With an approach such as Falk's, it will be possible to offer more visitor-centered interventions directly focused on the interests of the audiences, and it will be easier to conceptualize strategies and proposals for participation.



Therefore, when targeting a concrete visitor group based on their motivations, it will be possible to develop focused strategies to engage with them and to actively involve them in the different participatory processes and events.



Fig. 23. John Falk's visitor identities. Source: own creation of visual, content extracted from Falk, John. 2016. "Museum audiences: A visitor-centered perspective". *Loisir et Société / Society and Leisure* 39, 3, 357-370. DOI: 10.1080/07053436.2016.1243830

❖ *Reconsidering the contributory approach of Graven op Internet*

A second recommendation would be linked to weakness of reluctance to power-sharing with the users and to the Graven op Internet project, which had a contributory approach to participation in Nina Simon's words. The Oude Kerk is skeptical about social tagging and allowing users to contribute to the website, but researching their previous website focused on the graves has shown that the contributions of the users are very valuable and add knowledge to the institution; for instance, there are many contributions related to offering historical information of the records shown, which means that users are eager to engage with the Oude Kerk and value their opportunity to contribute to the site. Therefore, the contributory approach could be reconsidered with some boundaries or rules because, as an interviewee mentions, it is important to trust users and to explore the potential of the digital (interviewee 2023).

In relation to this, a recommendation linked to further research would be to investigate how this contributory approach could feasibly be implemented in the open archive. Therefore, some concrete plans could be to create limits and rules for social tagging in accordance with the Oude Kerk's mission and interests. A possibility for applied research could be to create a space for contributions of users in the open archive while it is still unreleased and to do an experiment or testing with a concrete group of people. This is something that would offer insights and first glances of what it would be like to have a contributory approach in the platform, and it would help the Oude Kerk to picture how this strategy for digital participation could work in real practice.

#### ❖ *Engagement with the team*

Another identified weakness is the involvement of the team in the intervention due to lack of time. The team is a relevant piece here since it will be directly involved with the open archive once it becomes public, and the staff also represents an added layer of participation for the organization. Therefore, a third recommendation would be linked to actively engaging the team with the project. Currently, the staff that is taking care of the intervention is the curator Marianna van der Zwaag and the eventual interns that come to the institution, but the rest of the team is not explicitly involved in the process; then, the ideal situation would be that every person of the team would be directly involved in the tasks of the open archive, but being realistic it is not a feasible paradigm due to the tight schedules and the lack of time of the staff.

Therefore, an ideal recommendation would be to establish a monthly meeting about the open archive to share the evolution and updates with the team, and therefore directly involve them by asking for suggestions, questions or ideas; this meeting should not be longer than one hour, and it would be useful to update the team of the steps that are being taken, so they are aware of what is happening with the intervention. A more feasible suggestion based on the current circumstances would be to integrate this meeting into the weekly team meetings; every Monday at 11 a.m., the Oude Kerk's staff has a weekly team meeting to communicate updates, problems or relevant information, but also to schedule and organize the week. Therefore, a more practical solution would be to add a 30-minute section to the last weekly team meeting of each month to create a space of exchange about the open archive, since it is a moment in which everybody is present and everybody would get informed and involved with the intervention.

#### **Collaborative recommendations**

In addition to the individual recommendations, during the 2-month placement Anne Huber and the researcher created a detailed participation strategy for the open archive, which is possible to consult in Appendix 2 (pg. 81). This strategy is introduced by a text that presents the open archive and its participatory objectives in relation to the Faro Convention, which provides a theoretical

framework for participation in the cultural heritage field. Afterwards, the strategy provides six feasible proposals for long-term and short-term implementations to the archive in relation to both the online and the offline environments. The following list summarizes the main proposals for participation in the open archive that are available in Appendix 2:

(1) Digital audiences

- a. Establishment of interactive connections in the archive that allow to navigate the platform with different paths
- b. Engagement with audiences through social media, with “staff picks”, in which the staff of the organization picks an object of the archive and discusses why
- c. Development of creative tools for users such as social tagging or the creation of personal collections

(2) Offline audiences

- a. Establishment of the Archive Sessions as part of the regular public program of the Oude Kerk
- b. Involving artists and creators in the archival process, making the archival process part of the curatorial work
- c. Dedicating a side room of the Oude Kerk to the open archive to have space for physical participation

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# Appendixes

## Appendix 1. Data analysis codes & categories

### 1. Oude Kerk's open archive

#### 1.1. Development

archiving intangible heritage

archiving the context and processes

connection to external archives

open archive phases

archiving diverse materials

connections to external institutions

participation in the open archive

archiving intangible heritage

contextual archiving

connections to external archives

archiving as part of the curatorial process

participation open archive

open archive funding

archiving intangible heritage and connections

connection with external institutions

connection with external people

creativity

open archive approach

archiving intangible heritage

differences open archive vs old website

connections open archive

differences open archive vs old website



origin of the Oude Kerk's archive

Internet op Graven

open archive origin

written to digital database

creating connections with external databases

future open archive

open archive development

connections to external institutions

connections external institutions

archive sessions

new website Oude Kerk

open archive categories

participation open archive

steps open archive

steps open archive

from Adlib to Axiell Collections

connections external institutions

## **1.2. Functioning**

functioning of the open archive

associations Adlib - open archive

open archive functioning

open archive functioning

open archive functioning

open archive functioning

contextual archiving

open archive sections

associations open archive

open archive functioning

archive functioning

associations open archive

associations open archive

connections open archive

materials archived

open archive functioning

open archive functioning

open archive functioning

open archive functioning

connections between records open archive

thematic connections open archive

open archive functioning

### **1.3. Target audiences**

target groups of open archive

impression on audiences

target groups open archive

target audiences open archive

target audiences open archive

target audiences open archive

connect with younger audiences through online space

open archive target audiences

target audiences open archive

### **1.4. Reasoning & motivations**

reasoning of the open archive

future expectations open archive  
connections between the contemporary and the historical  
Oude Kerk  
connection between the contemporary and the historical  
connection between contemporary and historical  
connection between contemporary and historical  
about archives now  
open archive reasoning  
archiving now  
open archive aspirations  
connection contemporary and historical  
open archive reasoning  
open archive reasoning  
open archive reasoning  
Oude Kerk  
archives now  
reasoning of the open archive  
creativity  
importance open archive among the team  
making intangible heritage accessible  
visibility of ephemeral heritage  
engagement online community  
innovation with open archive  
connection of personal stories open archive  
accessibility of materials open archive  
social media engagement

creative tools open archive  
Oude Kerk's archive reasoning  
Oude Kerk's reasoning for the archive  
accessibility of audiences  
reactivation of the open archive  
archiving the process  
adding participation to the open archive  
added value of participation  
contribution of users in the open archive  
added value of participation to the open archive  
reactivating the open archive  
open archive reasoning  
Oude Kerk  
Oude Kerk  
open archive reasoning  
open archive reasoning  
include participation open archive  
including collaboration open archive  
including creativity open archive  
open archive reasoning  
dedicate side room to open archive  
open archive reasoning

## **2. Contemporary archiving**

interlinked network of records  
creative archival solutions  
archiving depending on the material

definition of record  
definition of archiving  
definition of recordkeeping  
recordkeeping activities  
definition of archive  
archival multiverse  
two conceptions of archive  
records continuum theory  
agency of records  
dynamic archiving of records  
archive as a contested space  
archiving as communicating with the future  
archiving as caring for the material  
archive as an educational material  
searchability of the digital  
archiving as a practice of care  
archive as an alive space  
contextual archiving  
archiving stories  
content first  
sustainable system  
archiving intangible heritage  
content management system  
content management system  
archiving stories  
rethinking of a museum through digitality

potential of digitality

archiving as keeping things alive

shift in the understanding of archiving

linked open data movement

relationality

relationality

contextualization and relationality

hierarchy vs relationality in collections

technology as a reconstructor of relationships

future of museum documentation

non-hierarchical documentation systems

documentation systems as knowledge management

improvement relational capability documentation systems

connections to external institutions

lack of attention to user perspectives

archiving intangible heritage

contextual archiving

digital archives definition

### **3. Participation**

participation as networks

different degrees of participation

discourse of participation

power degrees of stakeholders

different levels of participation

power holding

participation as social care

participation as responsibility  
organicity in relationships  
care logic in relationships  
friendship paradigm  
transparency in participation  
clear long-term expectations  
participation as an educational process  
participation as pedagogy  
reactivation of the archival materials as participation  
connection digital with physical  
different layers participation  
co-creation participation level  
post-participation  
the digital is per se participatory  
digital participation  
digitality + participation  
participation of users in the digital  
co-creation as an empowerment tool  
misunderstanding about participation in the field  
diverse degrees of participation  
different affordances digital vs physical participation  
participation as relevance for a community  
participation reveals diversity  
digital vs physical events  
participation as giving control to the community  
inclusivity in museums

inclusivity in museums

meaning of inclusivity

### **3.1. Participatory archiving**

post-custodial reorientation in archiving

participatory archiving

participatory archiving

participation in recordkeeping

dimensions of participation

experience dimension of participation

identification dimension of participation

relating dimension of participation

research dimension of participation

research dimension of participation

rights of participation in relation to material

different degrees of agency exercise

annotations in archives

user reorientation towards records

sustainability and manageability of the archive

accessibility tools

collect stories

frameworks provide sustainability

sustainability in participatory archives

decentralized curation meaning

definition participatory archive

archiving steps in collaboration with community

three characteristics of participatory archives



decentralized curation

radical user orientation

contextualization of records and archival process

relationality materials and users

three characteristics of participatory archives

archives are for the people

decentralized curation

radical user orientation

contextualization of the records and the archival process

participatory digital tools

post-controlled approach to archives

participation does not interfere with the role of archivists

sustainability participatory archive

sustainability participatory archive

reconfiguration of responsibilities

community archives

three characteristics of participatory archives

participatory archiving

### **3.1.1. Tools & strategies**

discussions and commenting in the archive

creative tools for users

associations in the archive

engagement through social media

newsletters archive

interface for feedback

archive sessions as regular program

curate exhibition with target groups

dedicate side room to the archive

openness to input of the audiences

connections to external institutions

input from the staff/collaborators

archiving as part of the curatorial process

Discussions in the archive

Interface for feedback

creative tools for users

interactive associations in the archive

engagement through social media

newsletters about open archive

archive sessions as part of the regular program

dedicate side room to archive

connections with external institutions

archiving as part of the curatorial process

interface for feedback

archiving the process

participatory exhibition

documenting the process

workshops for participants

activation of the archive

visitor reports to archive intangible heritage

strategies depending on the context and material

conversations with artists to archive their practices

reactivating the archive

creation of categories in archive  
creation of categories for the archive  
new perspectives in the archive/library  
creation of categories as a dynamic process  
collaborations with educational institutions  
use of the Moving Stories system for other institutions  
use of AR  
creation of a sustainable archive  
introducing gaming  
participatory processes with citizens  
frameworks  
co-creation in the museum apps  
reusability frameworks  
engagement with citizens and participants  
gamification as an engagement strategy  
museum at the same position as users  
bottom-up communication  
strategy to engage participants in discussions  
bottom-up communication  
debatorial tool  
commenting in online collections  
user empowerment tools  
work closely with users  
having clear goals and expectations  
creating meaningful practices with users  
reusability of frameworks

exploring the potential of the digital  
transparency  
clear target audiences  
relevance for the audiences  
development of systems with rich linking  
conversations with donors  
donations of material  
transparency with collection development guide  
providing feedback  
internal procedure for feedback  
participation with volunteers  
clear policies and procedures  
transparency  
opinion of users on commenting  
user motivations on commenting  
design of incentives for participation  
need for understanding users' motivations to contribute  
social tagging  
social tagging definition  
strategies limitation tagging

### **3.2. Opportunities of participation**

support to the participants  
empowering participants  
involvement of participants in curatorship  
multiperspectivity  
new perspectives

inclusivity  
rewards of participation  
reactivation of the archive  
reactivating archival materials  
add layers of meaning to the house  
including interaction  
affordances physical participation  
affordances digital participation  
diversity of viewpoints  
engagement with audiences  
engagement with audiences  
user contributions advantages  
relevance of user contributions  
social tagging advantages

### **3.3. Drawbacks of participation**

issues in participatory archiving  
participation as an emotional labor  
bureaucracy  
participation as emotional labor  
limitations of Adlib in archiving other materials  
standardization open archive  
close communities' engagement  
sharing of power and control  
middle ground between creativity and manageability  
difficulty in creating narrow plans  
awareness to municipality

funding

obstacles in funding

funding

expectations at a small institution

lack of digital engagement

need for alternative archiving technologies

obstacles in the development

communication dept. vs archive & adlib

difficulties with Adlib/Axiell

lack of engagement of the team

lack of engagement of the team

complexities in managing participation

difficulties in engaging participants

tokenism as an obstacle

complexities radical user orientation

obstacle in funding

obstacle in preservation of donations

obstacle in funding

reluctance social tagging

social tagging lack of research

### **3.4. Cases & references**

Library of the Generations

Library of the Generations authors

Library of the Generations volunteers

Library of the Generations volunteers

Library of the Generations events

Library of the Generations  
interest of volunteers in the Library of the Generations  
Frankfurt Now  
Participation in Frankfurt Now  
CityLab  
digital CityLab  
If I Can't Dance  
archival material If I Can't Dance  
archive If I Can't Dance  
website-archive If I Can't Dance  
studio platform If I Can't Dance  
Grant Watson project  
Sands Murray-Wassink project  
If I Can't Dance audiences  
If I Can't Dance physical archive  
Landhuis Oud Amelisweerd  
connections Moving Stories  
connections Moving Stories  
Moving Stories target group  
digitality at the Badisches Landesmuseum  
discussions in the Creative Museum  
the Creative Museum as a participatory debatorial tool  
moderation of debates Creative Museum  
x-curator as an empowerment tool for users  
layers participation Creative Museum  
Saari Manor archive

accessibility Saari Manor

The ArQuives

The ArQuives audiences

degrees of participation in The ArQuives



## **Appendix 2. Participation strategy**

**(co-created with Anne Huber between the 13.04.2023 and the 09.06.2023)**

### ***STARTING POINT: THE FARO CONVENTION***

In 2021-2022, the Oude Kerk has deployed extra resources to conduct an initial exploratory study into promoting the digital availability of the heritage of the Oude Kerk. Research has been carried out into how to develop the institution's own archive into an innovative "open archive" in which network, connection and accessibility (including findability) are widely guaranteed. Besides this, the Oude Kerk is also currently researching how to approach participation as an added value for the open archive; in this sense, a complementary aim of this project is to create and implement participatory tools, practices and programs linked to the open archive, which will become a central intervention for the organization after its public release in 2026.

This approach to participation offers an added value to the open archive, and it is clearly aligned with the motivations related to cultural heritage and society that the Council of Europe promotes through the Faro Convention (2005) -which is currently being researched by the RCE to be ratified by the Dutch government-. Firstly, the open archive fosters accessibility to the Oude Kerk's collection, insights and knowledge through a shared information system accessible to the public that represents a shared source of remembrance, understanding, identity, cohesion and creativity (Council of Europe 2005, 6) that allows audiences to benefit from the cultural heritage of the organization and to contribute towards its enrichment (2005, 2). In this regard, this development promotes the share of knowledge and the possibility for individuals of participating from that knowledge without regard to their context, expertise or background. Furthermore, this also represents a step towards the improvement of the access to heritage (2005, 5) in the digital environment, which is a relevant matter in the 21st century.

Secondly, and as previously mentioned, the participatory approach to the open archive entails an added value for the project and for the Oude Kerk. Participation has already been approached through different public programs at the Oude Kerk; a clear example is the exhibition and related events "It's OK... commoning uncertainties", in which the artist Jeanne van Heeswijk organized diverse gatherings with locals, artists and visitors to discuss about current social issues. Nevertheless, the Oude Kerk aims to extend this perspective to the open archive, and the main objective is to develop practices and tools that foster participation and inclusivity with the different online and offline audiences; in this sense, it is an intervention that encourages everyone to participate in the process of public reflection and debate on the opportunities and challenges which the cultural heritage represents (2005, 5). This involvement of the individuals in the process

also reveals the position of the Oude Kerk as a memory institution that aims to share its knowledge and invites participants as a way of offering and benefiting with its cultural heritage to society.

Therefore, these participatory practices will involve the audiences in diverse ways in two main environments: in the digital space –more concretely in the open archive platform-, and in the physical space at the Oude Kerk; this division of spaces will allow to engage and interact with more diverse audiences, both local and international. These participatory practices will have the potential of promoting the use of materials and knowledge documented in the archive, and exploring their potential for contemporary applications (2005, 4). For instance, a proposal that is currently being considered is engaging artists with the open archive and propose a re-activation of its records, so it could be possible for artists to create a program or exhibition with the archive as a central thematic axis. In the next sections, there is a description and overview of 6 concrete strategies for participation for the open archive that are closely related to the ideas reflected in these paragraphs; they are divided into two groups: digital audiences and offline audiences. At the same time both sections are divided into two more sub-sections: short-term interventions and long-term interventions.

## ***1. DIGITAL AUDIENCES***

### ***1.1. Short-term, applicable interventions:***

#### **1.1.1. Connections in the archive**

##### **Why do connections matter?**

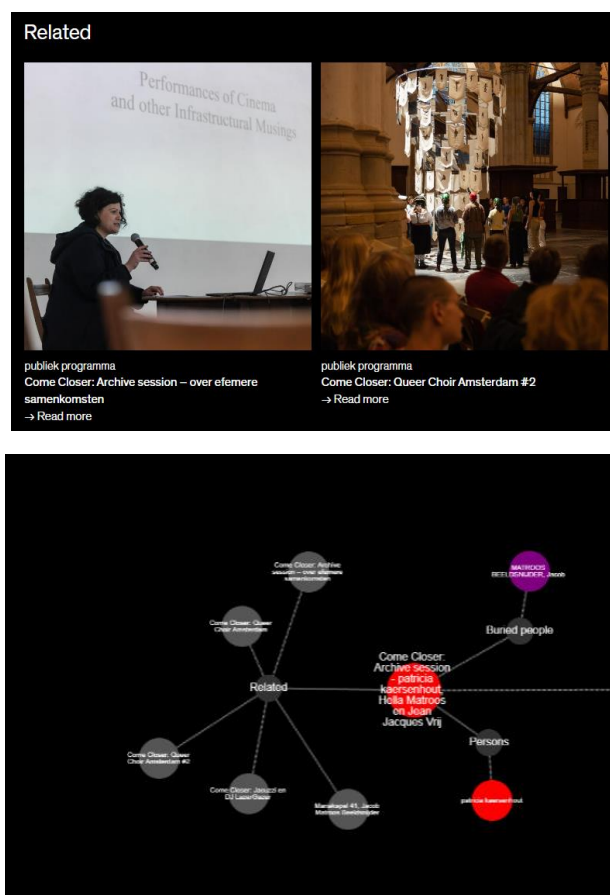
Relating entries in the archive to each other, in the case of the Oude Kerk Open Archive via the use of verbs as explained below, helps to transport one of the guiding principles of the Oude Kerk's curatorial practice – the interhistorical approach – into its archival structures. By connecting entries from different points in time – be it objects from the inventory crafted and added to the inventory throughout the centuries or public events taking place over the course of several years such as the Come Closer Series – different pasts and (hi)stories surrounding the Oude Kerk come into contact.

Furthermore, following the writings by cultural theorist Aleida Assmann on archives, letting these entries and their different temporalities interact in the present, by digitally linking them, facilitates a new process of meaning-making that extends into the future – by creating new webs of interconnectivity that can be built upon in the coming years with new people, new projects, and new perspectives entering the archive. By shifting the focus, from preserving and publishing singular entries to analyzing emerging relationships between them, the shape, paths, and structures of the community surrounding the Oude Kerk become the main objects of interest. This

process allows us to ask questions such as; how dense or sparse are certain parts of the Oude Kerk’s network? which paths and steps connect components – people, objects, as well as events – within the network? which parts emerge as central, as well-connected, and re-visited and which parts point to (un)known blind spots and new discoveries?

### Which connections does the Oude Kerk Open Archive make?

Connections in the Oude Kerk Open Archive work in several layers, allowing for users to find different paths through the archive as well as through databases connected to the Oude Kerk – such as the Stadsarchief or the Rijksmuseum – something that is focused on in a different section:



Come Closer: Archive Session. Related Sections and Network

People are for example connected to the graves where they are buried or to the objects they made. Furthermore, events taking place in the same series or during the same exhibition are linked to each other. These connections appear at the bottom of the page, in a section titled “Related” (in a future update this title will be changed to “Connected to”). This form of display also allows for a short explanation for the connection, which in some cases can be found below the image and title, and usually points to the series of events they both belong to or the exhibition they are framed by. As you can see in the above screenshots (which depicts the two connecting sections of the Come Closer also used as an example below), it is possible to find entries through various different

ways, for example by searching for their names or selecting them from the list or web of related entries, which encourages users to stumble upon new relationships within the archive.

Additionally, the Open Archive introduces thematic connections between entries, in this example visible within the white bubbles. The team started the process of finding thematic connections with a list of subjects or associations, forty-one in total. The list primarily includes verbs, such as breathing, inhabiting, or caring. These verbs are intended to serve as links between the elements in the extended collection – which includes the exhibitions and the public program – connecting them in a more creative, relatable, and less tangible way. We believe that this is a somewhat new approach setting the Open Archive apart from systems of categorization used in other digital archives. At first, each verb had its own short informational text attached to it, explaining the word's meaning in the specific context of the Oude Kerk. These texts for example included background information on burial practices or the events of the Iconoclastic Fury.



Come Closer: Archive Session. Associated Verbs

However, in order to limit the Oude Kerk's institutional authority on narrative and interpretation within the Open Archive, we have decided to instead use definitions taken from a Dutch and an English dictionary respectively. This allows for more freedom when connecting entries to these associations, as verbs are easily accessible for a variety of users and target groups within the institution, its community, and across the broader archival commons – the internet. Using this accessible way to connect entries in the digital world is furthermore a reflection of their lingering presence in the analogue world, specifically the emotions that people felt during the event, the actions they took, or the ideas that were discussed. The Oude Kerk is therefore aiming to create a new infrastructure combining these two spheres – the online and the offline.

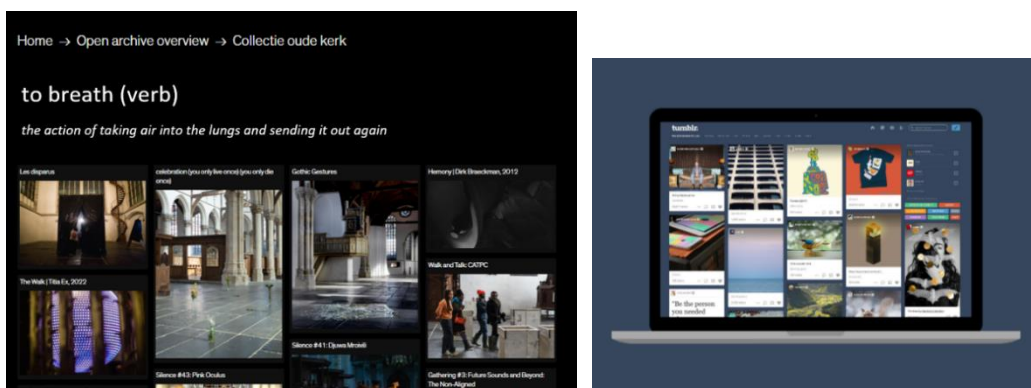
### What is the next step?

Currently, these verb associations only function in a way that is somewhat similar to the use of key words in the digital database for the archive of De Appel. There, the team works with so-called 'underwater indicators', a list of words that connects sets of data without being interactive or visible in the actual online archive on their website. The relationality is only tangible through the "See also" section (example: Gerrit Dekker "An event" - Archive - de Appel Amsterdam,

<https://www.deappel.nl/en/archive/events/6-gerrit-dekker-an-event>) at the bottom of the page where entries connected through the exact same set of indicators are displayed in a seemingly random order. Similarly, in the Oude Kerk Open Archive, the verbs are indeed visible but not interactive. Their use therefore does not per se extend beyond the associations and interpretations the verbs evoke in their users or the impression that the team at the Oude Kerk curated their selection for each entry. To change this, we are aiming to add a function to the archive which allows the digital users to click on the verbs or search for them directly. First of all, this would allow for the dictionary definitions attached to each verb to become visible and useable in the online archive. The page for each of the verbs would then start with this definition, before a collection of all the entries connected to it is displayed in a creative way below, visualizing their interconnectivity and simultaneously allowing the users to approach them through the lens of the specific verb and its associations instead of only through the categories they are filed under, such as inventory or extended collection.

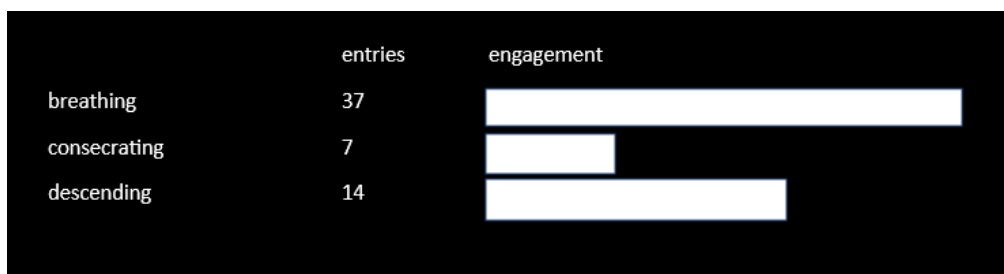
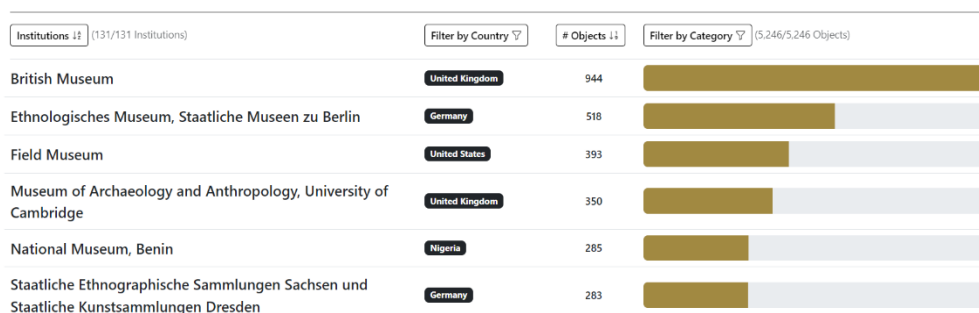
### Which functions need to be added?

1. adding the verbs (filed as associations or subjects in adlib) as separate entries to the open archive in order to create an individual page for each of them where their definition can be displayed as well as the other entries linked to them (apart from people and objects – the two categories now available in the Open Archive Sync – this third category needs to be added, they have individual record numbers)
2. making the verbs available to the search engine
3. creating an interesting but useable, simple visualization of the entries connected to the verbs; this could be done in several ways, depending on budget and time – the easiest solution includes a section similar to the current design of the Open Archive where connected entries are displayed under the title of “Related” (reminiscent of a blog space on platforms such as Tumblr or Pinterest) already integrated into the workings of the website (below)



Exemplary page for the verb to breathe and inspiration drawn from the website Tumblr

4. a second idea pertains the inclusion of a statistics section where users can see how many entries are attached to each verb, how often verbs are searched for etc. – this would furthermore already allow for the team at the Oude Kerk to track the engagement within the archive to some capacity – inspiration for this design can for example be taken from the Digital Benin Website (<https://digitalbenin.org/institutions>) which doesn't track verbs (or hashtags) but institutions – however, the same style of display as well as the same mechanisms might be applicable for the Open Archive; additionally, this form of exploratory participation tracking has been proposed as a new mechanism and next step by the Open Archive's IT desk, meaning that it is easily implemented and a logical next step to take. All of these steps require further consultation with the IT development of the website.



Example from Digital Benin and Mock-up for the Oude Kerk's Open Archive

### This ties in with the long-term plan to...

...allow for the creation of sub-archives (first steps for this are explained below), as it is important to keep in mind that the next step after giving the verbs more visibility and interaction within the archive is to track and archive the paths of interaction they create more thoroughly. Meaning: digital users engage with the Open Archive in a variety of ways, creating a sheer endless number of paths when navigating its dimensions. This form of engagement, expanded through the addition of the verbs as entry point, is a valuable layer of social interaction within the archive and should remain as part of the records within the archive as well as visible to other users, for example in the form of personal sub-archives, inspired by the connections and themes found through the verbs or to deconstruct them, to add to them etc.

**Target group of the strategy:** digital users in the broadest sense

### **1.1.2. Social media engagement**

In the recent years, with the boom of social media and digitality in the 21st century, museums and heritage institutions have been exploring the digital environment and bringing their institutions and practices closer to it. In this regard, social media platforms such as Instagram or Twitter are popular spaces in which museums post and inform their audiences, but they also offer the potential of creating a more interactive environment in which engage with them and broaden their target groups. Furthermore, there are diverse social media strategies that heritage organizations use in their everyday digital interactions: creating Q&As, giveaways, live videos, or interacting with followers among many others.

In the case of the Oude Kerk, it is an institution that is already present in the social media environment, which allows to interact with younger audiences or with other target groups that have an affinity with social media/digitality. The upcoming open archive will be a central project for the organization that will need visibility in different areas, especially in social media, so the creation of the so-called “staff picks” will help to get to know the intervention in an alternative and engaging way.

#### **What is “staff picks”?**

A staff pick is a social media strategy in which an individual chooses/picks an item from the museum and creates a reflection about it or explains why they have chosen that specific object. In the case of the Oude Kerk, these staff picks would be focused on the open archive, and the selected people would have to reflect about a concrete object/event/entry of the platform. This reflection would then be posted on Instagram (story/post). We consider this proposal as a short-term idea because it does not require extra funds and can be easily applied into practice with the collaborative work with the Marcom team. It can also already be implemented and work as a “sneak-peak” of the upcoming release, or it can be currently focused on the “Kunst & Erfgoed” section of the Oude Kerk’s website, which would help to give visibility to the new design.

The “staff pick” could be posted once every one/two months (depending on the engagement of the institution and the audiences), maybe always in the same day and considering social media timings (best hour and best day). It could be a normal post, but also a story could be created so it could direct to the main post (re-posting the post in a story). Maybe a template could be created for each post and story (on Canva?), so the creation every two weeks would be easier and homogeneous, it would have its own aesthetics so it would be recognizable.

### **What would that post include?**

1. The title “staff pick”
2. The name of the person and their position (publieksmedewerker, curator, staff from the koffieschenkerij, etc.)
3. The question: “what is your favorite item from the (open) archive and why?” or similar
4. After this, the answer would be quoted
5. The picture of the post could be of the object, the person, or both (together or two pics in the same post)
6. In the end of the post, there could be some indications on how to find the object in the archive (inventory number, for example). It could end also in an engaging way: “find x’s favorite object in the open archive!!”
7. In the story in which the post has been reposted, the link to the page of the open archive could be included in order to re-direct the users

### **Some references & examples:**

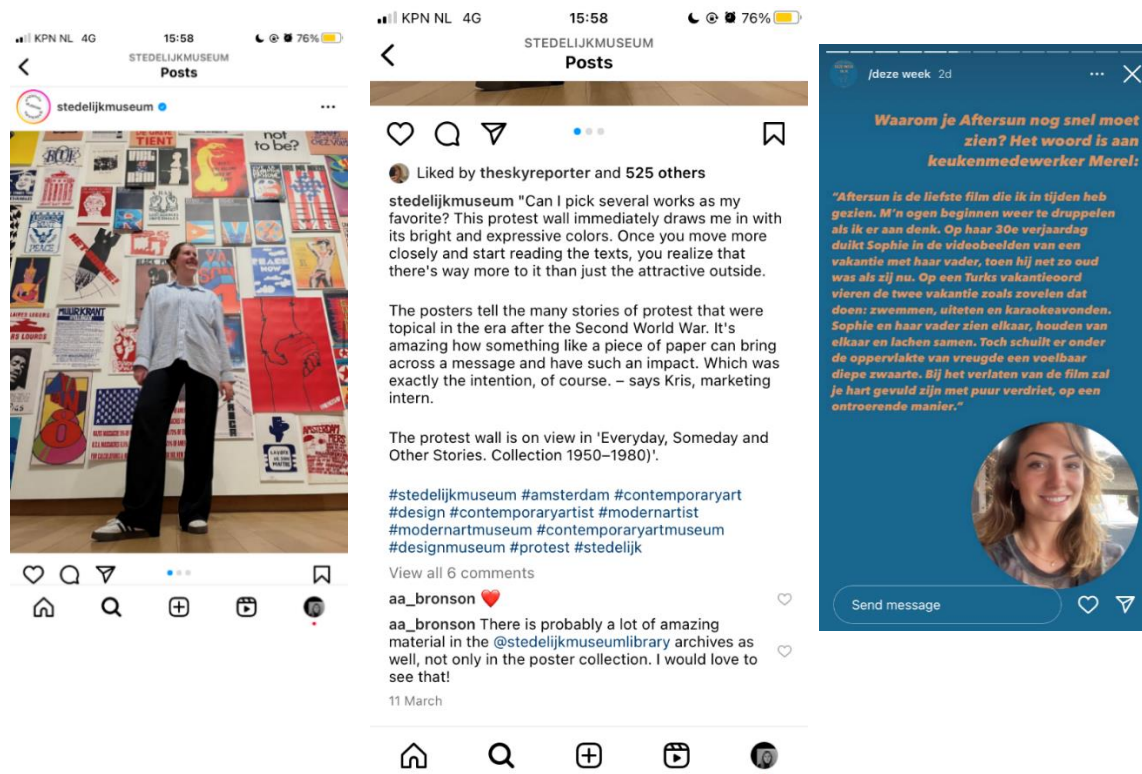
There are already diverse museums that are working with this approach and that are trying to engage with audiences in an online setting different than their websites –through social media, especially Instagram-. Some local examples are the Stedelijk Museum and the cinema Studio/K; they both have different approaches to the “staff picks”, but the conception behind them is clearly similar. On the one hand, the Stedelijk Museum posts pictures of their staff with a brief (two paragraphs) reflection about a specific work of the museum that the person has chosen. On the other hand, Studio/K asks its staff to answer the question “why should you hurry to see a movie?” in relation to a specific movie that they are currently screening, and it is posted as a story. The staff picks of the Oude Kerk could be a combination of both since the design of the Stedelijk Museum is more convenient for the Oude Kerk’s aesthetics, but the question asked in the post could be inspired by the staff picks of Studio/K. See examples attached.

### **Why “staff picks”?**

As previously mentioned, the staff picks offer the possibility of opening the archive to different audiences (young adults, social media lovers, etc.) in a different digital environment than the open archive website. Nevertheless, it is also related to the participatory factor that the Oude Kerk wants to achieve with the release of the open archive: the staff picks add a new layer of participation since they allow the staff and individuals close to the institution (shops/cafés nearby, artists, students, etc.) to interact with the archive in a non-formal and engaging way. In this regard, participation would not only be restricted to the target audiences of the archive, but it would be broader and more open to the team since it would provide an added value to the archive, and it would bring staff close to it. Furthermore, and from a more theoretical perspective, the staff picks



allow to connect stories from the past with the present since the individuals relate their own current experiences and emotions to objects that were relevant in different historical periods.



Staff picks of the Stedelijk Museum and Studio/K

**Target group of the strategy:** younger audiences, followers of the Oude Kerk’s Instagram, social media lovers, staff of the Oude Kerk and individuals close to it (neighbors, artists, students...).

## 1.2. Long-term interventions:

### 1.2.1. Creative tool for users

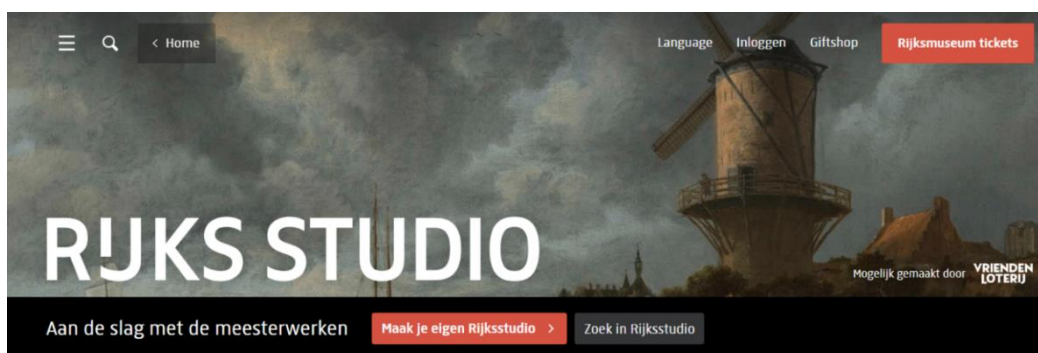
In Edward Benoit’s 2019 anthology “Participatory Archiving”, Alex Poole (researcher in the field of archives and records management, diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI)) notes that: “(social) tagging pivots around sense-making. (it’s a) personal tool for discovery [...] (and it contributes to) moving the archival commons into the hands of the people” (Poole 2019, 18). As the Oude Kerk’s Open Archive is firmly situated within this visionary framework of the archival commons, it is a central matter of concern to develop creative participatory solutions, in this case specifically in the form of first steps taken in the direction of social tagging and individually curated sub-archives.

## What is social tagging?

Social tagging is one participatory strategy resulting from the expansive possibilities and ideals of Web 2.0 (also coined ‘the participatory web’): a central concept of the 21st century, often associated with terms such as collaborative, transparent, innovative, and proactive. When transferred into the field of archival science and record management, the concept of ‘Archives 2.0’ describes the use of a digital space where users can find tools to contribute. Ideally, social tagging levels the playing field of the archive, by bestowing each user with the role and toolbox of the archivist, allowing for them to categorize entries, organize materials, and create new layers of meaning. As such it has been hailed as a productive and accessible means to foster diverse community engagement. Nevertheless, as several scholars have noted by now, social tagging also includes a number of challenges, ranging from concerns over quality and spamming to a lack of manageability due to the sheer volume of socially created data. The Oude Kerk has itself already experienced some of these challenges with social tagging practices, namely on the now discontinued [project website with the graves]. It is therefore our concern, at this moment in time, to test a new way to implement social tagging on a more limited scale before (potentially) reassessing ideas for a tool aimed at our wider audience.

## How is the Oude Kerk envisioning its creative user tool?

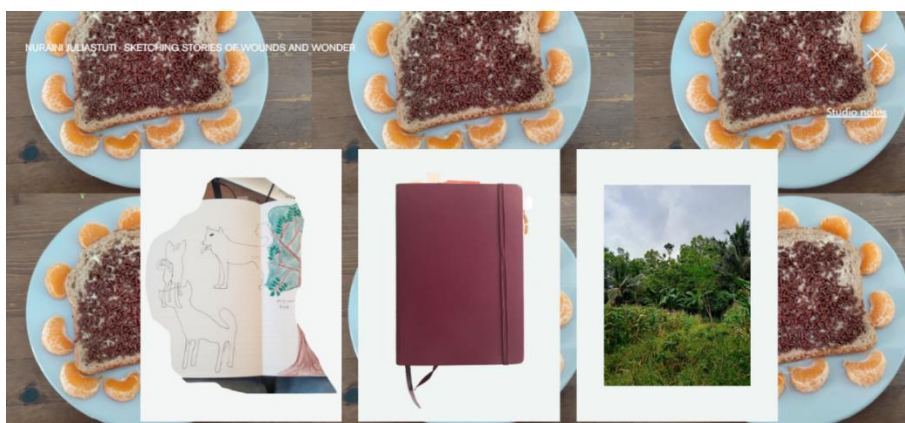
As noted above, one of the technical aspirations of the Open Archive is to implement strategies to record and publish the paths that people take within the database. Building upon the short-term goal to track this engagement through the use of verbs and their frequency (exemplified above), the long-term plan is more geared towards testing the possibilities for user-generated content and collections.



Rijksstudio homepage

As a starting point, inspiration is drawn from the Rijksstudio Project, launched by the Rijksmuseum in 2013. With the Rijksstudio, users can create their own mini-collections, choosing artworks from the holdings of the museum according to themes, personal preferences, or research. These personal studios are visible and searchable to all users and even people just browsing the separate website dedicated to the Rijksstudio Project. Additionally, the museum invited international artists to explore the new tool upon launch and to create new artworks based on the process of exploring, reorganizing, and categorizing the collection. This for example included the artist Rachel Harding of Studio Droog who designed a tattoo based on a 17th century painting by Jan Davidszoon de Heem.

In order to adapt this strategy to the experiences of the Oude Kerk and the scale of its archive, we are aiming to (firstly) implement sub-archives specifically dedicated to digital artist interventions. These personal collections can be centered around a particular theme or a space in the church, the research undertaken by the artist in preparation for an installation or the materials that inspired their artistic practice, as well as one of the(ir) works or a series of events. The sub-archives are intended to form new connections between entries, to add materials and perspectives, and to allow for new descriptions and stories to emerge – not strictly curated solely by the archival team at the Oude Kerk. This is in line with a study by dramaturgist Jayne Batzofin, concerned with archiving performance practices, who advocates for “inviting the participants of the project (back) to tell their stories of the [...] process through the media elements that were captured [...] (in order to) build stories out of different themes or events, creating curated pages which showcase a particular aspect of the shared community event” (Batzofin 2022, 11). These artistic sub-archives are visible to all users in the archive and can be found on a separate site (very similar to the digital structure at the Rijksmuseum/-studio - linked within the Open Archive, for example called “Oude Kerk Lab”) – in order to not disrupt the initial presentation and standardized categorization of entries. For this website, the main inspiration is drawn from the If I Can’t Dance Studio (<https://ificantdance.studio/>). Here, artists in residency develop digital work for the separate studio website which takes on a new, individualized form for each project.



Studio Page (If I Can't Dance)

These so-called ‘rooms’ are all introduced by a studio note, elaborating on the vision or thematic focus of the digital presentation, and include a variety of materials – from photographs and research articles to events, sketches, books, video clips, or scripts; all selected by the artist.

As an additional feature, the 1: Characters development (<https://ificandance.studio/nuraini-juliastuti/1-characters-development>) project as well as the Works and Words (<https://www.deappel.nl/en/archive/events/143-works-and-words>) project both include a reading table, displaying the textual materials that influenced the artistic process. This idea is particularly interesting for the Oude Kerk for two reasons: 1) the installations presented at the church often include an elaborate research process informing the artistic direction of the project (and vice versa) and 2) books and reading materials are so far less visible in the Open Archive (as they are usually only made available if it’s a publication by the artist or the Oude Kerk – external materials are not saved here so far). It is the idea to include them in the form of a bibliography where users can find the relevant information and the cover of the book/article (if available) to then search for them themselves – this is more in line with the way De Appel is approaching it. Including them (as well as for example documentaries, movies, tv shows etc.) here would therefore expand the scope of the project and also allow for further connections to outside databases and projects, such as for example De Appel’s Biblio-Graph (<https://biblio-graph.org/public/>)

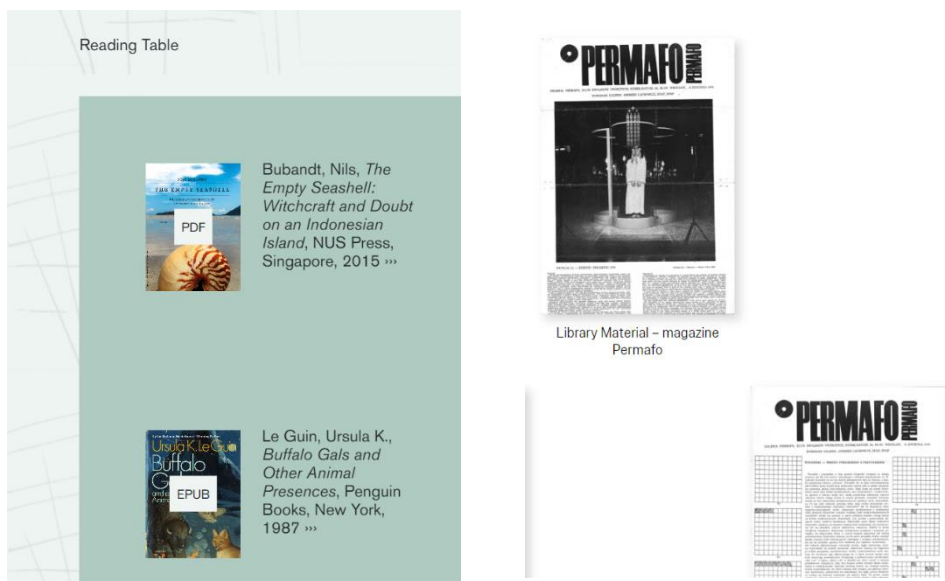
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Nuraini Juliastuti’s studio space functions as an expansion of her writing desk, offering small teasers of her play script in the making, from its characters and environments, to the political and cultural contexts these have arisen from. Entitled *Stories of Wounds and Wonder*, the play script will be released as an illustrated publication as part of If I Can’t Dance Edition IX Finale in the Fall/Winter 2023. Inspired by Juliastuti’s research into indigenous life technologies and cosmologies in Indonesia, the script narrates trans-species practices of survival across the Indonesian archipelago. Readers of different ages will encounter endangered monkeys, fugitive rats, street dogs, and, among humans, women who wove around the mountains as a form of eco-political resistance. (SSG)

Listen to an introductory interview with Nuraini Juliastuti [here](#).

Note for the Project ‘Stories of Wounds and Wonder’ (If I Cant Dance)

We are aiming to engage a variety of different artists. A primary focus will be on the artists already engaged with the Oude Kerk during their installation cycle. With this, each artist and installation presented at the Oude Kerk will get their own sub-archive where the archival process of this artistic cycle can take a (radically) different form from the standardized version also published in the general Open Archive. This is furthermore an expansion of the idea to ask artists how they want their work to be archived – if the artist is interested in developing a digital space and engaging with the archive to create a digital iteration of their work, this project can get integrated into the curatorial workflow of the installation cycle (as explained below).



Reading Table Section in the If I Can't Dance Studio and De Appel Archive Project 'Works and Words'

## Outlook into the future

These first tentative ideas for relinquishing some archival control and handing over the power and tools to design the narrative within the archive will ideally provide us with some insight into how applicable user-generated content is within the Oude Kerk's Open Archive. In terms of the technical dimensions, it would be great to first test the workflow and cooperative process by basically doubling the structure of the Open Archive for the new artist-curated website, as this will limit the amount of background work and modifications. However, in the future, an extension would be nice where the artists can mix and match the entries from the Open Archive themselves, just like in the Rijksstudio. What this means is that once the creation of artist-curated sub-archives has proven itself as a valuable extension of the archive, conversations on new technologies need to take place. And taking steps towards these new technologies would then allow for re-opening the conversation on broader audience participation and social tagging (in the style of the Rijksstudio).

### **Which steps are necessary?**

1. Conceptualization and realization of a separate website (technically structured like the Open Archive (a digital copy of its tools and mechanisms) but geared towards the sub-archives created by artists)
2. Conversation with the developers of the If I Can't Dance Studio to get advice on how to implement the tools and levels of customization found there
3. Linking this new website to the Open Archive
4. Approaching artists within the curatorial workflow of the Oude Kerk and asking them to engage with the archive, create sub-archives etc. (see below)
5. Re-assess the value of this strategy and potentially implement new tools (mix and match)  
– prepare discussions on broader audience accessibility

**Target group of the strategy:** artists and digital users

## ***2. OFFLINE AUDIENCES***

### ***2.1. Short-term, applicable interventions:***

#### **2.1.1. Archive Sessions as part of the regular program**

##### **What are the Archive Sessions?**

The Archive Sessions were part of the Come Closer series, which was a group of “performance programs in the Oude Kerk, developed in and around the specific artistic interventions. Together, artists, musicians, researchers and visitors explore an underexposed past, alternative versions of the present and possible futures. The Come Closers, curated by Radna Rumping, took the form of intimate evenings where visitors and artists explore the sonic space of the Oude Kerk through dance, performance and deep listening exercises” (Oude Kerk, 2022). As part of this program, there were two Come Closer events that were subtitled “Archive Sessions”, which were dedicated to exploring the challenges in the current archival environment and were conducted as conversations with artists, researchers and visitors. In this sense, the Archive Sessions provided an insight into the archive of the Oude Kerk and, at the same time, allowed to address issues present in the archive in a conversational and reflective way together with the participants.

Images of the open archive entries about the Come Closer series:



“Come Closer: Archive Session - Patricia Kaersenhout, Hella Matroos and Jean Jacques Vrij”



“Come Closer: Archive Session – over efemere samenkomsten”

### **Why Archive Sessions?**

As mentioned, the Archive Sessions provide a space in which topics and issues related to the archive of the Oude Kerk can be discussed with diverse people: researchers, artists and visitors. Since one of the objectives of the organization is to create a participatory approach to the open

archive, establishing the Archive Sessions as a recurrent event in the Oude Kerk's regular public program would be an opportunity to add this interactive factor in an offline setting. In this regard, the Archive Sessions generate a space in which gatherings with different people (artists, staff, researchers, visitors) can take place at the Oude Kerk to discuss and reflect about the open archive, so it would be an interesting addition to transform it into a permanent event that could put in-person participation in practice. The establishment of these interactive sessions as part of the regular program would tie to the definition of participation that Nina Simon discusses in her work *The Participatory Museum* (2010):

I define a participatory cultural institution as a place where visitors can create, share, and connect with each other around content. Create means that visitors contribute their own ideas, objects, and creative expression to the institution and to each other. Share means that people discuss, take home, remix, and redistribute both what they see and what they make during their visit. Connect means that visitors socialize with other people —staff and visitors— who share their particular interests. Around content means that visitors' conversations and creations focus on the evidence, objects, and ideas most important to the institution in question (Simon 2010, ii).

In this sense, the Archive Sessions would provide a space in which this definition of participation would be effective: visitors would be able to contribute and with their perspectives, actively discuss and connect both with the institution and other people that share an interest in the Oude Kerk and its archive.

### **Towards the establishment of the Archive Sessions as part of the regular program**

The Archive Sessions could have different settings and ways of being conducted. First, there should always be one or more mediators; these mediators, which would organize and conduct the sessions, would be different for each event. They can be:

- Internal to the organization
  - Team members
  - Publieksmedewerkers
  - Interns
- External to the organization
  - Artists
  - Researchers
  - Students working on a concrete topic close to the archive
  - People with experiences linked to the Oude Kerk

The mediators would be knowledgeable of the open archive and how the past Archive Sessions were conducted, and they would have high degrees of decision-making and control over the



creation of the session, always with the help and supervision of the Oude Kerk. Therefore, the activities taking place during the event could be very diverse and would depend on the topic and expertise/background of the different mediators. For instance, a session could be dedicated to a concrete object of the archive, so the event would completely revolve around the history and stories surrounding that specific item; or another Archive Session could address societal issues that are present in the archive, such as colonialism at the Oude Kerk. However, the factor that all the Archive Sessions would have in common would be participation: the events would be an open dialogue with the participants, and all of them would be welcome to offer their perspectives and ideas in relation to the topic discussed.

### **When and how?**

There would be around four Archive Sessions each year at the Oude Kerk. They would take place in-person at the church and the concrete space in which they would be conducted would be decided by the mediators. The sessions can be dynamic, meaning that the setting can be flexible, and the event could take place in different places of the church; in this sense, they would be interactive sessions in which it could be possible to walk, sit, and move around the space. Moreover, the duration of the sessions would be around one hour and one hour and a half.

Target group of the strategy: offline audiences of the open archive (Amsterdammers and locals from the neighborhood, non-western individuals, individuals not familiarized with the protestant religion, heritage and contemporary art lovers), researchers and artists, and individuals interested in the Oude Kerk and its programs.

### **2.1.2. How do artists and creators want to be archived and how to engage the broader team?**

#### **Diversifying perspectives and taking a first step in relinquishing archival control**

Artistic interventions – from the Oude Kerk’s performance-based events to the contemporary installations filling the space – are communal, creative/non-standardized, and oftentimes very personal ventures, as determined by Batzofin in her 2022 article on ‘the digital archive as storyteller’ and the process of archiving performance practices. The Oude Kerk recognizes these characteristics within its curatorial workflow, by creating a collaborative process (see below) in which different stakeholders, community as well as team members come together in creating the art interventions. These characteristics furthermore also impact the institution’s archival practice. In the age of the ‘Archival Commons’, a term coined by Andersen and Allen as early as 2009, diversifying archival perspectives and ownership is not only a necessary step for the participatory input in digital archives (meaning audience engagement) but also in the process of curating the archive and making its materials available in the first place. As archivists, curators, and institutions increasingly test the boundaries of relinquishing archival control, the Oude Kerk is

looking to integrate the questions of “how the artists and participants of projects want their work, research, and its surrounding program to be archived and how do they define and engage with archival practice?” into its overall workflow.

### Expanding the Oude Kerk’s curatorial workflow

The Oude Kerk’s curatorial workflow is intricately tied to its archival practice, as was established during a research project in collaboration with the UvA in 2021. Each step in the process, from identifying the artists to showing their work and eventually preserving it in the digital sphere, is connected to specific entry points for collecting archival materials (as can be seen in the graphic). A next step towards a diversified and innovative archival practice includes the introduction of several self-reflective moments as well as a new level of artistic control within archival representation. These moments are envisioned at two points in time during the process:

1. during the research and initial conceptualization of the artwork (‘open-ended research’ and ‘reading the building’): the archival process needs to be included in the conversation from the very beginning; this could for example include a preliminary interview with the artists on their view on archival practices as well as first wishes for their work’s representation within the Oude Kerk’s archive



Curatorial workflow of the Oude Kerk

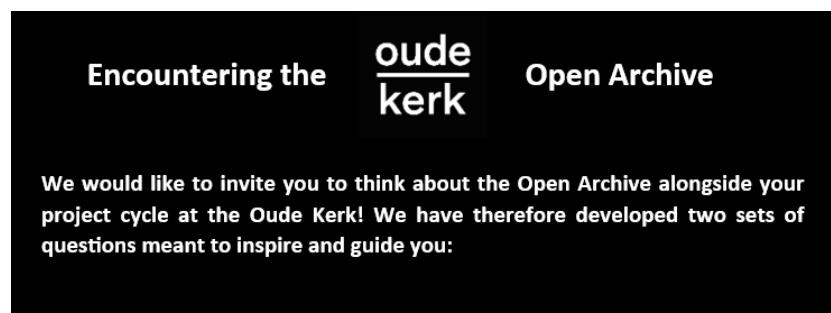
2. a second step includes a conversation on guidelines, wishes, restrictions for archiving after the work has been realized and shown at the Oude Kerk; this provides the artists with control on narrative and presentation of their work and might even inspire new and creative outputs

### **Creative outputs (ties into...)**

This idea of relinquishing archival control and allowing artists to sketch the narrative for their archival representation from the very beginning also ties into the idea of creating sub-archives (see above) within the Open Archive. For example:

If artists are interested in integrating the archive into the timeline and workflow of their project at the Oude Kerk, the end result (in the archival sense) could expand beyond discussing guidelines and/or texts for archiving the work – for example in the form of a creative, separate sub-archive – a website curated by the artist and linked within the Open Archive; exploring elements of their own work or connections within the OK’s archive; adding or highlighting unseen/overlooked materials, disrupting the standardized formula of the current website etc. – therefore a new and creative output/expansion of the work.

If artists are not interested or lack the time to expand their work into the archive, there should still be conversation on the content created on top of their work for the archive – what are their wishes/restrictions?

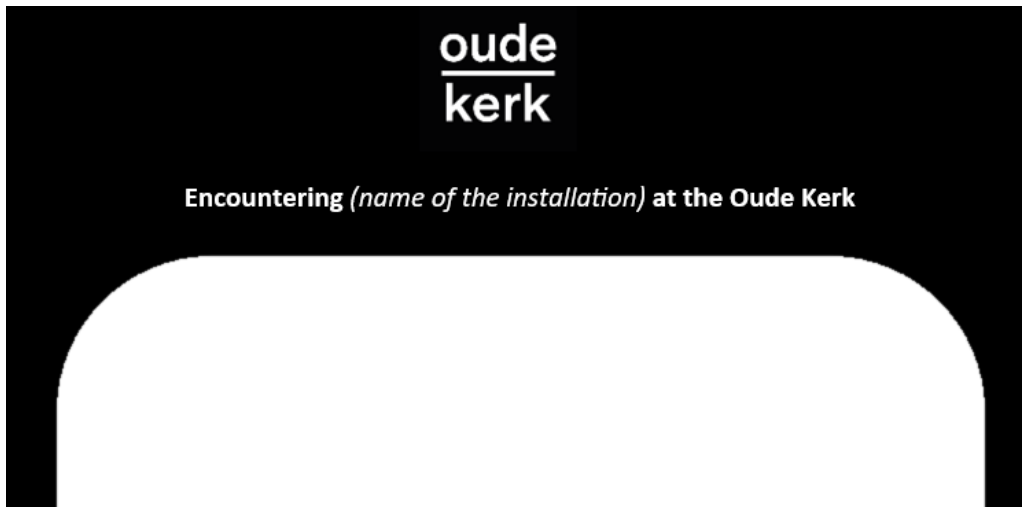


Mockup to engage with the artists

### **Expanding perspectives beyond the curatorial core**

Additionally, it is important to capture the perspectives of all people involved – from the curatorial core team, to the artists, people working on the PR campaigns, as well as the front of house team engaging with the work and visitors on a daily basis. Similar to the idea of staff picks, it is therefore interesting to introduce the notion of (self-)reflective essays – asking the people within and beyond the (entire) team at the Oude Kerk to submit a few lines (or pages) on their experience working on this installation cycle. There shouldn't be a formal structure to these – they can be handwritten or typed, in prose or factual, long or short, with pictures or without, focused on the

entire process or one detail. Allowing for creative outputs expands the scope of materials in the archive and contributes to bringing it alive.



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### **What is needed?**

#### 1. conversations with different teams in the Oude Kerk

- the curatorial team on expanding the workflow and integrating the notion of the archive from the very beginning
- the event team + MarCom + front of house on writing reflection essays

#### 2. structure for engaging the artists in the archival practice

- introduction to the archive (needs to be updated regularly – current one: open archive team pp.pptx (24.04.2023)) to be shown to the artists at the beginning of the process
- questionnaire/template (see artists archiving their work.docx for a first draft), to be sent/given with the presentation of the archive

#### 3. template for reflection essays/feedback: team reflecting on installations template.docx

**Who is the target of this strategy?** the team at the Oude Kerk + the artists

### **2.2. Long-term interventions:**

#### **2.2.1. Side room dedicated to the archive**

##### **Why dedicating a room to the archive?**

The Oude Kerk is not only aiming to establish digital participatory practices linked to its upcoming open archive, but the institution also has the objective of including its offline audiences

through in-person participation in relation to the archive. This is the reason why one of the main proposals is to permanently dedicate a side room of the Oude Kerk to the open archive; in this sense, it would be a physical space fully dedicated to the intervention, and visitors and audiences could engage with it in an offline setting. It would be the ideal space in which activities dedicated to the open archive or exhibitions related to it could take place; in a way, it would be a very experimental space, always open to the input and interaction of the audiences.

### **Possible ideas for the side room**

Since it will be a permanent space in the church, multiple activities and events could take place in the side room, and they could have many different settings and approaches. Here there are two main concrete proposals of practices that could take place in this side room:

### **Re-activating the Oude Kerk's archive**

As mentioned at the Faro Convention (2005), it is relevant for the heritage field to promote the use of materials and knowledge documented in an archive, and to explore their potential for contemporary applications (Council of Europe 2005, 4). This exploration of the heritage's potential in contemporary applications is one of the proposals for the side room dedicated to the open archive: twice a year, there would be a small exhibition in the side room about the open archive curated by external people to the Oude Kerk, such as artists, researchers, students, maybe locals or neighbors, etc. Similar to the Archive Sessions, these exhibitions could be very diverse: focusing on a concrete object, picking a story from the archive to exhibit it, choosing a specific topic that ties into the open archive, etc. The theme of the exhibition would be decided by the curator, and it would be approved by the curator of the Oude Kerk (Marianna van der Zwaag). The creation of these exhibitions with external curators adds a new value to the open archive since they provide new perspectives, fresh ideas and new connections to the archive, which represents a meaningful addition for the Oude Kerk.

The method to select the external curators could be an open call to participate in a fellowship. This fellowship could be named "Open Archive Fellowship" and the idea of it is that individuals interested in curating an exhibition in the side room could submit their exhibition proposal to the open call, and from all the proposals the curatorial team of the Oude Kerk could choose the most suitable one. Once the fellowship is awarded, the curator works independently with the support of the curatorial team. Furthermore, all these small exhibitions would also be archived in the open archive. A case that can work as a reference for this proposal is the exhibition "Arxius i Documents" (Archives and Documents), which took place between 2007 and 2008 at the Centre of Documentation and Research of the Museum of Contemporary Art of Barcelona (MACBA). The exhibition revolved around the archive and collection of the museum, and a curated selection of relevant editions and documents was exhibited with the mission of giving value to the materials

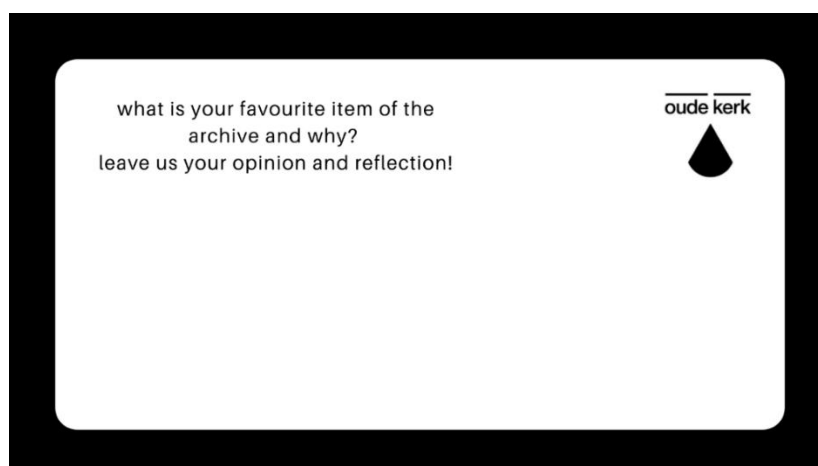
stored in the museum. This approach could be similar to the one that the Oude Kerk could put into practice in the side room.



Exhibition at MACBA about the archive, <https://www.macba.cat/en/exhibitions-activities/exhibitions/archives-and-documents>

### Actively involving the audiences in the room

The second proposal for the side room is to offer a participatory and interactive setting to the audiences with the mission of receiving their input and perspectives about the open archive. The design of the side room could include some interactive elements, such as some cards in which visitors could give their opinion about the archive; there could be diverse pre-designed cards with different questions such as “what is your favorite item of the open archive?” or “what is your opinion on the exhibition in the side room?”. This approach would differ from the guestbook that is placed in the church, and the cards could be sticky so they could be placed in a section of one of the walls of the room, so visitors could see and read other visitors’ opinions and perspectives.



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This interactive initiative has been recently implemented by the Nieuwe Kerk in Amsterdam, more concretely in their World Press Photo exhibition (see attached picture). In this case, it is

possible to appreciate the interaction between the audiences and the institution. Additionally, there could be a QR code in the side room with the link to the open archive, so audiences can access it while visiting the Oude Kerk, and it could also be placed in the leaflets that are handed in to visitors when purchasing a ticket and entering the church. A digital monitor (if possible) could be placed in a corner of the room and visitors could also access the archive in case they don't have a phone or device with them. All these ideas would bring the open archive closer to the visitors that are not aware of the project, and it would be a space fully dedicated to the archive in which in-person interaction with the audiences could take place; in this sense, it would be a space for multivocality and multiperspectivity, in which visitors' voices would have a value and would be meaningful for the Oude Kerk.



Interactive wall at the Nieuwe Kerk

**Target group of this strategy:** offline audiences of the open archive, regular visitors of the Oude Kerk and people involved in the institution (staff, external participants such as artists or researchers).

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