

The Augmented Archive: History in Real Time. An Archaeology of Images of the Egyptian Revolution

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This study explores the challenges of archiving the Egyptian revolution from 2011, and basically any archive consisting of digital media, specifically in contexts of ongoing political contestation. The text proposes a media-archaeological approach in both theory and practice: The media artist Kaya Behkalam speaks about his project The Augmented Archive, a digital topographic archive for Cairo's urban space, whereas media philosopher Knut Ebeling traces the wider historical and media theoretical context to archival and memory practices of resistance. Behkalam and Ebeling have repeatedly worked together in the past on essays and projects around archival practice and media archaeology.

Keywords: Egyptian revolution, archives, media archaeology, alternative historiography, real time, topography of trauma

This text focuses on the research and multimedia project The Augmented Archive, a GPS-based digital archival tool for video material from the Egyptian revolution of 2011, developed by media artist and writer Kaya Behkalam. In this article, Behkalam and media philosopher Knut Ebeling reflect on the project's conceptual ambition of working and thinking through a practice-based form of media archaeology. Although The Augmented Archive comes in the form of an iOS/Android app, its conceptual premise is not bound to any specific technological platform. Rather, it is an experimental setup and proposition for an alternative understanding of archival engagement in the digital age, an attempt for a critical use of corporate technology, and finally, an invitation to open up a critical debate around the subject.

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Figure 1. The Augmented Archive app in a street close to Cairo's Tahrir Square, showing a video of the same street six years earlier, with road blocks erected by the military.

Behkalam describes The Augmented Archive as

a digital art and research project for Cairo's (and basically any) urban space. A growing archive, a topography of the possible, a map of fragments from a city's manifold presents. The project takes the form of a spatial narrative, functioning like a speculative archaeological tool, leading you through real and virtual ruins of the past, present and future of the city and its imaginary expansions. Its framework is that of media architecture, a GPS-based archive that can be read and rewritten, open for your thoughts and interaction. It is a guide that speaks of the various contestations of the city and your personal encounters with and within them. You have to use a device to enter this virtual palimpsest—a smartphone or a tablet—as well as your imagination. Think of Walter Benjamin's *The Arcades Project* in the digital age of transmission and real time: a fragmentary poem guiding you through actual and potential disasters and desires, spaces and times of here and now. Walking with your device, you experience video documents recorded at the same place at other times; performances that are absent yet present; associative storytelling that is dreamlike yet hyper-real; suggestive instructions that ask for your own contribution and continuation of a story that is conflicted, disjointed and elusive—like yourself and the city around you. (Behkalam, 2017, para.1)

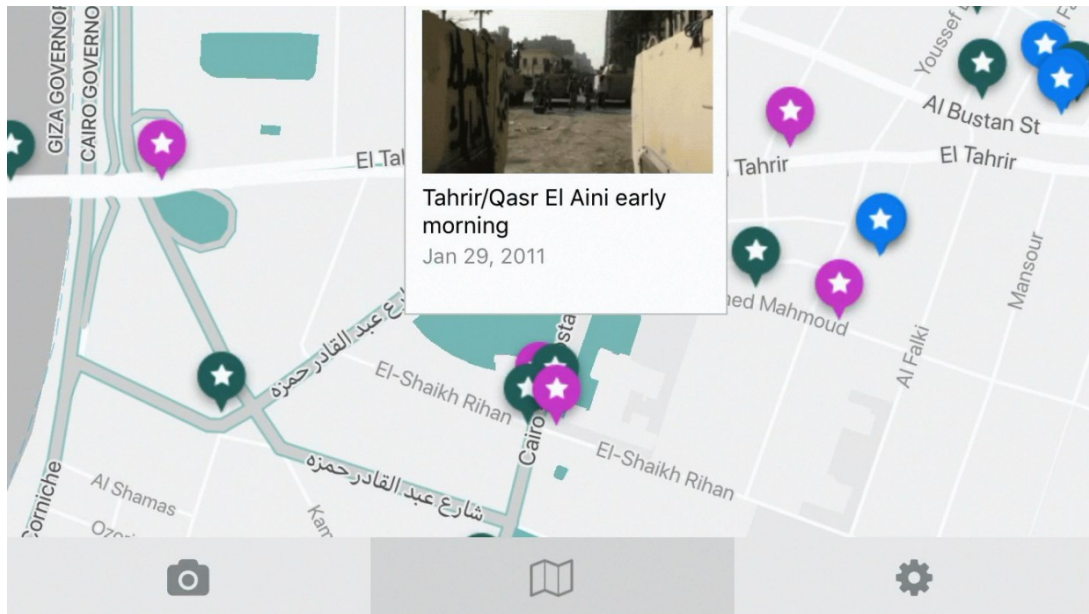


Figure 2. The Augmented Archive app's map view, showing markers around a user's position, with GIF preview files of the archival content.

The Augmented Archive explores, in both theory and practice, the changing medialities and materialities of the archival as it transitions from a mode of recording and storing to a means of transmission. Employing GPS data, augmented reality, and video-streaming technology, it makes the various layers of a story and a city available site specifically—that is, at the location of their initial recording via GPS and mobile devices (Figure 1). Users can thus explore urban space through these layers, juxtaposing different layers of time onto a site as they pass through it. The app's media framework is conceived as an expanding, interactive platform, enabling its users to record and upload videos and other contributions to the narrative architecture (Figure 2).

The content featured in The Augmented Archive consists of videos documenting events of recent history in and of the city. The videos are partly from the video archive 858: An Archive of Resistance, by Mosireen, a group of media activists that have produced and compiled one of the largest video archives related to the political and urban changes in Cairo from 2011 to 2014. After a three-year period in which their archive was not publicly accessible, it has been online since November 2017. In addition to these videos, the project features newly produced interviews with scholars, artists, writers, activists, filmmakers and urban theorists who contextualize the material from various perspectives. The interviews take place in public spaces and discuss the immediate site in which they are viewed by users of the app.

The project was developed by Kaya Behkalam in the framework of a practice-based PhD program at the Bauhaus-University Weimar under the theoretical guidance of and in conversation with media philosopher Knut Ebeling. The project was initially presented publicly at the Goethe-Institut Cairo in

November 2017, at a symposium alongside Alisa Lebow's project *Filming Revolution* and the media activist group *Mosireen's 858: An Archive of Resistance*.

History in Real Time

When in the winter of 2010–11 protestors in Cairo and other cities started documenting events with their cameras and mobile phones, and TV stations broadcast live video feeds 24/7, new forms of political participation and subjectivity came into being both on- and off-line—seemingly immediate, contagious, unstoppable. Video was a key witness of violence and of formerly unheard voices of dissent, and as such, one of the driving forces of the political struggles on the ground and of globally shared dreams of emancipation. The continuous transmission of networked video feeds with ever shorter delays and latencies seemed to confuse notions of chronological time, of confined understandings of an image, identity, place, and linear narrative. Instead, we witnessed an overwhelming and exhilarating experience of real time, of simultaneity and of a limitless architecture of seemingly self-governed streets and squares under virtual clouds. Real and virtual spaces conflated, and with it were birthed different “heres” and “nows.”

Yet what was live then is not live anymore. How do we deal with the abundance of digital traces of a once urgent now? What to do with the hasty, breathless testimonies articulating new visions of being together or recounting immediate injustices? What is the relevance of the countless shaky video images of a time when there was no time to lose? What happens to those newly articulated subjectivities once they enter the all-objectifying realm of the archival? How to keep a contested past relevant and accessible in the present, given the continuous targeted attempts to either erase or appropriate these documents of a once emancipatory sense of presentness? Is all that is left for us a sense of trauma lived as a painful reenactment of the past in the present? Must these “live streams of consciousness” turn into databases of defeat, archives of amnesia? As the epicenters of the Egyptian revolution in Cairo have been cleansed of their revolutionary traces, documentation of past events becomes ever more important. The graffiti that memorialized the martyrs from Mohamed Mahmoud Street is mostly gone today. The NDP building that stood as the symbol of the regime, which was burned out in January 2011, and whose ruin became the visible sign of the momentary victory of the revolt, has been demolished in recent years (Figure 3). Instead, there is a flagpole in the middle of Tahrir Square, commemorating patriotism. The numerous videos that were once sent around the world from Tahrir Square with great urgency and little latency, are now remaining mostly unseen and forgotten in hidden YouTube channels.



Figure 3. The Augmented Archive app, showing a video of the burning National Democratic Party building from January 2011, eight years later, after the building had been demolished.

“When looking at these videos,” activist Sharif Abdelkouddous of the Mosireen collective, says in an interview that is part of The Augmented Archive project,

you can see what these streets once looked like. They were not controlled by the state, they were controlled by people, by the revolution. They were part of convergence, they were points of dissent, they were points of violence, both revolutionary violence, and—to a much higher degree—violence by the state against the revolution. And so it’s very easy to forget, even if you know what happened and if you took part in the revolution, what it was like. It’s easy to forget how many people were involved, how many different kinds of people were involved, the energy they had, the conviction they had, it’s easy to forget the amount of violence that was perpetrated against the revolution, how people’s bodies were dragged in the streets, corpses filling the morgue. And also it’s a source of inspiration, not just to remember the fallen but also how we rose up. I watch these videos once in a while. It never fails to move me. Apart from the facts, the feeling and hearing all these different voices is an important part of history, not only to preserve memory but to revive memory. That’s very important because that’s what gives us agency now (Abdelkouddous, 2017).

Public events in the digital age, such as the mass uprisings across the Middle East and North Africa since 2011, generate images and are at the same time informed by that imagery. For a deeper understanding of this type of imagery, the current tools and definitions of image theory are not sufficient. It is both material and immaterial, fluid, fragile, and unstable, images that mutate through various virtual

networks, that gain or lose meanings and intentions, and that are constantly reembedded into new contexts. These images are live images, constantly broadcast live and anew in different scenarios and settings, and they have an agency that is potentially detached from human control. Yet however powerful they can become in their moment of liveness, what happens once they are stripped of their immediate urgency? How to delineate a materiality and an aesthetics of these fragile, uncontrollable live images? How to grasp them in their inexhaustibility and boundlessness? How to embed them into archival structures that remain truthful to their legacy of resistance?

To trace potential answers to these questions, a short excursion into the politics of archival theory might be helpful. The topic of thinking of archives as counterarchives has aroused increasing interest lately, especially its political aspects, and indeed the most important recent publications in archive theory belong to it—Markus Miessen and Yann Chateigné's (2016) *The Archive as a Productive Space of Conflict* and Eva Knopf, Sophie Lembcke, and Maria Recklies' (2018) *Archive dekolonialisieren* are just two examples. The reason for this is the global consequences of our era of colonialization: The more we deal with global power structures, the more we need neutral and "objective" data and counterarchives to ground our discussions. This is also the case of the entire current debate around decolonization: The decolonization discourse relies on counterarchives rather than just the archives held by those in power (Ebeling, 2019).

Archives are not only part of political negotiations, they are not only part of politics—they make politics. Archives encode political processes—in the colonial situation, more than anywhere else. For this reason, in the colonial situation, the suspicion soon arises that archives serve concealment—that archives are created to conceal certain things and to show them only to selected parties; that archives do not document and record actual courses of events and occurrences, but document and record only certain things, to conceal other ones. This would turn the colonial archives from sites of neutrality and impartiality into sites of concealment and partisanship—in brief, into accomplices of the power holders.

But this suspicion, too, which postcolonial provenience research has already widely expressed, may be too general. Additional questions arise immediately: Who records with which media, in which language? And who decides in the first place what is to be recorded in accordance with what logic—and in relation to which jurisdiction in which future? Who decides what an archive is, and to what purpose one should be established? Who controls who can put something in it, and who may not? And how should we deal today with these never-neutral documents full of gaps? How should the various power interests be made visible? Should not these archives of concealment be read against themselves, "against the grain," and used against themselves to find out "how it really was?" (Benjamin, 1942/2003, p. 391-92)

We can situate The Augmented Archive in this context of emancipatory archival practices, alongside with other known artistic archival projects, just like, to name a few, Mosireen's well-known 858: An Archive of Resistance and Alisa Lebow's meta-documentary *Filming Revolution* (2015). The question these projects ask is whether it is possible to create a place or institution of resistance out of an archive, or if archives will always remain institutions of those in power. Is it possible to turn an institution that supported colonialization into a decolonizing institution? In addressing but not directly answering these questions, The Augmented Archive opens up a philosophical dimension that resonates with 20th-century topographical and mnemotechnical concepts.

To transform an archive into an institution of resistance is no easy task, for archives have largely been connected to power since ancient Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Greek, and Roman times. They have not only had strong connections to authority but have often been necessary to establish authority in the first place—a condition of the possibility of authority. According to Jacques Derrida, writing in the 1990s, this is because authority and law both rely on memory. There can be no authority or law without the archive. The state and its legal system need the “memory of the state,” which is what the archive generally is. What does it mean for Mosireen to establish a counterarchive of alternative narratives of the 2011 Egyptian revolution? What does it mean for The Augmented Archive to institute a site-specific archive? These counterarchives are also connected to power, to authority, to order, with their attempts to establish independent sources of history beyond state control. They are providing the alternative sources necessary to write a history of the recent Egyptian past.

The new topic that a project like The Augmented Archive brings up is that of space, place, or site—a dimension that has seemingly disappeared and lost its specificity in our mediated environments of a globalized virtual space. The site of archivation has consequences, especially in the colonial context. It appears immediately clear that an archiving of the conditions of the transfer of ownership, of the transport, or even of the robbing of the artifacts (and the problems of archiving begin already here, because the designation of the operation in question already archives its nature, its assignment, and its mission—that is, the concepts of transfer, transport, or robbery)—at any rate, it appears immediately clear that the site of the archiving contributes to defining the events, and not only conceptually. The nature of the operation of transferring the objects from colonial to European contexts is in part defined by the site where they are archived; thus, archiving in an archive in Berlin (for example) will have entirely different implications, meanings, and effects from documentation within the regions from which the artifacts were transported away—regions in which the institutions of recording and of the archive may not even exist (Förster, Edenheiser, Fründt, & Hartmann, 2017). The site of recording and of the archive is thus not only interesting—the site of the archive is an integral part of the recording, its message, and its content. The site has agency, it inscribes itself in things, and has an effect. It may even determine what is in the archive and what is not, what is collected there and what is passed over in silence there. In 1996, Jacques Derrida’s *Mal d’archive* reflected on this site of recording and of the archive, a reflection that Ann Laura Stoler (2002) intensified. Derrida, himself, reflected on the power of the archive via the Greek term *arche*, because, according to Derrida, the *arche* means not only dominance but also the site of dominance, not only power but also its localization: *arche* is not only dominance but also the site of dominance, there where it is. Derrida is not thinking solely of power, but of power based on its site. But powers are fragmented, not only in the colonies; there is power, and there are those who take it. Power fragments, in the colonial context, usually not only between the colonial rulers and the ruled but within other groups—for example, local rulers, who usually were different people from the colonialists.

In that Derrida’s archive theory localizes dominance in the site of the archive, power is always already the power of the archive and archival power; the division between colonial archive and counterarchive appears to be artificial, because the archive was never neutral, but always already the archive of a site and of the rulers over this site. Would a “neutral standpoint” be conceivable at all at this point? How would it be secured, and how overseen? How would it be secured for the past, and how for

the future? What would be “neutral” archives of the colonial situation? At this extremely sensitive and painful point, where a radical self-examination could begin, only one thing seems clear: Whoever rules over the archive determines not only the recording of the past but also what should and should not someday arrive from it.

The Augmented Archive is now more site specific than archives usually are, for archives always build a bridge between time and space: They install time past in a specific space, in a specific site. Like museums, collections, and libraries, they form what has been called cultural memory—they fix the memory of a given culture in a space. Archives are probably the most solid and durable of all institutions of cultural memory. But The Augmented Archive differs also from the classic and conventional alpha-numerical archive that collects names and dates. It does not consist of written words and numbers, of bills and digits, like the ancient Mesopotamian archives. It consists of videos, moving images, that are not stored materially on film or video tape. They consist of digits, totally immaterial and only accessible via the Internet. We are talking about digital videos stored on the Internet—if this is indeed a site, and if it indeed provides storage. Media theorists are still debating the question of whether a store as unstable and immaterial as the Internet can be called an archive. So, the Internet-based nature of both The Augmented Archive and 858 puts their archival nature in doubt. Maybe we are not dealing with archives here, but something else?

Both The Augmented Archive and 858 detach themselves from any concrete space. Neither create collections in buildings, like libraries or museums, where you can go to consult them, if you are admitted—for accessibility in space is an entirely different problem than the accessibility of an Internet archive. The Augmented Archive and 858 do not gather their material in a space, a central archive—for all archives have some kind of centering quality—but on the Internet. Establishing an Internet archive is a different project that demands different techniques than a material archive. But there are also differences between an Internet archive like 858 and a site-specific archive like The Augmented Archive. For example, 858 centralizes all of its sources in one archive, accessible via the Internet. The Augmented Archive does not establish a centralized Internet archive or collection—it does not follow the logic of centralization. Confusingly enough, it is neither a classical material archive nor an immaterial Internet archive of videos, like 858—but it does rely on its material. The Augmented Archive is something else.

The Augmented Archive decentralizes and deterritorializes its material. In fact, this is probably its main operation: It scatters videos around the city they originally came from. It gives the images back to the sites to which they once belonged. In this strange and mysterious, simple yet important operation, having become independent of what they show, digital images are brought back to the site they document—as if rematerialized or reterritorialized. This reverses our general use or abuse of images. Normally, we take images—and this taking indicates that we can take them anywhere, that they have been taken away from their original site, that they lose their site. Photos and videos are never site specific, then: You can take and show them anywhere. Yet we know that this has not always been the case, that there have been and still are cultures and visual practices that attribute some magic or ritual quality to images, where you cannot just take pictures and leave, where the image belongs to its object and not just to the subject. The Augmented Archive shows us that we should not take picture taking for granted, that this take-away service is not natural or self-evident. This is what Walter Benjamin referred

to when talking about the aura—a quality of the image that links it to the original site where it was taken (Benjamin, 1936/2002, p. 103). The Augmented Archive takes images back to their origins. It reverses the direction of images, which normally go away from their source to become independent, to live autonomous lives. It takes them back, digging for their origins like an archaeologist. This is why we can call the project an archaeology of images of the Egyptian revolution, of scenes of an uprising taken back to the sites from which they originated.

The Augmented Archive is not a conservation project celebrating the origin of images or producing an ontological and archaic congruence of original site and its image. On the contrary, it displaces and defers archival material by decentralizing and scattering it in space. In this space, at the site of the happenings, images of the revolution are superimposed on the city's everyday life; real-time images of what once happened there overlay what is going on today. The app also confronts its users with at least two temporal layers—"real" real time and archival real time—that meet and interact in the mobile app. Arguably, there is a third temporal layer besides that of the recorded image and that in which we see it—the technological time of its streaming. An audiovisual and temporal experience similar to how sociologist Manuel Castells (2012) describes the hyperspaces of the protest camps in Cairo and other cities since January 2011, witnessed by a global audience:

The public space of the social movement is constructed as a hybrid space between the Internet social networks and the occupied urban space: connecting cyberspace and urban space in relentless interaction, constituting, technologically and culturally, instant communities of transformative practices. The critical matter is that this new public space, the networked space between the digital space and the urban space, is a space of autonomous communication. (p. 2)

The type of imagery that we are confronted with here is less determined by the aesthetic boundaries of a specific medium than by its intrinsic connectedness to the channels of digital transmission and its potential to connect and adapt to a cross-medial *modus operandi* of constant live transmission, creating a feedback loop between live and mediated action:

The street scenes become politically potent only when and if we have a visual and audible version of the scene communicated in live or proximate time, so that the media does not merely report the scene, but is part of the scene and the action: indeed, the media is the scene or the space in its extended and replicable visual and audible dimensions. (Butler, 2015, p. 91)

Research has been done in recent years to create new adequate terms and methodologies for such imagery emerging from and constituting these "spaces of autonomous communication," such as Peter Snowdon's (2014) work on vernacular video in relation to videos from uprisings in Libya (pp. 401–429), or Lina Khatib's (2013) attempts to outline an alternative semiotics around the idea of the "floating image" (p. 11) as an agent for political change. Similarly, W. J. T. Mitchell coined the term of the "metapicture," an affectively contagious

signifying entity that has the potential to explode signification, to open up the realm of nonsense, madness, randomness, anarchy, and even "nature" itself in the midst of the cultural labyrinth of second nature that human beings create around themselves. (Grønstad & Vågnes, 2006, para. 4)

This would call for a new understanding of a critical theory of images "that emphasizes their role as 'living' historical agents at turning points in human affairs and human understanding" (Grønstad & Vågnes, 2006, para. 24). According to Snowdon (2014), the imagery of amateur video from the Libyan uprising is less understood as singular visual entities than as elements of a dynamic process of circulating affective energies:

These videos do not simply sit there on YouTube . . . waiting for us to stumble on them: they are always already in circulation, posted and reposted via Twitter and Facebook, as well as being passed on through more private communications channels, such as email. They are not static objects waiting to be discovered and analyzed: they are part and parcel of a much larger dynamic process, in which what matters most is not any specific video itself, so much as the affective energy that they gather and transmit as they travel through the complex online-offline ecosystems these events have carved out across the region, and beyond. These videos are, then, not primarily videos, so much as one vector among many for the ongoing work of mutual self-mobilization that makes revolutionary social change possible, or at least, conceivable. (p. 402)

Little research has been done so far on what this new type of imagery means for archival practice and media archaeology. More than nine years after the political upheaval began in Egypt, this question is more than pertinent, both for understanding the political and historical legacy of the recent past and for building a fertile framework for critical analysis of these fluid, "promiscuous," and fragile images with all their challenges and potencies. We are used to navigating through our present via GPS and mobile devices, always aware of our real-time coordinates in actual and virtual worlds. Yet how can we employ and understand these technologies and experiences critically? How can we navigate our multilayered past and bring it into our immediate present? In an age of constant connectivity, traditional forms of historiography fail to reflect our shifting sense of time and space, of a present that is enmeshed in the vast, instantly available repositories of our past-future. Here, The Augmented Archive proposes a way to rethink our understanding of a city, of a site as a potential archive in the age of virtual networks, where notions of chronological time, site specificity, and linearity are displaced by experiences of real time, simultaneity and virtual cloud architecture, where tradition cannot be separated from transmission, where an event unfolds as much in real as in virtual space.

What is then called for is an archival practice that includes these multiple temporalities, incorporate the yet-to-come in the Derridean sense; an archive that is an active, subjective, and confrontational mode of engagement that continuously juxtaposes "nows" and "thens," without ever being fully concluded. Here, new digital technologies like streaming video and location-based technologies must be at the center, not

only of documenting the present but also of imagining new ways of thinking our present and future through the archive, and extending archival practice beyond its traditional understanding of storage, preservation, classification, and access (Røssaak, 2011, p. 11)—a notion that other media archaeology projects like those of the research group Forensic Architecture and their conceptual premise might illuminate:¹

While archives and their associated documentary practices are traditionally oriented towards the past and engage with systems of collecting, classifying, and retrieving historical documents and recordings, forensic futures is an attempt to produce future-oriented archives capable of anticipating incoming events. . . . Rather than engage in a documentary practice that is reactive, albeit activist, which responds to unfolding events on the ground or records the aftermath of such conflicts, forensic futures sets out to document the enabling conditions of violence, and offers an archive that may be called upon to testify in the future. (Schuppli, 2015, para. 1)

Similarly, but in a much simpler sense, The Augmented Archive sets out to open up an archival condition and temporality in which documents of a contested past are directly enmeshed in our immediate present without the distancing effects of seemingly neutral archival storage spaces and collections. What ideally unfolds in this process is a “re”storation, juxtaposing and probing a site in its immediate now, its archival representations and the presences of future witnesses. These three temporal layers come together to make up The Augmented Archive, and even though this seems to be quite a complex operation, the magic of the project or any such direct media archeological approach lies in the impression that it is very simple. It is the magic of someone sending you a video message and us looking at it. But what happens when we compare a real site with a recorded video image of it?

¹ Location-based technologies and data—often used in the projects of Forensic Architecture, and however differently in The Augmented Archive project—are promising tools for offering new ways of retrieving information and enabling innovative forms of image processing and visual experience. In the context of Egypt, all telecommunications and location-based data are subject to potential cyber surveillance, though, which in the past has often led to the ban of websites and arrests of political activists; a problem that all Internet-based projects dealing with political content are facing in the region. For more, see <https://madamasr.com/en/2014/09/29/opinion/u/you-are-being-watched-egypts-mass-internet-surveillance/>

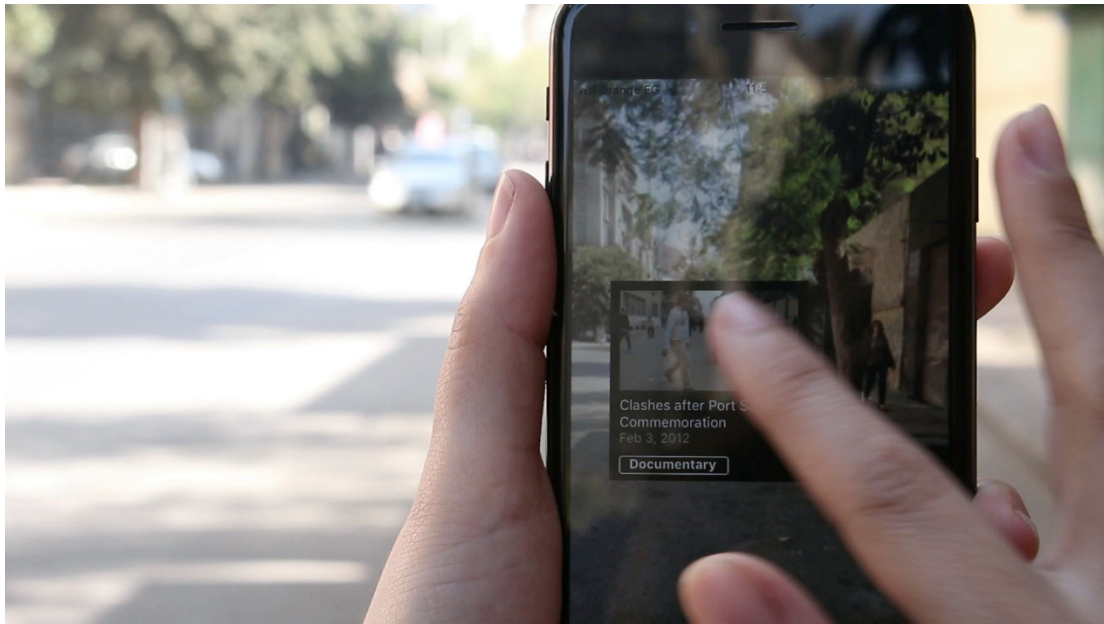


Figure 4. The Augmented Archive app interface in Cairo's Mohammed Mahmoud Street, showing a video of the same place eight years earlier during clashes between protestors and police.

The Augmented Archive tells us that time has changed; the archaeology of images discovers that what has once been there is there no longer (Figure 4). More than a site of melancholy, there is a natural incongruence between the videos and their original sites: First, the video itself is just a video image and not equivalent to past reality, which is coded anew by digital technology. The images that The Augmented Archive brings to our mobile screens are recomposed in the instant we watch them by digital technology, coding the images we see, always anew and in ever-changing, unique configurations and viewing modes. Secondly, things out there have changed, and one layer of time and imagery is superimposed on another. The protagonists have vanished, the uprising has left, time past is irretrievably lost, and life has gone on. Here lies the melancholy of The Augmented Archive, if it has any.

But The Augmented Archive is not an aesthetic exercise about the melancholic nature of the image, but a political, if not revolutionary, operation, reversing the movement of images of past actions. Clearly, this "revolutionary" operation of reversal and bringing images back to their origin site does something to them, but what? What is the effect of The Augmented Archive? There are several possible effects. The images may be emptied out if they are compared with the contemporary site, and this could be truly deceiving: The uprising is past, the revolutionary moment is over, all hope is gone, no revolution anymore, anywhere. But the opposite is also thinkable: The images may regain their original strength, their authenticity, their aura, as Benjamin would say. He said this about the artistic practices of the surrealists, that their artistic practice would recollect revolutionary energy, become a reservoir of revolutionary energy. According to Benjamin, surrealism was the first intellectual movement to discover the "revolutionary energies that appear in the 'out-moded'" (Benjamin, 1929/1999, p. 210). So, Benjamin's nostalgia also possesses a revolutionary explosive force.

Does The Augmented Archive do that, or is the idea just the philosopher's wish, yearning for the long-lost revolutionary moment? Is The Augmented Archive ultimately deceptive or nostalgic? We believe it is neither. Seeing it as nostalgic misses the fact that archives are simply recordings, and in a sense neutral. Thus, The Augmented Archive displays recordings of past uprisings and brings them back to their origin—but it also goes back to the origin of the archive itself, which lies not in its centralized quality, but rather in its scatteredness and dissemination. It was Derrida, again, who pointed out that archives in ancient Greece were originally scattered and disseminated—like The Augmented Archive's mobile archives in modern Cairo.

The Augmented Archive discovers and collects new energies in quite recent images (which Benjamin called *Das Jüngstvergangne*, Benjamin, 1982, p.1218). This approach really discovers something, which is the true archaeological aspect of the project: It digs for past images of a revolution not for mere historical reasons but to encounter their truly revolutionary energy. This revolutionary past covers up and superimposes itself onto the flat present, adding one (or two) new temporal layers. This the sense of any monument: To commemorate at a specific site what once happened there.

Thus, The Augmented Archive constitutes not only an archive but a monument in time, a memorial, or many memorials of moving images—in the primary, archaic sense that the first monument was not a sculpture but someone commemorating the past: This is the true sense of a monument that The Augmented Archive offers to the memory of the revolution. It is like a person standing at a specific site testifying to what once happened there—which is in itself a fascinating and poetic action. It works like a memory aid—including for those who did not take part in the revolution. And this is why this archive or monument is augmented: It augments human memory to bring past scenes back. In other words, this mobile memorial app relinks images of situations past to the sites where they once happened. It works like the ancient Greek practice of "mnemotechnique," which retrieved memories by dispersing and disseminating them in space. Certain sites made some memories come back—just like in one of the most famous situations in literature, when Marcel Proust describes not only when he ate the madeleine, but where he hit the old stone in the ground that made his memories come back. The Augmented Archive likewise reterritorializes memory, offering the site to the memory of the revolution so that the revolution can regain its territorial agency.

Thus, The Augmented Archive is all about the site—the site of a revolution that becomes the site where the project's images revolve. This site is also the one that Benjamin calls *Ort und Stelle* in his short piece *Excavation and Memory* (Benjamin, 1991, p. 400). And this is what The Augmented Archive does—it excavates and commemorates, it is a visual archaeology, an "archaeology of images," as phenomenologist Gaston Bachelard (1958/1994, p. xx) put it. Like a live memory, it excavates and retrieves the images that passed through a certain site—it is an archaeology of moving images; of those produced and archived, and those yet to come, yet to be recorded, experienced, and witnessed. Like any archaeological operation, The Augmented Archive unearths something old that has been stored and survived and examines it in relation to its site. But unlike archaeology, The Augmented Archive finds these images not in the earth, but on the Internet, and here the Internet archive of Mosireen, so this is also an archaeology of data, of image retrieval, an archaeology of old image data taken back to its original site. This mobile memorial app transforms the once-stable archive into a moving archive—into an "Archive in Motion" (Røssaak, 2011). It does this in two ways: It is a monument consisting of moving images, and it is itself set into motion.

What we can thus encounter through this media archaeological lens or engagement is a mediated experience that comes close to the hybrid media spaces from which this archival imagery, these “metapictures” or “floating images” emerged in the first place. This is a shift from the notion of the archive as a neutral entity of preservation and classification to a self-reflexive activity of immersion and transmission—from the archive as a place of storage to a site-specific archeology of restoration and resurrection. Brought back to their original site, these archival images are waiting to be called on to testify in the future—to be experienced anew, by new eyes, in different moments, giving births to new image constellations and interpretations. The political implications of such an archival practice lie not only in the recordings of past political actions but in reestablishing the original strength of images, in reviving and maintaining their initial affective energies, and in bringing back their authenticity or aura, at a time when all images on the Internet lose their aura and their strength. Like Georges Didi-Huberman’s 2016 Paris exhibition “Uprisings!/Soulèvements!” at Jeu de Paume, The Augmented Archive is not just an archaeology of images, but an archaeology of the political image as such.

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