

The work in question is archival since it not only draws on informal archives but produces them as well, and does so in a way that underscores the nature of all archival materials as found yet constructed, factual yet fictive, public yet private. (Hal Foster, *An Archival Impulse*)

In recognising the affinity of her practise with that of a collector Gemma Anderson seeks out her imagery from both her personal surroundings and formal archives with an immediate need to record. She investigates public collections of Natural History that are important as foundations of our factual knowledge and incorporates them into her private biography. With no exception, she spent her recent residencies in Canada, Japan and France looking for archived objects, drawing them from direct observation and re-archiving the imagery to create a personal travelogue.

While staying faithful to her objects during her direct observations, her organising of them intimates a sense of the absurd, that which ultimately threatens the logic of the archival system of gathering and storing. She shows arts potential to open up a world beyond a manifest order of knowledge, not only a mnemonic device but also as a tool to record mnemonic exercises that constitute a personal archive.

Anderson approaches her role as an artist with much in common with Foucault's 'archaeologist of knowledge' who aims to recover and reconstruct the archive. For Foucault the archive discerns an underlying structure that governs the thought systems and values of any given society. Through her process of etching the Natural History into its own people and landscapes, Anderson aims to reveal the nature of all archival material, in contemporary art and beyond; "found but constructed, factual yet fictive" and yet intrinsic to our collective memory.

