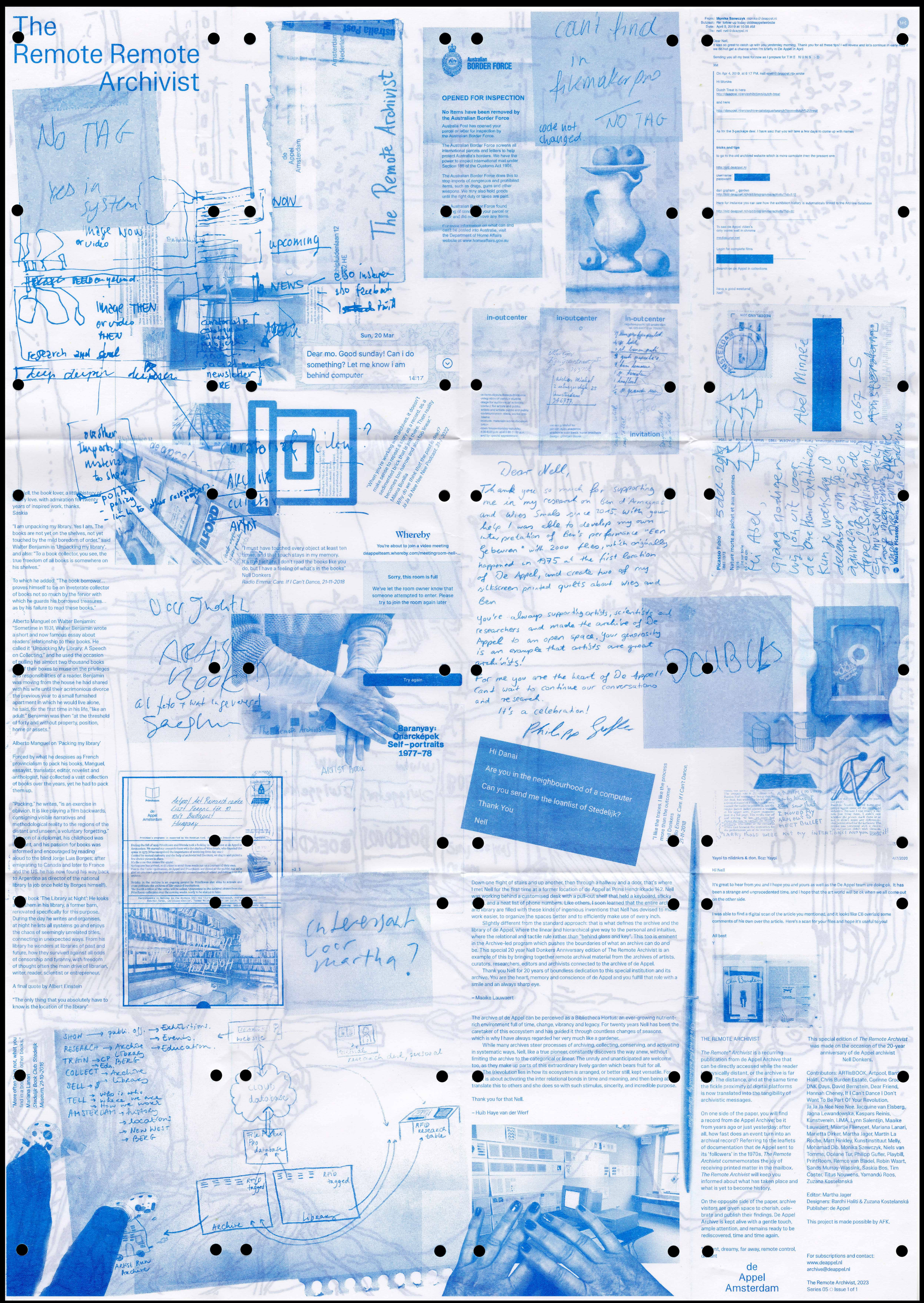
The Remote Remote Archivist



Nell, the book lover, a little history of my love, with admiration for twenty years of inspired work, thanks,
Saskia

"I am unpacking my library. Yes I am. The books are not yet on the shelves, not yet touched by the mild boredom of order." said Walter Benjamin in 'Unpacking my library', and also: "To a book collector, you see, the true freedom of all books is somewhere on his shelves."

To which he added: "The book borrower... proves himself to be an inveterate collector of books not so much by the fervor with which he guards his borrowed treasures... as by his failure to read these books."

Alberto Manguel on Walter Benjamin: "Sometime in 1931, Walter Benjamin wrote a short and now famous essay about readers' relationship to their books. He called it 'Unpacking My Library: A Speech on Collecting," and he used the occasion of pulling his almost two thousand books out of their boxes to muse on the privileges and responsibilities of a reader. Benjamin was moving from the house he had shared with his wife until their acrimonious divorce the previous year to a small furnished apartment in which he would live alone, he said, for the first time in his life, "like an adult." Benjamin was then "at the threshold of forty and without property, position, home or assets."

Alberto Manguel on 'Packing my library'

Forced by what he despises as French provincialism to pack his books, Manguel, essayist, translator, editor, novelist and anthologist, had collected a vast collection of books over the years, yet he had to pack them up.

"Packing," he writes, "is an exercise in oblivion. It is like playing a film backwards, consigning visible narratives and methodological reality to the regions of the distant and unseen, a voluntary forgetting." The son of a diplomat, his childhood was frequent, and his passion for books was informed and encouraged by reading aloud to the blind Jorge Luis Borges; after emigrating to Canada and later to France and the US, he has now found his way back to Argentina as director of the national library (a job once held by Borges himself).

On his book 'The Library at Night': He looks at them in his library, a former barn, renovated specifically for this purpose. During the day he writes and organises, at night he lets all systems go and enjoys the chaos of seemingly unrelated titles, connecting in unexpected ways. From his library he wonders at libraries of past and future, how they survived against all odds of censorship and tyranny, with freedom of thought often the main drive of librarian, writer, reader, scientist or entrepreneur.

A final quote by Albert Einstein

"The only thing that you absolutely have to know is the location of the library"

"More often than not, what you find in a book is other books."
Mariana Lanari
Stedelijk Book Club, Stedelijk Museum, 21-10-2016

"I must have touched every object at least ten times, and that touch stays in my memory. It's the tactility. I don't read the books like you do, but I have a feeling of what's in the books"
Nell Donkers
Radio Emma: Care. If I Can't Dance, 21-11-2018

"When you're working with archives, it doesn't make sense to repeat a story as a record, as a sedimented brick that is just there. Then reality becomes too narrow and also too linear."
Milena Bonilla
Why do we think that the past is dead?
Ja Ja Ja Nee Nee Nee Podcast, 31-7-2022

Whereby
You're about to join a video meeting
deappelteam.whereby.com/meetingroom-nell-...

Sorry, this room is full

We've let the room owner know that someone attempted to enter. Please try to join the room again later

Try again

Baranyay:
Önarcképek
Self-portraits
1977–78

Hi Danai

Are you in the neighbourhood of a computer

Can you send me the loanlist of Stedelijk?

Thank You

Nell

"I like the traces. I like the process more than the outcome"
Nell Donkers
Radio Emma: Care. If I Can't Dance, 21-11-2018

Down one flight of stairs and up another, then through a hallway and a door, that's where I met Nell for the first time at a former location of de Appel at Prins Hendrikkade 142. Nell was working behind a customised desk with a pull-out shelf that held a keyboard, sticky [illegible] and a neat list of phone numbers. Like others, I soon learned that the entire archive and library are filled with these kinds of ingenious inventions that Nell has devised to make work easier, to organize the spaces better and to efficiently make use of every inch.

Slightly different from the standard approach: that is what defines the archive and the library of de Appel, where the linear and hierarchical give way to the personal and intuitive, where the relational and tactile rule rather than "behind glass and key". This too is eminent in the Archive-led program which pushes the boundaries of what an archive can do and be. This special 20 year Nell Donkers Anniversary edition of The Remote Archivist is an example of this by bringing together remote archival material from the archives of artists, curators, researchers, editors and archivists connected to the archive of de Appel.

Thank you Nell for 20 years of boundless dedication to this special institution and its archive. You are the heart, memory and conscience of de Appel and you fulfill that role with a smile and an always sharp eye.

– Maaike Lauwaert

The archive of de Appel can be perceived as a Bibliotheca Hortus: an ever-growing nutrient-rich environment full of time, change, vibrancy and legacy. For twenty years Nell has been the caretaker of this ecosystem and has guided it through countless changes of seasons, which is why I have always regarded her very much like a gardener.

While many archives steer processes of archiving, collecting, conserving, and activating in systematic ways, Nell, like a true pioneer, constantly discovers the way anew, without limiting the archive to the categorical or linear. The unruly and unanticipated are welcome too, as they make up parts of this extraordinary lively garden which bears fruit for all.

The (r)evolution lies in how its ecosystem is arranged, or better still, kept versatile. For [illegible] is about activating the inter relational bonds in time and meaning, and then being able to translate this to others and she does so with such stimulus, sincerity, and incredible purpose.

Thank you for that Nell.

– Huib Haye van der Werf

Yayoi to nildnkrs & dn. Bcc: Yayoi 4/7/2020

Hi Nell

It's great to hear from you and I hope you and yours as well as the De Appel team are doing ok. It has been a strange and unprecedented time, and I hope that the art world will be ok when we all come out on the other side.

I was able to find a digital scan of the article you mentioned, and it looks like CB overlaid some comments of his own over the article. Here's a scan for your files and hope it's useful to you!

All best
Y

THE REMOTE ARCHIVIST

The Remote Archivist* is a recurring publication from de Appel Archive that can be directly accessed while the reader is physically distant, or the archive is far away. The distance, and at the same time the fickle proximity of digital platforms is now translated into the tangibility of archivistic messages.

On one side of the paper, you will find a record from de Appel Archive; be it from years ago or just yesterday; after all, how fast does an event turn into an archival record? Referring to the leaflets of documentation that de Appel sent to its 'followers' in the 1970s, *The Remote Archivist* commemorates the joy of receiving printed matter in the mailbox. *The Remote Archivist* will keep you informed about what has taken place and what is yet to become history.

On the opposite side of the paper, archive visitors are given space to cherish, celebrate and publish their findings. De Appel Archive is kept alive with a gentle touch, ample attention, and remains ready to be rediscovered, time and time again.

*Present, dreamy, far away, remote control, distant

de
Appel
Amsterdam

This special edition of *The Remote Archivist* was made on the occasion of the 20-year anniversary of de Appel archivist Nell Donkers.

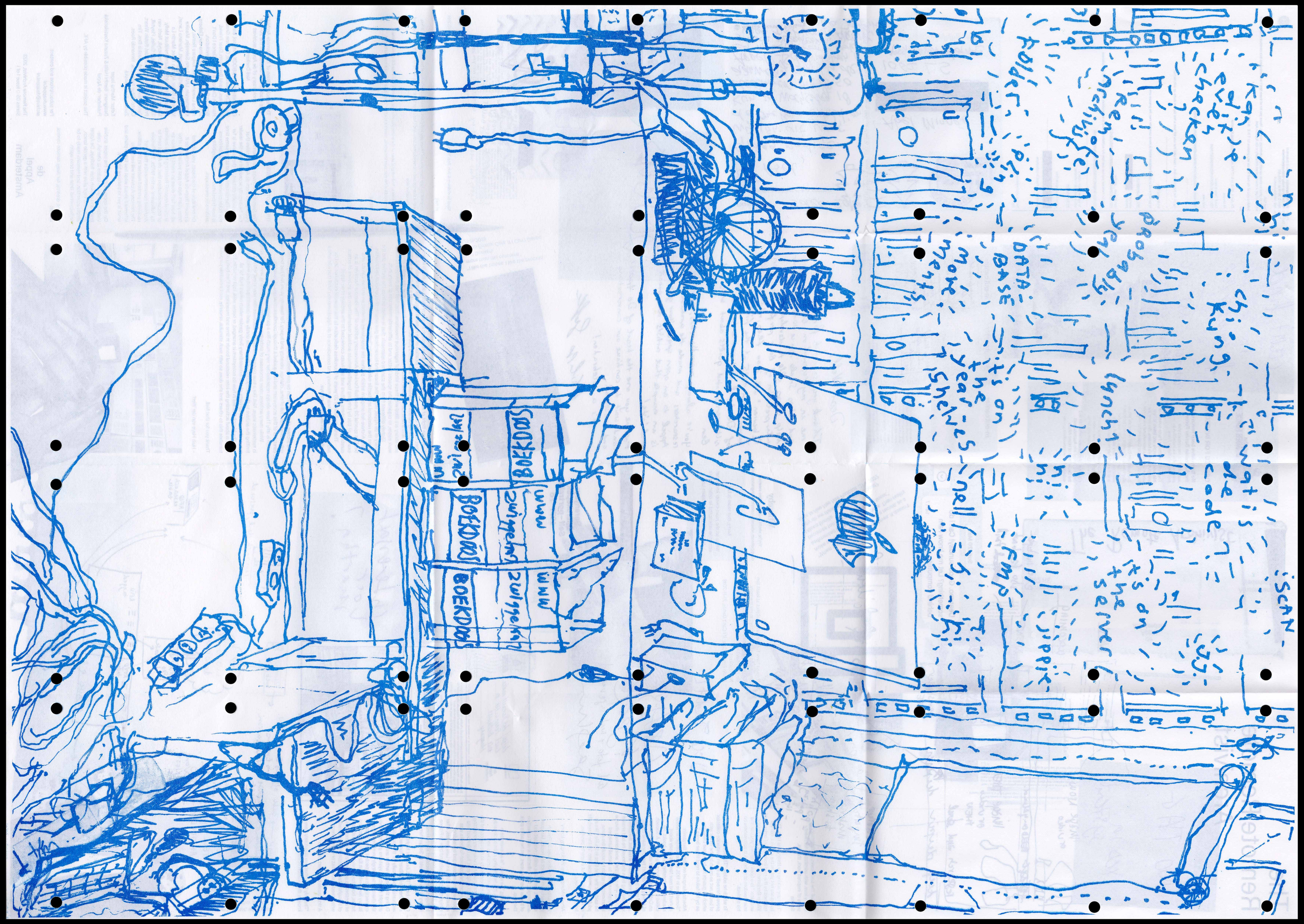
Contributors: ARTisBOOK, Artpool, Bardhi Haliti, Chris Burden Estate, Corinne Gruber, DNK Days, David Bernstein, Dear Friend, Hannah Cheney, If I Can't Dance I Don't Want To Be Part Of Your Revolution, Ja Ja Ja Nee Nee Nee, Jacquine van Elsberg, Jagna Lewandowska, Kaspars Reinis, Künstverein, LIMA, Lynn Salentijn, Maaike Lauwaert, Maartje Fliervoet, Mariana Lanari, Marietta Dirker, Martha Jager, Martin La Roche, Matt Hinkley, Kunstinstituut Melly, Mohamad Dib, Monika Szewczyk, Niels van Tomme, Océane Tur, Philipp Gufler, Playbill, PrintRoom, Remco van Bladel, Robin Waart, Sands Murray-Wassink, Saskia Bos, Tim Coster, Titus Nouwens, Yamandú Roos, Zuzana Kostelanská

Editor: Martha Jager
Designers: Bardhi Haliti & Zuzana Kostelanská
Publisher: de Appel

This project is made possible by AFK.

For subscriptions and contact:
www.deappel.nl
archive@deappel.nl

The Remote Archivist, 2023
Series 05 ○ Issue 1 of 1


BOEKDAG
BOEKDAG
BOEKDAG
DATA-BASE
SCAN-
lunchtijd