

A dynamic archive focuses on the process, rather than the institution; on memorizing, instead of memory; on the verb and not the substantive. Archiving is therefore a technique of reproduction and repetition. It is without a fixed product; there is no container, **no linear logic**. Its greatest concern is for that which is excluded, not included in its iterations.

If there were an analogy for *The Dynamic Archive*, it would not be a jar of preserves but **a recipe**—such as Alice B. Toklas’s recipe for ‘hashish fudge’, best on rainy days, for space- and mind-expanding operations (what else could be the function of an archive):

“Take 1 teaspoon black peppercorns, 1 whole nutmeg, 4 average sticks of cinnamon, 1 teaspoon coriander. These should all be pulverised in a mortar. About a handful each of stoned dates, dried figs, shelled almonds and peanuts: chop these and mix them together. A bunch of canibus [sic] sativa can be pulverised. This along with the spices should be dusted over the mixed fruit and nuts, kneaded together. About a cup of sugar dissolved in a big pat of butter. Rolled into a cake and cut into pieces or made into balls about the size of a walnut, it should be eaten with care. Two pieces are quite sufficient.”

The recipe is archived in a cookbook (obviously not in its first American edition) that Alice wrote in 1954. It also included World War II events and their effects on the modern metropolitan space. She was born in San Francisco but soon moved to Paris, where she met Gertrude Stein. Gertrude wrote and published her first archival book, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* in 1933, recording their life together. Alice, the narrator of the work, did not think it would be a success, but it actually became Gertrude's best-selling book.

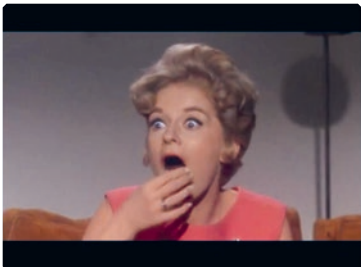
The autobiography, the most personal and probably most fictional form of an archive, would

not be the only project that memorialised Alice's and Gertrude's partnership; they would reappear in the mystery novel *Murder Is Murder Is Murder* (1985) by Samuel Morris Steward, a close friend, poet and professor, who left the university to become a tattoo artist and pornographer. Set at their château in the French countryside, Alice and Gertrude are drawn into the search for the father of their gardener, Petit Pierre.

Alice's hashish fudge would eventually be reproduced in the Peter Sellers movie *I Love You, Alice B. Toklas*. In 1968

The New York Times harshly criticized the film for its embarrassingly intimate bed scenes (not involving Alice). While Alice is even said to be memorialised in the *The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles* (1992), she still died in poverty at the age of 89, and is buried in Père Lachaise Cemetery, with her name engraved on the back of Gertrude's headstone. Today, the grave—in the form of a 1992 photograph by Felix Gonzalez-Torres, depicting its small, red, pink and violet flowers—has become part of a Miami museum archive.





If *The Dynamic Archive* is not to remain static, like a jar of preserves, it will include mind-expanding operations in the form of Alice's voice relating her recipe for space cakes. James Merrill eventually wrote of her, '[...] one knew about the tiny stature, the sandals, the moustache, the eyes', but one had not anticipated 'the enchantment of her speaking voice—like a viola at dusk'.

Eventually, *The Dynamic Archive* will also mention Alice B. Toklas's (and Stein's) ties to the Vichy regime during the Second World War. Although a lesbian Jew, Alice nevertheless managed to stay safe in France during the

occupation. She would later sell some of her precious Picassos to finance the escape of her old friend Bernard Faÿ, an anti-Semitic Vichy collaborator and Gestapo agent.

A u d i o

A. Serbest and M. Mahall, sound, 6 min., 2020. Audio collage: Alice B. Toklas reading her hashish fudge recipe from her 1954 cookbook (recorded 1963), and film sequences of eating hash brownies excerpted from *I Love You, Alice B. Toklas* (1968), Hy Averback, dir.

I m a g e

Film sequences of eating hash
brownies excerpted from
I Love You, Alice B. Toklas (1968),
Hy Averback, dir.

by Asli Serbest, Mona Mahall

Here you can find the audio collage:

