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# **“The Background for Our Future”: Locating The Black Archives in the Netherlands in Black Atlantic Traditions of Archival Activism**

Laura Visser-Maessen

## **ABSTRACT**

This case study of The Black Archives (TBA), located in Amsterdam, examines the emergence, trans-Atlantic networks, and archivist and activist practices of TBA by locating them in both the Dutch racial context and black trans-Atlantic traditions of using archives as tools of anti-racism activism. While TBA exemplifies a broader trend towards community-led archival activism that Andrew Flinn and others have rooted in post-World War II identity-based politics, here it is placed in a longer tradition of especially African American archival activism by black intellectuals, historically black universities and colleges, and civil rights organizations during and after the Jim Crow era—with some of whom TBA’s founders and the activists whose collections they hold are directly connected. This enhances understanding of the nuts and bolts of archival activism and cultural transfer, and illuminates black European identity formation and usages of the African Diaspora and the United States as reference cultures and organizing tools for twenty-first century black European activists.

**Keywords:** The Black Archives; Dutch racism; archival activism; Black Europe; Black Diaspora

## Introduction

“Please visit this important place!” These pressing words by former Black Panther Angela Davis after she visited The Black Archives (TBA) in Amsterdam in 2018 are placed prominently on its website. A video of the visit is attached, along with Davis’s statement that TBA’s work “made her feel more at home in Amsterdam than she sometimes feels in the US.”<sup>1</sup> Neither that Davis felt this way nor that TBA’s founders tout her endorsement as a badge of legitimacy is surprising; it speaks directly to TBA’s identity as the twenty-first-century heir to a long black activist tradition that crossed national borders. Founded by Dutch black anti-racism activists in 2015 and largely sustained through crowd-funding and volunteer labor, TBA houses the largest black-centered collection in the Netherlands, with over 8,000 books and artifacts on Dutch black history. The papers of Otto and Hermina Huiswoud, black Surinamese-Dutch activists connected to influential early twentieth-century black American, Caribbean, and Dutch activists, represent its key collection and ideological base. TBA is located in the building of the Association Our Suriname (VOS, Vereniging Ons Suriname), which Huiswoud turned into a trans-Atlantic hub of anti-colonial activism in the 1950s. Its founders see TBA as an “alternative archive” intended to “challenge dominant narratives which tend to downplay or deny histories of slavery[,] colonialism and its legacies”<sup>2</sup> in Dutch educational and heritage institutions. Despite its main function as a knowledge institute, TBA’s creative archival, exhibition, and social media methods, community activities, and function as a safe space where locals, scholars, and activists can exchange ideas have thrust it into the vanguard of twenty-first-century Dutch black anti-racism activism.

This case study examines TBA’s emergence, trans-Atlantic networks, as well as archivist and activist practices (sections 4–5) by locating them in the Dutch racial context and black trans-Atlantic traditions of using archives as tools for activism (sections 2–3). While TBA exemplifies a broader trend towards independent community-led archival activism that Andrew Flinn and others have rooted in post-World War II identity-based politics, here it is placed in a longer tradition of mostly African American archival activism by black intellectuals, historically black educational institutions, and civil rights organizations—with some of whom TBA’s founders and the activists in its collections are directly connected. This approach enhances the understanding of the nuts and bolts of archival activism and cultural transfer. This in turn illuminates black European<sup>3</sup> identity formation and the usages of the Black Diaspora

and the United States as organizing tools for twenty-first-century black European activists. TBA's archival activism provides a window into the current Dutch racial status quo and the possibilities of social change that left-leaning black activists see. By reaffirming the importance of resource mobilization, grassroots leadership, and the internationalism of early twentieth-century black (scholar-)activists for the global black freedom struggle then and now, it captures the intersections of contemporary debates in American Studies and Black European Studies on the place of the transnational and of (dis)continuities in black activism across time and space. Centering on the Netherlands extends these debates beyond the general focus on the United States and larger European nations like the United Kingdom and Germany.

## II. Black Archival Activism in a Trans-Atlantic Perspective

As a grassroots institute bent on creating a 'useful past' for social change, TBA neatly fits what Flinn terms independent community-led archives, defined broadly<sup>4</sup> as "the grassroots activities of documenting, recording and exploring community heritage in which community participation, control and ownership of the project is essential." In this definition, community refers to any "group who define *themselves* on the basis of locality, culture, faith, background, or other shared identity or interest."<sup>5</sup> Although some of these archives are more political than others, all can be viewed as "sites of resistance." Unlike local, geographically-based historical societies, for instance, community-based archives are "explicitly conceived as an active intervention in response to under-representation and misrepresentation within the mainstream archive and heritage world, and as an educational resource to challenge, and sustain challenges, to those misrepresentations."<sup>6</sup>

While community-based archives have existed since modern times, their number has grown exponentially after World War II, particularly in the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, South Africa, and Australia, and especially among groups marginalized by their race, class, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, language, or political persuasion—or a combination, like Black Queer identity archives<sup>7</sup>. This boom is explained by complex, interrelated developments, like the civil rights era's push for democratization and the revaluation of bottom-up history writing. The maturation of ethnic, gender, and post-colonial studies, new technologies, and minorities' continued struggles against marginalization accelerated the community-led archives boom, with successful examples serving as models for twenty-first-century ones. Archival activists of this new

generation, like TBA's founders, are often aware of recent debates in post-colonial, memory, and archival studies inspired by Jacques Derrida, Anne Stoler, and others. These debates have centered on the need for creating a 'refigured archive' that practices participatory and/or social justice approaches, avoids nation-specific foci, and recognizes archives as subjective knowledge repositories over which power can be exerted by including, excluding, distorting, and appropriating materials, events, and persons.<sup>8</sup>

Community-led archives like TBA often utilize a three-pronged approach of education, contesting history production, and political campaigns that tie past struggles to contemporary ones. In this, their relationship with mainstream institutions is central, as community-based archives exist in opposition to *and* derive part of their legitimacy from them.<sup>9</sup> Their subsequent fight for archival autonomy—defined as “the ability for individuals and communities to participate in societal memory, with their own voice, and to become participatory agents in record-keeping and archiving for identity, memory and accountability purposes”—functions as an *integral* part of such communities' overall liberation struggle from institutionalized local and global power structures.<sup>10</sup> Achieving archival autonomy accordingly hinges on the ability to establish credibility with the own community as well as mainstream society. Having “an ‘alternative archive’” is not enough, TBA's founders agree. “It is the engagement with the archive through public programmes and the dynamic interplay between activists, artists, educators and institutions that sparks change.”<sup>11</sup> Achieving archival credibility—that is, “the right to make statements about the past, about history, about change, about fate, and, by extension...about the future”<sup>12</sup>—then depends on the execution of their archival activism. Originally a term coined by Howard Zinn to implore archivists to actively document the voiceless, archival activism now refers to all activities in which professional or self-ascribed archivists “seek to campaign on issues such as access rights or participatory rights within records' control systems or act to deploy their archival collections to support activist groups and social justice aims.”<sup>13</sup>

TBA is thus similar to other black community-led archives such as London's Black Cultural Archives (BCA) and the George Padmore Institute that were founded to challenge black invisibility in 1970s-80s British education.<sup>14</sup> But overemphasizing such archives as post-World War II phenomena obscures the longevity of black archival activism and the significance of such archives' need for identification with this tradition. Because next to providing inspiration, legitimacy, and connections to the heritage the Diaspora deprived its descendants of, it is *exactly*



*because of its characteristic foci on the transnational and identity formation as integral for contemporary protest that make this tradition appealing for today's black archival activists.*

While many examples of this tradition can be located across time and space, TBA's archival activism explicitly harkens back to the trans-Atlantic movement of early twentieth-century black intellectuals and activists like Arturo Schomburg, W.E.B. DuBois, C.L.R. James, Franz Fanon, George Padmore, Aimé Césaire, and Anton de Kom. For various ideological reasons, these figures used or advocated archival activism as essential for realizing a collective, diasporic identity that could serve as "a firm cultural basis for a kind of 'peoplehood.'"<sup>15</sup> This metaphysical nation-building project could then be channeled in service of decolonial thought, a mode of resistance to the specific intertwined forces of capitalism, imperialism, modernity, and white supremacy that undergirded late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Western 'civilization.' As Robin Kelley observed, this transnational outlook fundamentally shaped Black Studies from the start, preceding the 'transnational turn' in American Studies by almost 100 years.<sup>16</sup>

In "The Negro Digs Up His Past" (1925), Arturo Schomburg (1874–1938) explained his ideas of archival activism, which were rooted in a mixture of nineteenth and twentieth century African American book collecting traditions and Puerto Rican and Cuban nationalist ones, as a 'theory of recovery' for the articulation of a "future imaginary—a connected web of people of African descent who might draw on each other in their minds or through their actions in their pursuit of social change." In "Racial Integrity" (1913), he already pleaded for academia to facilitate such restoration, while validating black knowledge production created outside: "We need in the coming dawn the man who will give us the background for our future; it matters not whether he comes from the cloisters of the university or from the rank and file of the fields."<sup>17</sup> Schomburg argued for a type of archival activism that allowed "for the comparison of Afrodiasporic communities across difference without discounting those differences. Such unity across difference [he suggested would] give people of African descent the inspiration and intellectual foundation to liberate themselves from the continuing forces of white supremacy."<sup>18</sup> Historians like DuBois, Padmore, and James echoed such views. They were also put into practice by black organizations, societies, and historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) like Howard University. Such activities fit a larger pattern in especially African American history in which black people during and after slavery used (parallel) educational

institutions, libraries, archives, and (global) black history as an activist mode. Countless black activists were amateur book collectors or historians, and civil rights organizations like the NAACP (1909–today) and SNCC (1960–1972), whose two clasped-hands symbol TBA initially adopted as its logo, meticulously documented and interpreted their activities for outsiders as well.<sup>19</sup>

Although archival activism was central to the (global) black freedom struggle, the ways in which it materialized depended on local circumstances. Similarly, TBA's brand of archival activism flowed organically from its members' Dutch-Afro-Surinamese roots mixed with local racial realities. An overview of this Dutch racial context and understandings of the Black Diaspora in Europe is therefore needed first to be able to analyze TBA members' identity formation (section 4) and archival activism in practice (section 5).

### **III. Race and Racism in the Netherlands and the Black Diaspora in Europe**

Flinn notes that community history interest rises when communities undergo rapid change and see their identity threatened or ignored.<sup>20</sup> For today's Afro-Dutch community, this sense resulted from the nation's post-World War II transformation to a multicultural society, combined with its continued insistence on what Gloria Wekker termed Dutch "white innocence," referring to the "dominant way in which the Dutch think of themselves, as being a small, but just, ethical nation; color-blind, thus free of racism."<sup>21</sup> In fact, despite well-documented structural racism in Dutch employment, housing, education, and policing, silence and denial define the Dutch white majoritarian approach to race. As Joy Smith captured it: "The willful ignorance surrounding race issues, and its importance, becomes the defense against discussing it. If it is not acknowledged, then it cannot exist."<sup>22</sup>

Like many of its European counterparts, the Netherlands exhibits what David Theo Goldberg has termed Racial Europeanization, referring to the disconnect in public perception between European nations' colonial history and the present-day presence and unequal position of racial minorities in their midst<sup>23</sup>. This discrepancy emerged from the overseas contours of European colonization, Europeans' tendency to discuss racism through prisms of culture, class, and ethnicity, and integration in terms of assimilation. The emergence of democratic socialism, pre-occupations with the Holocaust, and insistence on narrow definitions of racism as segregation or white supremacist violence further inhibited

acknowledgments of structural racism. In the Netherlands, these phenomena merged with nation-specific circumstances, such as notions of victimization during World War II and Indonesian independence that tied in with long-held misconstrued concepts of Dutch national identity as tolerant and humane. Such ideas date back to its 'golden' seventeenth-century seafaring days: although the Dutch transported 600,000 Africans during the trans-Atlantic slave trade, set up slave-based colonies in what are now the Dutch Antilles and Suriname and oppressive non-slave ones in southern Africa and Indonesia, they viewed these activities through the prism of trade. They believed this separated them from the unchecked brutality of other imperialist powers—an idea echoed in Dutch historiography.<sup>24</sup> Silence on race then became a coping mechanism after World War II.<sup>25</sup>

Until then, the black presence in the Netherlands was small. This was reflected in VOS, founded in 1919 to help Surinamese people adjust to Dutch life. In the 1950s, a new generation, radicalized by postwar decolonization, took over its conservative, pro-Dutch leadership. Among them was Surinamese-born Otto Huiswoud (1893–1961) who had migrated to New York in 1910 and co-founded the American Communist Party (CPUSA). He worked with Surinamese nationalist De Kom, A. Philip Randolph, and George Padmore, among others, and befriended many in Schomburg's circle like Langston Hughes and Claude McKay. He also debated Marcus Garvey in 1927. After the war, Otto and his wife Hermina (1905–1998), a migrant from British Guyana he had met in Harlem, settled in Amsterdam. With Otto's chairmanship in 1954, VOS morphed into a left-wing organization advocating Surinamese independence. Huiswoud invited members from his multicultural trans-Atlantic network, like W.E.B. DuBois and C.L.R. James, to lecture at VOS. After internal clashes over Surinamese domestic politics following the nation's independence in 1975, VOS returned to its old function as a cultural organization.<sup>26</sup>

By then, Surinamese mass migration to the Netherlands had commenced; by 1980 some 80,000 migrants had arrived. They were joined by: descendants of African soldiers the Dutch had deployed to the Dutch East Indies and other, mostly mix-raced, Dutch Indonesians who migrated after Indonesia secured its independence in 1946; political and economic refugees from African countries like Ruanda; and ten thousand foreign so-called 'guest workers,' many from Turkey and Morocco, whom the Dutch had invited to facilitate the country's economic expansion in the 1970s. Although the Dutch turned their welcoming attitude into

a hallmark of their national identity, they lacked long-term visions for accommodating these newcomers. During the 1980s-1990s they played catch-up to help them 'integrate,' but created different programs for each ethnic group. This followed the longtime Dutch societal organizational structure of pillarization (*verzuiling*) that gave religious denominations and political groups their own institutions, but in practice this approach resulted in tolerating such minorities and ignoring them otherwise. Sometimes they were literally invisible: city governments for instance allowed only one Surinamese family per apartment building. By squatting abandoned housing projects in the Bijlmer area, only the Surinamese community in Amsterdam was able to retain its strength. This activism, part of a larger anti-discrimination movement in the 1970s-80s, however, coincided with an increased resentment against alleged 'ungrateful' newcomers 'pampered' by the 'goodhearted' Dutch welfare state. After 9/11, backlash against Dutch Muslims reinforced black invisibility, as it expedited rightwing populism and framed racism as 'new' to Dutch society and confined to Islamophobia<sup>27,28</sup>

Following the growing belief that colorblindness embodied racial progress better than 'pillarization,' Afro-Dutch invisibility became institutionalized. Academic and governmental support for ethnic organizations and institutes invested in race and Dutch colonial history, like the Center for Race and Ethnic Studies (CRES, 1984-1991) and the Dutch Institute for the Study of Dutch Slavery and its Legacy (NiNsee, 2003-2012), were withdrawn. Dutch schoolbooks already emphasized the East India enterprises of the Dutch and slavery in the United States over its own enslavement of Africans. While critical race discourse became part of Dutch research and teaching output in the late 1990s, it remains scarce. Small black student bodies, resulting from a myriad of causes including structural racism, perpetuate a climate that benefits whites in Dutch academic hiring practices, research funded, and knowledge production paradigms valued. This spurred black students' and scholars' alienation and sometimes departure, like Gloria Wekker's and Philomena Essed's refuge to American universities.<sup>29</sup> The Dutch media's massive characterization of TBA as 'novel' and the remarkably belated move towards decolonizing practices in Dutch heritage institutions when compared to the United States and the United Kingdom underscores the extent of black invisibility in Dutch collective memory.<sup>30</sup>

Unsurprisingly, Guno Jones observed it were "students and scholar-activists in wider society who started a critical re-reading of this part of Dutch heritage and whom, by doing so, risked serious repercussions for

their careers.<sup>31</sup> Revived Afro-Dutch activism, centered on black visibility and representation, then resulted in a National Slavery Monument<sup>32</sup> in 2002, the foundation of NiNsee in 2003, and an annual Keti Koti festival to commemorate the abolition of Dutch slavery in Amsterdam since 2009. Other activities include decolonizing museums and removing racial stereotypes in the public arena. Efforts to end the tradition of Black Pete (Zwarte Piet), the caricature black helper of Saint Nicholas (the Dutch Santa Claus) whom whites annually dress up as using blackface, have intensified since 2011. Under the umbrella group Kick Out Zwarte Piet (KOZP), activists use the annual Saint Nicholas parade for nonviolent direct action. They have repetitively encountered (false) arrests and violence; in 2017 authorities cancelled their protest altogether after whites blocked their bus on a freeway. In a major victory, organizers of the 2019 parade agreed to abandon blackface; local parades, however, have not. The organizational strength of this new activist 'wave' and its success in keeping racism in the spotlight likely facilitated the unprecedented massive turnout at the days-long George Floyd sympathy protests, organized by KOZP and other anti-racism organizations, in Dutch cities in June 2020.<sup>33</sup>

This new movement, which includes TBA, must then also be understood against the background of what Reni Eddo-Lodge termed a "renaissance of black critical thought and culture" in twenty-first-century Europe at large, during which numerous black organizations, institutions, and anti-racism movements have emerged or been revitalized. Like the U.S.-based Movement for Black Lives, these highlight systemic racism and black invisibility in political, cultural, and educational institutions. Some have begun developing 'pan-Afro-European' identities through initiatives like the European Network Against Racism (ENAR) and European Network of People of African Descent (ENPAD).<sup>34</sup> Conferences, summer schools, and publications on Black Europe are also blossoming, including in the United States,<sup>35</sup> through growing Black European Studies (BEST) frames and networks. Black student bodies are pushing debates on reparations and Eurocentric knowledge production, often through international 'decolonizing the university' frameworks, while black European race scholars are increasingly shaking reliance on U.S. scholarship for understanding the, markedly different, black European experience.<sup>36</sup> Intersectional frameworks of 'women of color feminism' that emerged in the U.S. in the 1980s deeply influenced European black women too. Women like Wekker helped spur several of Europe's largest transnational feminist and queer of color collectives, such as Sister Outsider and Strange Fruit, that infused

the Dutch anti-racist activism from the 1980s to today.<sup>37</sup> BEST-scholars like Stephen Small therefore call for a new “transnational European perspective” that aims to establish commonalities in the black European experience, while celebrating black heterogeneity. Others, like Jacqueline Nassy Brown, prefer more pragmatic definitions of Black Europe as a “racialized geography of the imagination,” in which diasporic meaning is derived from “the situated encounters in which people actually express some form of desire for connection.”<sup>38</sup> Such readings of Black Europe, which mirror Schomburg’s ideas of diasporic identity, are similarly detected in TBA’s archival activism.

#### **IV. The Black Archives and Identity Formation through Archival Activism**

TBA was founded as an extension of the Dutch Afro-Caribbean social enterprise New Urban Collective (NUC), established in 2010 to foster the socio-economic advancement and self-awareness of young Dutch people of color. Its founders are Mitchell Esajas, an anthropologist-turned-activist of African-Surinamese descent; Jessica De Abrue, another anthropologist-turned-activist of Portuguese-Surinamese descent; and the two sons of Surinamese sociologist Waldo Heilbron (1936–2009). Thiëmo Heilbron is a biologist-turned-social entrepreneur in sustainability and Miguel Heilbron an economist and engineer-turned-social entrepreneur in inclusivity projects. When NUC opened a café in 2015 for organizing meetings centered on Black Diaspora, the Heilbron brothers donated their father’s collection of 2,000 books on Dutch colonial history. Due to the gentrification of the Bijlmer, they moved the collection to the Hugo Olijveldbuilding of VOS in 2016. TBA then emerged organically after they discovered the Huiswouds’ papers and VOS’s archives in the attic and after a core maintenance team of volunteers was found. Additionally, it houses literature on African American history, the book collections of VOS-member Frits Corsten and former NiNsee director Glenn Willemsen, and artifacts related to Dutch black history dating to the seventeenth century. Following Waldo Heilbron’s life-long mission of challenging Eurocentric perspectives in education, TBA uses its collections to advance knowledge of, and celebrate, Dutch black history and fight racism in the present. By providing “a fair and multifaceted picture of Dutch black history and [the] contemporary situation” to black and white visitors alike, it aims to provide a new “perspective to the public discourse” that, in De Abrue’s words, can be “fundamental in the preparation for a truly multi-cultural Dutch society.”<sup>39</sup>

After all, the twenty-first century black activist revival, TBA's founders assert, demonstrates "the necessity of further developing understanding of the language and ways in which Dutch racism manifests itself,"<sup>40</sup> with TBA being one tool among many. Before and after TBA's founding, Esajas and De Abrue have also been involved in ENAR, ENPAD, and KOZP; the revived anti-Black Pete protests started with their friend Quinsy Gario's arrest in 2011. Esajas was on the bus stopped by counter-protesters in 2018 and has regularly been arrested. In 2019, whites mobbed a KOZP-meeting with fireworks and Esajas's car was smashed. Such experiences radicalized their positions. "It was emotionally hard because a lot of my friends...were really brutally arrested. Their hair was pulled out, my friend Jerry [Afriyie] was beaten up," De Abrue recalled, "I'm happy to be among these people because activism is a really lonely place...Everybody is watched by the authorities."<sup>41</sup> It also solidified their identification with Black Atlantic protest traditions. KOZP often communicates in English and its promotional material showcases connections to widespread European and American traditions of blackface as means for tapping tap international support<sup>42</sup> and creating trans-Atlantic networks. Miguel Heilbron was key in developing the Black Achievement Month with NiNsee, celebrated annually since 2016, and NUC from the start employed Afrocentric educational tools.<sup>43</sup>

These experiences predisposed TBA members to the idea of achieving archival autonomy as a "grand societal challenge,"<sup>44</sup> requiring the type of (archival) activism across borders (geographical, time-, and otherwise) they found in TBA's collections. But this awareness had begun in childhood and accelerated through the way the 'black renaissance' permeated European academia when they were students. Esajas holds an MA degree in Anthropology and Business from the University of Amsterdam (UvA). The Heilbron brothers studied at UvA as well, while De Abrue holds an MA in Anthropology and one in Business Anthropology from Amsterdam's Vrije Universiteit (VU). All realized their presence was exceptional given that 50% of Amsterdam youngsters have migrant backgrounds but few attend university. Despite high test scores, De Abrue's teachers advised against her taking the pre-university track in high school—a frequent occurrence for Dutch students of color. She therefore always "perceive[d] my college attendance as a form of upward social mobility, and a political statement...It was my story and those of my surroundings which showed that our experiences are not isolated events but rather formed a structural problem." Esajas did attend an elite pre-university high school, the only child of color in his class. From an early age,

they, and others in their network, resented black history's glaring absence from school curricula. Summer courses on diversity Esajas attended at the University of Los Angeles underscored this void.<sup>45</sup>

Such contradictions ensued at university. Although UvA disbanded CRES, several scholars in TBA's network are doing or have done groundbreaking research on race at UvA or VU, including Waldo Heilbron. Esajas too wondered how he could be arrested for his KOZP-activism one day, while teaching at UvA the next. Because of such apparent openness, Esajas co-founded NUC in 2011 to help youngsters of color excel professionally predicated on the notion that "if you work hard enough, you will be fine." But micro-aggressions in academia, combined with Gario's 2011 violent arrest, changed that view. NUC increasingly became a "space to feel safe at the university, not only in our bodies but also in our thoughts," De Abrue said. Along with Amsterdam United, a city-wide organization for students of color, NUC organized "I too, am UvA" and "I too, am VU" protests in 2014. Following the example of Harvard students, they spread pictures on social media holding signs with examples of racism they had encountered. Internal turmoil at UvA in 2015 strengthened their conviction that despite academic success, societal acceptance remained ephemeral. When students occupied a university building to mandate democratization, minority students, united in University of Colour, demanded its full 'decolonization.' With Wekker, De Abrue and Esajas worked on UvA's Diversity Commission, erected to subdue the tumult, but only to discover that diversity hiring practices mostly favored white women and Eurocentric curricula remained. Esajas soon traded his job as program manager of VU's Anthropology Department to work for NUC/TBA.<sup>46</sup>

They subsequently used NUC as a vehicle for organizing meetings on diversity in education and employment, including a conference with Essed. Such initiatives strengthened TBA members' relations with scholar-activists doing research in BEST or decolonizing-the-mind (DTM) frameworks, like Small, Kwame Nimako, and others, and with the scholar-activist networks of NiNsee (which restarted in downsized form) and the Black Europe Summer School Nimako founded in 2007. VOS has a tradition of hosting these scholars too. Alongside befriended (scholar-) activists, Esajas and De Abrue contributed to the academic publication *Smash the Pillars* (2018). The book applies the DTM-framework to the Netherlands, while locating the origins of decoloniality theories in the early twentieth-century transnational black activist movement featured in TBA's archival activism. These connections enable understanding



of TBA beyond post-World War II identity politics paradigms. As its editors assert, "decolonial examination is different than identity politics as we do not seek to deconstruct any given identity found in contemporary Dutch culture by some disincarnated, apolitical, postmodern adventure." Rather than representing a homogeneous political identity among Dutch citizens of color, the "decolonial imaginary of color," they argue, is something "transitory, always crossing borders, always moving, but always present" while remaining fluidly tied to the Dutch nation-state depending on choice or circumstance.<sup>47</sup>

TBA's collections then reaffirmed such identifications by spurring what Carolyn Steedman calls the "politics of the imagination." This is innate to the heritage business, Elisabeth Kaplan explains, as "archivists appraise, collect, and preserve the props with which notions of identity are built. In turn, notions of identity are confirmed and justified as historical documents validate their authority."<sup>48</sup> TBA members similarly retrieve understanding of their lived experiences through their collections and interpretations of them. In interviews and his own writings, Esajas frequently points to discovering material documenting local black resistance to Black Pete and other forms of racism from the 1970s onwards, like Surinamese-Dutch magazine clippings on police brutality or the 1978 booklet *Apartheid* on housing segregation in Amsterdam. The racist language used as justification, TBA members noted, resembles that used to bar refugees from white neighborhoods today. Such discoveries strengthen their sense of diasporic kinship with other minorities of color and their interpretation of Dutch racism as structural and inextricably tied to capitalism. This in turn furthers their resolve to tell these stories as essential for the realization of a true multicultural society.<sup>49</sup>

Having such knowledge, TBA members argue, is especially pertinent to black youngsters. As natural-born citizens, unlike their parents, many favor more militant activist approaches but have difficulty finding homegrown models. Esajas often refers to a fellow activist who in TBA's collections discovered her father's involvement in the 1970s squatting movement, whose history that generation of often socialist black activists largely concealed out of disappointment or a desire to protect their offspring. Likewise, De Abrue's mother never shared her own history of activism in the Bijlmer movement. In a poignant illustration of her subsequent internalization of the colorblind myth, De Abrue captured the revelation of knowing "that the reality we (as black youngsters) experience isn't new...this is important for your identity, how you approach life, the direction in which you'd like to take it. For me, [TBA] is a way

to cope with that...Telling the stories of earlier generations ensures that you don't have to question your own reality." Identity is therefore central to TBA, she stated. "When we open up the boxes we know more about ourselves than we knew ever. Sometimes that can be emotional. I feel obligated to do this, so I can hopefully not only speak about the colonial past, but that racism is a real thing in the Netherlands."<sup>50</sup>

The discovery of the Huiswouds' activism, previously unknown to them<sup>51</sup>, then helped establish the movement's longevity beyond the 1970s-1980s, its inherent internationalist and 'radical' bend, and theirs "as a new generation that connects up with that."<sup>52</sup> Being in the VOS building reinforced this, as it is not uncommon for the "material spaces of archives [to] exert tremendous and largely unspoken influences on their users, producing knowledges and insights which in turn impact the narratives they craft." Esajas for instance noted the significance of KOZP holding "meetings to mobilize people and raise awareness in the space of VOS, continuing the practices once started by Huiswoud." The movement's longevity accordingly helped justify their continuation and view of it—to supporters, critics, and themselves alike. TBA's archival activism, rooted in the Black Atlantic, then solidified such identifications.<sup>53</sup>

## **V. The Black Archives: Practicing Black Atlantic Archival Activist Traditions**

TBA's key to achieving archival credibility is its distinct approach to archival activism. While activism and archival objectivity are not mutually exclusive<sup>54</sup>, TBA's success depends on playing creatively within this realm. Its success is predicated on revealing the subjectivity of mainstream institutions, while presenting itself, in Miguel Heilbron's words, as a counter-hegemonic yet reputable "knowledge institute in the same vein as the Anne Frank Foundation." From that, it gains its authority to engage in contemporary social struggles utilizing identity histories, particularly of their Dutch, American, and Surinamese/Caribbean predecessors. Matthias Danbolt's more metaphysical classification of archival activism as "the way repertoires of activist history are reactivated, reenacted, and re-embodied in contemporary actions" plays an essential part in this.<sup>55</sup>

TBA's archival activism is built on three cornerstones: creating racial awareness, pride, and self-empowerment. These pillars are maintained through four, mutually reinforcing levels: using 1) education and decolonizing-the-mind frames, 2) community formation and resource mobilization, 3) exhibitions, art, and artifacts, and 4) 'popularizing the archives' techniques. Central foci are the Netherlands/Europe, the United

States, and the Caribbean/Suriname, with the rest of the 'Global South' (a term its members use frequently) in the periphery. This has three implications for understanding TBA's archival activism and, by extension, present-day Dutch black identity formation. First, its continued reliance on the Americas—which is natural given that most black Dutch inhabitants have Surinamese/Caribbean roots and/or have English as a second language<sup>56</sup>—reaffirms divergences in diasporic practices among black Europeans and thus rightful apprehension of 'totalizing' black European frameworks. Second, despite engaging in what Small calls "mobilizing the political power of the Diaspora," ideas of nation prefigured TBA's archival activism—just as national identifications *always* stayed relevant for transnationally-oriented black intellectuals and activists.<sup>57</sup> Third, TBA members' engagement with the Black Atlantic says as much and perhaps more about their contemporary power struggles than about their predecessors'. An analysis of TBA's four levels of archival activism reveals how this materializes in practice.

#### *Education and Decolonizing-the-Mind*

The direct ideological line between TBA founders' homegrown views and the black trans-Atlantic movement of the early twentieth-century crystallized through the Huiswouds, but they looked to Arturo Schomburg as well. In that they are not alone: NiNsee and BCA were explicitly modeled after the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, founded in 1925. TBA members likewise visited it to learn "from black institutes with experience in conserving and presenting black history." Becoming like the Schomburg is a dream, Esajas noted. "It more or less started like we did, with one person's book collection. Now it's a vibrant center, in the middle of Harlem, accessible to anyone with an interest in black history and culture."<sup>58</sup>

Like many in this movement, TBA promotes education built on decolonized practices. As Esajas said, "Societal issues did not happen overnight [and] by analyzing the latter from a historical perspective, collective awareness can be created." Decolonized education is also imperative for black internal transformation, De Abrue added. "Many blacks in the Netherlands wrestle with their identities. Why are they here, why do they have such marginalized positions in society? They lack access to the history needed to constitute that identity. [TBA] helps with that."<sup>59</sup> Its archival activism therefore hinges on reviving forgotten Dutch and European black history, often by explicitly invoking the imagined nation-building projects of the early twentieth-century movement. Like Schomburg,

Esajas and De Abrue contribute to academic and popular initiatives that foreground such histories, write their own, and present them at conferences, including one on Black Europe at UCLA. In *Open Cultural Studies*, for instance, they made the case for decolonized education by underscoring the irony of Huiswoud's invisibility in Dutch history considering that Huiswoud already lamented in a 1956 issue of VOS-magazine *De Koerier* how "the history of the people is completely suppressed by that of the motherland...National heroes become criminals and terrorists while the colonists are presented as paternal, humane and highly developed." He wrote the passage after hearing Césaire read his paper "Culture and Colonialism" at a Paris conference. When explaining TBA's mission to Johnny Pitts for his *Afropolitan: Notes from Black Europe* (2019), De Abrue also channeled the Huiswouds. Their story, she said, formed a fortuitous tool for nullifying the complicity of their parents' generation in the act of forgetting: "[W]hen we opened up this story about the Huiswouds it created a link. People came to us from all generations...They really wanted to speak about it, more so than write about it, which is why our task is to do oral history as well as written."<sup>60</sup>

In interviews, blogs, and tours, TBA members explicitly use their own past ignorance of black history to call for decolonized education and reference books that make similar claims, like Esajas's favorites *Marcus Garvey Life and Lessons* and Malcolm X's *Autobiography*. In one 2016 blog, he quoted passages from De Kom's *We Slaves of Suriname* (1934) about resisting Eurocentric education to protest a controversial white speaker chosen for that year's Anton de Kom lecture. The book and its 2020 reprint feature heavily in TBA's web shop and its recommended 'Power to the People'-reading list on its website, alongside works by like-minded black (scholar-)activists. When asked by a Dutch reporter—in a perfect example of the Dutch insistence on colorblindness—if identifying with such pasts does not *increase* societal divisions, Esajas countered that *false narratives* created these schisms: "If we don't learn in school how diversity in contemporary Dutch society has come into existence, how can we then get rid of stereotypes and racism?"<sup>61</sup>

TBA members therefore give lectures at educational institutions, made their collections more accessible through crowdfunding-enabled digitization, and developed a "silenced history" project with a magazine and radio show where they discussed finds from their archive. Aided by teachers and historians, they developed a non-Eurocentric alternative to the official poster of the ten eras in Dutch history taught in schools for the government-sanctioned revision of the so-called historical canon<sup>62</sup>.

The poster—on sale at TBA—offers new names and emphases, like renaming the 17<sup>th</sup> ‘Golden Century’ the ‘Age of Colonialism and Trade Capitalism’ to better encompass black experiences. The poster was launched at TBA in 2019 with roundtable discussions on the need to diversify Dutch history education, but it continues to invite interested parties to contribute suggestions for additions.<sup>63</sup>

Other TBA activities include organizing debate nights, movie screenings, annual “Books and BBQ” festivals, and lectures featuring black (scholar-)activists like Kimberlé Crenshaw and Opal Tometi. With former Black Panthers Emory Douglas and Katherine Cleaver they organized an international symposium in The Hague that featured artifacts from TBA to prompt discussions on the role of culture in today’s black freedom struggle—a point they underscored by organizing an event that included Dutch politicians around VOS documents related to the forgotten history of Keti Koti memorials to debate lingering legacies of Dutch slavery. TBA also collaborates with mainstream institutions, like the Tropenmuseum, as long as it can maintain control. Avoiding cooptation is a direct lesson from VOS—one of the few Dutch-Surinamese organizations still in existence due to its rejection of governmental subsidies—but it is an extension of minorities’ overall liberation struggle too, as “silence can be a method used by the marginalized to deny [mainstream] archives their records as a way to exercise their power over the powerful.”<sup>64</sup> Yet carrying the “weight of history,” Danbolt found, often carries unintended consequences for archival activists, including “a feeling of political exhaustion.” Their inclusion at the Rijksmuseum’s Night of History for instance underscored the heartbreaking longevity and grassroots-base of their struggle, De Abrue sighed: “Our inclusion...did not come out of nowhere. It is the result of decades of Dutch activists pushing awareness about our shared history.”<sup>65</sup>

### *Community Formation and Resource Mobilization*

VOS history and the long-standing African American traditions of grassroots activism and of using black independent or parallel institutions and indigenous resources like HCBUs, churches, and pre-existing social organization networks as vehicles for social change and as insulation against exhaustion—a practice Aldon Morris termed resource mobilization<sup>66</sup>—influenced TBA as much as the imagined community projects of early twentieth-century black (scholar-)activists. While Heilbron’s collection was the catalyst, the role HCBUs played in sustaining the American movement and Esajas’s experiences with the Martin Luther King archive

at Morehouse College were prominent in TBA's formative stages. In Atlanta, where he went in 2016 for a John Lewis Fellowship program, he was exposed to King's 'radical' post-1965 legacy and 'long civil rights movement' frameworks in Black Studies. He also joined local Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests. These experiences spurred his homegrown ideas on organizing and structural racism. In words echoing King, BLM, and their predecessors in the black radical tradition, he concluded that for achieving "black liberation...the organizing principles of the neoliberal capitalist system which inherently feeds off a global and national 'racial caste' of black and non-white people must be addressed." The Dutch movement should therefore mirror the American ones' investment in education and international alliances to "develop a comprehensive vision and agenda focused on the root causes of the problem."<sup>67</sup>

TBA could foster this through becoming a source of institutional support for the local (activist) community. Next to workshops and consultancy on topics ranging from colonialism to ending job discrimination, it provides community services like rental space for meetings and access to Humphrey Lamur's registry of Surinamese slave family names. To promote the black vote in city elections, it invited election candidates to discuss political participation and published the Black List, a local initiative that listed Afro-Dutch grievances, on its website. But community formation is predominantly created through functioning as a network-hub and a 'safe space,' like Huiswoud used VOS and which the organization institutionalized by acquiring its own building. Independent black institutions worldwide have always harbored that function. In the United States, particularly black churches and HBCUs fulfilled that need, including for international students like Esajas. The desire for safe spaces increased during Black Power, including in SNCC as black workers felt inhibited at integrated meetings. Today's right-wing extremism, Esajas argued, made a space like TBA, where they can "exchange ideas and just be," even more urgent. After the violent reactions to the 2018 KOZP-protests, TBA for instance co-organized a meeting with black experts on activist self-care.<sup>68</sup> The support of older VOS members, like Ivette Forster and Delano Veira, and (scholar-)activists fulfill a similar function, with people like Wekker and Essed serving as mentors and providing their younger counterparts with the language to bolster and articulate their own arguments. This underscores the significance of black scholarship as well as generational waves in the black freedom struggle. SNCC for instance relied on older activists from the NAACP and the 1930s radical Harlem climate, like Ella Baker, while BLM uses SNCC and Baker as role models. Yet SNCC

and BLM simultaneously have used generational differences to underscore their uniqueness. Similarly, Esajas and others have stressed how the new Dutch 'wave' is more upfront, captured in the shift from the 1980s slogan "Black Pete is Black Grief" to "Black Pete is Racism."<sup>69</sup>

### *Exhibitions, Art, and Artifacts*

TBA's archival activism reflects its members' journey into black history, following leads from their collections, research trips, and people in the networks they established along the way.<sup>70</sup> In this sense, it represents an archive of their activism—in alignment with Danbolt's metaphysical theory of archival activism. Because they experienced this journey as transformative, they aim to extend that experience to others by translating the relevance of their collections for today in an accessible manner. This also enables using the question of archival accessibility in itself to challenge Dutch racial-capitalist structures. In one 2018 blog, Esajas argued that local racial realities could be amended by heeding black radicals' lessons on racial capitalism. Yet "the time to delve into [that] literature," he lamented, is "a privilege not many have." TBA therefore merges its educational and community activities with accessible pop-up exhibitions, artwork, and tours. Although this is not novel—Schomburg already made exhibitions integral to his archival activism—it is a lesson Dutch activist history reinforced; culture has been part of the anti-Black Pete movement and VOS's community outreach for decades. Waldo Heilbron had wanted to build a museum in the VOS building as well.<sup>71</sup>

During TBA tours, artifacts and primary documents are shown to explain Dutch black history and contemporary racial realities, like the booklet *Apartheid*; Otto Huiswoud's FBI-file; a book Langston Hughes gave to Hermina; and a so-called *wisselbrief*, a Dutch government letter awarding financial compensation to a slaveholder after slavery's abolition in 1863. Because this letter is also in the Rijksmuseum, it can be used as a teaching device on decolonial practices, De Abrue argued: "[W]e then explain how emancipation resulted from hard-fought resistance, like Tula's slave uprising in Curaçao in 1795. You don't hear that [at the Rijksmuseum]." A small, permanent exhibition on blackface engages the present directly: next to Dutch children's books from the 1940s and other artifacts from across Europe depicting racial stereotypes, protest signs from KOZP are placed. The trans-Atlantic is also visible in the books featuring black radical thought and the Dutch newspaper articles from the 1960s-1970s on the American black freedom struggle that are displayed on tables. In this sense, TBA mirrors Schomburg's tactic of creating a "unity

across difference” through placing artifacts from across the Diaspora in non-linear structures at exhibitions, forcing visitors to consider the shared relations between objects and people across historical contexts and the gravity of the disjunction the Diaspora wrought on its descendants.<sup>72</sup>

Blurring the lines between an archive, museum, community center, safe space, and art institute—a combination that helped TBA win the 2018 Amsterdam Art Prize—is in fact key to its archival activist success. TBA’s 2019 exhibition “Our Tori: Stories of Surinamese Communities in the Netherlands,” for the 100-year anniversary of VOS, put decolonizing-the-mind frameworks in practice by linking the past to the present needs. Marketed explicitly as an exhibition that celebrated forgotten black achievements, it was built around seven portraits of important VOS members, painted by seven Surinamese-Dutch artists and supported with artifacts from TBA. Particularly black female role models were foregrounded, such as the story of Ivette Forster, host of the first black Dutch TV-show between 1987–1990. As a longtime anti-Black Pete proponent, the exposition also used Forster in part to show that movement’s longevity, which in turn legitimized their own KOZP-activism. Visitors were encouraged to contribute own stories too. Such participatory approaches help democratize history practices and tighten relations with the community. Following the example of VOS, TBA used Ketj Koti festivities to crowdfund its 2017–2018 exhibition “Black and Revolutionary: The Story of Otto and Hermina Huiswoud,” thereby giving the Afro-Dutch community a sense of ownership of the project. 700 donors responded, raising €20,000 within weeks. This, TBA members felt, showed “the broad support and need for these kinds of ‘alternative archives.’”<sup>73</sup>

The “Black and Revolutionary” exhibition, which attracted 2,500 visitors, is the clearest example of how TBA’s archival activism relies on the power of Black Atlantic identities. Through the Huiswouds, their own activist concerns were inserted and legitimized by turning past and present movements into one historical continuum that justified the continuation of the black radical tradition. Six chapters highlighted the Huiswouds’ migration to New York; their roles in VOS and the CPUSA; their global travels; collaborations with De Kom; and Otto’s imprisonment in Suriname in 1941. Panels using accessible language explained the concept of imperialism, Surinamese and African American migration patterns, and black communist ideology. The chapters were supported with artwork by Surinamese-Dutch artists Iris Kensmil, Raul Balai, and Brian Elstak; a Dutch news clip describing colonialism as benevolent



paternalism; an interactive panel where visitors could learn about the places the Huiswouds visited for the Comintern; and artifacts from TBA's collections like photographs and material on Huiswoud's activities for a solidarity protest against Patrice Lumumba's assassination.<sup>74</sup>

The panels explicitly aimed to intervene in visitors' historical memory. The one on Surinamese migration intended to challenge hegemonic tales about Caribbean migration; Hermina Huiswoud's work was included to reflect current recognition of black female activism; and the stress on black communism intended to balance the overemphasis on the 1960-70s U.S.-based movements in black freedom struggle renditions. De Kom's inclusion served to question the Huiswouds' invisibility in Surinamese history<sup>75</sup>. The panel on Huiswoud's imprisonment—illustrated with wall paper of his FBI-file—challenged World War II memory by illustrating the juxtaposition between the Dutch as victims of aggression during the war and their own behavior in the colonies. Explicit parallels were drawn with the present, such as panels on how social awareness during the Harlem Renaissance spread through newspapers and the similar function of social media today. Elstak's mural of Garvey and Huiswoud on opposite ends made visitors contemplate working-class solidarity and cross-cultural alliances for activism then and now. In a video installation, Balai connected Huiswoud's imprisonment to Dutch authorities' treatment of KOZP-activists, some of whom Kensmil celebrated in charcoal portraits.<sup>76</sup>

As exhibition participants and interpreters, the artists' and TBA members' work simultaneously became secondary *and* primary sources of Dutch black activist history that were more informative of the current Dutch anti-racism movement than the Huiswouds. One criticism levied at the exhibition was indeed that the Huiswouds' voices were marginalized in the process. The exhibition and TBA writings about the Huiswouds also gloss over assessments of how representative they were for the African American and Dutch (black) political landscapes at the time; the limits the strenuous relationship between African Americans and Caribbean migrants in early twentieth-century New York posed on transnational solidarity; the limitations of the CPUSA and 1930s black radical thought in advancing racial equality; and the complex reasons for their demise and invisibility then and now.<sup>77</sup> Yet such oversights paradoxically accentuate the exhibition's power and the strength of TBA's ingenuity and grassroots movement ownership. After all, this fits a longer tradition of how (black) Europeans have engaged the Diaspora and U.S. connections for contemporary means. European activists during the

1960s and beyond—ranging from anti-racism activists to other New Left, environmentalist, and peace groups—appropriated America’s black protest movements for own purposes,<sup>78</sup> with the 2020 European George Floyd solidarity protests as the most recent example. Even in Huiswoud’s time this happened: at the 1919 Pan-African Congress, when DuBois articulated his Pan-Africanist vision, European and colonial representatives were more narrowly concerned with using the conference to boost their own movements.<sup>79</sup>

Accordingly, in TBA’s archival activism, the significance of the Huiswouds’ legacy is defined less through their lived experiences than the imaginative power they generate as an organizing tool for today. To spur the type of collective, diasporic identity across time and space that the exhibition emphasized, TBA organized an accompanying summer school on radical black thought featuring Tony Borgues, Hakim Adi, Keeyanga Yahmatta Taylor, and Runoko Rashidi. There, the Huiswouds were used as a catalyst for probing contemporary issues of labor discrimination and cross-cultural alliances to counter rightwing populism. In one blog, Esajas used Huiswoud’s Lumumba connection to promote Dutch engagement with Pan-African solidarity movements, like signing a Belgian group’s petition to decolonize Belgian street names; in interviews and tours, he similarly highlights the 1970s correspondence between VOS and the Black Panthers. In another blog, he used the Garvey-Huiswoud debate to question modern-day slavery and resurgence of rightwing extremism, concluding with a call to revive Garvey’s race-centered analyses and Huiswoud’s addition of class and interracial alliances.<sup>80</sup>

### *Popularizing the Archives*

Such blogs on TBA’s website and other writings exemplify the final layer of its archival activism geared at popularizing its collections. While TBA’s adoption of the practice emerged organically, it has always been part of black archival activism. Besides organizing exhibits and publishing historical essays in popular black magazines such as the NAACP’s *The Crisis* and Garvey’s *The Negro World*, Schomburg for instance lectured on black history in churches.<sup>81</sup> The Huiswouds and VOS similarly promoted “consumable narratives” for black-owned popular magazines. TBA members continue this by providing introductions to black-centered theater productions like recent Dutch renditions of the *Raisin in the Sun*-trilogy, through their own (online) writings, and by cooperating with mainstream media outlets. Their website even provides convenient links to such segments.<sup>82</sup> In such segments, they commonly use their collections to discuss

the present. In one, Esajas discussed finding a 1952 copy of *De Tsjerne*, a literary magazine in the Frisian language, spoken in the Dutch province of Friesland, that focused on Suriname. Quoting from its foreword, he noted how Surinamese and Frisian elites cherished—or found it useful to project—a shared history of cultural oppression in the Netherlands. He then recounted his disappointment when he found no such sympathy when Frisians stopped their bus during their KOZP-protests. From there, he explained Surinamese and Frisians' divergent perceptions of structural racism. Such discrepancies, he concluded, could only be solved through decolonized education. TBA also popularizes archival activism by spotlighting the value of research-based activism, meaning the "use of public records for the excavation of suppressed or forgotten history that gained current significance."<sup>83</sup> Esajas for instance devoted a 2019 blog to countering rightwing politician Thierry Baudet's proclamation of the Dutch representing the world's "grandest civilization" by describing documents he found in the National Archives that captured how much proponents of ending Dutch slavery in parliament harbored racist stereotypes too. The blog ended with a call to promote the black vote.<sup>84</sup>

TBA's online archival activism fits a broader trend of marginalized groups using the digital realm to create spaces of representational belonging, catalogue grievances, and galvanize support for their power-struggles in the real world. African American groups particularly use online spaces for networking and documenting (past) abuses for accountability purposes, like projects documenting police brutality.<sup>85</sup> Due to the lack of boundaries online (geographic and otherwise) and such fora's abilities to extend "diasporic attempts of 'knowledge is power,'" several scholars have argued for seeing such online spaces as modern-day "Pan-African sites of resistance" and a direct extension of Schomburg's counter-archival practices.<sup>86</sup> TBA's web-, Facebook-, and Twitter-sites likewise work in tandem to promote activities by TBA members and others in and outside their networks, communicate directly with their followers, and discuss issues of interest to the Afro-Dutch community. In one blog, Esajas used America's Black History Month (founded by Schomburg's friend Carter Woodson) to celebrate local black achievements, like the 2018 publication of *Zwart!*, a collection of stories by Dutch authors of African descent overlooked by the Dutch literary field.<sup>87</sup> Together, TBA's online archivist practices serve as an extension *and* archive of the own activism, turning their digital presence into an independent community-based archive in itself.<sup>88</sup>

### **Conclusion: The Background for the Future is in the Present**

By rooting its archival activism in Black Atlantic traditions, TBA benefits in multiple ways. Utilizing the Diaspora and its manifestations in the Americas represents an authentic part of members' background and the fluid cultural identity that characterizes its descendants. But it also provides a space of safety and legitimacy to discuss racism in a local climate in which it is controversial to do so. Besides sustenance and activist cues, it additionally provides lessons to safeguard its existence. Being classified as "activist" and "amateur" can threaten the fundraising abilities of independent community-led archives, inhibit mainstream cooperation, and leave them dependent on political whims. A right-wing newspaper for instance falsely termed KOZP-activists violent left-wing extremists, which hindered TBA's ability to attract sponsors and increased physical threats, although such attacks strengthened members' activist identification and constituted another organizing tool. Other community-based archives rooted in the Diaspora, like BCA and the Schomburg, show that existential threats are best overcome through long-term planning that allows for lasting, mutually beneficial collaborations with mainstream institutions, a steady workforce, and articulations of 'future imaginaries' that are not dependent on individuals.<sup>89</sup>

Strategic partnerships and participatory democracy also alleviate risks of romanticization and alienating community members who do not feel represented.<sup>90</sup> At this stage, TBA mostly reflects a section of the Dutch anti-racism movement shaped by its geographic location, Afro-Caribbean roots, and student base. While the Dutch media use KOZP and TBA members as the default voice of the Dutch anti-racism movement, others within that movement have not. This is not surprising considering the cultural diversity within the Afro-Dutch and Dutch non-white populace at large. For example, Dutch black (scholar-)activists have extended 'decolonizing-the-mind' frameworks to include Muslim minorities<sup>91</sup> and occasionally formed precarious alliances with Turkish and Moroccan activists and politicians, but continued fears over Islamophobia eclipsing black concerns keep the relationship between these groups strenuous.<sup>92</sup> Despite overlapping organizational memberships, many differences over strategies and direction also exist within the black movement. For instance, other black activists critiqued Esajas' defense of the University of Colour's direct action protest at a 2017 event on black women at the UvA that did not feature any black women scholars as a direct and necessary continuation of the black radical tradition's emphasis on structural racism and intersectionality.<sup>93</sup> Neither do all in the Afro-Dutch community

support anti-Black Pete activism<sup>94</sup>, although they may support other anti-racism initiatives, as the 2020 Floyd protests show. TBA therefore tries to broaden notions of community identity by encouraging participatory approaches and applying the debates on intersectionality emphasized in its left-leaning network. Like early twentieth-century black female archivists such as Dorothy Porter, De Abrue called it her “duty to speak out for the women who might be erased from our history” through TBA’s archival activism. In her writings, she often spotlights Hermina Huiswoud’s seminal role in collecting the Huiswoud Papers. In one piece, she cited Hermina’s support for activist writing and direct action to justify and discuss the forgotten roles De Abrue and other black women played in anti-Black Pete protests. Likewise, black queer activists’ presence in TBA’s network, like Gloria Wekker, Naomie Pieter, and Wigberston Julian Isenia, led to Pieter’s and Isenia’s creation of the Black Queer Archive at TBA, which documents Dutch black queer history, in 2018.<sup>95</sup>

Nonetheless, internal divisions in community-led archives over objectives and function can create tensions or inconsistencies in approaches.<sup>96</sup> Some TBA members also emphasize the idea of a knowledge institute, while others are more politically outspoken. But exactly this muddling of objectives and voices help its purpose of creating social change, as it allows for addressing several constituencies at once and uncovering similarities over differences. In evoking the diasporic nation-building projects of the early twentieth-century black activists, they found one powerful tool for creating such unity within its ranks and outside. In the same vein Huiswoud, Schomburg, and other contemporaries were invested in such projects for their own reasons, reviving them by maintaining the “grand narrative” of a “radical African Atlantic”<sup>97</sup> serves a similar purpose for TBA. Its subsequent success and authority created within movement circles in turn spurs those in the mainstream to accept its legitimacy.

The ways in which TBA ‘practices the archive’ must be seen as an essential part of the broader cultural, lexical, and spiritual archive of Black Atlantic resistance. Its deliberate situation in pre-existing trans-Atlantic networks, semantics, and practices reaches the core of the diasporic experience, both real and imagined. It ties it to a longer tradition of black archival activism, grassroots activism, and resource mobilization beyond the identity politics and community archive boom of the post-World War II era—a paradigm shift that emerges and is understood properly only when placed *inside* the Diaspora and, conform decolonial thought, *outside* conventional Eurocentric approaches to history. This also reaffirms the trans-Atlantic turn in American Studies, while simultaneously

illustrating the complexities of diasporic meaning for twenty-first century black Europeans and of (dis)continuities in black activism. TBA's archival activism instantaneously validates long-held critiques of the "totalizing perspective" of any theoretical framework that treats the black freedom struggle in a continuum through time, space, and ideology *and* provides further evidence for its lasting utility in practice as an organizing tool for twenty-first-century black European activists. The processes and networks which inform TBA's archival activism exemplify the kaleidoscopic and vulnerable position in which contemporary black European activists and scholars find themselves as they are chartering an independent path of their own. But it also shows how (African) American Studies can continue to be a useful tool for fine-tuning the local black experience, even as the Anglo-American diasporic framework is more suitable for the Netherlands than black Europe as a whole. TBA members' choices in foregrounding certain eras and players who recognized the existence of structural racism embedded in intersectional power matrixes, acknowledged rocky yet necessary alliances with whites, and the power of internal transformation reflects their creativity, agency, and Afro Dutch Surinamese/Caribbean identity. But it also reflects the tenacity of the colorblind myth they are fighting and discloses the biggest hurdles and the solutions they see for countering structural racism today. As "the relationships within the imagined community of the black diaspora will continue to transmogrify and change form and function deep into the twenty-first century,"<sup>98</sup> TBA's archival activism confirms that the background for that future will always be found in the present.

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## Notes

- 1 TBA website. All the web sources used for this article were accessed between September 5-30, 2019 and June 1-12, 2020. Quotes from Dutch that I translated are indicated with "TLVM."
- 2 Mitchell Esajas and Jessica de Abreu, "The Black Archives: Exploring the Politics of Black Dutch Radicals," *Open Cultural Studies* 3, no.1 (2019): 402, 412.
- 3 Due to the complexities of defining "black" and "Europe," I subscribe to Small's definition of "Black Europe" as referring to those living in Europe who "identify themselves (or are identified by others) as Black, African, African descent, African-Caribbean, Afro-European, African Americans, or some other national variation, and who trace their origins to Africa and the Americas" (See Small, *Questions*, 34; Blakely, "The Emergence of Afro-Europe," 3-28.
- 4 Terms like "community," "archive," "archival activities," and "archivist" are heterogeneous, flexible, inclusive and exclusive—depending on internal strife, self-definition, impositions from above, and national and cultural practices—and continuously evolving due to scholarly, political, and technological shifts. "Independent" may refer to funding, physical and/or intellectual ownership. See: Flinn, "Archival," 5-8; Flinn, "Archives," 20, 27-28, 34; Flinn and Stevens, "Mistri," 4-7; Manoff, "Theories," 10-13; Caswell, "SAADA."
- 5 Flinn, "Community," 152-154.
- 6 Flinn, "Community," 153-154; Flinn and Stevens, "Mistri," 4-8. Quote on 4; Flinn, "Archival," 4-8. Quote on 7; Flinn, "Archives," 27-29; Caswell, "Seeing," 32.
- 7 See, for instance, Rukus! in the U.K. Black Queer archives are also compiled as subsections within other identity-based archives, such as the Schomburg Center's Black Gay and Lesbian Archive or the Black Queer Archive at TBA.
- 8 Flinn and Stevens, "Mistri," 4-7; Flinn, "Archives," 19-35; Flinn, "Community," 154-159; Flinn, "Archival," 3-5, 12-13; Caswell, "Seeing," 31-32; Schwartz and Cook, "Archives," 1-19; Manoff, "Theories," 9-25; Holton, "Decolonizing," 224-227; Burton, "Introduction," 1-17; Gilliland, "Neutrality," 193, 195; Vukliš and Gilliland, "Archival," 14-25.
- 9 Flinn and Stevens, "Mistri," 7-8; Caswell, "Seeing," 32; Schwartz and Cook, "Archives," 30-31.
- 10 Flinn and Stevens, "Mistri," 8 and "Archives," 21; Evans et al. "Self-determination.." Quote on Quote on 337-338; Flinn and Alexander, "Humanizing," 332.
- 11 Esajas and Abreu, "Exploring," 412.
- 12 Osborne, "Ordinariness," 54.
- 13 Flinn and Alexander, "Humanizing," 329-332, 334-335. Quote on 331; Yaco and Hardy, "Historians," 254-255; Flinn, "Archival," 1; Vukliš and Gilliland, "Archival," 14-18.
- 14 Flinn and Stevens, "Mistri," 8-10, 12-15; Flinn, "Archives," 30; Flinn, "Communities," 157-158.
- 15 Kelley, "Phase," 1050.
- 16 Kelley, "Phase," 1045-1047, 1050-1051, 1057-1058, 1067-1073; Holton, "Decolonizing," 220-222, 232; Parker, "Capital," 98-117; Weiner and Báez, "Introduction," xiv.
- 17 Holton, "Decolonizing," 218-219, 227, 230-232. Schomburg quoted on 218-219, 227.
- 18 Holton, "Decolonizing," 230.
- 19 Holton, "Decolonizing," 222-224, 230; Kelley, "Phase," 1058; Porter, "African," 17; Parker, "Made-in-America," 729, 731, 734-750; Jardins, "Librarians," 15-18; "Colored People's," 44-45; "Keeping Negroes," 30; Knowlton, "Negro," 23-45; Visser-Maessen, *Moses*, 211-214. Schomburg was involved in many such organizations and his friends Jesse Moorland and Arthur Spingarn created the archives of DuBois's and Padmore's alma mater, Howard University. Apart from writing black histories themselves, black female archivists such as Dorothy Porter and Catherine Latimer unearthed collections on black women to counter their marginalization in history.
- 20 Flinn, "Community," 159.
- 21 Wekker, *Innocence*, 2.
- 22 Ibid. Wekker; Essed and Hoving, "Innocence," 9-13; Weiner, "Ideologically," 732,

- 735-737; Smith, "Carnavalesque," 233. See also other articles in *Dutch Racism* (2014) and *Smash the Pillars* (2018).
- 23 Goldberg cited in Weiner and Báez, "Introduction," xi. This can partly be attributed to what Stoler called 'colonial aphasia,' referring to the separation of colonial history from national history (Helsloot, "Zwarte," 1-20).
  - 24 Nimako et al., "Chattel," 33-44.
  - 25 Wekker, *Innocence*, 1-25; Essed and Hoving, "Innocence," 9-13; Ghorashi, "Racism," 101-116; Essed, "Voorwoord," 7-9; Hondius, "Reports," 273-275; Hondius, *Blackness*, vii, 1-12, 284-286, 300-301; Essed and Nimako, "Designs," 281-312; Weiner, "Colonized," 451; Balkenhol, "Silence," 278-293; Weiner and Báez, "Introduction" and "Conclusion," ix-xiii, 199; Salem and Thompson, "Old," 3-18; Visser-Maessen, "Getting."
  - 26 James,  *Holding*, 74-75, 88-89, 94, 156, 162, 183, 270-271; Adi, *Pan-Africanism*, 14-16, 22-25, 61, 105-106, 155-161, 163-174, 194-199, 299-302, 326-327, 387-390; Pitts, *Afropean*, 139-147; Esajas, "Untold," 6-8, 14; Esajas and Abrue, "Exploring," 405-412; Meershoek, "Vereniging."
  - 27 The backlash against Muslims additionally facilitated what Philomena Essed calls "entitlement racism," the framing of the right to be discriminatory as a principle of free speech, with rightwing politicians like Pim Fortuyn and Geert Wilders defending intolerance of Muslims as the ultimate form of 'saving' Western ideals of equality, particularly for women and the LGBTQ+ (Essed and Hoving, "Innocence," 13-18; Essed, "Geleide," 15-21).
  - 28 Sherif and Rouw, "Inleiding," 6; Chin, *Crisis*, 26, 44-49, 64-65, 75-76, 102-112, 136-137, 228-231, 273-278; Ghorashi, "Racism," 101-116; Pitts, 147-152, 156, 158-159.
  - 29 Essed and Hoving, "Innocence," 11-12; Chin, *Crisis*, 273-275; Pitts, *Afropean*, 159; Hondius, "Reports," 276-277; Nimako et al., "Chattel," 37; Weiner, "Colonized," 450-465; Small, *Questions*, 165-171; Weiner and Báez, "Conclusion," 201, 207-208; Jones, "Activism," 161-173; Guadeloupe, "Acknowledging," 125-135, 136f.5; Hoeven, "Perspectief," Essed and Nimako, "Designs," 281-312; Weiner, "Ideologically," 731-732; Elibol and Tielbeke, "Alledaagse" and "Goede"; Cain, "Decoloniality," 182-183.
  - 30 "Een Zolder," *NOS*; Varsseveld, "Meeste"; Blokker and Chorus, "Hoe,"; Bodegom, "Conserveren."
  - 31 Jones, "Activism," 165.
  - 32 Paradoxically, the Monument reaffirmed Afro-Dutch invisibility due to government cooptation and their literal exclusion from its unveiling ceremony (Kardux, "Monuments," 87-106). Waldo Heilbron was also involved in the Monument's realization.
  - 33 Small, *Questions*, 21, 65-66, 172-185; Yaco and Hardy, "Historians," 263; Nimako et al., "Chattel," 44-48; Wekker, *Innocence*, 139-167; Weiner and Báez, "Introduction," ix, xii, xxi, and contributions Garío, Esajas, and Abrue; Weiner, "Ideologically," 736-737; Hondius, *Blackness*, 100, 191, 292; Heilbron et al., "Zwarte"; Henley, "Dutch." The Floyd protests compelled prime minister Mark Rutte to announce a "major change of heart" about Black Pete that he partly attributed to his meetings with protesters since 2013, but insisted the government should not interfere with its practice (Krever and Woodyatt, "Dutch").
  - 34 *Ibid.* Small, 81-89, 100, 97-107, 153-154; Flinn, "Community," 159; Eddo-Lodge, *Why*, 235; Visser-Maessen, "Getting."
  - 35 *Ibid.* Small, 15, 43, 49-52, 76, 178-179; Tuck and Boehmer, "African," 98-99; Hondius, *Blackness*, 9, 13f.16, 283. See works by Carol Blackshire-Belay, Tina Camp, Tiffany Florvil, Sande Gilman, Sara Lennox, Fatima El-Tayeb, Onyekachi Wambu, Kehinde Andrews, David Olusoga, Afua Hirsh, and others.
  - 36 *Ibid.* Hondius, 9; *Ibid.* Small, 14, 33, 47, 52, 57-58, 104-107, 161, 168-171, 174-176, 193-194; BDG, *Black*, 25; University of Colour, "Hollow," 17-30; Weiner and Báez, "Introduction" and "Conclusion," xiii-xix, 204; Cain, "Decoloniality," 182; Small, "Introduction," xxix-xxxi; Camp, "Pictures," 63-64; Weheliye, "Volk," 161-165. This American dependency is logical due to the influence of the U.S. and African America as reference cultures for post-war Europe, Europeans' lack of a discourse that acknowledges racism as an intersectional and structural power domain, and the strength of U.S.-based Black Studies departments; countless Europeans have attended HBCUs for the black-centered education they missed at home. See Salem and Thompson, "Old," 3; Höhn,

- "Panther," 154, fr. 75; Wekker, "Another," 280-281; Parker, "Made-in-America," 730-731, 737-739; Paul Gilroy, *Postcolonial Melancholia* (Columbia University Press, 2006); Katherina Gerund, *Transatlantic Cultural Exchange* (Transcript Verlag, 2013); Klimke, "African," 91-106; Visser-Maessen, "Getting."
- 37 El-Tayeb, *Queering*, 62-63, 129-137; Kessel and Leeuwen, "End," 285-297; Meijeren, "Rijke."
- 38 Ibid. El-Tayeb, xii-xiii; Small, *Questions*, 24, 35, 58, 68, 110-118; BDG, *Black*, 25-26; Brown, "Black," 201, 209; Weheliye, "Volk," 161-164; Kardux, "Monuments," 91.
- 39 Ibid. Small, 49-50, 159; Homepage TBA; Quote Esajas in Dijk, "Eerlijk"; Quote Abrue in Abrue, "Hoe"; Pitts, *Afropean*, 136-137; Esajas, "Untold," 4; Abrue, "Reclaiming," 64; Esajas, "Zoektocht"; Bolwijn, "Zwarte"; *Brummelen*, "Black"; Broer and Luimes, "Nederland"; Linge, "Vier"; Frank, "Zoek."
- 40 Ibid. "Hoe."
- 41 Pitts, *Afropean*, 162-164. Quote De Abrue on 163; Esajas et al., "Geen."; Weiner and Báez, "Conclusion," 246.
- 42 Such support is vital for the anti-Black Pete movement, as international voices, like the United Nations in 2013 and celebrities like Kim Kardashian in 2019, receive widespread attention in Dutch media.
- 43 Pitts, *Afropean*, 162-164; Weiner and Báez, "Conclusion," 199.
- 44 Evans et al. "Self-determination," 338.
- 45 Abrue, "Reclaiming." Quote on 69; Pitts, *Afropean*, 136; Blokker and Chorus, "Dekoloniseer"; Guadeloupe, "Acknowledging," 125-132; Cain, "Decoloniality," 181-182; Torsch, "Decoloniality," 31-35; Broer and Luimes, "Nederland"; Hettinga, "Slavernijverleden"; Bolwijn, "Zwarte"; Rasit and Tielbeke, "Goede."
- 46 Ibid. Blokker and Chorus, Broer and Luimes, and Pitts, 136-137, 162. Quote Abrue on 136; Guadeloupe, "Acknowledging," 130; University of Colour, "Hollow," 17-30; NUC, "Waarom"; Brummelen, "Black."
- 47 Small, *Questions*, 14, 33, 174-176; Weiner and Báez, "Introduction," xiii-xix. Quotes on xvii and xviii.
- 48 Steedman, "Space," 72-73; Flinn, "Archives," 22-26; Kaplan, "We Are," 126. For more on the transforming effect of community archives on staff members, see: Flinn, "Community," 164-166; Flinn and Stevens, "Mistri," 10, 12, 17-22; Flinn, "Archival," 1, 3-4, 8-9, 13; Michelle Caswell et al. "To Suddenly Discover Yourself Existing," *American Archivist* 79:1 (2016), 56-81, and Steven Fullwood's entry in *Community Archives* (2009).
- 49 Linge, "Vier"; Esajas, "Untold," 8-12; Bolwijn, "Geshiedenis"; Frank, "Zoek."
- 50 Ibid. Esajas, 12; Ibid. Bolwijn; Broer and Luimes, "Nederland"; Quotes Abrue in Driessen, "Toen," TLVM, and Vassel, "Archives"; Pitts, *Afropean*, 148-149, 151.
- 51 Esajas attributed this to the Dutch educational system, since radical anti-colonial writers are acknowledged in the English and French systems, although De Abrue nuanced that the Huiswouds' communism was to blame too. (Bouwhuis, "Vijf").
- 52 Dijk, "Eerlijk." TLVM.
- 53 Burton, "Introduction," 8-11, quote on 10; Esajas, "Untold," 5, 13, quote on 13; Bouwhuis, "Vijf." In *Afropean*, Pitts also notes the impact of the VOS-building on his response to the Black Archives (133, 138, 164).
- 54 Jimerson, "Archives," 252-281.
- 55 Frank, "Zoek," TLVM; Danbolt, "Here!" 104.
- 56 The second largest group of blacks in the Netherlands are from West-Africa (Small, *Questions*, 79). Many come from Ghana (where the Dutch operated their slave trade from), which has English as the official language.
- 57 Ibid. Small, 191; Elmer, "Black," 60-161, 165-166; Kelley, "But," 1050-1051; Parker, "Made-in-America," 738.
- 58 Small, *Questions*, 188; Flinn and Stevens, "Mistri," 13-14; Esajas, "Zoektocht," TLVM; Brummelen, "Black," TLVM. They also visited the Tamiment Library, Robert F. Wagner Labor Archive, Yale's Langston Hughes archive, Washington, and later Suriname, Trinidad, Jamaica, and Curaçao to research the Huiswouds' lives.
- 59 Windt, "Black"; Dijk, "Eerlijk," TLVM.
- 60 Pitts, *Afropean*, 148; Esajas and Abrue, "Exploring," 412. For another example, see Heilbron, "Meerstemmig," 278, 280-283.

- 61 Esajas, “Untold,” 7-8; Blokker and Chorus, “Dekoloniseer”; Esajas, “Zoektocht,” quote TLVM; NUC, “Alleen”; Website TBA, sections on De Kom, Huiswoud, and Power-to-the-People-Reading-List; “On the Matter,” *Worldpress*; Hettinga, “Slavernijverleden,” TLVM.
- 62 The Dutch government established a commission in 2019 that advises on revising the historical canon taught at Dutch schools, paying special attention to the shadow sides of Dutch history—a move that met with controversy. (“Aanpassen,” NOS)
- 63 “Lees,” TBA.
- 64 Carter, “Things,” *Archivaria*, 215.
- 65 Danbolt, “Here!,” quote on 105; Hettinga, “Slavernijverleden”; Bolwijn, “Zwarte”; Website TBA, sections “Boekenverkoop,” “Fotoverslag,” and “Lees”; Esajas and Abrue, “Exploring,” 405; Esajas, “Power” and “Werkt Wel?”; “Verzwegen,” FunX; Brummelen, “Black”; Quote Abrue in Varsseveld, “Meeste,” TLVM.
- 66 Morris, *Origins*, xii, 279-286.
- 67 Quote in Visser-Maessen, “Getting”; Esajas, “Lessons” and “Santa.”
- 68 Website TBA, sections “Lees Meer over de Poster ‘10x Meer Geschiedenis,” “Fotoverslag,” “Diensten,” “18 Hoogtepunten uit 2018,” and “Zwarte Lijst”; Brummelen, “Black”; Flinn and Stevens, “Mistri,” 6; Esajas, “Grootste,” quote TLVM; Parker, “Made-in-America,” 729, 750; Visser-Maessen, *Moses*, 264, 289-290.
- 69 Pitts, *Afropean*, 137, 147-148; Elibol and Tielbeke, “Alledaagse”; Esajas, “Untold,” 12-13; Berk and Visser-Maessen, “Race.”
- 70 This sometimes occurred coincidentally; Esajas met Hakim Adi at a 2015 Washington conference, but Adi’s questions about Huiswoud did not resonate until he discovered Huiswoud’s papers months later (Esajas during TBA tour attended by author, November 22, 2019).
- 71 Esajas, “Lessen,” quote TLVM; Brummelen, “Black”; Driessen, “Toen”; Gario, “Agency,” 75-85; Bolwijn, “Zwarte”; Holton, “Decolonizing,” 234.
- 72 Ibid. Holton, 234-236; Author’s visits to TBA; Varsseveld, “Meeste,” quote TLVM; Bolwijn, “Zwarte.”
- 73 Ibid. Varsseveld; Website TBA, sections on “Onze Tori,” “100 Jaar VOS,” and “Ivette Foster”; Esajas and Abrue, “Exploring,” 403, 410-411. Quote on 411.
- 74 Ibid. Esajas and Abrue, 406-412; Esajas, “Strijd.”
- 75 De Kom (1898-1945) is generally more well-known because he joined the Communist branch of the Dutch resistance movement during Nazi occupation and died in a German concentration camp.
- 76 Esajas and Abrue, “Exploring,” 406-412; Roorda, “Zwart.”
- 77 Ibid. Roorda; Parker, “Capital,” 98-117; Sinnette, *Schomburg*, 112; Allen, *Reluctant*, 207-280.
- 78 For examples, see Klimke, “African,”; Tuck and Boehmer, “African,” 100; Visser-Maessen, “Getting”; Todd Carmody, “Missing Paul Robeson in East Berlin,” *Cultural Critique* 88 (Fall 2014), 1-27; and works mentioned in footnotes 35-36 of this article.
- 79 Berk and Visser-Maessen, “Race”; Dunstan, “Conflicts,” 133-150.
- 80 Esajas, “Strijd,” “Zoektocht,” “Lessen,” and “Historische”; Esajas and Abrue, “Exploring,” 408; Bolwijn, “Zwarte.” Before the corona pandemic, TBA planned to open an adjusted version of ‘Zwart & Revolutionair’ using the work of Surinamese artists at the National Archive in Suriname in April 2020.
- 81 Holton, “Decolonizing,” 218, 229-230, 232; Sinnette, *Schomburg*, 161-166, 172; James,  *Holding*, 203.
- 82 TBA website, section “In the Media.”
- 83 Vukliš and Gilliland, “Archival,” 21.
- 84 Hettinga, “Slavernijverleden”; Esajas, “Grootste.”
- 85 Ng, “Community-based”; Flinn and Alexander, “Humanizing,” 333-334; Flinn, “Archives,” 31-34. Black Twitter is a modern version of the African American practice of ‘signifying’ for creating and performing black cultural identities online and spurring activism (Lavan, “Tweets,” 56-65).
- 86 Beckles, “Black,” 311-324. Quotes on 313, 314; Lavan, “Tweets,” 56.
- 87 *Zwart!* was compiled to contribute to “a specific Afro-European identity and awareness” while simultaneously underscoring the longevity of black cultural exchanges between

- Europe, Africa, and the Americas (Sherif and Rouw, "Inleiding," 10-12. Quote on 10).
- 88 Esajas, "Helden."
- 89 Flinn, "Archival," 13-15; Flinn and Stevens, "Mistri," 8-13, 20-21; Flinn, "Archives," 30; Flinn, "Community," 166-169; Esajas et al., "Geen."
- 90 Vukliš and Gilliland, "Archival," 19; Schwartz and Cook, "Archives," 17; Caswell, "SAADA"; Flinn, "Archival," 9-10.
- 91 See for instance Halleh Ghorashi's contributions in *Smash the Pillars*, 185-194, and *Dutch Racism*, 101-116.
- 92 Examples are the political party DENK and the protest following the June 2015 death of Mitch Henriquez in police custody. Fears over black invisibility due to Islamophobia became visible when the 2017 Martin Luther King Lecture Series at the VU headlined a Dutch-Moroccan actor and Dutch-Turkish anthropologist over Dutch black activists (Visser-Maessen, "Getting").
- 93 Pitts, *Afropean*, 156; Esajas, "Lessen"; Veldhuyzen, "You."
- 94 Reasons for opposition to the anti-Black Pete movement include wariness, acquiescence, nostalgia to St. Nicolas experiences in childhood, rejection of connecting Black Pete to institutionalized racism, and seeing other anti-racism causes as more important (Smith, "Carnavalesque," 232).
- 95 Pitts, 134-135, 145-146; Abrue, "Reclaiming," quote on 70; Linge, "Vier"; Kessel and Leeuwen, "End," 285-297; Meijeren, "Rijke"; Website TBA, section "18 Hoogtepunten"; Colpani et al., "Archiving," 163-179. In 2019, Pieter and Isenia created their own exhibition *Nos Tei* on Dutch Surinamese and Caribbean queer lives, after an exhibition to celebrate forty years of Dutch queer activism at the Dutch LGBTQ archive IHLIA obscured black contributions to that struggle.
- 96 Flinn, "Archival," 9-10; Flinn and Stevens, "Mistri," 22.
- 97 Weiss, "Between," 89-109.
- 98 Tuck and Boehmer, "African," 101.

