**org is an online platform, collecting, describing, presenting and generating documents of all sorts. It documents documents.**
**Your path through the collection lead along** Tracking

**12.03.2023**

**What constitutes a 'document' and how does it function?**

**According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the etymological origin is the Latin 'documentum', meaning 'lesson, proof, instance, specimen'. As a verb, it is 'to prove or support (something) by documentary evidence', and 'to provide with documents'. The online version of the *OED* includes a draft addition, whereby a document (as a noun) is 'a collection of data in digital form that is considered a single item and typically has a unique filename by which it can be stored, retrieved, or transmitted (as a file, a spreadsheet, or a graphic)'. The current use of the noun 'document' is defined as '*something* written, inscribed, *etc*., which furnishes evidence or information upon any subject, as a manuscript, title-deed, tomb-stone, coin, picture, etc.' (emphasis added).**

**Both 'something' and that first 'etc.' leave ample room for discussion. A document doubts whether it functions as something unique, or as something reproducible. A passport is a document, but a flyer equally so. Moreover, there is a circular reasoning: to document is 'to provide with documents'. Defining (the functioning of) a document most likely involves ideas of communication, information, evidence, inscriptions, and implies notions of objectivity and neutrality – but the document is neither reducible to one of them, nor is it equal to their sum. It is hard to pinpoint it, as it disperses into and is affected by other fields: it is intrinsically tied to the history of media and to important currents in literature, photography and art; it is linked to epistemic and power structures. However ubiquitous it is, as an often tangible thing in our environment, and as a concept, a document *deranges*.**

**the-documents.org continuously gathers documents and provides them with a short textual description, explanation, or digression, written by multiple authors. In *Paper Knowledge*, Lisa Gitelman paraphrases 'documentalist' Suzanne Briet, stating that 'an antelope running wild would not be a document, but an antelope taken into a zoo would be one, presumably because it would then be framed – or reframed – as an example, specimen, or instance'.**
**The gathered files are all documents – if they weren't before publication, they now are. That is what the-documents.org, irreversibly, *does*. It is a zoo turning an antelope into an 'antelope'.**

**As you made your way through the collection, the-documents.org tracked the entries you viewed. It documented your path through the website. As such, the time spent on the-documents.org turned into this – a new document.**

**This document was compiled by ____ on 12.03.2023 17:09, printed on ____ and contains 1 documents on 5 pages. (https://the-documents.org/log/12-03-2023-5273/)**

**the-documents.org is a project created and edited by De Cleene De Cleene; design & development by atelier Haegeman Temmerman.**

**the-documents.org has been online since 23.05.2021.**

**Notes**

- De Cleene De Cleene is Michiel De Cleene and Arnout De Cleene. Together they form a research group that focusses on novel ways of approaching the everyday, by artistic means and from a cultural and critical perspective.
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- This project was made possible with the support of the Flemish Government and KASK & Conservatorium, the school of arts of HOGENT and Howest. It is part of the research project *Documenting Objects*, financed by the HOGENT Arts Research Fund.

**Sources**


- Briet, S. *Qu'est-ce que la documentation?* Paris: Edit, 1951.
- Gitelman, L. *Paper Knowledge. Toward a Media History of Documents.* Durham/ London: Duke University Press, 2014.
- *Oxford English Dictionary Online*. Accessed on 13.05.2021.




I drove through the neighborhood seeking evidence of the disruption using a power outage map as a compass. Winding through quiet streets, I stumbled upon a lone blue PG&E truck idling opposite a charred utility pole with fragments of wood and wire strewn across the pavement. I parked my car and walked toward the truck to ask the driver what had happened. He pointed to the top of the pole where a porcelain insulator dangled precariously from a high-voltage line. “Tracking,” he said curtly. “Is that like a short circuit?” I asked. “Kind of,” he replied before pausing. He finally elaborated, explaining that the problem arises when moisture from morning fog settles on power lines, creating a pathway for electricity to arc across components.

He then input something into a handheld device before driving away, leaving the repair for another service team to complete. I gathered the debris intending to collect the remaining components that comprise a utility pole, each having failed in one form or another. I shipped the fragments to Maziar the following week.

**Notes**

- Mathew Kneebone is an artist based in San Francisco. His interdisciplinary practices takes different forms, all in relation to an interest in electricity and technology. He teaches studio and thesis writing at California College of the Arts.




| type | date | filename | size | author |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| photograph | 24.02.2023 | 02_tracking.jpg, 03_tracking.jpg | 3,51 MB, 324 KB | Mathew Kneebone |

category
automobile, collecting, encounter, hand, impact, map/plan, precipitation, repair, technology

**21:39:04**

the-documents.c



21:39:04