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ALMS report

It was 3 days only but it was a very inspiring experience. Participants from all over the world displayed their approach to the idea of archives in a queer universe. From personal objects to pieces that are part of museums, we saw it all. And all of us asked the big question: what do we do with these memories? With this inheritance the world as given to us?

I was there to present my project: Queerquivo – a portuguese LGBT archive. An archive not in Wikipedia style, that results from asking people to write about their icons and people who influenced them. It's a collection of texts that express how those figures and places were important to them and helped them become better people.

The project has a site and every week there was a new text from an author, about someone. No filter, no censorship. Just their voices.

Later came a book with the texts in Portuguese and translation in English.

And thus we have an Emotional Archive.

The ALMS Conference gave me the opportunity to meet others who believe in these conversations with the past. Who feel we are the guardians of pieces of history that cannot – must not! – disappear.

I was overwhelmed with Esther C. Suwannanon's presentation and how a simple school notebook is an archive of a person and her self development. I was also very heartened by Loo Zihan's paper on how the history of a watch can be a memory of a dangerous past, and I felt honoured when I touched that object and its whole story.

My presentation ended with a story of a portuguese king and had curious reactions in the room. His name was Sebastian and he was gay. It is said this king went to an important battle, on foggy day, and never came back. We have a saying in Portugal that states that on a foggy day, someday, this king will return.

I really think these 3 days together prevent all these stories we shared of disappearing into a mist. We owe to these people telling their stories. Saying their names.

If we don't know our past, we cannot prepare our future.

www.queerquivo.com (book available in PT and ENG)