Conversations in the Archives: Carolee Schneemann Foundation

Intro

Lisa Darms: From Hauser & Wirth Institute, this is Conversations in the Archives, a podcast about artists' archives and the people who create, care for, and are inspired by them. I'm Lisa Darms, Director of Hauser & Wirth Institute, a nonprofit devoted to transforming the field of artists' archives. In this series, I speak with some of the most exciting thinkers and practitioners in the field.

Rachel Helm (excerpt): She kept her childhood drawings, she kept her student work, she kept every piece of paper that crossed her path starting at such a young age that I always think, what a wild person to be 22 and say, "All of this is going to be relevant to somebody later."

LD: For today's conversation, I sat down with Rachel Churner and Rachel Helm of the Carolee Schneemann Foundation. Rachel Churner is an art critic, editor, and professor, the cofounder of No Place Press and the director of the Carolee Schneemann Foundation. Rachel Helm is the manager of the Foundation. Together, we had a thoughtful and entertaining conversation about the Foundation's recent oral history project, what it's been like reading through Schneemann's thousands of pages of diaries, and the complexities involved in deciding what should be public and what should remain private in an artist's papers.

LD: I'm here with Rachel Churner, director of the Carolee Schneemann Foundation, and Rachel Helm, who's manager of the Carolee Schneemann Foundation. I like to start these conversations by asking my guests if there was something—even starting from childhood, but maybe later in life—that drew them to an interest in archives or working with artist legacies. Rachel H., is there something like that in your past?

RH: Well, it's kind of funny with me, as I wouldn't say I was particularly drawn with any intention towards working with archives or artists' legacies, kind of either one. My background–my mother was a reference librarian, and I worked in public libraries for a number of years. So I kind of come from that world which is very different from the world of archives, because it's... You know, you weed collections, and you drop books in the bathtub, and people take things home, and it's a very different relationship to materials. But I did kind of bring that knowledge forward into working with Carolee Schneemann's archive in particular, which is the only one I have any direct experience with. I grew up in Kentucky, and when I was a teenager, *Angry Women* came out, and like all angry young women, I read that. And you know, Carolee's name is included in that book. She wasn't my primary interest at that time, but I carried through decades kind of an awareness of her and an awareness of the art world and transgressive art and aesthetic experimentation. So that's very intriguing to me. And what brought me to the Carolee Schneemann Foundation was really just kind of coincidence. Right time, right place. That's where I'm coming from...

LD: Yeah. I was also very influenced by *Angry Women*, the ReSearch publication, and I remember, in a way, it was like an archive for teenagers, who could find it in a time when there was no other way to find information about these incredible women. So same for me, it was like, "Note to self: Who is this amazing person? Will I find out more someday?"

What about you, Rachel Churner?

RC: Sure. It's interesting about *Angry Women*, because I also remember when that came out, and one of the things that I was really fascinated with for artists was documenting their own artistic process. And that's one of the reasons I really liked those ReSearch publications, because they had artists writing about themselves and their photos. I think that this idea of how artists think and talk and write about their own work, particularly the edits they make throughout the process, is something I've always been fascinated in. I'm trained as an art historian, so I did archival research on artists like Hans Haacke and Kurt Schwitters. And there's a way in which you get to know the artist as a person, which is always kind of intriguing. But more importantly, I think there's this idea that you can see how their thought process evolves about their own work. And so, what I like about archives is that you get to see the edits that they're making to themselves and to their own presentations and self-mythologies as they emerge.

I also worked for *October* magazine for several years as the managing editor. And there I became very interested in how you can make an archive public and accessible in different ways, right? Do you publish early versions? Do you write intros that give different types of context, and how can you share those archival materials? And then later, I had an art gallery, which afforded this amazing opportunity to have archives as materials be exhibited and shown. And one of the shows we did was an exhibition of the work of Wooster Street Enterprises, which was this Fluxus store that Jaime Davidovich and Judith Henry had set up with George Maciunas. They had Yoko Ono fur coat stationery, they had George Maciunas grotesque masks, and all these things that had been for sale, but we were also able to show the invoice receipts and the correspondence and the requests for funding in a way that kind of allowed the viewer to understand that these objects were embedded, yes, in a certain time and a context, but also that there was a kind of practical life behind them—and that's the sort of thing I find really interesting with archives is how they can activate that work.

LD: I think I've definitely been noticing a trend–well, there are a lot of trends–but there's a long trend of artists curating from archives as their practice. But I think there's also increasing use of archival material by curators in exhibitions, and I think it's an interesting trend. Of course, I think it's great, because I think the process is sometimes more fascinating than the product.

I'm curious to hear more about the Foundation and maybe how you came to it, and what the work of the Foundation is.

RC: Sure. Schneemann was a really kind of incredible artist who worked from the ’50s through the 21st century. She died in 2019 and was active until her death, and she was a painter who moved painting quickly beyond canvas itself. She was working first at literally activating the canvas by spinning it. She took it beyond into these sculptures and reliefs that often had motors that moved them and, you know, gave them a kind of kinetic energy. She was working in performance, in film, in installations throughout

her life, and she was deeply invested in the body— the female body, in particular, yes, but also the body's experiences. I would say Schneemann was also interested in the erotic, in the taboo and the sacred, right, and in ways of resisting forms of oppression, be that patriarchy or settler colonialism. The Foundation is committed to keeping that radicality alive through supporting the work of other artists as well. And to that end, we're working on a residency in her home in upstate New York. This home was the muse and the site of many, many works since the '60s when she moved there.

LD: What you said about Schneemann's interest and foregrounding of the body really made me think of her house, which I've had the honor of visiting. And it's so interesting to be in a house like that that has the traces of an artist, and especially in that case where, although things are missing, in some cases, the residue of her life is still really tangible. And so Rachel H., I'm curious, maybe you have a different relationship to the house and to the archive because you actually knew Carolee, right?

RH: Yeah, I'm certain that influences my feelings and decisions around, especially, the house. I worked for Carolee during her life, not for a long time. At this point, I've spent more time with her legacy than I spent with her corporeal self. But I came on about a year and a half before she died. I wasn't her professional assistant; I came on as handyman, gardener; I cooked, I cleaned, I helped her with her papers, I helped her with correspondence, and kept her company. I considered her a friend. You know, she was a complicated woman, but she was also really delightful to be around. She loved to laugh, and had just an incredible intellect, and was really gifted at making the people around her feel really special and really listened to and talked to, and I think part of that is just she was so well read and…anything you were into, she could talk about it and she knew it back to front. But you know, one of the things that had to happen is we had to have a really fast intimacy, because she wasn't well. She had been living with and fighting against a cancer diagnosis since the early 1990s at that point, over 20 years, and her body was really starting to fail, so she needed a lot of help. That influences, sometimes, the way I feel about the house, because one of the things that we shared in common is that we both really loved it. I really appreciated it, and I was really respectful of it as her space. I still feel aspects of that. You know, after she died—I kind of joke that I came with the house—but I stuck around to make sure that everything was under control in her place upstate, and that's what I continue to do.

I do think there is....It's not a romance that I have with it at all, you know. It's in a lot of ways, to me, sort of my to-do list. But I do think all the time of how much it was like an embodiment of the inside of her mind and of her artwork and the way that she thought, all of her research. And always on my mind is how to preserve that: make it functional, make it sustainable, make it make sense. And too, you know, having known Carolee as a person, as a body, as a person with needs, as somebody who's hungry, as somebody who needs cat litter, I have a really, kind of, humbled experience with her. So sometimes it's translating that version of her with the monolith which we deal with, you know, now, as the creator of this vast archive, as the creator of this tremendous *oeuvre* of artwork, and this great thinker and great writer. And I kind of hold two versions of it in my mind, and I'm sure that influences things for better and for worse. I'm sure.

RC: One of the things Rachel and I talk a lot about is legacy work as a form of caretaking. And I don't mean to gender it in that way, but I feel like the way in which one—just as you were describing—really does... You care for a person, you care for the place, you care for the things that they made, and that's

how we sort of sustain that legacy, right? We keep it there. The house just happens to be this particularly fascinating repository of so much of herself, but also it's a site that had a life before, and that we want to have a life continuing, right? And one of the things that's so important to us is that we both maintain a home without freezing it, without fetishizing it. And that's a real challenge to figure out, how to keep someone alive but also allow there to be these sorts of understandings. And I think with, for example, the oral history project, it enabled us to hear voices that were not only Carolee's. I think for me, in particular, Carolee's voice is such a strong one, because... You know, her writing was so critical to how we understand her work, her take on it was so powerful, and the way in which she promoted herself, and even just the way she edited her own archives, her own diaries even. And so this idea of being able to hear from people who had these both lofty experiences of Carolee as mentor, but also the very mundane Carolee as lover. How do you kind of have both of those and how do they stand? And that was really important to us.

LD: So you're talking about the oral history project that Hauser & Wirth Institute funded last year, and I'm curious to hear more about how you made the decision to choose who you were going to interview.

RC: Just as a backup, Carolee's archives are held at Stanford University and at the Getty. And it's a wealth of information, hundreds and hundreds of boxes, right: Images of performances, preparatory sketches, correspondence, edits, research. And I think what Rachel and I were interested in was creating a group of people, nine people, some of whom were intimately connected with her (we have two former partners), some of whom collaborated with her (Deborah Hay, for example). And also those who looked to her, both as friends and fellow artists, or they made work about her—thinking of Lynn Sachs, who made a film on Schneemann. And for us, I think the real urgency was that many of Carolee's closest friends were born in the 1930s and '40s, as she was, and we felt a real sense of urgency to hear them as they neared the end of their lives.

LD: Rachel H., I know you were an interviewer for some of these conversations. We've selected a clip from the oral histories from Jane Wodening. Can you talk a bit about who Jane was and why she was selected for the project?

RH: Jane Wodening is an absolutely fascinating person. I would encourage anybody who listens to explore her writing, because it's all excellent. It's readable and folksy and sophisticated at the same time, really an excellent, excellent writer. But she was, you know, an author, she was an artist, she was a ham radio enthusiast. She was a mother to quite a few children—I couldn't tell you exactly how many. She was Stan Brakhage's wife from the 1950s to the 1980s. And Stan Brakhage is the point that connects Jane Wodening to Carolee Schneemann, because Brakhage was a childhood teenage friend of James Tenney, the experimental composer who was Carolee's partner in the 1950s and ’60s. And this little cohort of Stan Brakhage and Jane Wodening and Carolee Schneemann and James Tenney were very close friends in the early and mid 1950s and they spent quite a bit of time together, where they were still forming as creative individuals and as people in the world. And part of why we wanted to speak with Jane is not necessarily because she had a close friendship or depth of friendship with Carolee—because she didn't exactly—but she was present for so much: so many conversations, for events over the years, for witnessing artworks in their early stages that are things that we, you know, consider some of the most important work that Carolee has made. And too, Carolee didn't do a lot of

formal portraits—I was thinking about this on the bus on the way here—that are paintings. I mean, it's kind of just Jim and Jane, am I…?

RC: Mmm-hmm.

RH: Yeah, I thought that was kind of interesting, that Jane is one of, really, just two people who sat for a portrait for Carolee. And you know, she was 86 years old when I met with her. I met with her in April of 2023. I visited her home in Denver and I had just an incredible experience with her. She was a true eccentric: funny, fascinating. Maybe, like, low-key didn't like Carolee a lot, which I thought was really interesting. I mean, *liked* her, *loved* her, *adored* her, respected her. But there was a thread—there was a little bit of an antagonistic thread to it, which was an interesting thing.

LD: The excerpt that we're going to play concerns Jane's memories of a performance of Carolee's famous Interior Scroll. And I was wondering, Rachel C., if you could sort of set us up a bit with the significance of this particular performance?

RC: Absolutely. Interior Scroll was first performed in 1975 at the festival Women Here and Now, it was in East Hampton. And I'm going to give you the long version, because I think it's important, because we often just see the single image of, you know, The Scroll, but it was part of this 40-minute action by Carolee. She came in, she undressed, she painted her body with mud, she stood up on a table and did a series of live modeling action poses while reading from her book *Cezanne, She Was a [Great] Painter*. She read *Istory of a Girl Pornographer* while wrapped in a sheet, *Prick of the Week* with these kind of wide-open legs, and then she stood up and pulled this scroll, very delicately wrapped, from her vagina while reading what had been typed onto it, and this was a text that's a voiceover from her film Kitch's Last Meal, which was in progress at the time. The work was captured on film—we have very famous film stills of it—but what I find really fascinating is that we only have those stills of it. We don't have moving images to experience this whole thing. And then two years later, it was performed again at the Telluride Film Festival. And this is when Carolee's film *Fuses* from 1963 to 1965 was meant to be screened, and Schneemann was frustrated because it was included in something called…"The Erotic Women" was the program, and she was very angry so she kind of reprised it as a protest, in a sense.

LD: Should we listen to the first part of the clip?

RC: Well, it's interesting too that you were at that performance at Telluride. There's not a lot of documentation of that.

Jane Wodening: Oh, really?

RH: Yeah. And people are very interested in, what was the difference between those two performances?

JW: Well, this time she kind of turned her back so that she wasn't like…. She had herself about like this, and so she was like… It was secret, what she was doing, in a way.

RH: Oh, pulling the scroll out?

JW: Yeah. And I guess she was farsighted, or wrote big.

RC: So, was she preparing for that at any point, like in your company?

JW: No. I remember, though, she was very huffy, and I thought, "She's doing this in anger," because they didn't want her to show the nudity in the films that she was going to show. Probably. Probably she was showing…what was the name of the sex film?

RC: Fuses.

JW: Yeah. She wanted to show Fuses*. So then she did this outrageous [laughs] speech that she was giving. It was so erudite. At the time I was so struck… It reminded me of Annette Michelson, if you don't, if you haven't—*

RC: Oh, yeah!

JW: It reminded me of her, because she was like, groping for the big words, and Annette couldn't stop doing that.

RC: What I like so much about this quote is, one, that it captures so well the surprise and the shock of this event. And I think we are, or *I* am, I guess, used to seeing some of the images, and so you just assume, "Great, that happened, this is a monumental moment," done. But the way in which she's still slightly scandalized by this action is so telling, I think. Because it is really fascinating, and I think it brings up a few things. One is this idea of how a performance could be done, sort of through anger, right? And, like, birthing this thing... But of course, what I love about the piece is, you know, this umbilical cord is this language. But it's about film, but it's about her work and the rejection of her work. And it's really tied up in this, like, really intense sense of sort of righteous indignation that someone is not listening.

This connection to Annette Michelson is perhaps interesting in the sense that Annette was a *very* important film theorist and critic and was very imminent. She was a big champion of Brakhage, and she was writing about Yvonne Rainer at the time. And for someone like Schneemann I think it was incredibly frustrating that Michelson was not interested in her own work. And you know, there's a lot of mythology about Interior Scroll itself and to whom these texts are meant to… You know, the scroll famously begins with, "I met a happy man, a structuralist filmmaker," and I think the point of who that individual is, is perhaps less important than the idea of what she was struggling against, which was kind of sanitized, conceptual, heady—but heady without much embodiment of it, you know. And that was what she was pushing against, but using these kind of big words. And I think the big words that we're not hearing, that Jane is referring to, are the very famous, early description: "I met a happy man, a structuralist filmmaker," who said (I'm paraphrasing), "We cannot look at your work. Don't ask us to look at our work. We cannot, because we cannot look at the personal clutter, the hand-touched sensibility,

the diaristic indulgence, the painterly mess, the dense Gestalt, the primitive techniques." You know, all of those were things that were kind of anathema to this type of filmmaking. And yet, I think for someone like Schneemann, looking at, say, Brakhage's *Window Water Baby Moving*—which is Jane giving birth—it must have been really difficult for her to reconcile how one thing that she was doing was somehow unacceptable, and yet this other entity was manageable.

Thinking of what you were saying, Rachel, about the relationship between Jane and Carolee—it was always triangulated through Stan, and untangling that becomes very challenging. One of the things that's really interesting, though, is Jane Wodening's papers are at Yale, at the Beinecke, and she has these incredible scrapbooks and a bunch of really lovely letters from and to Carolee in the late '80s and '90s, where they sort of were able to have a relationship that wasn't based on this other party. And that's really fascinating, to see the support that they came up with later.

RH: And that's something Jane mentioned when we spoke, she was really concerned that when Stan left her, that Carolee would go… I think her exact words were, "Just go with him." And they managed to really kind of find each other in a new way that, like you said, wasn't triangulated by this man.

LD: This opportunity for them to have a relationship outside of him, I think, is kind of nicely punctuated by this oral history that she does right before her death. How soon after the interview did she die?

RH: Well I went to Denver in April of 2023 and she died in November of 2023 so it was just a matter of months. I was pretty surprised. When I was there she was still working in her garden; she kept chickens, she gave me homemade rhubarb wine, she made me curry. We went on a walk after that tired me out. She seemed just incredibly robust and alive. And I was…I was pretty surprised, and I felt really honored that I was able to go out there and spend the day with her.

It meandered. Our conversation meandered, probably more than I would like professionally, but personally, I had a really lovely time.

LD: You know, we've been talking a bit about the visceral and the things that have been left out. And I think Jane's description in the second part of the clip, kind of…what's the word I'm looking for? Allows for, crystallizes that.

RH: The scrolls that she made, they're like a kind of a really cottony, fabric-y paper, and they're all folded like an accordion—

JW: So she did put them in there?

RC: Yeah, she definitely did. I think there would just be one…

JW: But, I mean, she would do it many times.

RH: I think she tested them. But she did that performance once in the Hamptons in, like, '74, '75—

JW: Oh, and that's the only time she performed the pulling the scroll out of her cunt.

RH: Did she not pull it?

JW: She did.

RH: She did pull it, when you saw her—

JW: Yes!

RH: It was coming out.

JW: It was, it was stuck. It was like…

RH: Oh, my goodness.

JW: She was like this, so you couldn't really see her face, but I kind of thought, you know, she was having trouble getting it. I mean, it's such a Carolee thing, to speak. I mean, it's such a woman's rights—the grandmother of women's rights, you know, or something.

LD: What you're describing is something that could be very useful to conservators or archivists. You're describing the iterations of a document. And so I just thought that was interesting.

RH: Oh yeah, it's funny the things that we've found. We're preparing the second half of Carolee's archive to go to Stanford University, and one of the things I found was a box with all these test scrolls made with newspaper and different kinds of paper. But then I realized the newspapers were from 2005, so it's funny how she's still working with that same material.

I just wanted to go back briefly to that second clip from Jane and say two things. One is, it's so funny to me that she uses the phrase "the grandmother of women's rights," because Carolee would be apoplectic over that. It makes sense though for Jane, because that is a part of who she is as a woman, as a mother and a grandmother, and that's just in conflict with Carolee's version of womanhood. But I just wanted to say, put it on the record—

RC: Right. We'd have to replace it with “goddess.”

RH: —Carolee would not have liked the term "grandmother of women's rights."

But the other thing I just wanted to describe really briefly is, in this brief conversation Jane and I had about Interior Scroll, we were in her backyard, there were chickens running around, she's standing up demonstrating what it would look like, you know. She put her back to me, and she kind of hunched over, and she was fussing around and making all these faces. And it was really… She was, like, very electrified and excited to retell the story. And I think it's clear in her laughter and enthusiasm.

RC: It also gives us a chance to, again, kind of understand it as event, as opposed to photographic still, right? Because the mechanics were really important. I remember so distinctly the first time I was at the house. And one of the things that's so magical about the house is Carolee's annotated…the books, right? But not only the books in her library that she's read—her Virginia Woolfs, etc.—but books about herself. So she'll go through and make notes to what people have said that's incorrect. And the one that I remember very distinctly, that I think either Rachel, you or Lila showed me, was that a scholar had been writing—it was one of the earlier pieces on Interior Scroll—and they describe it as a *wad*, or just a wad of paper. I just remember the word *wad* is circled with these many, many exclamation points. Because it wasn't a wad, right? It has delicately folded elements that she had worked very hard on that she was actually reading from. And I loved that that was important enough to her to comment on. But it also does kind of carry through in this, right....

At times I chafe against the very easy response of the piece that I was reading from Interior Scroll. "The painterly mess" is the kind of thing that comes up very often when describing or thinking about Schneemann, but there was a lot of construction and thought process and planning behind how this “mess,” quote unquote, would be produced. And I think it's important. And this clip reminds us of how you can't just pull something right out and expect it to be legible, but it requires this really interesting forethought.

LD: What you said about Carolee annotating the books in her library that were written about her… I like that idea of her having the ability to continue to "zhuzh" and correct the archive, right? But she's no longer here to do that. And I know one of the things that you are both working on right now is that Stanford, I understand, has digitized her diaries, and you are currently reading through them. Why don't you tell me in your own words how you're reading through them and what the purpose of that is.

RC: So as part of Schneemann's original sale of the archive to Stanford, there were six decades’ worth of journals. And Schneemann wrote daily. It was a serious commitment to noting the weather—which I love—to noting who she had seen, what she did, how she was feeling, really rigorously. And when those went to Stanford, they went with the promise that they would be digitized. And so one of the things that I feel very grateful for is that this decision to make this material public was made for us by Carolee herself. These are intimate diaries, and there's a lot of, you know, not just her sex life, but her fears, her petty grievances, her indulgences. But she had made this plan for them, and one of the most fascinating things for me about them is how she's also gone back to them time and time again. So you'll have… Words are underlined, passages have been highlighted. She's mined the early diaries for material for *More Than Meat Joy*, and they were published as kind of excerpts from journals. But she's also returning to them. She's edited them. She fills in different words, she corrects names. And so in the same way that she's having this dialogue with those who are writing about her, though it's been published, she has this dialogue with herself, in the sense of a back-and-forth. And so for me it's this middle ground between the editing of a text—and Schneemann saved all of her edits, which is just this treasure trove of material—but doing that on your most kind of intimate experiences is a really interesting process.

RH: I'd never thought about the fact that she had made the choice for that to be digitized during her lifetime. You know, it is kind of…. What a tremendous relief that is to us as an organization. I mean, I feel like there's a part of me that would maybe fight tooth and nail, like "These are private," because that's how I… Yeah, I would say, "This is private. This is not public."

LD: I've actually been in that position myself. When I worked at the Fales Library & Special Collections, I became aware of David Wojnarowicz's tape journals, which he had recorded episodically, but had written on many of them "Tape Journals." So we know he thought of them as journals, but we don't know whether he wanted them to be public or not. At some point, I decided that this might be a great book project, and with Semiotext(e), published them, but throughout the entire process felt very conflicted about whether he would or would not have wanted that. In the end, based on my knowing that he wanted his print journals to be published, and how much—like Carolee—he's sort of mining his own journals for his other writing, I was at peace with it. But it's an interesting position to be in. And of course the Estate gave permission, which ultimately was the main thing that mattered. But I think it's a really interesting question for you. You know what she wanted, but did she leave you instructions for… Is it everything that should be public? Are there things in there that that people don't know about, or should there be a gap in how long it takes for people to have access to them? How are you reckoning with that?

RC: Well, the journals were sealed for five years after her death, and that was the original agreement as well. This is now the fifth year, and they've become made available for scholars onsite for the first time. With the digitization, we want to move a little bit more slowly as far as making things public, in part because the sheer volume of pages is outstanding. You know the librarian, the head of the Special Collections at Stanford, Lindsey King, hand-delivered to us this huge hard drive of tiffs, thousands of tiffs, to work through, and Rachel and I want to review that material. But we've also decided that we'll roll it out in phases, so that '50s, '60s, '70s are the first to be accessible. And it's trickier with things from the '90s on, because those people are still alive and important to her, you know? And we don't necessarily need everything to be available at once.

RH: Yeah. Well, I think it's less about redacting or anything like that, and more about, first of all, us just not being the second person to find out, you know, what's in some diary. And for us to be able to start also thinking about ways in which we want to work with this material, and people who might want to work with this material. And the vastness of it… You know, you really can't understate what it looks like when a person records everything, every day, without missing a day. I think I was reading 1980 or '81 and, you know, I got to the end—days and days of reading this—and I was, "Oh, phew, I made it. Made it through '81." And then I go to the next file, and it's just 1981 again, and it was like a separate journal of her travels. So she was writing, but then having a separate one that was extra travel information.

I mean the volume is just staggering, and the dedication to it is impressive. And the other thing too is [it] just like reiterates that this was for people to read. This was not just for her reference. I think about this a lot with her archive. She kept her childhood drawings, she kept her student work, she kept every piece of paper that crossed her path starting at such a young age that I always think that it's just like, what a wild person to be 22 and say, "All of this is going to be relevant to somebody later." You know, it's just kind of bananas. So I kind of think that her diaries were written for an audience. You know, I do.

I think it's…it's difficult… I'll come across something, and I'll be like, “Nobody should read this page,” and then I'll find out she wrote an entire essay about that page. And I'm going, “Okay, I'm just...” I don't know what I am. Private. And it could be knowing her, too, maybe feeling a little protective.

RC: I think we're both protective of this person, and though I didn't know her well personally, you still—maybe back to that caretaking idea—you still want to make sure that they are protected in a way.

One of the things that the diaries give us is this way in which we can understand the account of someone in their dailyness, right, who's also grappling with major world events and with crises in different areas of the world, you know, from the Vietnam War on, in a way that is intensely personal, but that also isn't completely reductive. And I think, again, this way of trying to imagine Interior Scroll as more than a set of ten photographic stills, trying to imagine Carolee as a far more complicated person than even she put forward—which is why the oral history project comes out—is really important.

In the sweetest way, a friend of Carolee's kind of chastened me the other day, because we were going back and forth, and they were saying, "Oh, the oral history project is so great," and I said, "We're so proud of it, blah, blah." And they said, "You know, it really should be the Oral *Istory* Project." And I loved that correction, because it showed how those little changes—removing the H from “history” —was something that Carolee did, and that her books showed, and that she didn't want that gendered inflection. And I loved that it showed this very individual moment of someone carrying forward what Schneemann had taught them. And I think that's the beauty of, again, having the dialogue. It was as if they had gone and corrected the cover of the book, you know, in the same way. And I think that, to me, is really exciting, because that's also what we need. That's what getting the material out there can make happen.

LD: Well, on that note, Rachel Helm, Rachel Churner, thank you so much for joining us today.

RC: Thank you, Lisa.

RH: Yeah, thanks, Lisa.

Outro

LD: This episode of Conversations in the Archives was recorded at Gotham Studios and edited by Lisa Darms. Our theme music is Afterglow by Growing courtesy of Joe DeNardo and Kevin Doria. Technical support was provided by David O'Neill.