



# Counter-Archive: Film, the Everyday, and Albert Kahn's Archives de la Planète (Film and Culture Series)

*Paula Amad*

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Tucked away in a garden on the edge of Paris is a multimedia archive like no other: Albert Kahn's *Archives de la Planète* (1908-1931). Kahn's vast photo-cinematographic experiment preserved world memory through the privileged lens of everyday life, and *Counter-Archive* situates this project in its biographic, intellectual, and cinematic contexts. Tracing the archive's key influences, such as the philosopher Henri Bergson, the geographer Jean Brunhes, and the biologist Jean Comandon, Paula Amad maps an alternative landscape of French cultural modernity in which vitalist philosophy cross-pollinated with early film theory, documentary film with the avant-garde, cinematic models of temporality with the early Annales school of history, and film's appropriation of the planet with human geography and colonial ideology. At the heart of the book is an insightful meditation upon the transformed concept of the archive in the age of cinema and an innovative argument about film's counter-archival challenge to history. The first comprehensive study of Kahn's films, *Counter-Archive* also offers a vital historical perspective on debates involving archives, media, and memory.

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