JOAN MITCHELL
FOUNDATION

Joan Mitchell in her studio in Vétheuil, France, 1983. Photo © Robert Freson.

CALL CREATING A LIVING LEGACY

Career Documentation for the Visual Artist: An Archive Planning Workbook and Resource Guide

Getting artwork ready for sorting   Neal Ambrose-Smith

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Overloaded storage shed   Neal Ambrose-Smith

An Introduction to the Workbook

This workbook was created to help an artist, artist's assistant, Legacy Specialist, family member, or friend of an artist in the process of career documentation.

FOR ARTISTS:

This workbook will help you to:

- » assess what you have or have not archived.
- » develop and/or improve on an inventory and archiving system.
- » set realistic archiving goals that are comprehensive and sustainable.

For many artists there can be a conflict between the desire to create and the need to concentrate on the "business" side of their art careers. Administrative and organizational tasks can get pushed aside, avoided, or addressed intermittently. It is our hope that this workbook will help you to approach the archiving of your artwork in a systematic way, as a series of steps that can be completed on a day-to-day basis.

The process of career documentation is about valuing your artwork and your career. At any point in an artist's career, documenting and inventorying artwork can be an immensely personal and emotionally complex process. For emerging artists this can feel like a distraction from making work. For mid-career artists, it can be difficult to look back at what you've accomplished and to plan for the future. For mature artists with large bodies of work, it can be difficult to ultimately consider your own legacy.

The process requires that you assign value to what can often seem intangible, and the task, in its enormity, can at times be overwhelming and anxiety producing. Keep in mind the purpose of archiving, which is to value your artwork. Ultimately through creating a system of documentation, you will be closer to achieving your art career, life, and legacy goals.

FOR LEGACY SPECIALISTS:

This workbook will help you to:

- » understand how to work with an artist.
- » develop and/or improve on an inventory and archiving system that works for this artist.
- » understand difficulties that can arise while employed as a Legacy Specialist.

FOR FAMILY MEMBERS, PARTNERS, OR FRIENDS OF AN ARTIST:

This workbook will help you to:

- » understand how imperative career documentation is for planning an artist's estate.
- » understand what role you can play in preserving the legacy of the artist.

Organized Polaroids   Neal Ambrose-Smith

The content of this workbook was greatly informed by the artists the Joan Mitchell Foundation worked with in our program Creating a Living Legacy (CALL). In 2007, we developed the CALL program to explore the needs and concerns of mature painters and sculptors in the documentation of their works. Working closely with four artists, CALL supported these artists as they began the process of creating a comprehensive inventory of their careers. Over the next three years, we asked the artists to share their experiences and insights with us.

In addition to working closely with these four artists, we hosted artist convenings, panels, and workshops. The Joan Mitchell Foundation is now excited to bring what we, along with the CALL artists, have learned from this experience to a larger community of visual artists. It is our intention that this workbook serve as a resource for artists throughout all stages of their artistic lives. To learn more about the CALL program, please visit our website: joanmitchellfoundation.org

SPECIAL THANKS

The Joan Mitchell Foundation would like to thank the four initial CALL artists: Mildred Howard, Elemore Morgan, Jr., Freddy Rodriguez, and Jaune Quick-to-See Smith. Without their artistic vision, openness, and willingness to share their experiences and knowledge, this project would not have been possible. Finally, we would like to dedicate this effort to the memory of Elemore Morgan, Jr., and to his wife Mary Morgan, an amazing artist and truly wonderful educator.

CHAPTER 1

Importance of Documenting and Archiving Your Work

Why go through this process of documenting both your work and career?

The process of documentation is fundamentally about caring for your life's work. On a practical level, the information that you gather can be crucial at any stage of your career. But what does this mean? Consider the following scenarios where documentation would be important to an artist's career:

THE EMERGING ARTIST:

» May wish to apply for a grant, fellowship, and/or commission and need to present documentation of prior projects and work.

» May be asked to give an artist's talk.

THE MID-CAREER ARTIST:

» May have an opportunity to create a book or catalogue of their work that surveys all or some aspect of their career.

» May regularly get requests for images to be used by other people such as reproductions in a textbook, art historical text, student paper, or for educational purposes and lectures. Having complete records for the images becomes a necessity.

THE ESTABLISHED ARTIST:

» A curator may visit their studio to plan a retrospective of their work.

» An art historian may ask for documentation of the work that was in a seminal art exhibition many years ago.

» May be considering what will happen to their work when you are no longer around.

> "I have learned that if I don't take care of my work, no one else will. If I don't see the importance of archiving, why should anyone else see the importance?"
>
> *Mildred Howard*

Jaune Quick-to-See Smith working on her CALL project

Neal Ambrose-Smith

> "If I didn't have an archive or sorted inventory, there would be nothing for anyone to understand. All of my work was in folders stacked from floor to ceiling. Who would come in and sort through all these folders? No art historian would do that."
>
> *Jaune Quick-to-See Smith*

An Introduction to the Vocabulary

WHAT DOES CAREER DOCUMENTATION MEAN?

Career documentation includes all aspects of your career as an artist. It is a system created to document, detail, and demonstrate connections between your artwork, exhibition history, contacts, and archives.

Many artists begin inventorying their work by creating photo documentation of artworks. Photographing and storing your artwork can be a first step in the documentation process, but it should not be confused with the creation of a complete archive. A comprehensive system of career documentation requires an overarching organizational structure that documents all aspects of your career and catalogues their interconnection, including artwork and archive materials, sales and exhibition history, and contacts.

WHAT IS AN ARCHIVE?

An archive is what you will be compiling while you are in the process of career documentation. An archive is comprised of two parts:

» the physical inventory, which includes the artworks and archived materials documenting your career.

» the records, which are the means of tracking everything in the physical inventory, including the artworks and archived materials.

WHAT ARE THE KEY COMPONENTS OF A SUCCESSFUL ARCHIVE?

A comprehensive archive of your work should include both a physical archive and a record-keeping system. The physical inventory includes the actual works of art still in your possession, but could also include catalogues, books, project proposals, correspondence, and other materials related to your career. The record-keeping system includes documentation on each artwork in the physical archive as well as art that you no longer own. This system also contains records of your contacts and information on your career.

WHAT IS A LEGACY SPECIALIST?

During the initial phase of the Living Legacy project, the Foundation discovered that the specialized skills required to work with an artist on career documentation exceeded those of an assistant. An assistant may move canvases around and sweep floors, but a Legacy Specialist can manage inventory, images, reproduction, archiving logistics, and much more.

In later chapters of this workbook, we discuss in more detail the process of organizing your physical inventory and developing a record-keeping system. In addition we've included worksheets to help you prioritize steps in the archiving process. Keep in mind that these are suggestions; you should determine for yourself the best means of beginning the archiving process based on your individual needs.
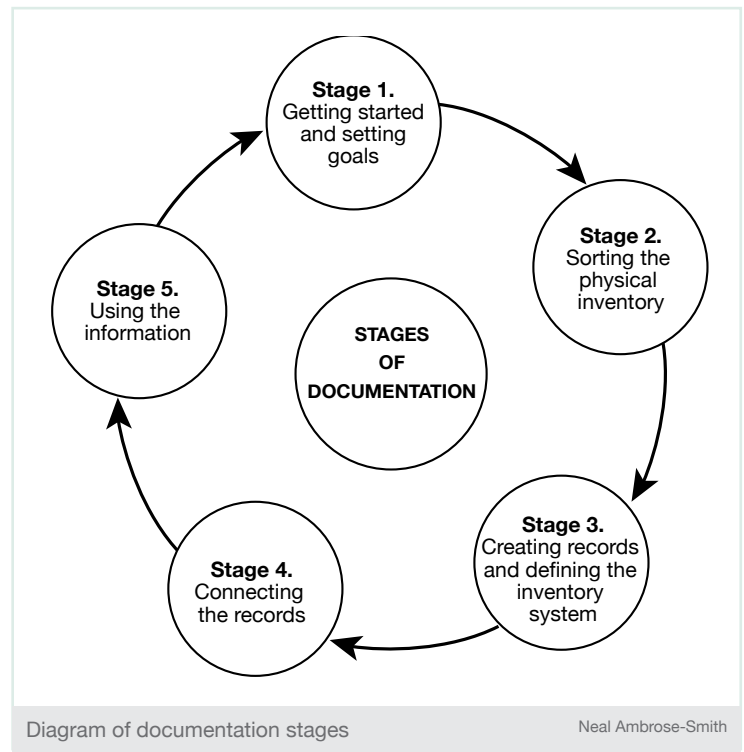
The Stages of Career Documentation

It may be helpful to think of the process of career documentation as composed of a series of stages, which the Documentation diagram illustrates.

The Joan Mitchell Foundation has learned from artists that the process of career documentation is ongoing, with artists returning to these stages at different points. The organization of your physical inventory and records may be at different stages for different bodies or types of work. For example, you may have a complete inventory list of your paintings, but have no records for your works on paper. Or you may have a comprehensive archive that relates to a specific exhibition, but no documentation for artworks that haven't been shown.

What do you do when you are confronted with the amount of work to be archived?

For many artists, starting is the hardest and most overwhelming part of the process. It is essential that you define a method that is realistic, sustainable, and manageable for you. In the following chapters we will walk you through the stages of career documentation and help you create an archiving system that works for you. The worksheets will assist you in taking stock and setting realistic goals.

Stage 1. Getting started and setting goals

Stage 2. Sorting the physical inventory

Stage 3. Creating records and defining the inventory system

Stage 4. Connecting the records

Stage 5. Using the information

STAGES OF DOCUMENTATION

Diagram of documentation stages   Neal Ambrose-Smith

At this point in my career what do I prioritize?
There is no perfect answer and every studio situation will be different.

EMERGING ARTIST

Define a numbering system that is simple and makes sense to you and begin numbering all your work. Always number-shoot-enter data all artworks before they leave the studio: place your inventory number on your work, photograph the work, and upload the photo with all its data into a database.

MID-CAREER ARTIST

Numbering is usually a great place to start. It's usually better to photograph works once they are numbered and record data once it is collected. You should still decide what is best for you. Don't forget to number-shoot-enter data all artworks before they leave the studio.

ESTABLISHED ARTIST

You may decide to have a work partner or Legacy Specialist (see Chapter 3: Getting Assistance) and develop a plan together. There may be stacks of unorganized artworks and ephemera. Space is at a premium and sorting can become daunting. Think about preserving work space for artmaking. Then number the existing works before numbering-shooting-data entry, and sorting artworks into new drawers, boxes, folders, or piles. A computer can sort each work into a group of your choosing.

The studio before the archive project, and the artist at work during the project

Neal Ambrose-Smith

Chapter 1 Worksheet

CREATING A TIMELINE

Begin an outline for a timeline of your career and life as an artist. This may include points when you traveled or lived in new places, experienced new materials, or started new bodies of work.

CHAPTER 2

Getting Started and Setting Goals

How do you begin the archiving process?
Are you supposed to begin from the start of your artistic career?
What do you even begin with?

The process of archiving, documenting, and organizing can be daunting. If you don't have a system in place, even the thought of creating one can be intimidating. It can paralyze artists before taking a first step. Following are some suggestions gathered from many artists. In addition, the worksheets at the end of this section are designed to help you brainstorm solutions.

1. **Get help—don't start alone.** Having someone to work with can make this process manageable. Similar to working with a trainer at the gym, having a Legacy Specialist who focuses on archiving can keep you committed to the work week after week. If you can't afford a Legacy Specialist, consider finding an intern or taking on the challenge with another artist who is also creating an archiving system. If you have a lot to sort, set a day to go through the materials and ask a group of friends or volunteers in to help you.

2. **Invest in storage materials.** Get a folding table to work on and purchase bins for sorting. Secure extra flatfiles or a filing cabinet. Build basic shelves. Professional archiving materials, such as archival boxes and plastic sheet protectors, can be very expensive. A roll of glassine can be cut to size, minimizing waste. Don't hesitate to get the supplies you need to ensure the safety of your work, but do consider what other materials are out there.

3. **Decide on a record-keeping system.** Decide which system will work best for you—will you start by keeping handwritten files or will you start on the computer? If you are working on the computer consider using a database system, however you can start with an Excel spreadsheet or Word document if you don't have access to a database. Next, decide on an inventory numbering system to use.

4. **Build on what you have.** Records of your work exist everywhere. Do you have a website? Are there any galleries, nonprofits, or museums that have information about your work? Has a catalogue of your work been published? Before you begin, take a moment to think about what records you currently have or that may be accessible through galleries, dealers, or other institutions. You may be able to avoid redoing work that has already been done.

5. **Start from your résumé.** Use your résumé as a starting point to consider your exhibition history. Loan agreements and consignment forms will include information about which artworks were included in which shows.

6. **Start from the first thing you pick up in your space.** If you are using a database system, you can simply start with the top of the pile. You do not need to worry about sorting things, the program is designed to sort information for you.

7. **Start now.** Get in the habit of labeling, inventorying, and logging every new artwork you make and every work that leaves your studio. Set up a digital camera and take a snapshot of each new work. Sign, number (inventory number), and date each new artwork, and jot down the details in a notebook, on a clipboard, or enter them in a database.

8. **Start small.** When deciding what needs to be done, break the task down into manageable steps. For example, start with one flatfile drawer or all the work on one storage rack. Or begin to catalogue all your recent works on paper before you start an inventory of your paintings. Set an objective that makes it easy to estimate the time required for its completion and keep it relatively short. See the following page on developing a S.M.A.R.T. goal.

Note: This list was devised with special help from Jaune Quick-to-See Smith, who kindly shared her recommendations.

"In the beginning I'm really glad that we started out slow, nobody knew what kind of process worked for this. Our first assistant had worked for a museum and felt that we should be just like a museum, which of course, turned out to be totally the wrong thing. Museums use abstract numbering systems as they deal with multitudes of art and artists. I need a numbering system that has meaning for me. When working with an individual artist it is not at all like a museum."

Jaune Quick-to-See Smith

Setting Manageable Goals

Setting manageable goals is critical to beginning the process of archiving. It is easy to write down a long list of things that need to get done and then get overwhelmed by them. Instead, we recommend that you think about regularly setting goals that are realistic and timely. The goal worksheets at the end of this workbook will help you to create a clear plan of action in the coming weeks and months.

EXAMPLE OF AN UNREALISTIC GOAL:

Archiving all of the work in my studio that I have done for the last 40 years.

EXAMPLE OF A MANAGEABLE GOAL:

Within the next two weeks, I will dedicate 1 hour every day to inventorying all the artwork in one drawer of my flatfiles.

S.M.A.R.T. GOAL:

S-specific, **M**-measurable, **A**-attainable, **R**-realistic, **T**-timely.
   » **Specific** goals depend on who, what, where, when, which, and why?
   » **Measurable** is accountability and tracking progress.
   » **Attainable** is a goal that motivates you towards achievement.
   » **Realistic** is a goal within your current abilities.
   » **Timely** is a goal with a time frame.

SUGGESTIONS:
   » make all goals concrete.
   » make the goal something you can clearly state in one sentence.
   » make a clear end point. The accomplishment of the goal should be definite and visible.
   » make sure the goal is something you can complete—factor in time and space restrictions.
   » set a realistic date for completing your goal.

Goal: Inventory one drawer over the next two weeks

Neal Ambrose-Smith

Chapter 2 Worksheet

GOALS

Clear goals are critical components to starting and sustaining your inventory process. Use the space below to brainstorm. Keep the goals specific, manageable, and achievable within a realistic time frame. Visualize the steps you would take to complete the goal. Use one short sentence to describe each.

LONG-TERM GOALS: **DATE:**

SHORT-TERM GOALS: **DATE:**

Chapter 2 Worksheet

GOALS

Select three short-term goals from your list that you would like to start with. Articulate each goal in one short sentence (longer sentences may indicate you are creating multiple goals). Take a moment to fill in the particulars of each below.

GOAL 1   **PROJECTED DATE OF COMPLETION:**

POTENTIAL OBSTACLES:

STEPS TO TAKE:

NOTES:

GOAL 2   **PROJECTED DATE OF COMPLETION:**

POTENTIAL OBSTACLES:

STEPS TO TAKE:

NOTES:

GOAL 3 PROJECTED DATE OF COMPLETION:

POTENTIAL OBSTACLES:

STEPS TO TAKE:

NOTES:

GOAL 4 PROJECTED DATE OF COMPLETION:

POTENTIAL OBSTACLES:

STEPS TO TAKE:

NOTES:

GOAL 5 _____ **PROJECTED DATE OF COMPLETION:** _____

POTENTIAL OBSTACLES:

STEPS TO TAKE:

NOTES:

GOAL 6 _____ **PROJECTED DATE OF COMPLETION:** _____

POTENTIAL OBSTACLES:

STEPS TO TAKE:

NOTES:

CHAPTER 3

Getting Assistance

You are encouraged to get assistance. Many artists have not organized or archived their work simply because they require help or are lacking the necessary computer skills. Hiring a Legacy Specialist can answer these needs, but you do have other options based on the type of assistance you require and what you can afford. Think broadly about ways you can get help.

Consider what skills you need your Legacy Specialist to have. Do you need someone with good computer skills? Do you need someone who can help you with photography or scanning? Do you need someone who can build shelves in your storage space?

When archiving, keep in mind that it is in your best interest to be working alongside your Legacy Specialist, actively participating in the process. You need to be present for two reasons: first, you should be available to answer questions on your work. Second, you will want to make sure you understand how to use the organizational system being created and that it works for you.

Consider compiling a team of assistants that would encompass paid employees, contract laborers, as well as family or friends.

> "With a young artist one Legacy Specialist could come in and get them going. But with an older artist like me and the amount of work I have, I see no other way than working with a team. If the artist is serious about creating an archive of work, they must be committed to the 'big-dig.'"
>
> *Jaune Quick-to-See Smith*

TYPES OF ASSISTANTS

The assistant: Assistants can work part-time or full-time; either way they should be paid by you as an employee. What this means is that they should be on your payroll, and you will be required to deduct state and federal taxes from their paycheck. They will have a set schedule and are expected to accomplish the tasks that you outline.

The independent contractor (Legacy Specialist): An independent contractor differs from an assistant as you will be hiring him or her for specific projects and frequently for a specific skill set—as a photographer for example. An independent contractor should outline the project for you what their project phases and timeline are in a proposal. When paying an independent contractor, you do not have to remove any money from his or her paycheck for taxes or unemployment. However, you will need to provide both the IRS and the independent contractor with a 1099 form if the cost of the contractor's services is more than $600. The independent contractor is responsible for his or her taxes on these earnings.

Working with a Legacy Specialist   Neal Ambrose-Smith

LEGAL ISSUES IN HIRING AN ASSISTANT VERSUS AN INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR:

Please note: artists frequently hire assistants and pay them as if they are independent contractors, as a means of avoiding paying taxes on the employee. This practice is illegal if the assistant is really an assistant working for you versus an independent contractor. If you do get caught, you are liable for back taxes and penalties. Contract labor is part-time work, 20 hours per week or less. Before hiring an assistant or an independent contractor, please consult an accountant.

The intern: Interns are usually unpaid or may receive a modest stipend for their time or traveling expenses. An intern can provide temporary or short-term help, however keep in mind that legally an intern should not be working the way an assistant or Legacy Specialist does. The purpose of an internship is to provide an educational opportunity. With an intern, it is necessary to define specific projects and learning goals for the duration of the intern's time with you.

The best way to find interns is through a local college or university, especially those that offer credit for internships, or require internships in the completion of a degree. Consider approaching a local university's fine arts, art history, or arts management department to locate potential applicants. Make sure to write up a description of what the intern might learn working with you or the type of experience he or she can expect to have.

Getting family and loved ones involved: It is very important in any archiving project that you engage the people whom you are close to. In particular, as you get older, you will want to make sure you have selected one or two people to be knowledgeable about your archive: how it is structured, how your work is stored, and what you value. Getting a son or daughter, partner or close friend involved in the archiving process is a wonderful way to ensure he or she understands your work and your wishes.

Involving your community: Many artists are teachers or leaders in their communities. They have engaged a range of people over the years to give them a hand on their work and their archives. By choosing to involve more people, these artists in turn found their communities more invested in them and their work.

Involving your gallery: Your gallery will most likely respond with enthusiasm to your organizational efforts. A gallery that you have worked with for any length of time will have information useful to your archive. Some galleries can be averse to sharing contacts and collector information. When working with a gallery, approach the topic early on in your relationship.

Find an archiving partner or start an archiving group: When The Joan Mitchell Foundation first started researching the process of career documentation the group of four artists were regularly brought together to share their archiving processes. We hadn't foreseen how valuable these conversations would be to the artists. As mentioned earlier in the workbook, archiving can be an intensely emotional and tedious task. Getting support and advice, and sharing goals out loud can make the process more bearable. Build that support system by choosing to start the process with a buddy or a group of friends.

Organize a team to work with you: If you are an artist starting this process late in your career and you have a lot of work to archive, consider the team approach. A team utilizes a range of assistants, independent contractors, and interns in conjunction with a committed team player who is a family member or a close friend. This individual could also be the person who handles your estate. The tasks are divided between the team, while the person responsible for your estate is intimately informed about your archiving system.

"Something that I didn't do, but I would recommend is that there should be a signed contract spelling things out. What is going to be done and what is expected. This contract could be very formal."

Freddy Rodriguez

ADVICE FOR LEGACY SPECIALISTS WORKING WITH ARTISTS

It takes a great deal of skill, patience, and servitude. It's a commitment that can be taxing on the relationships of the artist and the assistant as well as their families. Contract workers can simply stop whenever they want, as they have no further legal obligation and there is simply nothing the artist can do or say about it. Professional commitment should supersede the legal obligation to finish the job and build relationships.

In the beginning of contract work between the artist and the Legacy Specialist there is a lot of catching up to do: telling stories, discussing how coffee should be made and when to take breaks, sharing ideas and learning something about each other–building a foundation of trust and understanding. What matters most is what you share, not what you know.

Be prepared to spend some time in discussion. These talks will inform the Legacy Specialist and provide him or her with important details about the artist and work. With the artist's permission, these conversations could be recorded for the archive. The more information collected, the more complete the archive.

Establish work schedules and habits early on. In an artist's studio everyone is a stranger, except for the dogs, and this applies to spouses and family. Strangers are difficult to work around and make it difficult for the artist to work. With a little time and dialogue a schedule can make it easier for everybody. Habits can include music, coffee, walking the dogs, and talking on the phone. Open communication between the artist and the assistant is vital to the relationship.

"You need someone who is knowledgeable about art, but also someone who is committed and has an interest in what the job entails. You have to work with the assistant even if it is a limited amount of time, and even though I hate to supervise other people, I think it is necessary to make sure that the work is being done in a way, that when it is finished, it makes sense to you."

Freddy Rodriguez

Working with a Legacy Specialist   Neal Ambrose-Smith

CHAPTER 4

The Legacy Specialist

The individuals that the Foundation has trained to work with artists are called Legacy Specialists. They are defined by four categories of skills:

1. **SOCIAL SKILLS**

2. **ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS**

3. **ART APPRECIATION**

4. **TECHNOLOGY SKILLS**

Social Skills include good communication, listening, and being respectful. Often many of the artists Legacy Specialists work with are older, so patience is a vital element in the relationship. Through being open to suggestion and asking questions, the Legacy Specialist can reassure the artist.

Organizational Skills involve inventory assessment, handling the physical and digital archive, including computers and equipment, and maintaining a clean and safe work area.

Art Appreciation covers a broad area: A basic understanding of art history and art identification, art mediums and health and safety, art-related packing and archiving materials, and art conservation. Furthermore, an appreciation and respect of the artist's work is imperative.

Technology Skills cover computers and photography. A basic understanding of computers, art-related software, and scanning are necessary. Basic, rather than professional, photography skills are required as well.

Many of these skills can and will be learned on the job as the Legacy Specialist is a very specialized and unique worker.

Example of the proper way to handle a painting, keeping the hand and fingers from pushing into the back of the canvas.

When a canvas is handled improperly damage to the painting may result. In the images at right, you can see where the knuckles are pushing into the back side of the canvas. A small dent could potentially crack the surface of a painting and or stretch it irreparably.
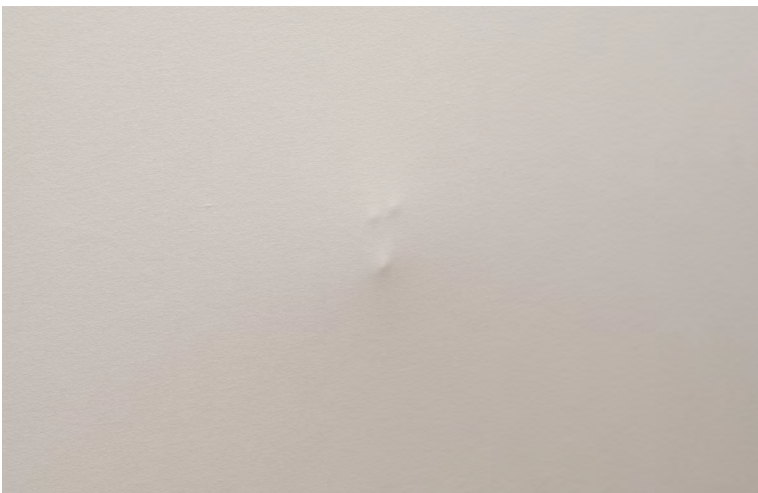
Not every assistant or Legacy Specialist will know the proper way to handle your art. Taking the time to share information is very important to the safety of the art and Legacy Specialist.

Proper and improper art handling   Neal Ambrose-Smith

Getting Started with a Legacy Specialist

Provide an overview of your work.
It is critical that anyone helping you to create a record-keeping system be knowledgeable about your work. It is also critical that your archive be organized in a way that is logical to you. Take the time to write a guide outlining the series or themes of your artwork so that you can create a structure appropriate for your archive. Please refer to the Legacy Specialist worksheet at the end of this chapter for guidance.

Talk through your timeline.
When working with a Legacy Specialist, it can be useful to give him or her a sense of the timeline of your life and career. This may seem a bit awkward at first, however the career overview will assist the Legacy Specialist in determining which artworks belong to specific points of your life.

Set realistic and regular goals.
Work with your Legacy Specialist to set archiving goals; hold scheduled meetings to discuss your progress. Continue to have discussions about prioritizing critical artworks and artworks that can wait. Artwork for an upcoming show for instance, would need immediate documentation.

Have your Legacy Specialist keep a work log.
The work log is another form of communication with the Legacy Specialist. This is especially useful when you are working with a team. The log records what they are currently working on as well as any questions they might have for you, in addition to tracking timelines for tasks.

Set aside time to answer questions.
The Legacy Specialist will need time to get to know your work. They will have more questions for you in the beginning. As the project evolves, the process will stabilize, and the goals will become clearer.

Stay involved.
Make sure you know everything your Legacy Specialist knows.

Chapter 4 Worksheet

OVERVIEW OF YOUR ARTWORK

The purpose of this worksheet is to give you an opportunity to provide an introductory overview of your career. You can then use this career outline to help you create a plan for organizing your work and your records. In addition, this overview will assist the people helping you archive, handling your estate, or researching your work in the future.

1. Outline the types of work you do. Under each type include the materials you have historically used. For example: Painting: oil on panel, oil on canvas, acrylic on canvas.

2. Outline any dominant themes in your work or series you have created over the course of your career. Include a short description of each.

3. Is there anything else people should know about your artwork?

4. Finish the following statement: I will feel my legacy successful if...

Chapter 4 Worksheet

PROJECTS FOR THE LEGACY SPECIALIST

Before a Legacy Specialist starts working with you, take a moment to outline five projects to focus on.

PROJECT 1

PROJECT 2

PROJECT 3

PROJECT 4

PROJECT 5

Metal flatfiles with large wheels mounted on plywood create a mobile base. Large wheels (5" or 7") keep the files off the floor and make them extremely easy to move.

Example of a simple flatfile matboard box. The box is scored and folded. The seams are reinforced with linen tape for long life. These boxes are made to fit the artwork and do not exceed the flatfile drawer height. Keeping artworks in these boxes prevents the artwork from sliding around, catching on drawer parts, and bending corners, resulting in damage.

Neal Ambrose-Smith

CHAPTER 5

The Physical Inventory

A critical element to creating an archiving system, as well as caring for your artwork, is developing a method for physically organizing your studio and additional storage. Any records you keep will be more useful if they include information on the physical location of the artwork. As with many organizational tasks, making the decision and then setting up the system is the hardest part.

This section will orient you to some of the larger concerns about safely storing your artwork and related material. Keep in mind it is important to care for your work, but don't feel as if you have to become a museum. See the end of this chapter for professional resources, including archival supply companies and books on conservation that will address, more thoroughly, the archiving of physical artworks.

"Personally going through this process has helped me to understand what I have done. It gives me the opportunity to access the work that I have done over all these years, and I think that is really important.

By having things in order, if I have to apply for a fellowship or send some slides out, it is all there and available. If someone is interested in writing about my work, or even if I need to find something that I have done in the past in terms of articles or reviews, I can just go to it. I don't have to go through piles and piles of papers to find one thing."

Mildred Howard

Steps for Organizing and Taking Care of Your Physical Inventory

1. **Evaluate your current storage methods and storage space based on the following suggestions:**

   » Keep the temperature consistent. Extreme temperature and temperature fluctuations are harmful to all types of artwork. The temperature fluctuations in uninsulated areas, such as an attic or basement, can cause many types of materials to expand and crack.

   » Keep the humidity low. Ideally all artwork should be stored at humidity levels between 40% and 60%. Photographs, especially negatives or color prints, must be kept in a cool and dry location.

   » Consider building a climate-controlled space if you work with very fragile materials or live in a warm climate. There are also storage services that provide climate-controlled spaces for artwork, however these can be expensive options. As an alternative we have seen artists use AC units to keep the storage space a consistent temperature.

   » Try to control air quality. Dust, pollen, pollution, sand, all of these can be harmful to work. Evaluate which environmental factors you can control or eliminate.

   » Avoid direct sunlight. Keep all stored artwork out of direct sunlight which can cause long-term damage to artwork.

   » Avoid cement floors, which can retain moisture. Build shelves or racks to raise the artwork off the floor.

   » Assess the likelihood of insect or rodent problems.

   » Consider the types of natural disasters that could happen to your storage space, particularly flooding. If you live in an area prone to flooding, consider building a sealed space for your storage. Consider the sprinkler system. Though it is essential to have a sprinkler system for fire safety, if this system does go off it could result in unexpected water damage. We recommend you anticipate this potential damage by covering shelving units with plastic or tarps.

   » Insurance. Getting insurance to cover the retail value of your artwork can be difficult and expensive. If renting you can consider renters insurance which can cover tools and computers. Insurers will require proof of value of artwork through an outside assessment, usually provided by a gallery or paid consultant.

2. **Make sure you are properly preparing your artwork for storage.**

Strategies for packaging and storing depend on the specific materials of the artwork. Below is a general list; for any unusual materials please refer to the resources listed at the end of this workbook.

2D ARTWORK

   » Label and sign all works on paper: signature, year, inventory number.

   » Keep unmatted, small, or loose work in drawers, boxes, or ideally metal flatfiles. Flatfiles reduce the possibility of damage from rodents and other animals and often insects.

   » Store similar materials together and be aware of what materials can not be stored together. For example, separate all newspaper and other highly acidic paper from other types of paper.

   » Place glassine between each work or at least on the top of each drawer.

   » When storing work in plastic sleeves be sure it is acid-free plastic.

   » Store large canvases or framed work vertically on shelves with acid-free cardboard between each to protect the surface.

   » To prevent warping and damage to large paintings, attach a reinforcement directly to the stretchers on the back of the canvas. This reinforcing board can be made of Coroplast, foam core, or cardboard.

   » Be careful when using foamcore for long-term storage of your artwork. Foam core can be harmful to the surface of artwork.

   » If you run out of space, consider rolling paintings. Make sure the work is dry and the surface is not too delicate. Roll the canvas around a cardboard or plastic tube with the painted surface to the outside.

3D ARTWORK

Consider the materials of the artwork and what you can wrap around the object to protect it. Some artists will build crates, use large bins and boxes with blankets or plastic. Get several plastic bins to help with the sorting process. Label each bin by date span (a set of years) or by category (such as "exhibition materials"). You will then be able to sort broadly into the bins; returning to fine-tune the sorting process one bin at a time.

» Be sure to label the packaged work to easily identify it. Include handling and/or assembly instructions.

» Larger pieces frequently have to be disassembled, then boxed up.

» When wrapping objects use an acid-free plastic.

» Be sure to carefully support objects that are boxed.

SKETCHBOOKS

Store sketchbooks vertically on a bookshelf. Even a slight angle puts tension on the binding.

If a sketchbook's binding is already in a vulnerable state, store it horizontally without any weight on top.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Store in boxes or flatfiles.

Keep in a consistent, cool environment with low humidity.

Consider the materials you will store them in, and make sure that any paper or cardboard has limited acidity.

VIDEOTAPES

Keep all videotapes in spaces that are climate-controlled and dust-free.

Videotapes should be stored vertically, as opposed to horizontally.

EPHEMERA

Such as archived career materials, including documents, exhibition materials, books, photographs, etc.

Store all papers in filing cabinets, bins, or boxes; books should be stored on shelves.

> "Since we have such a large selection of work to deal with, we decided to divide the work up by decades. We have four flatfiles filled with work and each one represents a different decade. Once the pieces are sorted out by decade, we then sort them by year, and then by type and series (drawing, painting on paper, print) filing them as we go."
>
> *Jordan James, Jaune Quick-to-See Smith's Legacy Specialist outlining their studio process*

3. Conservation and damaged works.

Start keeping a record of all damaged work. When looking for a conservator check with your gallery, a local museum, or framing shop to see whom they recommend.

4. Designating a space to sort.

For many artists, once an artwork is finished, it is packed and put into storage. To access what you have, you will need to define a space in your studio or storage to be used for unpacking and sorting.

» Set up folding tables to work on, creating enough surface area to sort.
» Get an extra flatfile or a series of bins, labeled with year or category, to sort materials.

5. Make a studio/storage map.

The storage map will provide you and others with what archivists call a "finding aid." The map will identify each area of storage that you have artwork or archive materials in. Each flatfile, drawer, or section of shelving should be named and labeled and the corresponding label written on the map. When you create the record for each artwork, its physical location will also be documented. This is one of the ways to create a clear connection between your physical inventory and your record-keeping system.

6. To purge or not to purge.

Some works are simply tossed in the trash, some need to be hauled to the dump, and others can be reused, finished, or repaired. Consider a two-step process for purging. First create a pile or drawer for questionable or unfinished artworks. Materials can be reclaimed or recycled from this pile and this gives you time to revisit these works later. Step two is when you truly decide to purge or not to purge. The most important thing to remember is to destroy any works beyond recognition prior to their disposal.

7. Keep a list of supplies you need to buy or build in order to store your artwork and archived career materials, such as:

» Shelving systems or painting racks
» Cardboard, storage bins, boxes, or files
» Flatfiles for works on paper and photographs
» Glassine or other archival materials
» Archival plastics (acid-free plastics) made from polyester, polypropylene, or polyethylene
» Tape, scissors, box cutter, sharpies

"This project was way bigger than I even imagined. I didn't really know what we were getting into until we started schlepping stuff around. I affectionately call this process the 'big dig.'"

Jaune Quick-to-See Smith

Resources

STORAGE AND STORAGE SYSTEMS FOR ARTISTS

Art Boards art-boards.com/art_storage_system.htm

Blick Art Materials dickblick.com/categories/conservation

Container Store containerstore.com

Archival Supply Companies

Archival Methods archivalmethods.com

Hollinger Metal Edge hollingermetaledge.com

Light Impressions lightimpressionsdirect.com

University Products universityproducts.com

BOOKS

Konstanze Bachmann, Conservation Concerns: A Guide for Collectors and Curators (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Books, 1992).

Margaret Holben Ellis, The Care of Prints and Drawings (American Association for State and Local History) (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 1996).

Ralph Mayer, The Artist's Handbook of Materials and Techniques, 5th ed. (New York: Viking, 1991).

Marjorie Shelley, The Care and Handling of Art Objects: Practices in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1987).

Jill Snyder and Joseph Montague, Caring for Your Artwork: A Guide for Artists, Collectors, Galleries, and Art Institutions (New York: Allsworth Press, 2001).

ONLINE CONSERVATION RESOURCES

American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works
conservation-us.org

The Exhibition Alliance
exhibitionalliance.org

The Getty Conservation Institute
getty.edu/conservation

The Institute of Conservation
icon.org.uk

The Library of Congress, Preservation
loc.gov/preservation/resources/care

National Parks Service, Conserve-O-grams
cr.nps.gov/museum/publications/conserveogram/conserv.html

Smithsonian Museum Conservation Institute
si.edu/mci/english/learn_more/taking_care

Arts & Business Council of Greater Boston, VLA, Estate Planning Webinars
artsandbusinesscouncil.org/online-presentations.html

Chapter 5 Worksheet

Assessing Your Physical Inventory

STUDIO ASSESSMENT

1. Consistent temperature?

2. Air quality?

3. Artwork exposed to direct sunlight?

4. Artwork resting on cement floors?

5. Evidence of insects or rodents?

6. Are natural disasters a concern?

7. Physical dangers?

8. Insurance?

9. Artworks labeled?

10. Artworks packed properly?

Outline the current state of organization (or lack of organization) of your physical inventory:

List any systems you are using to keep track of your work: databases, inventory lists, digital images, or simply "in your head":

Given the storage procedures detailed in this workbook, write down any concerns you have about the safety of your work:

Chapter 5 Worksheet

Mapping Your Studio and Storage Space

Draw a map of your studio and/or storage space and label each area where artwork or your archives are currently stored. You will be noting these locations in your records as a way of linking your archiving system to the physical location. Make sure to leave a copy of the map in connection with your record-keeping system.

Map of studio   Neal Ambrose-Smith
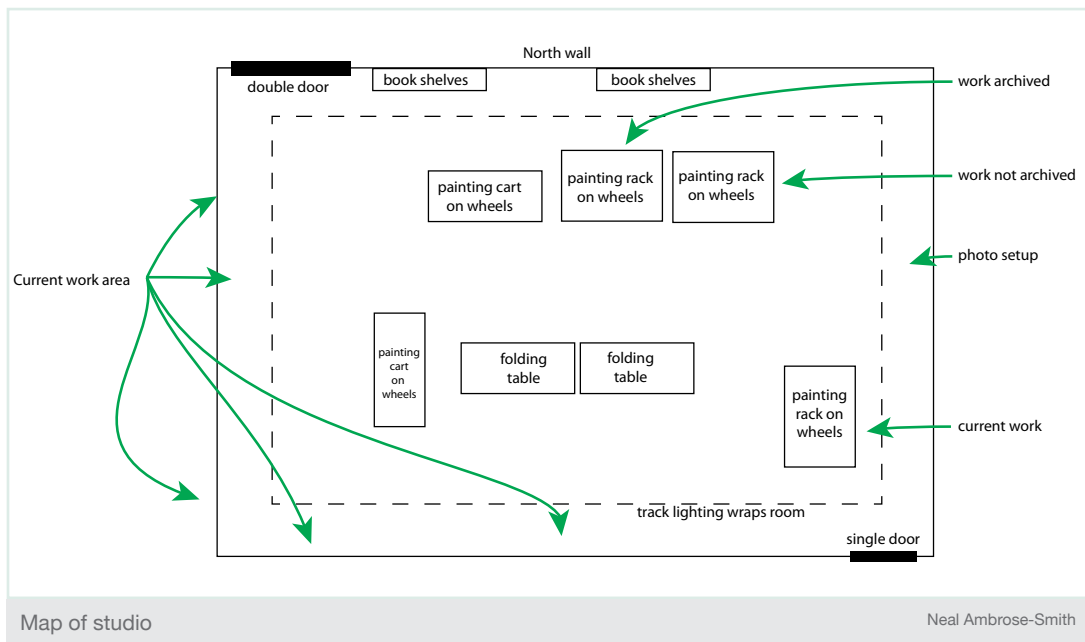
An example of a record-keeping system using a recipe box. These cards could then be scanned later, uploaded to a computer, and added to a database or spreadsheet.

Another example of a record-keeping system: inserting slides into plastic sleeves in a three-ring binder. The slides are safe and ready for labeling and future scanning.

Examples of organizing record-keeping systems

Neal Ambrose-Smith

CHAPTER 6

The Record-Keeping System

Artists keep track of their careers in a range of ways: with an inventory list of artworks, a detailed CV with exhibition information, an e-mail list of contacts, and a bibliography of publications. Each of these examples represents an important record-keeping category within an archiving system: artworks, exhibition information, contacts, and archive materials. This section provides an overview of record-keeping systems, the different options and equipment you may need for each, and the type of information you should be collecting for the record fields.

THREE EXAMPLES OF RECORD-KEEPING SYSTEMS

Below are three different examples of record-keeping systems. The first system involves handwritten information on a card or in a notebook and does not require a computer. The second two inventory systems both require use of a computer. We recommend people use a computer and in particular a database software system, however we want to emphasize that it is important to find the system you are most comfortable with.

1.   Handwritten notecards or notebooks

Keeping an inventory list in a notebook or creating an index-card system is a simple starting point. When keeping handwritten records, make sure to pair an image with each entry. If you are uncomfortable with digital cameras, simply sketch the artwork for each record. In addition, make sure to photocopy all records and keep a copy in a secure location off-site.

Example of a documentation record   Neal Ambrose-Smith

LIST OF WORKS FOR PENSECOLA MUSEUM SHOW:

1. *What have you been missing?* (2013), Oil on canvas, mixed media, 60" x 72"; NS13PG004
2. *Learn our history in three videos* (2013), Oil on canvas, mixed media, 60" x 96"; NS13PG005
3. *I always say plow in all the fertilizer your pocketbook can stand* (2011), Mixed media, 48" x 36"; NS11PG008
4. *Coyote Goes Hunting at the Disco* (2006), Intaglio-Type, 42" x 23"; NS06PR001
5. *Story Teller* (2007), Monotype, 30" x 22"; NS07PR005
6. *Map of the Universe* (2008), Monotype, 32" x 44"; NS08PR002
7. *Singing the roof off* (2008), Monotype, 32" x 44"; NS08PR003
8. *Charlie Two Eagles exercising affirmative action* (2008), Color Lithograph, 30" x 22"; NS08PR036
9. *Going where no man has gone before* (2008), Monotype, 22" x 30"; NS08PR016
10. *Abstract in Your Home* (2009), Neon, 71" x 71"; NS09SC002
11. *Dancers* (2011), Inverse Intaglio-Type, 39"; NS11PR095
12. *Indian Heart* (2011), Mixed media, 48" x 36"; NS11PG009
13. *Indian Shoe* (2012), Oil on canvas, mixed media, 60" x 48"; NS12PG003
14. *Masquerade* (2012), Mixed media, 39" x 25"; NS12PR034
15. *Exposed, Strange and Weird* (2012), Mixed media, 44" x 30"; NS12PR035
16. *Fighter Sang Tenor* (2012), Mixed media, 39" x 25"; NS12PR036
17. *Detective Tom Scares Easy in 'Terror Powwow'* (2012), Mixed media, 44" x 30"; NS12PR037

Example of a Word Document List   Neal Ambrose-Smith

	TITLE	ID NUMBER	MEDIA	TYPE
1	**TITLE**	**ID NUMBER**	**MEDIA**	**TYPE**
2	James Paints-too-Soon	NS13PG012	Oil on canvas	PAINTING
3	Walter Redglare	NS13PG011	Oil on canvas	PAINTING
4	Sonny Speaks-Easy	NS13PG010	Oil on canvas	PAINTING
5	Weird	ns12pg004	Oil on canvas	PAINTING
6	ears (2013)	NS13SC001	mixed media	SCULPTURE
7	Coyote Goes Hunting at the Disco	ns06pr001	Monotype	PRINT
8	Story Teller	ns07pr005	Monotype	PRINT
9	Map of the Universe	ns08pr002	Monotype	PRINT
10	Singing the roof off	ns08pr003	Monotype	PRINT
11				
12				
13				
14				
15				
16				
17				
18				

Example of an Excel Spreadsheet   Neal Ambrose-Smith

Spreadsheets and Databases

2. Word document or Excel spreadsheet on the computer

A computerized record-keeping system has many advantages. It allows you to easily back-up your records, share the information with others, and even develop a system in which Legacy Specialists can do the inputting. A simple way to begin is to create an inventory list in a Word document or create a spreadsheet in Excel. Spreadsheets organize related information and group different categories of information (such as artwork, contacts, etc.) in separate columns or lists.

3. Database program on a computer—the most comprehensive system

A database is the best system for managing your records. Databases allow you to connect different types of information to each record without a need for repetition. They allow you to store a range of information—records for work, contacts, and press—all within the same system.

Looking at the database example on the previous page you will see that the "General Information" tab is open. There are multiple tabs for editions, images, copyrights, and more. This information can be linked in multiple locations. The potential for error is greater with the spreadsheet record-keeping method as changes to entries are not automatically replicated across worksheets; you must manually update the information in each location to keep your records up-to-date.

A database, on the other hand, allows data fields to be linked across the system. You can enter the collector's name and link it to all related areas within the database; any changes you make to entries are automatically replicated in multiple locations. You can also perform searches that allow you to pull up all instances of a collector's name or the name of an artwork that was included in a particular show. It is this linking of information that makes a database the most dynamic record-keeping system.

Example of an Excel Spreadsheet   Neal Ambrose-Smith

> "It is more than important, it is a lifesaver. I mean this is unbelievable, to have a database at your fingertips. You open this little thing on the computer and you can find everything you have done in your life. I mean how good is that? You don't have to scratch your head and try to remember in which box to look."
>
> *Freddy Rodriguez*

A FINAL NOTE ON DATABASES

With databases, you have two options. You can purchase the software, such as Filemaker Pro, and build it out according to your needs, or you can purchase software customized for the needs of visual artists. Ask fellow artists what they are using. Use caution when buying a program that has been designed for a gallery and not an artist. Galleries frequently purchase complex database programs that have monthly or yearly service fees.

Filemaker Pro is one of the software programs in which many databases are designed. You can purchase pre-made databases or simply purchase the software to design something to your needs. If you are comfortable with computers and confident in your ability to learn a new program, you can design your own database system. For the beginning user it is not recommended.

BASIC EQUIPMENT TO CONSIDER

» Notebook or notecards if you are choosing not to use a computer

If using a computer you will need:

» Computer and external hard drive for backup
» Printer
» Digital camera and/or scanner

Software you might need:

» For images: Picasso, iPhoto, Aperture, Adobe: Photoshop, Lightroom, or Elements
» For documents: Microsoft Word, Apple Pages, or Adobe Acrobat
» For spreadsheets: Microsoft Excel or Apple Numbers
» For a database: Filemaker Pro or a program designed for artists

Additional materials:

» Filing cabinet or filing boxes for paperwork and/or a fire-safe

Information Your Records Should Contain

Now that we have outlined three types of systems, we will review the type of information to collect. Records should be kept for the following categories:

- » Artwork
- » Contacts
- » Exhibitions
- » Archives

1. Artwork Record

You will be compiling records for all of the artwork in your studio and storage space, as well as for artwork you have sold or donated. From these records, you will create an inventory list.

Following is a list of fields that should be included in an artwork record:

» Inventory number	» Medium	» Locations (current/home)	» Installation Instruction/Care
» Title	» Size	» Value/Price	» People/Institutions
» Date	» Images	» Exhibitions	» Notes

Unique inventory number

A unique numbering system allows you to identify and track each work you have made. The number should be listed both on the artwork (or packaging) and on the record. When creating an inventory numbering system, you should take into account the way you work. Inventory numbers are critical for artists who make many untitled works, prints, or work in multiples. This number should have meaning for you.

A standard example includes your initials, the year the work was completed, the category of work (for example: drawing versus painting), and a number for that individual work. The numbers given to individual pieces are usually chronological within the year or category of work.

Time to start logging these files into a database or spreadsheet

Neal Ambrose-Smith

UNIQUE INVENTORY NUMBER EXAMPLES

JD2009DW27 or JD09DW27
This is the 27th drawing Jane Doe made in 2009
(i.e., Jane Doe, 2009, Drawing, #27)

JD09DWO27
This is the 27th drawing from the "Oceans" series that Jane
Doe made in 2009

JD09DW0311
Jane Doe made this drawing on March 11, 2009

Account for multiples: Consider any prints or multiples you have
done.

JD09PR0122
JD09PR0222
Jane Doe's 2009 prints 1 and 2 from edition 22.

JD09IN1A or JD09IN101
Jane Doe's 2009 installation. In these examples either "A" or
"01" serve as an indicator of components.

If you are using a database system you won't need special
numbers for editions. The database can manage this special
category.

Unknown year of creation: For some artists, there is a lot of
undated work. If you can not remember the year, choose a
number to signify the year is unknown. This number should
correspond to a year that you will never be creating artwork,
such as your year of birth. You want to keep track of the work
that has an unknown year.

JDXXDW42
Jane Doe's 42nd drawing from an unknown year
("unknown" is represented by the letters "XX")

HOW TO USE YOUR INVENTORY NUMBER

» An inventory number should exist both on the artwork itself and in the artwork record.

» The number should also be listed on sales receipts, consignment forms, and exhibition loan records.

» Inventory numbers should never be altered, especially once the work has "entered the world."

» Consider making inventory numbers for work that has been sold, given away, or perhaps even destroyed.

Unique inventory number
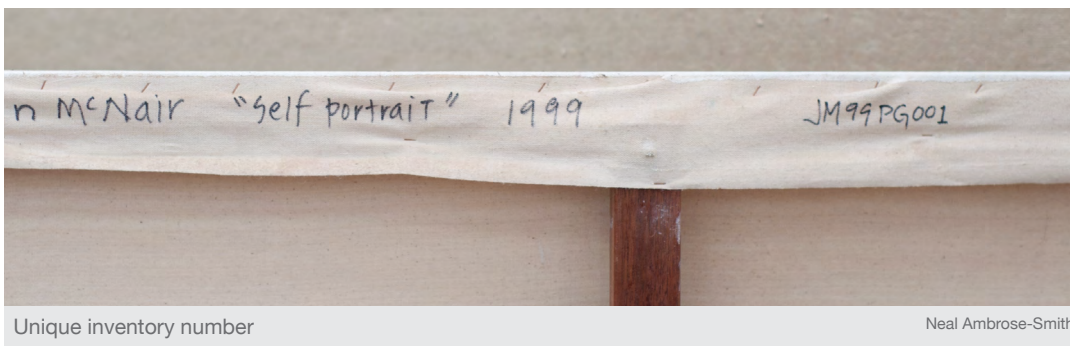
Neal Ambrose-Smith

The back of this painting
is identified with a unique
inventory number:
JM99PG001 signifying
"John's" first painting in
1999.

Final note: Keeping your numbering system simple is best. This number is designed to track your work and not necessarily contain
more information than "artist" (JD), "year" (09), "category" (DW), and "number made that year" (001). Using two place holders or digits
for artist, year, and type are more than adequate. Three digits for the "drawing number" made that year is, in most cases more than
adequate as well, giving you 999 drawings for that given year. Using this system "JD09PG001" is easy to read and computer friendly.
Alternating two letters with two numbers is easier to read as well.

Periods can be hard to read on your work and can leave a serious dimple on the face of work. Dashes and other symbols might not make your job any easier and may confuse computers. Two digits for the year will allow for a century of "art tracking" information. A simple code for "type of work" is best. For instance: DW for drawing, PG for painting, PU for public art, SC for sculpture, and so on. Print edition numbers can be managed in a database or spreadsheet, further reducing confusing inventory numbers.

In essence, every work of art leaving your studio should have a number on it: paintings, sculptures, and every print in an edition. Each editioned print should be considered an independent work of art. Pick a numbering system that has meaning for you and is easy to read. Changing it later on can be costly and difficult.

Previous numbering systems: Galleries also create and assign inventory numbers to your work. Keep in mind that these numbers reflect a system designed for their organization, not for you. They should not to take the place of your inventory numbers. You should list the gallery number alongside your own inventory number in your archive record for that piece, connecting your inventory number to theirs.

Title: Full title of the artwork should be listed.

Date: This is the year the artwork was completed. If you are uncertain of the date, make a note of that. Dating is essential to determining an artwork's value, as well as to understanding the chronology of an artist's career.

Medium: List all of your materials, which will aid in the future care of your work as well as provide necessary information for historians and archivists.

Size: Include information on whether the work is framed or mounted and what those measurements are: in the order of height x width x depth.

Images of your work: An image (photograph, slide, or digital image) should be paired with the record and inventory number of each artwork in your system. The photograph does not need to be professional, just a snapshot meant solely for the purpose of identifying the work. This process can also help you to identify pieces that need to be documented professionally at a later date.

Location of your artwork: Consider creating at least two fields for location: one for the "home" of the artwork, and one for its current location (for work currently showing or on loan). Locations may include your home, studio, gallery, or storage. Also document the location for artworks owned by collectors, gifts, donated, or even work that has been destroyed. Although sold work can be hard to locate, you will want to consider tracking it, especially if you are planning a retrospective or catalogue at some point, for which this information will be needed.

Artwork values according to date: Always note the selling price of each piece and its value (the value may be higher than the selling price if it was discounted), along with the date and who made the sale. If you donate works to benefit auctions or gift pieces to friends, note the estimated value (usually determined for shipping or consignment purposes) and date as well.

All estimated values should correspond to a verifiable sales history. If you are an emerging artist and do not yet have a sales history for your work, ask around and take a look at what comparable artwork by artists at your career point is selling for.

Determining an appraisal value for your work, although an uncomfortable process, is very important when thinking to the future, and is vital for artists who are working on estate planning and taxes. If you don't place a value on the artwork, someone might be forced to value it for you, if anything were to happen to you. There are some resources on estate planning at the end of this chapter.

Exhibitions: Your entire exhibition history should be linked to the artwork record.

Installation and proper care instructions: How is your work meant to be shown? Include hanging or floor instructions. If you make installations or sculptures with many components, document the parts, and include assembly and breakdown instructions. If you use unique materials that people may be unfamiliar with, include instructions on how best to care for the work.

People or institutions affiliated with that artwork: This field includes owners, curators, collectors, gallery directors, writers, etc. In addition you should list any collaborators, fabricators, or others who contributed to making the artwork.

Notes: You should include a notes field in which to document any related information about the artwork. In addition if you do not have an image of the artwork you can use this area for a short description or drawing.

2. Contact Record

For each individual and institutional contact your records should include the following fields.

- » First Name
- » Last Name
- » Institution
- » Address
- » E-mail
- » Website
- » Phone Number
- » Notes

Contacts should include anyone who has shown interest in your work: fellow artists, curators, galleries, dealers, collectors, staff at support foundations, and "art fans." These are people who may be able to help you as you undertake the process of documentation. In addition, you should

- » keep your contacts list up-to-date with names, mail and e-mail addresses, websites, and other relevant information.
- » link your contacts to the related artwork or exhibitions in your archive system.
- » keep a record of where your artwork goes if you work independent of a gallery and/or sell directly from your studio.
- » create an agreement with your gallery regarding contacts. Often times galleries and dealers selling your work may not automatically divulge their clients' and collectors' information. When requesting client information from your gallery, you may consider working out an agreement that ensures you will respect the relationship the gallery has with their clients by not approaching these clients directly for sales. In ten or twenty years, around the time you may be planning a mid-career retrospective, you will want to follow up with these collectors to find out if they have kept the work, sold it, or donated it to an institution.

3. Exhibition Record

Your exhibition records expand on your CV, provide an in-depth look at your career, and help map the network of connections among your works, exhibitions, and reviews.

Exhibition records should include information in the following fields:

- » Exhibition Title
- » Exhibition Dates
- » Opening Date
- » Location
- » Institution
- » Curator(s)
- » Images
- » Artwork
- » Exhibition Materials
- » Catalogue/Writer
- » Press
- » Notes

In addition to listing exhibitions, an exhibition record contains information on the pieces that were in each show (the artwork record should also cross-reference the exhibition), who the curators were, and, in the case of group exhibitions, who the accompanying

artists were. Include all shows you participated in, regardless of their size, as you want to create a complete picture of your career development. You should also maintain an official CV that lists all your exhibitions, no matter how small a show may feel in retrospect. This comprehensive CV will be in addition to your working CV that has been edited down for length.

Exhibition images and materials: If you are able to, take an installation shot for each show or ask the gallery or venue to supply you with one. Retain the original press release, cards or flyers, and any other material related to each show.

Press reviews and listings, books, catalogues, etc: In addition to keeping copies of any press reviews and listings of you and your work, you will want to keep a record of which pieces and exhibitions were featured in each review. (This information should also be in your artwork record—note where the piece was reviewed, whether an image of the work was reproduced, and who wrote the review.)

4. Archive Record

Materials in your archives can provide other artists, future historians, and curators with information about your career development and how you conceptualize your work. In addition, many artists have found it useful to review copies of projects, proposals, and artist statements later in their career.

Archived material can include artist statements and project statements filed by date and/or body of work.

Applications, show and project proposals: File all of your grant or residency applications, and your show and project proposals even if you are not awarded them. They provide valuable information about your ideas and ambitions. When re-applying, access to past proposals can be useful in tracking development between applications and weeding out repetition.

List of all awards, fellowships, and residencies: List these, and in addition, the body of work or project related to each, if applicable.

Other materials: Sketchbooks, project sketches, correspondence, personal photographs, and other related material.

Records for archived material should contain information in the following fields:

- » Name/Title
- » Type of Archived Material
- » Date
- » Location
- » Individual/Institution
- » Related Artwork
- » Exhibition
- » Notes

In the beginning this list might be small and simple, but leaving room to grow for future information is advised. For instance, many artists may only have titles and dates. Focus on available information.

Resources

Please note: Filemaker Pro was used to build the database for the Foundation. Many other programs can be used, though we can not endorse their effectiveness and quality.

Filemaker Pro	GYST	Artworks
filemaker.com	gyst-ink.com	artworkspro.com
Bento 4	ArtSystems	PrimaSoft
filemaker.com/products/bento	artsystems.com	primasoft.com

Legacy Specialists working with the Joan Mitchell database   Neal Ambrose-Smith

Chapter 6 Worksheet

Developing Your Inventory Numbering System

Considering the examples listed earlier in this chapter, and including specifics about your artwork, design an inventory numbering system that works for you.

1. Consider all types of work you do and draft the abbreviations for all types or mediums you use. For example: Drawing is DW

2. List the other elements of your work you'd like to keep track of. This may include multiples, series, or anything that is constant about the work. Do not include things that might change, such as framing or location.

3. Outline your inventory numbering system below:
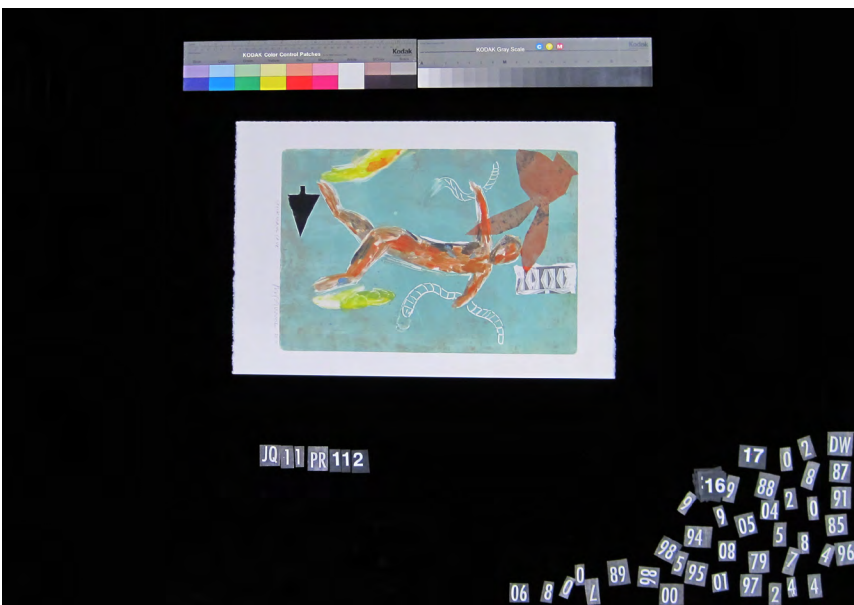
Copystand setup for small to medium works
Neal Ambrose-Smith

Example of a large-format copystand. The Speedotron strobes are mounted to the ceiling straddling a skylight. The skylight is blocked out and a Nikon D300 (50mm lens) is mounted in there. The camera is USB tethered to a laptop computer using Nikon's Camera Control Pro 2 software. Focusing, shutter speed, aperture, white balance, and shutter release are all controlled on the laptop. The screen has an active view for correct placement of artworks. This could provide a continuous work flow of 150 artworks shot per hour, with two people.

Copystand setup for small to medium works as photographed
Neal Ambrose-Smith

Example of copy stand work area. A 50" x 60" flat board is covered with black cloth. Color bars are placed next to the artwork. The unique inventory number is read from the back of the artwork and assembled on the board as well. The numbers and letters are printed as white text on a black background from a computer. Extra numbers and letters are stored out of view from the camera, but the color bars and inventory number are kept in the shot. Having the inventory number in the shot avoids confusion later when editing the photos and entering them into a database or spreadsheet.

CHAPTER 7

Photographing Your Work

Professional photography is very expensive and film increasingly obsolete. Many artists today are shooting their own work, digitally. While it is important to capture images of your work for documentation purposes, you'll also want the best quality images possible. Here are two methods for lighting your work for digital photography and some helpful tips.

1. **Decide on your budget.** High quality photography can be achieved without spending too much money. Be firm on your budget.

2. **Digital cameras.** Most point-and-shoot cameras fit many budgets. Choose a camera with the highest resolution you can afford. Many are ten megapixel or higher. The higher the megapixel, the higher the resolution. Some cameras offer several image formats: JPEG, TIF, and RAW. RAW is the highest resolution because there isn't any loss to the image due to compression, but you can still get high-quality images with JPEG. TIF is an uncompressed format that many cameras offer today, and is the preferred format for reproduction. If using a point-and-shoot camera, hot lamps are most likely the only option. Use the self timer and a tripod to avoid shaking the camera while photographing. DSLR cameras (digital single lens reflex) are very similar to 35mm film cameras in function and style. They have interchangeable lenses, are more expensive, and can be controlled via computer.

3. **Lenses.** Zoom in to 50mm or more with point-and-shoot cameras. This will eliminate barrel distortion or bending of your image. If you are using a DSLR then choose a 50mm or longer lens.

4. **Trapezoid.** Be sure to keep your camera and your work on the same plane to avoid a trapezoid affect. This is where the bottom of your image is wider than the top.

5. **Hot lamps.** Depending on what type of lamps used, they can get quite hot. Set them evenly spaced and pointing towards your work at 45 degree angles. Generally two lamps are adequate for works on paper 22 x 30" or smaller. More lamps may be required depending on the size of the work. Take some test shots and check them on your computer for even lighting, vignetting (dark edges), and hot spots (bright circles). Every light has its own color so be sure to use the same lamps on each side for accurate color correcting later.

6. **Flash.** Strobe systems or "flash" systems require a DSLR generally, although some point-and-shoot digitals have hot shoes or sync connections. Strobes can be quite expensive. Typically strobes work best with umbrellas. Point the strobes away from the work into the umbrellas, at 45 degree angles from the work. This will provide nice even lighting. White umbrellas are best. The larger the umbrella, the larger the light spread. Flash photography is difficult with shiny paint and reflective surfaces, so hot lamps may be the best choice without getting into advanced photography techniques.

7. **White balance.** Most digital cameras have a white balance setting. Typically shoot the white card and set the camera to the card shot. A color chart is imperative for reproduction. Be sure to mount or place the color chart so that it is in the shot. Each photo can be color corrected for reproduction. The color chart is cropped out once the image is corrected.

8. **Polarizer.** A polarizing filter can be purchased and attached to most DSLR cameras for shooting reflective surfaces and through glass, as in shooting framed art works. The polarizer twists to control which light waves pass through the lens, thereby eliminating reflections from glass.

Resources

LIGHT SOURCES

Hot lamp Bescor Portable LED Video 1-Light Kit

Flash Elinchrom D-Lite-2 IT EL 20814KIT

CAMERAS

Point-and-shoot/compact digital:

» Canon PowerShot SX210 IS

» Nikon COOLPIX L120

DSLR:

» Nikon D3000

» Canon EOS Rebel XS 18-55IS

ONLINE SHOPPING

B&H photo
bhphotovideo.com

Ebay
ebay.com

Craigslist
craigslist.org

White balance card and color chart for digital
xritephoto.com

Compact camera mounted on tripod   Neal Ambrose-Smith

Example of compact camera maximizing image area for artwork and color bars. Camera is placed about ten feet from wall in order to zoom in enough and prevent wide-angle-lens barrel distortion. A bubble level is used to make sure the lens and artwork are parallel. Capture setting is at the camera's highest resolution.

CHAPTER 8

Budgeting

Setting up a comprehensive inventory system can have a range of costs associated with it. In particular many archival materials can be expensive. When you start considering what supplies to order for archiving it can be overwhelming to consider the potential expenses. By building out a budget, however, you can develop a system that works with you without depleting your resources.

Below are highlighted areas where expenses can arise. In addition there are listed recommendations for mitigating expenses.

Assistance: Getting help in this process can be the most expensive part of it. It is also the most valuable for artists who simply have too much work to sort through on their own. As discussed in Chapter 6, consider what options you have in getting interns, bartering or getting a group of friends or family to help you on a specific project.

Storage: Many artists have to take on new spaces simply for storing artwork. When putting the work in storage you need to consider a few things. How frequently will you want access to the work? If you live in a city, storage can frequently be more expensive than storage outside of the city. You also need to consider whether the work is safe. It may be tempting to store everything in a friend's barn, however, rodents are a threat.

Storage Materials/Containers: Flatfiles are needed for storing works on paper and photographs. Though you can store much of that work in portfolios or boxes, metal flatfiles are safer in terms of protecting your artwork. When shopping for a flatfile consider checking Craigslist for your area.

Before purchasing archival boxes, consider building your own out of museum board and tape. For instructions on building archival boxes see: CALLResources.org

Much of your archival materials can be kept safely in simple plastic bins.

Technology: The new computer, scanner, and digital camera can all add up. These are tools that you will need, especially if you are developing a website. Ask your friends for recommendations for affordable cameras to purchase. Consider buying things second hand.

Software: Programs such as Photoshop can be prohibitively expensive for the individual artist. If you are affiliated with an educational institution you may be able to get a discount. Other options are freeware programs available on the web. These are programs that are developed for people to use for free. Programs such as Picasso might offer you the basic editing for digital images that you need, versus all the options that Photoshop has.

Consider your time: It can be a choice between spending your time working on this, or spending your time working on proposals for projects. Consider whether this is the best use of your time, or whether you'd prefer to hire someone to help.

Below we outline a few budget options and costs.

BUDGET ONE: CHEAP	BUDGET TWO: AFFORDABLE	BUDGET THREE: EXPENSIVE
Digital camera, tripod, lamps	Digital camera, tripod, lamps	Digital camera, tripod, lamps
$300–$500	Computer	Computer
	$1,500–$2,000	Software
		Flatfile, glassine
		$3,000–$5,000

Lights, cameras and computers   Neal Ambrose-Smith

Off-site climate-controlled storage   Neal Ambrose-Smith

These simple metal racks purchased at a local hardware store are versatile, adjustable, and are easily assembled or disassembled to relocate and modify. Dividers keep the artworks from touching the metal.

Chapter 8 Worksheet

Developing a Budget

Outline potential expenses in the areas below:

ASSISTANCE:

STORAGE:

STORAGE MATERIALS/CONTAINERS:

TECHNOLOGY:

SOFTWARE:

OTHER EXPENSES:

A Final Note

CALL RESOURCE WEBSITE

In addition to this guide, our website **callresources.org** provides additional resources to assist an artist, artist's assistant, Legacy Specialist, family member, or friend of an artist in the process of career documentation. The site includes this guide along with the Estate Planning Guide, which is designed to be a practical tool for artists and/or their supporters to use when carefully assessing and identifying the unique estate planning needs and concerns specific to the visual arts. The site also includes legacy case studies, interviews with past CALL artists, and tips on the process of inventorying in the "DIY Archive" section.

ABOUT THE WORKBOOK

It is our hope that this workbook provides you with a comprehensive overview of career documentation, serving as a starting point from which to tackle this important aspect of your career. This workbook is a work-in-process, and we appreciate any thoughts or feedback. Please contact the Foundation at: info@joanmitchellfoundation.org with questions or suggestions.

Finally, good luck with the work, and keep in touch.

Joan Mitchell Foundation, January 2015

Mitchell in her New York studio, 1957.   Rudolph Burckhardt

Bios

Chief Executive Officer of the Joan Mitchell Foundation, **Christa Blatchford** oversees the programming, administration and operations of the Joan Mitchell Foundation's two New York City locations, the home office and the newly opened Education & Research Center, as well as the Joan Mitchell Center, an artist residency center in New Orleans, LA, and alongside the Board of Directors directs the vision of the Foundation. Blatchford has previously served as the the Foundation's Deputy Director and Artist Support Director. Before joining the Joan Mitchell Foundation, Christa spent three years as a Program Officer at the New York Foundation for the Arts (NYFA), working to provide a variety of professional development opportunities for artists. She has also worked with a range of non-profit visual arts organizations including Minetta Brook and Eyebeam. A practicing video and installation artist, Blatchford graduated from the Hunter College MFA program.

As Artist Support Manager for the Joan Mitchell Foundation, **Shervone Neckles-Ortiz** manages the New York City and national Creating a Living Legacy program and Career Management and Development Workshop Series. Before joining the Foundation, Neckles-Ortiz worked as an art education consultant and instructor for the NYC Department of Education, Pratt Institute, and other leading NYC arts organizations. As a mixed-media artist, Neckles-Ortiz has held residencies in areas as diverse as the Youlou Arts Foundation in St. Vincent and the Grenadines in the West Indies, The Center for Book Arts in New York, The Fabric Workshop & Museum in Philadelphia, and The Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture in Maine. Previous awards include grants from The Puffin Foundation, Joan Mitchell Foundation, and fellowships from Robert Blackburn Printmaking Workshop and Manhattan Graphics Center. Her work has been shown worldwide in both solo and group exhibitions. She earned an MA from Teacher's College, Columbia University, and an MFA from Queens College.

Painter, printmaker, and educator **Neal Ambrose-Smith** is a consultant to the Joan Mitchell Foundation's Creating a Living Legacy program. Ambrose-Smith has also worked as a Legacy Specialist, goldsmith, graphic designer, and freelance photographer for artists. His work is included in the collections of many national and international museums and institutions, including the New York Public Library, the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, Galerie D'Art Contemporain in Chamalières, France, and Hongik University in Seoul, Korea. He received his BA from the University of Northern Colorado and MFA from the University of New Mexico.

Glossary

Acid Free: Material that yields a neutral pH of 7 or slightly higher on the pH scale.

Antivirus Software: A type of utility used for scanning and removing viruses from your computer. While many types of antivirus (or "anti-virus") programs exist, their primary purpose is to protect computers from viruses and remove any viruses that are found.

Archival: Material with good aging properties and a neutral or slightly alkaline pH.

Backup: A copy of one or more files created as an alternate in case the original data is lost or becomes unusable. For example, you may save backup files in case a hard drive fails.

Browser: A program people use to access the World Wide Web. It interprets HTML code, including text, images, hypertext links, Javascript, and Java applets. After rendering the HTML code, the browser displays a nicely formatted page. Some common browsers are Microsoft Internet Explorer, Netscape Communicator, and Apple Safari.

Byte: Unit of measurement used to measure data. A group of binary digits or bits (usually eight) operate as a unit or *byte*. One byte contains eight binary bits, or a series of eight zeros and ones. Such a group is a unit of memory size.

Career Documentation: Collecting, collating, and organizing supporting material and records pertaining to an artist's career for future reference. This may include photographs, audio and video recordings.

Cloud: Metaphor for the Internet. The phrase "cloud computing" means a type of Internet-based computing, where different services (servers, storage, and applications) are delivered to computers and devices through the Internet.

Collection Management: The supervision and organization of collected artworks, which may include their copyrights and provenance.

Compact Digital: Portable cameras particularly suitable for casual snapshots. Compact digitals are usually designed to be easy to use, sacrificing advanced features and picture quality for compactness and simplicity.

Compression: Reduces the size of one or more files. When a file is compressed, it takes up less disk space than an uncompressed version and can be transferred to other systems more quickly. Compression is often used to save disk space and reduce the time needed to transfer files over the Internet.

Condition Report: Documentation detailing an artwork's complete physical appearance.

Cursor: Mouse pointer on screen.

Data/Program Migration: The act of digitally moving all program and related files from one computer to another.

Database: A computer program which collects data (information) on a specific topic that is stored in an organized manner. Most databases contain multiple tables, which may each include several different fields. For example, a company database may include tables for products, employees, and financial records. Each of these tables would have different fields that are relevant to the information stored in the table.

Database Field: A single category of information for which data is given in each individual record.

Database File: The entire database is also known as a database file.

Database Record: All information listed for one particular item (person, place, or thing) in the database file.

Database Search/Find: An operation to locate a specific record(s) that satisfies a statement or statements of criteria.

Database Template: Pattern or form that is used repeatedly for each record in a database file. When creating a database, the template is the blank form that comes up each time you add a new record to the database.

Data Entry: Each piece of information entered for each field.

Desktop: The primary user interface of a computer. When you boot up your computer, the desktop is displayed once the startup process is complete. It includes the desktop background (or wallpaper) and icons of files and folders you may have saved to the desktop. In Windows, the desktop includes a task bar, which is located at the bottom of the screen by default. In Mac OS X, the desktop includes a menu bar at the top of the screen and the Dock at the bottom.

Download: To transfer data or programs from a server or host computer to one's own computer or device.

Drag-and-Drop: A common action performed within a graphical user interface. It involves moving the cursor over an object, selecting it, and moving it to a new location.

Drop-Down Menu: Horizontal list of options that each contain a vertical menu. When you roll over or click one of the primary options in a drop-down menu, a list of choices will "drop down" below the main menu.

DSLR: Digital single-lens reflex cameras combining the optics and the mechanisms of a single-lens reflex camera with a digital imaging sensor, as opposed to photographic film.

Emergency Preparedness: Instruction or documentation of response actions for a disaster in the studio. Forming safety and action plans in case of flood, fire, or other related disaster. See studioprotector.org

File: A collection of data stored in one unit, identified by a filename. It can be a document, picture, audio or video stream, data library, application, or other collection of data.

File Format: Defines the structure and type of data stored in a file. The structure of a typical file may include a header, metadata, saved content, and an end-of-file (EOF) marker. The data stored in the file depends on the purpose of the file format. Some files, such as XML files, are used to store lists of items, while others, such as JPEG image files simply contain a block of data. Some file format extensions are: Document files: DOCS, RTF (Rich Text Format), and PDFs. Image files: JPEGs, GIFs, BMPs, and PSDs. Audio files: MP3s, AACs, WAVs, and AIFFs. Video files: MPEG, MOV, WMV, or DV formats.

File Extension: The suffix at the end of a filename that indicates what type of file it is. For example, in the filename "myreport.txt," the .txt is the file extension. It indicates the file is a text document. Some other examples include .docx, which is used for Microsoft Word documents, and .psd, which is the standard file extension for Photoshop documents.

Filename: A text string that identifies a file. Every file stored on a computer's hard disk has a filename that helps identify the file within a given folder. Therefore, each file within a specific folder must have a different filename, while files in different folders can have the same name.

Gigabyte: One billion bytes. A unit of computer memory or data storage capacity equal to 1,024 megabytes.

Hard Disk: When you save data or install programs on your computer, the information is typically written to your hard disk. The hard disk is a spindle of magnetic disks, called platters, that record and store information. Because the data is stored magnetically, information recorded to the hard disk remains intact after you turn your computer off. This is an important distinction between the hard disk and RAM, or memory, which is reset when the computer's power is turned off.

Hyperlink: A word, phrase, picture, or icon in a computer document on which a user may click to move to another part of the document or to another document.

Host: A web hosting service is a type of Internet hosting service that allows individuals and organizations to make their own website accessible on the internet. Websites are hosted or *stored* on servers.

Import: A command typically located within a program's File menu (File/Import...). Like the standard File/Open... command, Import is used for opening files, but it serves a more specific purpose. Instead of opening standard file types, Import is often used for importing parts of files, program settings, plug-ins, or other unconventional file formats. Some programs allow "drag-and-drop" from one file to another without having to import files.

Install: To install or load a program onto your computer before use. You can install a program or software update from a file downloaded from the Internet or from a hard drive or disc.

Intern: A student or a recent graduate undergoing supervised practical training in a working environment.

JPEG: A format for compressing images.

Kilobyte: A unit of memory or data. The kilobyte (abbreviated "k" or "kb") is the smallest unit of measurement greater than a byte. It precedes the megabyte, which contains 1,000,000 bytes.

Legacy Specialist: A highly skilled expert in aiding the advancement and preservation of an artist's career.

Megabyte: A unit of memory or data that is one million bytes. One megabyte (abbreviated "MB") is equal to 1,000 kilobytes and precedes the gigabyte unit of measurement.

Metadata: Provides information about a certain item's content. For example, an image may include metadata that describes how large the picture is, the color depth, the image resolution, and when the image was created. A text document's metadata may contain information about how long the document is, who the author is, when the document was written, and a short summary of the document.

Microsoft Excel: A spreadsheet program.

Operating System: OS is software that communicates with the hardware and allows other programs to run. It is comprised of system software, or the fundamental files your computer needs to boot up and function. Every desktop computer, tablet, and smartphone includes an operating system that provides basic functionality for the device.

PDF: (Portable Document Format) a multi-platform file format developed by Adobe Systems. A PDF file captures document text, fonts, images, and even formatting of documents from a variety of applications. You can e-mail a PDF document to your friend and it will look the same way on her screen as it looks on yours, even if she has a Mac and you have a PC. Since PDFs contain color-accurate information, they should also print the same way they look on your screen.

pH: A measurement of acidity in archival materials.

Pixel: A minute area of illumination on a display screen, one of many from which an image is composed.

Preservation Policy: Rules or guidelines for safe handling, wrapping, and storing artworks using archival and acid-free materials.

RAM: (Random Access Memory) Small memory chips that form a memory module. These modules are installed in the RAM slots on the motherboard of your computer.

RAW: A raw file is a collection of unprocessed data. This means the file has not been altered, compressed, or manipulated in any way by the computer. Raw files are often used as data files by software programs that load and process the data. A popular type of raw file is "Camera RAW," which is generated by a digital camera. Instead of processing the image captured by the camera, the data is left unprocessed and uncompressed until it is opened with a computer program.

Remote Computer/Access: Logging into one computer from another over a network or the Internet to access files and run programs. Commonly used as a remote teaching tool.

Resolution: The term to describe the number of dots, or pixels, used to display an image. Higher resolutions mean that more pixels are used to create the image, resulting in a crisper, cleaner image.

Restoration: The act of repairing a damaged artwork to its original condition.

Server: A computer or computer program that manages access to a centralized resource or service in a network.

Spreadsheet: A document that stores data in a grid of horizontal rows and vertical columns. Rows are typically labeled using numbers (1, 2, 3, etc.), while columns are labeled with letters (A, B, C, etc). Individual row/column locations, such as C3 or B12, are referred to as cells. Each cell can each store a unique instance of data. By entering data into a spreadsheet, information can be stored in a more structured way than using plain text. The row/column structure also allows the data to be analyzed using formulas and calculations.

Studio Assistant: A person who aids or supplements an artist. Tasks may include mixing paint, photographing artwork, and walking a dog. See also intern.

Studio Guide: A pamphlet or drawing offering basic information or instruction about an artist's studio. A studio guide may contain safety instructions, emergency preparedness information, location of materials and artworks, and tips for fixing the fax machine.

Studio Manager: A person in charge of studio business affairs. Studio managers handle email, schedules, phone calls, employees, and potentially sales, contracts, and more.

Terabyte: A unit of memory or data. One terabyte (abbreviated "TB") is equal to 1,000 gigabytes and precedes the petabyte unit of measurement. A terabyte is exactly 1 trillion bytes.

Thumbnail: A small image that represents a larger one. Thumbnails are often used to provide snapshots of several images in a single space. They are commonly used by digital photo organization programs as well as visual search engines.

TIFF: Originally standing for Tagged Image File Format, is a file format for storing uncompressed images, popular among graphic artists, the publishing industry, and both amateur and professional photographers.

Upload: To transfer (data or programs), from one's own computer or device to a server or host computer.

URL: (Uniform Resource Locator) The address of a World Wide Web page. A protocol for specifying addresses on the Internet.

Web Site: A group of World Wide Web pages usually containing hyperlinks to each other and made available online by an individual, company, educational institution, government, or organization.

Notes

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