Session/Meeting Name: Documenting Now: Living Artists and their Archives
Date, Time: April 24, 2010, 1 pm – 2:30 pm

Moderators: Alice Whiteside
Recorder: Heather Koopmans

Session D: Documenting Now: Living Artists and Their Archives

Discussion Notes
Q <Kim Collins>: To all presenters: how should artists document and preserve “born-digital” materials (i.e. websites, blogs)? To Eumie: Who ‘owns’ the database used in the Mitchell Foundation initiative?
  • A <Eumie Imm-Stroukoff>: The foundation provides the software to the artists for testing. It is not yet shared between the artists.
  • A <Heather Gendron>: Did not ask the artist about born-digital materials specifically. But there are other groups / projects whose purpose is to archive transitory web and digital materials.

Q <Janice Lurie>: To Greg: After ‘cleaning up’ the older video and audio recordings, did you keep the originals?
  • A <Greg Hatch>: Yes. Additionally, every step of the editing process was duplicated so that various versions would also be archived.

Q <unknown person>: To Heather: The working conditions in Cai Guo-Qiang’s studio are exceptionally clean and well-organized. Other artists studios tend to be less divided between personal and professional activities / materials. How much does it matter if not all materials are kept?
  • A <Heather Gendron>: There is value in organizing material from a business perspective, i.e., to apply for grants. How much organization depends on the available resources and making art is still the artist’s priority. Personal life experience (such as family history) is also a factor – if the artist sees it as important. Guo-Qiang’s practices are not how all artists should organize their studios, but it is a good example of how it can be done well.
  • A <Eumie Imm-Stroukoff>: Some artists are just not interested in staying organized, or are even offended by suggestions that they should. But if materials are not documented, then a piece of history disappears. Researchers need access to these materials. It’s all a balance; artists do not need to be organized to library standards. Mentorships and partnerships with well-organized artists are one way to encourage good documentation practices.