A Well-Made Object

best practices for collecting emerging media

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A Well-Made Object
Conversations with
Architect Howard Meyer
Welcome to the movie A Well-Made Object, a documentary on architect Howard Meyer.

In the late 1980s, as his architectural practice was ending and his archive was being transferred to the collection of the University of Texas Alexander Architectural Archive, Meyer's past client Carolyn Clark worked with Dallas filmmaker Jim Murray to produce a short film devoted to Meyer's life and work.

The film project was completed in rough form in 1991 but the project lay dormant for a number of years until reignited in the spring of 2009 by Ms.
Howard R. Meyer, 1903-1988
Source: Alexander Architectural Archive
http://www.howardmeyer.org/RBrettell.php
William Lescaze and George Howe
The Museum of Modern Art Scheme 4, First Variation
1930

Wood, plastic and metal  33 x 12 x 16 3/4
Museum of Modern Art (New York, N.Y.)
ARTstor Collection:
The Museum of Modern Art, Architecture and Design Collection
William Lescaze and George Howe
The Philadelphia Saving Fund Society
1932
Werkbund Exhibition
Stuttgart, Germany

Weissenhof Housing Colony (Siedlung)
1927

Source: Visual Resources Collection

Le Corbusier - House 14/15

Hans Scharoun
Zale Residence (c. 1939)
Source: Alexander Architectural Archive
Lipshy Residence (c. 1950)
Source: Alexander Architectural Archive
Lipshy Residence (c. 1950)
Source: Alexander Architectural Archive
Hexter Title & Abstract Building (1953)
Source: Alexander Architectural Archive
3525 Turtle Creek Boulevard (1950)
Source: Alexander Architectural Archive
Temple EmanuEl (1953-59)
Source: http://www/howardmeyer.org/
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Source: http://www.howardmeyer.org/
http://www.howardmeyer.org/Carolyn_Clark.php
Timeline

July 1987
• Jim Murray (filmmaker) requests funding to complete editing of original documentary:
  – The Center at the School of Architecture (now the Center for American Architecture & Design - CAAD)
  – Dallas AIA

August 1987
• Lila Stillson, curator at the Alexander Architectural Archive, views documentary, considers acquiring footage in addition to Meyer’s records

October 1987
• Meyer’s records are added to the Alexander Architectural Archive

January 10, 1988
• Meyer dies at the age 84
Timeline

1991
• Jim Murray suffers a stroke
• Documentary is virtually complete

April 1993
• Murray contacts AAA and CAAD about distribution of the documentary to schools of architecture

June 1993
• preview for contributors at the Clarks’ home

Source: Alexander Architectural Archive
Timeline

Timeline

October 2009
• Mark Gunderson, AIA and UT alumn, contacts Beth Dodd, curator of the Alexander Architectural Archive to discuss the possibility of UT Libraries hosting and preserving the online documentary.
• Beth Dodd and Martha González Palacios meet with Technical Integration Services (TIS) and Preservation and Digitization Services to explore feasibility of the project.

January 2010
• J. Mitchell Johnson, filmmaker, submits formal proposal to UT Libraries to request hosting.
• Project is officially approved.
Technical Requirements

We would also like to construct the site so that its technical frame-work is totally compatible with what you and the UT library system can handle on into the future. The idea is that once we are finished with our work, then UT Austin would host the site and take-over its maintenance in perpetuity.

J. Mitchell Johnson, e-mail message to Aaron Choate (Head of Technical Integration Services), January 29, 2010.
We host in a combination environment where non-drupal sites are proxied into the same directory structure as those built in drupal. If your designer would like to implement the site in Drupal, we can certainly accommodate doing so. However, we don’t require it. **Outside of Drupal, we run a Solaris 10 server with a typical Apache/MYSQL/PHP webstack.**

I believe that there may be a possibility of **our hosting your media files on our streaming server.** [but can be stored elsewhere. size was a concern, **encode to MP4** – ]more portable than the typical FLA video that has become popular lately.

Aaron Choate, e-mail message to J. Mitchell Johnson, February 18, 2010.
Timeline

February 2010
• Deed of gift signed for the film and raw footage

October 2010
• Screening at Temple EmanuEl

January 2011
• Website on beta

February 2011
• “They would like to hold off on giving the site to UT until a later date. As with architects, I do not promote taking active records so that is fine on our end. Until then, I suggested the Internet Archive.” Beth Dodd, e-mail message to Aaron Choate, Feb. 2, 2011
• Screening at UTSOA
• Materials related to documentary received at AAA
Timeline

March 2011
• Carolyn Clark hires Matt Brusche to work on PR and the website
• Brusche contacts Dodd and she gets him in touch with Technology Integration Services (TIS)

August 2011
• Martha González Palacios assumes responsibility for Digital Projects

February 2012
• Website is almost ready, Brusche contacts Dodd/González to coordinate transfer and PR strategy
• González coordinates between Brusche and TIS

March 2012
• UT Libraries gets FTP access to website
• Website is uploaded to UT Libraries
A Well-Made Object
Architect Howard Meyer

Welcome to the movie A Well-Made Object, a documentary on architect Howard Meyer.

http://www.lib.utexas.edu/vidfilm/howardmeyer/
Some materials, either aged, in poor physical condition, or of a certain rarity or historical significance, are contained in a separate Special Collection from which items may be viewed in the library upon request. Guidelines for using these materials are available here.

Special strengths include central and eastern European architecture, especially the Vienna Secession Movement, late nineteenth and early twentieth century British and French architecture books, as well as titles from the libraries of architects whose work is represented in the Alexander Architectural Archive. Of special note are the libraries of architect Paul P. Cret, architectural historian Colin Rowe, and architect and educator Charles W. Moore. The Rowe Collection and the Moore Collection are located off campus. To view these materials, submit a request at the Architecture and Planning Library’s Check Out and Information Desk. Please be aware that there can be several weeks delay before Rowe and Moore Collection materials are available for viewing in the library.

During the 2010 summer session, the Architecture and Planning Library initiated a number of projects to provide greater access to the content located in the library’s special collections. Supported by the John Green Taylor Endowment and through the generous service of volunteers, these projects promote special collections use by enhancing collection records and marketing its contents. Graduate students from a number of disciplines are currently working to identify individual collections, generate more comprehensive provenance notes, and develop web content that facilitates collection navigation. These projects are part of an ongoing effort to expose the rich and diverse materials held in the library’s special collections.

Can’t find what you need? Get help from Martha González Palacios, Architecture & Planning Librarian.

If UT Libraries doesn’t own a copy of the book you are looking for, request it through Interlibrary Loan.
When George and Gerrie Andrews climbed their first Maya pyramid in the late 1950s, they hardly could have anticipated that a life’s calling was awaiting them. Yet by 2000, they had documented approximately 800 buildings at 224 separate sites. As a practicing architect, George brought a unique focus to Maya studies through fieldwork that produced detailed measurements, scale photography, reports, and architectural drawings and plans. While George sometimes engaged the services of students when he was a professor at University of Oregon, Gerrie was his most faithful field assistant, accompanying him on most of his trips.

"Then—came the Maya story. From 1957* to 2000 we worked in Mexico and Central America investigating Maya sites and recording all architectural data. We had many harrowing experiences and met with archaeologists in the field and survived with many memories."—Gerrie, 2004 reflection
Next Steps

• Confirm that all copyright permissions for website content has been granted
• Investigate if Deed of Gift is necessary for the website
• Transfer website to UT Libraries template
• Create the highest quality available master dub, we currently have dubs on DVCam and DigiBeta tape
• Create and implement PR plan
The Good

The Donor and her team:
• Goal compatible with UT Libraries: to increase awareness of Howard Meyer’s work
• Understanding of the value of depositing the documentary and website at UT Libraries
• Communication along the process
• Willingness to accept UT Libraries parameters

UT Libraries:
• Open to collect non-traditional media
• Institutional capacity to accept and support project
The Challenges

- Donor driven timeline: on again, off again pace
  - Hard to plan and schedule
  - Changes in staff and other parties involved
- Buy in from Technical Integration Services
- Communication between all parties
- New territory for everybody
  - No established workflows or best practices
Lessons Learned

…or the beginning of best practices for collecting emerging media

- Memorandum of Understanding and Deed of Gift should include as much detail as possible
- Ensure creator/donor clearly understands copyright issues
- Document, document, document
- Act as intermediary between technical staff and content creators/donors
- Be flexible
Thank you.

Temple EmanuEl (1953-59)
Source: Alexander Architectural Archive

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http://www.lib.utexas.edu/apl
Image Credits

- A Well-Made Object: Architect Howard Meyer
  http://www.howardmeyer.org
- ARTstor (removed for proceedings)
  - The Museum of Modern Art, Architecture and Design Collection
  - The Carnegie Arts of the United States Collection
- Howard R. Meyer Drawings, Photographs and Archival Records, 1924-1986, New York, Texas and Early Modernism, Alexander Architectural Archive, University of Texas Libraries, the University of Texas at Austin
- School of Architecture Visual Resources Collection, The University of Texas at Austin (removed for proceedings)