NDSR | Art @ Mia
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Managing Time-Based Media/Digital Art
At (an appropriate) Scale

Chiho Aoshima and Collaborator: Bruce Ferguson, *City Glow* (2005), Detail

Minneapolis Institute of Art
Managing Time-Based Media/Digital Art at (an appropriate) Scale

Chiho Aoshima and Collaborator: Bruce Ferguson, City Glow (2005)
Who we are

Mia
Minneapolis Institute of Art
enriches the community by collecting, preserving and making accessible outstanding works of art from the world’s diverse cultures
Who we are
Who we are

Bill Viola, *Three Women* (2008); Chiho Aoshima and Collaborator: Bruce Ferguson, *City Glow* (2005); Jennifer Steinkamp,
*Hurdy Gurdy Man (Chrysanthemums)* (2006); Doug Aitken, *migration (empire) - linear version* (2008); Be Blank Consort,
Sound Mess + Other Poems (2003)
Performed by Be Blank Consort
Compact disc audio recording
Gift of the Artist 2009.72.3.2a-c

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What

Mia’s NDSR|Art Residency Goals

- Assess and address needs
- Create technical solutions for management / preservation
- Implement policies, procedures and systems
- Train Mia staff
- Disseminate residency products and learning
About me

Erin Barsan
MSLIS, Pratt Institute
• Archives Certificate
• UX Concentration

Previously:
Archivist, Leslie-Lohman Museum

Background in graphic design and photography.
Information gathering

Time-based media art (TBMA) resources:
- Matters in Media Art project
- Smithsonian Time-Based Media Art Working Group
- Electronic Media Group

Digital preservation resources:
- former NDSR projects
- Digital POWRR
- DPOE Curriculum
...and much much more
Internal interviews

1-on-1 meetings with New Media Task Force members and other stakeholders (including some Sr. Leadership)

Shared priorities & goals revolved around idea of workflows:
- Establishment of best practices & standards
- Improved cross-departmental communication
- Flexible, adaptable solutions
- Improved display equipment management

Next step:
Document existing workflows so that we can then establish what is desired and figure out how to get there.
Current TBMA acquisition workflow

SELECTION
- Object selected
- Loan.acquisition potential discussed with Sr Leadership
- Decision to pursue for acquisition is made
- Proposal for acquisition drafted

PRE-ACQUISITION
- Incoming Loan Proposal completed and approved
- Loan Agreement prepared, signed, and returned
- Shipping of object arranged
- Object record created in TMS

ARRIVAL/REVIEW/ACCEPTANCE
*Denotes only performed when “actual” object received by Mia
- Object arrives*
- Object’s physical condition assessed*
- Any digital files checked*
- Object cataloged in TMS
- Incoming Receipt created and sent to lender*

ACQUISITION
- Trustees approve object for acquisition
- Object photographed
- Invoice, Certificate of Authenticity, installation requirements, and other conditions for object requested from seller, if not already received.
- Payment for object released
- Rights holder asked to sign non-exclusive license agreement, when applicable

MAINTENANCE
- Curatorial object file maintained
- Object assigned physical location
- Conservation needs addressed ad hoc

NOTE: Does not apply to most digital TBMA as “viewing copy” is often obtained
External interviews

Spoke with a number of media conservators at other institutions with established standards and processes for their TBMA collections.

Mia does not have a conservation department in-house
• Care of TBMA is a shared responsibility
• Opportunity for improved documentation practices

Next step:
Identify gaps in current workflow and propose a new, usable, workflow based on research.
Mapping existing workflow to best practice
New TBMA acquisition process flowchart

1. Object Selection
   - Research Artwork
   - Explore deeper
   - Assemble expertise
   - Get the details
   - Condition Pre-assessment
   - Determine costs

2. Propose Acquisition
   - Decision to pursue Acq

3. Acquisition Prep
   - Documentation
   - Negotiations
   - Object Review
   - Accession Proposal finalized

   - Proposal OK'd for Trustees

   - Trustees Approve Acq

   - 4. Assessment & Acceptance
     - Copyright/Licensing Agrmt
     - Object Arrival
     - Confirm Content
     - Confirm Functionality
     - Document Installed work

   - 5. Acquisition
     - Digital File Storage
     - Complete documentation

   - Physical Storage
     - Conservation Planning

   - 6. Ongoing Maintenance
     - Fixity Checks
     - Obsolescence Checks
     - Emulation/Migration

sets out:
- **WHAT** needs to be done
- **WHEN** (i.e. in what order)

still to be determined:
- **WHO** is doing what
- **HOW** things will be done

*incorporates best practice as set out by the Matters in Media Art project and the Smithsonian Time-Based Media working group*
What about digital preservation?!?! 

Currently researching appropriate digital preservation and storage options 
• Creating cost models for recommended solutions 

Establishing our baseline for digital preservation of TBMA 
• Focus on what is achievable now/soon 
• Ensuring it is something we are comfortable with 

Not in a position at the moment to partner with our library and archives, but its something we’re keeping in mind as a future possibility.
What’s on the horizon

Testing new workflows using potential new TBMA acquisition as a case study.

Ideally, getting our baseline digital preservation and storage solution set up, and begin ingesting existing digital TBMA.

• Possibility that we will not have access to funding until next fiscal year (i.e. when the residency is wrapping up)

Rolling out new changes and workflows to Mia staff to ensure the project keeps moving forward after residency ends

• Training, documentation, policy changes, etc.
Major takeaways

Collaboration is key.

Don’t wait to have all the answers to get started.

Project management tools are your friend.

Don’t take certain limitations for certain.

Take advantage of professional networks & organizations.
Thank you!

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