Time-Based Media Arts and TMS

Lynn Putney, Associate Registrar
Emily Guth Schlemmer, Assistant Registrar, Collections Information
TBMA and TMS: Agenda

● Overview
  --- What is TBMA and why is it so challenging?

● TBMA Needs and Workflow
  --- Finding common ground, then defining the deviations

● Content Formats
  --- Taming the hydra / The flexible cage

● Equipment
  --- Sharing the load / Too much for one box
TBMA = Time-Based Media Art

Artworks that:

1. Exhibit an intentionally changing observable state
2. Require a power source
3. Utilize 20th and 21st century technologies as inherent components affecting content, functionality and appearance

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(i.e., experiencing the artwork extends beyond the visual to incorporate changes in motion, sound, or light and is aided by technological means)

...video, film, sound art, software generated artworks, video games...
... paintings, sculpture, prints, drawings, collages, photographs...

- Unique or editioned artworks  
- Singular, tangible originals

with well established protocols for long term stewardship, storage and retrieval, documentation...
Takeshi Murata
Sound: Plate Tectonics
*Monster Movie*, 2005
single-channel video, color, sound; 04:19 minutes
Smithsonian American Art Museum, 2013.71
Museum purchase through the Luisita L. and Franz H. Denghausen Endowment
© 2005, Takeshi Murata

...and then THIS!
TBMA is a related, but different beast

- Often no singular original
  --- Multiple "originals" desirable

- Obsolescence
  --- Destruction, disposal and replacement

- Complex documentation
  --- Interdepartmental collaboration

- Active “care and feeding”
  --- Managing change productively
Early examples at SAAM

(from 1941/acquired 1986)
Dwinell Grant, *Contrathemis*

David Hockney, *Snails Space, Painting with Vari-lites*

(from 1959/acquired 1979)
Harry Bertoia, *Sculpture Group Symbolizing World's Communication in the Atomic Age*

Nam June Paik, *Megatron/Matrix*
Smithsonian American Art Museum
Donald W. Reynolds Center for American Art and Portraiture

- Completed 1868; Major renovation 2000 – 2006
- American art from the colonial period to today
- Shared facility, SAAM and NPG

Renwick Gallery

- Major renovation 2013 - 2015
- Opened as a museum in 1874
- Home to SAAM craft and dec arts since 1974
RENOVATED BUILDINGS, RENEWED VISION
19th C buildings • 21st C collections

commitment to contemporary art • expanding the concept of “craft”
Bill Viola
Performers: Sarah Steben and John Hay
The Fall into Paradise, 2005
single-channel video installation, high-definition, color, sound;
09:58 minutes
dimensions variable; Edition 2 of 3
Smithsonian American Art Museum, 2012.56
Museum purchase through the Luisita L. and Franz H.
Denghausen Endowment
© 2005, Bill Viola / photos by Kira Perov

- detailed instructions
- strict installation parameters
Buky Schwartz
_Painted Projection_, 1977; installation view 2015
closed-circuit video installation
dimensions variable
Smithsonian American Art Museum, 2014.10
Museum purchase through the Luisita L. and Franz H. Denghausen Endowment
© 1977, Ziva Schwartz

Raphael Montañez Ortiz
_Golf_, 1957
16mm film, black and white, sound; 01:59 minutes
Smithsonian American Art Museum, 2011.30.1
Museum purchase through the Luisita L. and Franz H. Denghausen Endowment
© 1957, Raphael Montañez Ortiz

instructions (only!) when accessioned

16mm film, altered with a hole punch
Robert Watts, David Behrman and Bob Diamond
Cloud Music, 1974-1979; installation view 2015
hybrid sound/video installation with custom electronics
dimensions variable
Smithsonian American Art Museum, 2013.64
Museum purchase through the Luisita L. and Franz H.
Denghausen Endowment
© 1979, Robert Watts Estate, David Behrman, Bob Diamond

custom vintage electronics / no repeatable content (occurs in real time)
• Custom software composes the artwork in real time

• In response to keywords, files are randomly selected from immense directories of video, sound, subtitles, music

• Endless combinations (and a film that never ends)
“We are building the bicycle while we ride it!”

MICHAEL MANSFIELD,
SAAM FILM AND MEDIA ARTS CURATOR
“More than that; We are racing the bicycle while we build it!”
“...really, we’re racing the bicycle in traffic while we build it and juggle...”
TBMA needs and differences affect how we approach...

THE THING (the artwork) ↑

THE DATA that DESCRIBES the thing →

ACQUISITION
+ STEWARDSHIP of BOTH the thing and the data →

Curatorial + Registration + Conservation + Exhibitions
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Finding the common ground

PRE-ACQUISITION → ARRIVAL → ASSESSMENT AND REVIEW → ACCESSIONING → MAINTENANCE

Shipping → Condition Report → Curatorial → Accessioning → Storage
Request + Receipting Acceptance + Conservation + Retrieval

Defining the differences

What exactly are we expecting?
(And from whom?)

Condition VS. Functionality

Challenging to present and explain (Collaborative Preparation)

What's required for accession?
Prep for long-term care

Where/how is it stored and tracked?
Will it function 1 mo., 1 yr., 100 yrs. from now?
Keeping the "tried and true" / Integrating the new

Shipping → Condition Report → Curatorial → Accessioning → Storage

Request + Receipting → Acceptance + Conservation + Retrieval

Standard Shipping Request + Pre-Arrival Master List of equipment, content

Standard TL Receipt + Incoming Inventory + Testing and Acceptance form

Object Review preparation form (Optional; used at curator's discretion)

Memo to Accession + TBMA addendum + Conservation ID Report + Installation Parameters + Installation Planning Guide

TMS location tracking + Installation Iteration Reports + Updated Conservation ID Reports

SAAM sample FORM SET available at: www.si.edu/TBMA
TBMA and TMS: Agenda

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What is a TBMA Content Format?
Four types of Content Formats

1. Preservation Format  greatest/biggest metadata
2. Access Format  easily accessible in storage
3. Exhibition Format  use in gallery or for loan
4. Other Format  everything else

Example of “Other Format”
DVD signed with edition number by artist
Each Content Format has a Unique Identifier

2013.71.EXF.2

<accession number> . <suffix> . <sequential number of format type>

Preservation format = PRF
Access format = ASF
Exhibition format = EXF
Other format = HRF
Content Formats are placed in the Components Module

Why the components module?
- Media content literally *is* the artwork
- Much like an artwork with separable, but integral parts
- Accountability (Registrar must track this content)
- Flexibility (Content formats will be made and destroyed)

Note: Challenges of components module will follow
Managing Content Formats in Components Module

Raphael Montañez Ortiz

Newsreel, 1958
16mm film, black and white, sound
Smithsonian American Art Museum, 2011.30.2
Museum purchase through the Luisita L. and Franz H. Denghausen Endowment
© 1958, Raphael Montañez Ortiz
Film and Media Arts
2011.30.2

Newsreel
Artist: Raphael Montañez Ortiz

1958
16 mm film, black and white, sound

Museum purchase through the Luisita L. and Franz H. Neumann Endowment

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<th>Count</th>
<th>Active</th>
<th>Component Type</th>
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Description

Physical Description
Quicktime H264 Compressed Video. Includes linear PCM stereo sound. Created by Preservation Technologies in April 2014.

Component Barcode
343E9374265002

Dimensions

Preparation Comments

Installation Comments

Notes
Newsreel
Artist: Raphael Montañez Ortiz

1958
16 mm film, black and white, sound

Museum purchase through the Luisita L. and Franz H. Neumann Endowment

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<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>Quicktime H264 Compressed Video. Includes linear PCM stereo sound. Created by Preservation Technologies in April 2014.</td>
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Newsreel
Artist: Raphael Montañez Ortiz

1958
16 mm film, black and white, sound

Museum purchase through the Luisita and Franz H. Neubhausen Endowment

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Physical Description
Screening DVD with additional content. Black and white, sound; 2:00 minutes. Artist provided; received upon acquisition.

Physical Description
16mm film. Artist provided; received upon acquisition.

Physical Description
High definition 4k digital transfer. Created from original 1958 16mm film and includes the 1968 optical soundtrack created from a Zen Prayer. Created by Preservation Technologies in April 2014.
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Equipment for TBMA: Complex Example

What sort of equipment are we dealing with?

- Hybrid sound/video installation with custom electronics, dimensions variable

*Custom Video Analyzer and Audio Synthesizer*
Four Types of Equipment

1. Unique  Created by or highly modified by artist
2. Dedicated  For use only with one artwork
3. Historic  Significant or outdated equipment for reference
4. Non-Dedicated  Stock equipment
Four Types of Equipment

1. Unique

Created by or highly modified by artist

Christy Matson, *Sonic Structure II*, single-channel interactive sound, cotton, copper, and amplifiers, 24 x 112 in.

Details of artist-created circuit box.
Four Types of Equipment

2. Dedicated

For use only with one artwork

Sony PlayStation 3

Jenova Chen and Kellee Santiago, *Flower*, 2007, video game for SONY PS3, color, sound
Four Types of Equipment

3. Historic

Significant or outdated equipment for reference

Hardware for an “Exhibition Build” of an artwork.

Hardware for an “Historic Build” of an artwork.
Four Types of Equipment

4. Non-Dedicated Stock equipment

- Buky Schwartz, *Painted Projection*, 1977
- Closed-circuit video installation, dimensions variable
Challenges: Equipment Categorization

• Collaboration
• Inclusion of Unique Equipment
• Definition of Historic Equipment
• Sculptural parts versus Equipment

• ADÁL, West Side Story Upside Down, Backwards, Sideways and Out of Focus (La Maleta de Futriaco Martínez), 2002
• Suitcase, flat-screen LCD monitor, single-channel digital video, color, sound; 12:51 minutes, 14 x 20 x 7 in.

Tim Tate, Oracle, 2009, glass and mixed media, 16 x 8 x 8 in. Record shot showing monitor parts.
Managing Equipment in TMS

Bill Viola
Performers: Sarah Steben and John Hay
*The Fall into Paradise*, 2005
single-channel video installation, high-definition, color, sound; 09:58 minutes
dimensions variable; Edition 2 of 3
Smithsonian American Art Museum, 2012.56
Museum purchase through the Luisita L. and Franz H. Denghausen Endowment
© 2005, Bill Viola / photos by Kira Perov
Title
EQUIPMENT for "The Fall into Paradise"

Medium
EQUIPMENT for "The Fall into Paradise". SEE COMPONENTS
Numbering schema for Equipment

2012.56.EQP
(As appears on Equipment Record Front Page)

2012.56.EQP.1
2012.56.EQP.2
etc.
(As appears on Equipment Record Components List)

<accession number> . <suffix> . <sequential equipment number>
EQUIPMENT for "The Fall into Paradise"
Artist: Bill Viola

EQUIPMENT for "The Fall into Paradise". SEE COMPONENTS
Object number: 2012.56.EQP

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Description:
Panasonic Projector PT D7700 DLP with standard zoom lens and power cable (1.6-2.0 throw ratio). Condition note: Lens must be packed separately from Projector.

Component Barcode: GC5AE384B22

Dimensions:

Preparation Comments:

Installation Comments:
EQUIPMENT for "The Fall into Paradise"
Artist: Bill Viola

EQUIPMENT for "The Fall into Paradise". SEE COMPONENTS
Object number: 2012.56.EQP

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2012.56.EQP.6  Loudspeakers  5  Part of an object
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<td>Physical Description</td>
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<td>Five (5) Meyer loudspeakers UPM-1P (part of Meyer UPJ 1 surround sound system)</td>
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<td>NON-DED/DED/HIST/UNIQUE</td>
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<td>DEDICATED</td>
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**Description**

**Physical Description**

Adtec Edje411 HD single-channel media reproducer, outputting true 16:9 HD video at 1080i (with preloaded media files)

**NON-DED/DED/HIST/UNIQUE**

DEPRECATED
Challenges: Components Module

- “The unknown”
- Reporting (in progress)
- On-View problem (resolved!)

This guy again.

Takeshi Murata, *Monster Movie*, 2005, single-channel video, color, sound; 04:19 minutes
TBMA and the Location Module

- "@" = on view (AA3/N320 vs. AA3@N320)
  --- Lost in translation; The part representing the whole

- DISPOSED
  --- Re-purposed for destroyed TBMA content formats

- EXH DEPT
  --- New! "Signpost" for non-dedicated equipment stored and tracked by Exhibitions staff (not Registrar)

**************************************************************************************************

Under discussion
Smithsonian-wide Digital Asset Management System (DAMS)
TBMA and the Conservation Module

- Testing & Acceptance Form (a.k.a specialized condition report for TBMA objects)
- Installation Parameters Form
- Conservation Identity Report
- Iteration Report
Q&A

Lynn Putney, Associate Registrar
PutneyL@si.edu

Emily Guth Schlemmer, Assistant Registrar, Collections Information
SchlemmerE@si.edu

SAAM sample FORM SET available at: www.si.edu/TBMA