Documenting Digital Art in Small Galleries: The Approach of the InterPARES Project

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InterPARES 3 Project

• International Research on Permanent Authentic Records in Electronic Systems
• InterPARES 1 and 2—Develop the theory of preserving authentic digital records over the long-term
• InterPARES 3—Apply the theory to practice, working with small- and medium-sized organizations
Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery

• On campus of the University of British Columbia
• Mandate to research, exhibit, collect, publish, educate and develop programs in the field of contemporary art
Case Study: Issues and Objectives

• Establish policies and procedures for preservation of digital art

• Recommendations:
  1. The use of an Artist Questionnaire
  2. A Documentation Framework to organize documentation
Artist Questionnaire (1)

- Captures the intellectual and creative intent behind the work
- Identifies essential components of the work that must be preserved to uphold the intellectual and artistic intent
- Records any known preservation issues that may arise
- Create a history of the artwork that captures technological and intellectual contexts
Artist Questionnaire (2)

• Divided into three forms:
  1. Artist Information Form
  2. Artwork Information Form
  3. Media-Specific Form
Documentation Framework (1)

• Series: Artwork
  – File: Acquisition
  – File: Artist Questionnaire/Installation History
  – File: Exhibition
  – File: Conservation
  – File: Reproduction
Documentation Framework (2)

• Series: Artist
  – File: Artist Questionnaire
  – File: Activities
  – File: Publications
Documentation Framework (3)

• Main Points
  – Maintain intellectual links between files relating to an individual artwork
  – Reduces redundancy across files
  – Identifies documentation that will be useful in future presentations of the work and in planning conservation treatments for the work
  – Serves a tool that allows the Gallery to uphold the artist’s moral rights during future exhibition and preservation
Moral Rights

• Two moral rights legislated in Canada
  – Attribution
  – Integrity
  – Other moral rights include: Disclosure, Withdrawal, Resale Royalties

• Documentation can:
  – Track provenance, to ensure proper attribution
  – Serve as a framework for acceptable methods of preservation/conservation, ensuring integrity
Implementation

• Documentation framework used as a guide in preparing files
• Implementation of the Artist Questionnaire for complex artworks
• Belkin Art Gallery in process of implementing a new database
Mahalo!

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• InterPARES 3 Project
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