

Hello from the Other Side: Next Steps in Collecting Time-Based Media

This was a presentation by **Katie Leavens** (Assistant Registrar, Incoming Loans) at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), **Kacie L. Rice** (Assistant Registrar, Incoming Loans) at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (MFAH), and **Deanna K. Tyler** (Associate Registrar, Permanent Collection) at the Art Institute of Chicago (AIC).

The overall theme of the session was to examine the documentation of time-based media (TBM) artworks during both the acquisition process and when they have been incorporated into the permanent collection. Building upon this groundwork, the presentation then explored the approaches taken to improve documentation, and overall care of TBM works, as they live within the museum.

The first part of the presentation saw Katie Leavens introduce and describe LACMA's Time-Based Media and Installation Questionnaire (TBMIQ) and its functions. This document is utilised during the acquisitions process to source all required information concerning a TBM acquisition, and is divided into eight sections: Materials; Package Dimensions, Installation Instructions, Rights, Equipment (Installation), Technical Overview (Deliverables and Display, Production Context and Display Equipment), Long Term Preservation (Components and Vendor Contacts) and an Artist Statement.

The questionnaire is sent out to all parties from whom the acquisition may be sourced in order to capture as much information as possible about the artwork (ie. its fabrication, components, history, long-term preservation, and manners of display, etc). The completed TBMIQ is circulated to all members of LACMA's TBM Committee for reference and review. It is interesting to note the similarities with Tate's working processes; specifically, with the TBM Conservation team's use of their own questionnaires that similarly source all the required information to fully document and acquire the work as part of the acquisitions process.

In the second section of the presentation, Deanna K. Tyler presented the development of the AIC's cataloguing system for TBM components. No pre-existing cataloguing system had been in place for TBM artworks and, following the identification for the need for one, the AIC developed the system through internal dialogue, as well as liaising with external 'buddy' institutions to discuss ideas and concerns. It is helpful to note that the new cataloguing system had to work within the existing alpha-numeric framework that the AIC use for cataloguing artworks (of all media types) and managing their components.

The base structure for the AIC's new TBM cataloguing system is – yyyy.xxx.TBM.#a-b – and includes the following information:

- yyyy.xxx = base accession number; year and order acquired (standard for AIC permanent collection)
- TBM = TBM suffix; a capitalized three letter code
- # = each TBM suffix should start at one (1); number count continues as needed per copy/count

- a-d = if required; for ease of cataloguing a multichannel video (i.e. 4 files) of the same format, use alpha extension as with standard cataloguing

I found it very valuable to learn about the AIC cataloguing system and enlightening to compare to Tate's labelling protocol for TBM components. There are many similarities and, although Tate's protocol sits outside of the accession number-suffix system (as the institution does not catalogue its collection in this way), it is encouraging to see that components are being documented in a similar manner. I was happy to see that the AIC also places great significance in the media that is received as part of the acquisition which would always be retained by Tate and documented as either an Artist Supplied Package or Artist Supplied Master. The highest quality material would always form part of our documentation of the work and would be held as an Archival Master, through which we would generate further Duplicating Copies, Exhibition Formats, etc.

In the third section of the session, Kacie L. Rice presented the MFAH's recent large-scale cataloguing project of all TBM artworks within its collection, focussing specifically on Nam June Paik's *Rose Art Memory* 1988. This project saw the cataloguing of all of *Rose Art Memory*'s components, which included tapes, DVDs, minidisks, artist-made boxes, flash drives, etc. Each component was photographed and documented fully through a master TBM component spreadsheet, hard-copy paper file documentation and on the MFAH's collection management system – TMS.

I was very interested to see the manner in which the project had documented TBM components on TMS, especially as Tate uses the same collection management system. Tate documents each individual artwork component on TMS in a similar fashion to the MFAH, however we do not currently utilise the component's media functionality to add images of each individual component. It was very inspiring to see this functionality employed so well, and will certainly be something I will consider when thinking about ways that Tate could improve the documentation of its collection, and specifically its TBM holdings.

Submitted by Stephen Huyton, Collection Registrar, Research, Tate, United Kingdom