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Intro to MIAP

<u>Introduction</u>

   Cultural institutions are important to our society. Without these institutions, we would lose important historical information that may serve to educate future research in various disciplines. In America, according to Anne J. Gilliland-Swetland we have at least three well-defined types of institutions that work with collections. The most known and visited are museums that house unique works of art. The mission of a museum is to identify, acquire, preserve, exhibit, interpret, and educate the public on its unique collection. Museums are cultural memory institutions whether they are art or historical museums. Most museums have a strong focus on tourists or communities. The next type of institution is the library. This type of institution can be split into two subgroups, the public library and the special collections library. The public library acquires and provides access to the public on the knowledge gathered through texts. Recently, public libraries also include within their collections audios visuals such as music or movies and Internet access. Libraries promote literacy and research. Special libraries such as the Morgan Library also have collections. But, these collections like a museum are unique and do not have an open access policy like a public library. Its goal is also to educate and acquire, but also focus strongly on preservation, which is not seen in the public library. Their focus groups like museums are often tourists and local communities. The third type of institution with a collection is the archive. An archive is similar to a public library, with a strong emphasis on accessibility as a main policy. The fourth type that I

have added to this is the art gallery that can be related more to a commercialized retail store. The gallery's main goals are to promote the artist and his or her work and to sell them to interested parties. I will go more into detail about an archive and gallery later in this paper.

There is a fifth kind of institution that is rare and has no word or definition for its type. Only two exist in the United States, Video Data Bank in San Francisco, and Electronic Arts Intermix, also known as EAI, in New York. EAI is very unique because it is not just an institution that collects video art. What is so special about EAI is its hybrid institution modeled after an archive and a gallery. In this paper, I will first examine what an archive is and how it functions, then I will explore the gallery's roles and functions, and finally explore EAI's institutional programs and attempt to analyze why and how EAI incorporates both characteristics of an archive and a gallery.

What is an archive?

In the information age, with such an overload of information through texts, papers, documentation, etc., it is important to have an organized and structured system in which people can find what they need. Archives are created in various institutions to serve this purpose, to save what is deemed as valuable for future research or use. There are at least three fundamental goals and missions of an archive. The first is that an archive's role is to identify records of paper that are deemed important for future usage. In order to keep an organizational structure, archives must be able to identify materials within their collections to be catalogued and to be easily found. The second goal is the need to preserve their collections. In order to provide future usage in a lot of their authentic and unique materials archives must make sure that these works are kept in good

environmental conditions. The third and most important feature of an archive is its ability to provide accessibility to patrons (Hunter 3). These three features are important to the fundamental structures of archives today.

<u>History</u>

Archives are not just recent creations. The idea of an archive has existed for over a thousand years although in a different form. In early periods, famous political figures of Rome, Cicero, who was a statesman, lawyer, and political theorist, and Pliny, author, naturalist, and military commander, amassed their own collections of important papers (Hunter 12). The Middle Ages saw an organized form of record keeping within large kingdoms. And as time passed, organized record keeping was clearly evident and important within many European governments. Accessibility came into play and was especially prevalent and important after the French Revolution. This concept of public right was to protect the people's rights and abilities to inspect the government administration (<u>SAA History</u>).

As America began to be colonized, many of the settlers brought with them the ideas of important structured record keeping. This form of record keeping was seen in everyday life from marriages and births within the villages and cities, to the accounting of merchants and their shops. The earliest institutional form of record keeping occurred after the Revolutionary War in the United States. In 1791, Jeremy Belknap, a student of Thomas Price who collected records of Plymouth plantations, established the first institution in the United States the Massachusetts Historical Society. Its motto was to "preserve the manuscripts of the present day to the remotest ages of posterity (<u>SAA History</u>)." After the establishment of the first institution, other states began to model

after the Massachusetts Historical Society. Between 1830-1850, thirty-five state and

local historical societies were established and these numbers began to rise as time went

on. One of the biggest issues among these groups was a lack of a standard (Hunter 13).

Of all the historical societies popping up, there was no archival standard. For example,

the Ohio Historical Society had their own cataloguing standard by preserving their

materials in a metal box. The society had created a metallic box that would be labeled

with a description on what was contained inside without having to open the box. Other

historical societies used different methods. Standards were not established until 1884

when the American Historical Society was created. This organization helped to bring

together separate entities together in a forum to establish standardized guidelines in

preserving and archiving the societies' collections. The 1930s saw a large establishment

of many national records and archives. The Historical Records Survey and Survey of

Federal Archives was established and then in 1934 Congress declared the National

Archives an independent federal agency. Today, all archives adhere to strict guidelines

and codes of ethics (SAA: Council Handbook).

Present Archival Practice

        The traditional model of archives was thought of in a linear frame of mind. The

linear form focuses on the identifying of the materials, then preservation of the materials

and finally creating accessibility of the material to the respective patrons. Today, the new

archival model is not linear but cyclical but still structured under the three main concepts

mentioned previously. The important cyclical model begins with conducting a survey,

then an appraisal, acquisitions, accession, arrangement, preservation strategy, security,

description, access and reference, outreach and promotion, and then reappraisal. Each

work entering into the archives will pass through this rigorous process (Hunter 3-5)

       The first step mentioned above, the survey, is important when works have not

entered the custody of the archives. Although surveys are not done often, this is

important in weeding out works deemed less valuable before even possible acquisitions.

There are four types of surveys that archivist may use: the records management survey,

which identifies all the records of an organization and includes any records within a

management program and usually ends in creating a retention schedule for respective

departmental papers within the larger framework of the institution; archival records

survey, which focuses on separating archival records from other records in a short period

of time; a multirepository survey, which surveys on more than one institution and is

usually used to identify and unite the materials; and nonrepository survey, which is a

survey of records outside is focused on creating awareness of the value of the materials,

improve access to the material, or to identify material for possible acquisitions. These

surveys are important for helping scholars and researchers, for creating efficient

organized administration decisions, for promoting and fostering the preservation of the

materials, for furthering the collections programs, for improving the planning of the

archives, and for educating and training staff (Hunter 19-27).

       The appraisal and reappraisal stage is considered one of the most important stages

of archival practice. Appraisal and reappraisal is the process in which archives determine

value through various criteria: the operating, administrative, legal, and fiscal importance;

historical and research value; the condition of the works; their inherent value; and the

relationship of the works to other works in the collections.   Appraisal occurs when

deciding whether or not the institution should acquire materials. The reappraisal process occurs after the material has been in the collections for a while. These are important processes as material increases because it helps the institution decide whether or not the material is deemed relevant and important to their collections. There are a few options with records that are noncurrent after the appraisal and reappraisal step. First, is the possibility of transferring the material to a low-cost temporary storage, the next is to transfer the material into the archives, another option is to donate the material to another archive that may make use of the material, and next option is to reproduce the material into a digital format, and finally the least accepted view is to destroy the material (Hunter 47-51).

During the acquisitions period the physical and legal custody of the material or object is to be given to the archives. There are three ways of acquiring material for an archive. An option is for the physical custody of the material to transfer from one department of an institution to the archival department. Here, the title does not change, but the physical location of the material is given to the archives to be into the archival department. The second option is gaining the physical and legal custody of an object through the purchase of an object and the final option is when an object is given in donation. When purchase occurs, one of the criteria would be the cost of the object and the cost of long-term maintenance. Objects chosen will be adhered to under the archives acquisition policies (Hunter 75-80; Cook 82).

After the object has been acquired. The archive must next figure out an arrangement for the object within its collection. Arrangement is "the process of organizing records and papers to reveal their contents and significance (Hunter 97)."

This process to organize the object/objects within the collections which would include the physical packing, labeling, and shelving of the work in an organized fashion. There are five levels to creating structured arrangements within an archive. The first level of organization is the repository level. This is broad and encompasses the whole collections for a long period of time. The repository level decisions are typically determined by the institutional director or some level of upper management. The second level called the record and subgroup is where the archivist will have a hand in the organization. These two levels are more detail oriented. A record group would be organized in terms of provenance, for example a box of papers from X's office would all be under X. The subgroup for example will be under the groups and may be X's office assistant's paper which is under the file of X. The third level, which is even more detailed, is the creation of series. Series is determined through the relationship of various materials. If there is some sort of particular relationship, these documents would be grouped as a unit. For example, a series may be under the heading of invoices. So going back to X again, if X has a box of files and within his files there are a bunch of invoices, then invoices would be a small series under X's files. The fourth level is the file unit level. This level is even more detailed and is organized alphabetically, chronologically, geographically, by subject, or numerically. With the example of X's invoices, to group the invoices into a unit level would involve probably organizing each invoice chronologically from the latest date to the most recent date of purchase. The last level is the item level. An item is some sort of textual document and is typically arranged either chronologically or alphabetically (Hunter 97-102). While the smaller detailed locational aspects are important on a broader scope, the physical location of all materials is also important to consider. Preservation is

key to location. Material must be stored in temperature-controlled environment with proper security to prevent non-relevant staff from entering and handling rare and fragile objects.

Once the location is organized, the next important step is to create a description. This is needed to help find objects through the creation of a finding aid. The description is the creation of a map of the arrangement phase. Finding aids will first help locate materials, identify the provenance or chain of custody, outline the contents within the collections, provide general contents of the individual collections, provide detailed information about individual collections, and summarize specific topics within the collections. (Hunter 113-114).

Now that the material is organized in a manner that patrons can find them with finding aids, the archive now provides access to certain material that they deem permissible within the collection. Cases in which access is prohibited are when the donor imposes restrictions, when it has to do with national security, and when the archivist may deem the material private or restricted because of preservation issues. Although some works are strictly prohibited, some material may be partially restricted. With the access policy also comes constraints of copyrighting. Sometimes, archives may not make duplicates for any patron. The archivist available to assist needs to be aware of the copyright issues and will adhere to them for the materials requested. For some material, there may be restrictions such as allowing the material to be open to researchers in a specific field, and may only be used for scholarly purposes but not commercial, and must include notice of copyright in the produced copies (Hunter 179-195). The cycle listed is the general foundation of an archive.

What is a gallery?

History

       Patronage of the arts has been around as far back as the Antiquities. In the late seventeenth and eighteenth century, the Royal Academy was established as an academic artist institution. Artists that entered into this program were considered arbiters of aesthetics. Artists within this institution were forbidden to engage in the commercialization of art. But by the eighteenth century, many of the less successful artists began to become dealers selling other people's paintings. Bigger commercial galleries dealt internationally with private agents dealing with collectors. These dealers later also assisted in the selling of the artwork of wealthy patrons collections (White and White 5-10). The dealer's goals were to sell work for a profit through a variety of means. Some dealers at this time exhibited works of younger and anonymous artists and sometimes assisted artists by providing a salary to the artist as a patron would when commissioning an artist (White and White 94-96).

       Although many of these artists were new, many dealers took the risk by investing into the whole career of the artist versus just an individual painting. Buying and focusing on promoting Impressionist art also required the critics' cooperation in bringing publicity and recognition to the artists. The new system was a dealer-critic relationship oriented system. Impressionist artists needed the aesthetic judgment of critics to promote their works (White and White 98-99). Other ways to promote the sale of works was the creation of sale catalogues in attempts to advertise and sell works of art. By the late eighteenth century, a huge portion of expensive sales in the art world was due to the work of art dealers (White and White 5-10).

Present Gallery Practices

Gallery systems and goals are still similar to the past. A gallery is a commercial business with goals to promote artists and to sell their works. Galleries can be seen as agents, finding ways to promote the celebrity, or the artist. Although most galleries are focused on a business, there are some gallery owners who are wealthy enough that the gallery is just a hobby. For those galleries, their goals are not necessarily to make a profit but to promote artists they feel are worthy to be in the spotlight of the art world. All galleries require a strong artists-gallery-critic relationship to be successful.

In order to establish the artist and gallery relationship, the first step is for the gallery to find the right kind of artists to represent their business. This typically happens through artists submitting their works in a professional portfolio and then later an interview with the gallery director. When looking for best artists to represent their galleries, directors typically search for artists that are reliable, unique, and have a vision (Katchen 85-88).

Once the gallery wants to include the artist in their repertoire of exhibitions, they work together on preparing for an exhibition in the near future. Once a list of artworks is set for an exhibition, the artist will typically contract with the gallery in order to protect both parties from legal issues. When works are consigned for a limited time period during an exhibition, there are six points that should be included within the contract. The first is to have a checklist of the works that are to be received, the second is to define how long the work is to be under consignment, the third point is to determine how much each work should be sold for, the fourth is who is to insure the works, the fifth is how much of a commission should be given to the gallery (this is typically 40-50%), and the sixth is

when the artist should receive payment for any works that were sold. After the first short contract, both parties may consider to form a longer contract if the gallery would be interested in representing the artist. Typically, longer contracts last two to three years. On the longer contract, the gallery is required to at least exhibit the artist's work periodically depending on the cyclic nature of the roster of artists within the gallery (Caplin 217-231).

After the artist and exhibition is chosen, it is then the gallery's job to promote the artist and exhibition. Galleries will do so by having a press release of the exhibition and sending out mailers of the exhibition to its list of collectors, museums, and other patrons on their mailing or email list. From there, the gallery will then prepare for the exhibition and opening. The cycle is then repeated for other artists within the gallery director's roster.

Electronic Arts Intermix (EAI)

EAI is an institution with a long-standing history of being an early distributor, collector, educator, exhibitor, and supporter of video art. There is only one other repository or institution of its kind in the United States. One of the major characteristics of EAI is its unique institutional model.

History

EAI was the braindchild of Howard Wise, an advocate and supporter of video art. In 1971, Wise began organizing and setting up the non-profit institution Intermix, which later became known as Electronic Arts Intermix, EAI. The original board members of EAI consisted of Wise, his wife Barbara, and his attorney Jerald Ordover. One of EAI's earliest goals was to provide funding to individual artists using new technologies within

their works of art. When EAI received its first grant, its funds would be used for 3 important groups: Perception, a group which focused on the making of art using new equipment and technologies, the Avant-Garde Festival (this was supported until 1974), and Open Circuits, a conference that took place at the Museum of Modern Art, New York during 1974 (Sturken).

Three year later in 1973, EAI established a new program called Artists Videotape Distribution Service and published a brochure called *Leading Edge of Art*, which provided a short history of the use of video and television in daily life, encouraged artists to use and experiment with technologies in everyday life to provide a synthesis of art and life through mediums such as video and television, and outlined a structural plan of EAI's role within the video arts community. According to this manifesto, EAI's aim at this time was to,

> " …assist the video artist in making an increasingly significant contribution to the development of non-broadcast television during these formative years. To this end, it is sponsoring a number of projects, a brief description of which follows. It is our intent to orient these programs more and more toward utilizing the cassette and cable television systems. We expect gradually to develop our present facilities to permit videotape production. We plan to ask museums, public service organizations, universities, and selected community groups to work with us to produce programming of educational as well as esthetic merit (Electronic Arts Intermix, Inc. 8)."

This vision of EAI, for the most part, proved successful in various ways. Before the manifesto was published, EAI had already been in the acting role of caretaker and partner

in helping smaller grassroots video coalitions. Although by the time that *Leading Edge of Art* was published, EAI had begun to stop supporting the groups that it had previously such as Perception, Vasulkaa Video, the Kitchen, the Avant-Garde Festivals, the Open Circuits conference, and the Midnight Opera Company because many of these groups were beginning to become autonomous. Although EAI did not have an active role anymore in these groups, the institution still supported artists in their role to utilize television and video as an artistic medium. With the lack of need to play a dominant role in these groups, EAI began to fulfill their other goals in being both an editing facility and a distributor (Sturken).

In 1974, when the group Perception disbanded, all equipment was given to EAI's Editing/Post Production Facility and helped to ground and focus EAI's role as an editing facility. In 1978, the Rockefeller Foundation provided a grant to upgrade the equipment, and with the help of a video technician, artists could edit their works paying $25 per hour using equipment for 1/2" and 3/4" equipment with a time-base corrector. The structure of the editing facility was to become influential because other post-production houses had begun to copy EAI's model. But as EAI grew, the editing facilities were beginning to be less utilized and instead, their distribution services were to gain distinction. In 1975, EAI's first published catalogue of artists within their distribution listed more than 100 videotapes by a variety of artists that practiced during this period. Although this is by no means what it is today, this significant amount of work would dramatically increase as EAI continually evolved and changed (Sturken).

Institutional Programs

Presently, EAI has become more than what it was in the 1970s. On EAI's website, their mission has not changed much since the 1970s, with its core programs focusing on distribution of their collection and preservation of these works. Included within their scope of programming are: educational services, exhibition and public programming, viewing access, and an online catalogue and resources. New to EAI is its online archival database.

Containing over 3,000 historical works by 175 international artists, EAI's collection begins from the mid 1960s to current works by artists working in the mediums of video and the Internet. Their collections range from performance works, experimental narratives, cultural essays, subjective documentaries, technical explorations, and many other themes. Artists within their collections include well known artists in mid-career such as Bruce Nauman, Bill Viola, Gary Hill, Joan Jonas and other new artists such as Cheryl Donegan, Douglas Gordon, Martha Rosler, Pipilotti Rist, and many more. Recently, their collections have also included digital works or Internet works captured in a CD-ROM. What is unique about EAI is that the institution has no acquisitions fund (Zippay). There is no monetary exchange for a work to be 'bought' or 'sold' the way a museums may buy a work from a gallery or auction house. EAI's current collection is obtained through a consignment with the artists. Through a signed agreement, the artist gives EAI rights of distribution and receives 50% of distribution sales whether it be rental or sales fees, and 60% if the work is sold to a cable or broadcast company (Sturken).

EAI is one of the few institutions that distribute video and Internet art with a strong list of clientele worldwide from museums to universities and private collectors.

Approximately one third of EAI's business is international and have representatives in big metropolitan art centers such as Paris, Berlin, and Tokyo (Sturken). EAI's video and Internet works are sold on different price ranges from approximately $30 to a few thousand depending on the work, artist, and institution that is interested in buying or renting the works. According to an interview with Lori Zippay, educational institutions such as universities will have a smaller fee as compared to a museum or broadcast company that has a larger budget and would be required to pay more for the same work (EAI).

Within the institution, EAI has also incorporated a study center. Because EAI's goals are to be able to disseminate their collections for educational and cultural purposes, the study center allows the public, typically researchers, scholars, and academics to view the film within their institution. Through appointment and request, EAI allows the public to view requested material in two-hour blocks. Staff is made available to guide visitors through the work and provide educational supported materials if needed (EAI).

One of the intuitions most well known programs is its preservation resource. One of the first preservation programs in the United States in video art, EAI's conservation strategy focuses on two components: the physical deterioration and restoration, and the cataloguing of the collections into an archival database. With many older works in their collection, EAI has adopted the standard of migration or refreshing of works that are deteriorating. Another technique that is considered in preserving video art may be to reconstruct or re-master the work from the original images and sound elements. Conservation work is done with consultation often from artists, academics, and professionals in special facilities that deal with migrating delicate artworks. Often, each

piece has to be considered on a case-by-case basis, dependent upon the artist's intention and physical condition of the work. EAI's Online Resource Guide for Exhibiting and Collecting Media Art is a cooperative program working with IMAP, the Guggenheim and other institutions. The resource guide delves into issues of collecting, exhibiting and preserving New Media art using case studies from various institutions such as the Guggenheim, New York, Rhizome.org, the Curatorial Resource for Upstart Media Bliss (CRUMB), and many others. The resource's goal is to attempt to create best practices and standards when dealing with issues of New Media Art (EAI).

Recently, EAI has also begun to incorporate and organize an online archive. The online archive incorporates documents and histories of EAI beginning from the 1960s. Included within the documents are essays, catalogues, photographs, ephemera, and videos in QuickTime format. Other aspects of this online archive, although not complete, is EAI's past and current exhibitions and their online catalogue and database of artists, which include biographies, bibliographies, QuickTime excerpts, and other source materials. The online archive is a work in progress, growing and changing as EAI progresses and evolves into the future (EAI).

Another program still in effect, but less popular is EAI's editing facilities Unfortunately, the editing facilities are less requested than in the past. The editing facilities are also less emphasized within EAI's website.

Other programs are EAI's exhibitions and educational events. Although EAI does not have any exhibition facilities, the institution has had exhibitions of artists and works within their own collection through collaboration with other institutions such as Dara Birnbaum and Dan Graham A Program of Video at the Urban Rooftop Project with Dia

Center for the Arts. Other events include lectures and panel discussions such as

Copyright and Contemporary Art Practices (EAI).

<u>Analysis</u>

EAI is an institution that is created from both the model of a gallery and an

archive. The three main points of an archive are to identify works of value, preserve the

works, and provide accessibility. EAI provides all three to their collection and historical

ephemera. Through its online catalogue, EAI provides identification of the works by

including respective resources of the artists such as its biography and other

bibliographical references. A type of arrangement although in a less detailed manner

than an archive is also presented within the online website to make it easier for users to

find the artist they are looking for. Description is also included within the website for

easy readability. Another key element within EAI is its preservation strategies. Typical

to archives, EAI also uses assessments to determine what needs to be migrated to an

updated format. And finally, like an archive, through the creation of the website, EAI has

provided accessibility to the public of their historical documents and parts of their

collections. On their Kinetic History archive section, pdf files are included for historical

documents like *Leading Edge of Art*, a manifesto written a few years after the

establishment of EAI. Also incorporated within the online archives are short QuickTime

videos as a frame of reference to the works in their collections. The preservation

resource section includes contracts that EAI uses for other institutions and patrons

interested in looking for a reference into writing their own contracts. All of these works

are accessible and downloadable to the public. Other methods of accessibility within the

institution include the study center, which allows patrons to come and view EAI's

holdings of video, and Internet works.

The part of EAI that is similar to a gallery is the way in which EAI obtains works

from the artists in their collection. EAI focuses on creating a relationship between their

institution and the artist. As mentioned previously, EAI does not actively acquire works,

but instead creates a contract that allows EAI the ability to sell, rent, and distribute the

works on the artist's behalf. A portion of the sales like a gallery is given to the artist and

a portion given to EAI. Like a gallery, EAI can be seen as an agent to the artist,

providing the opportunity to gain recognition into the art world. Promotion of new artists

entering their collection is accomplished through their website. Another aspect that is not

common in an archive but common in a gallery is the ability to exhibit works within their

collection. Although EAI does not have an actual exhibiting space, they have previously

exhibited works within their own collections. This is another method in which EAI

promotes artists within their collection.

Conclusion

Both archives and galleries are very different institutions with different goals.

Although the history of both types of institutions has been long standing, the new hybrid

institution EAI has only been established in the last few decades. The history within EAI

may still be new, but it is an institution that is important within the arts community.

As EAI grows, an archival model will be extremely important in order to organize and

provide accessibility to the public.

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