

THE RECORDS OF VISUAL ARTISTS:
APPRAISING FOR ACQUISITION AND SELECTION

by

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Abstract

The responsibility of archivists is to preserve society's documentary heritage. Visual artists contribute to this heritage through their creative vision of man and his civilization. Because the archival purview to preserve some representation of the artist's activity is evident, it is necessary to determine, from a theoretical perspective, which part of the artist's output is of archival nature and how archivists may appraise this output for acquisition and selection.

This thesis uses published sources of European and North American archival theory, aesthetic philosophy, business, and law and data gathered from interviews with four British Columbian artists to investigate the validity of theoretical appraisal principles for the evaluation of records generated and received by artists.

The study concludes that artistic activity is clearly divisible into functional components and productive of many basic record types. Because of the pressures and requirements of the often-conflicting interests of art, business, and law, artists must depend on their records as a basis of security, a means of operating, and a source of memory. These records are archival in nature because they are generated out of a practical activity, constitute an organic accumulation, and are used and then retained for the use of their creator. Except under certain circumstances, the finished work of art is not of archival nature. Consequently, archival repositories do not have the right to preserve works of documentary art.

Artists' records can be appraised in accordance with the theoretical principles of archival science. Appraisal results in a decision about acquisition and a decision about selection. Both decisions are based on the archivist's knowledge about the artist's contemporary society, his life, and his activities and records. The result of the first decision will be the acquisition of organic bodies of records representative of their contemporary society, complementary to the primary and secondary sources preserved in the area where the repository acts, and relevant to the acquisition policy of the repository. The second decision will be the selection and preservation of those records considered as having been most essential to the organization, function, security, and memory of the artist's activities.

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Introduction

When English painter Joseph Mallord Turner died in 1851, he bequeathed the entire contents of his studio as a gift to the nation. One hundred finished oil paintings, two hundred unfinished paintings, nineteen thousand watercolours, drawings, and sketches, and over fifty linear feet of correspondence, diaries, notebooks, commission files, financial records, and manuscripts comprised the *fonds*. Turner imposed only two conditions on his gift: that the works and records be viewed free of charge and that they be housed together in a special building. "What is the use of them but all together?,"¹ he qualified, revealing an archivist's sensitivity to the need for contextual understanding of the whole and the power of provenance.

The concept of artists² as creators of archives seems almost paradoxical with their archetypical image as Byronically romantic, eclectic, and unorganized figures living in a private world of sublime imagination. Indeed, even to the archivist, the stereotypical artist is not conceived of as an orderly record-producer or record-keeper;

Painters, sculptors, and composers of music are apt to be more concerned with giving birth to pictures, sculptures, and symphonies than with keeping detailed records of their past accomplishments. Once a thing is done they want to go on to the next, and if what they have created has passed out of their

¹ quoted in John Bainbridge, "London Journal," *Gourmet* 67 (November 1987): 36.

² For the purposes of this study, the term "artist" refers to visual artists, specifically painters working in any medium. I am making reference to painters for simplicity in exposition and because I selected painters for my interviews. Of course, all I say refers also to sculptors, architects, printmakers, and the like.

possession, they³ may have only the most fragmentary information about it.

This is not always true, however, for artists are in fact required by the organization and priorities of their profession to be pragmatic and business-minded individuals. The uncertainty and sudden fluctuations of an artist's income, the lack of financial and legal security in the artistic vocation, the challenges of the business world, and the special features of artistic activity which usually depend on constant study, practice, and recording of techniques, themes, and subjects for later use combine to characterize record-keeping as a necessary practice.

In the manner of Turner, artists generate and retain numerous common record types. Working as self-employed individuals, under commission, or in conjunction with a corporate or governmental granting body, artists participate in the practical activity of creating their art for whatever purpose, and in the course of this activity generate distinct series of records used primarily for their own legal, economic, administrative, and operational purposes and secondarily, at a later time, for the purposes of outside researchers.

The role of the artist throughout history has been to act as a social critic, to explore all areas of human existence, and to present us with a reflection of ourselves. Society, however, has often regarded the artist with ambivalence. One moment, the artist is a hero and prophet, a secular oracle who interprets the purposes of the universe for ordinary

³ Walter Muir Whitehall, "Archives of the Arts: An Introduction," *The American Archivist* 30 (July 1967): 427.

men; the next, a parasite, a producer of luxury items, and a wastrel with suspicious views and intentions. It is not an exaggeration to characterize the careers of many artists as controversial. In these cases, this points to a wealth of record information.

The value of being able to cast light on aspects of the creative process, the artist's unique view of a particular subject, or the political, social, or economic ramifications of a specific artist or artistic movement, to suggest a few examples, through the evidence of the archival record is understandably great if we agree with Schellenberg that archival records offer

a means of transmitting the cultural heritage of the past, for they contain the ideas and principles upon which governments are based, the explanation of man's intricate social and economic organization, and the evidence of his material and intellectual growth.⁴

In most European countries, and especially in socialist countries where the creative process of the artist is considered as a function of the state as a whole, artist's records are preserved in repositories alongside the records and papers of public figures.

In Canada, however, a cultural mystification with the artist coupled with an archival mystification with the records of the artist is resulting in an inability on the part of many Canadian archivists to properly appraise and acquire these records.

According to the Canada Council, the Canadian labour force consisted of 2,310 visual artists in 1971. By 1981 this figure had risen to

⁴ T. R. Schellenberg, *The Management of Archives* (New York and London, 1965), 66.

7,950, a difference of 224 percent.⁵ Yet the citation of significant artists' records in the *Union List of Manuscripts* and other guides has not proportionately risen. Aside from national treasures such as the records of David Milne, Lawren Harris, Carl Shaefer, Alex Colville, and A. Y. Jackson at the National Archives of Canada and the records of Emily Carr housed at the Provincial Archives of British Columbia, organic *fonds* of artists' records are not commonly appraised and acquired by archival repositories. Where are the records of the over 2,000 artists currently practicing in Canada? How much information about the Canadian artist and his activities is being lost?

The fragmentary manner in which artist's records are acquired by repositories and the valuable documentation which is lost when records are not brought to the archivist's attention or are not opportunely appraised has created a situation not unlike that fostered by the archival community's neglect of the records of post World War II science and technology in the United States. In this case, a startling loss of records precipitated

due to the fact that [scientific] institutions lack solid archival traditions, geared to research use by scholars ... and on the other hand, to the fact that records managers, archivists, and scholars have not yet realized that the revolution in postwar science and technology had brought with it unique problems in appraising the records created.⁶

⁵ The Canada Council, *Selected Arts Research Statistics* (Ottawa: The Canada Council, 1986), 67.

⁶ Joan N. Warnow, *Guidelines for Record Appraisal at Major Research Facilities*. Selection of Permanent Records of DOE Laboratories: Institutional Management and Policy, and Physics Research. (New York: Centre for History of Physics, 1985), 1.

See also Joan K. Hass, et al, *Appraising the Records of Modern Science and Technology: A Guide* (Cambridge: Massachusetts Institutions of Technology, 1985).

The documentary work of artists is subject to the same neglect. When an artist's work is being created in the context of corporate or government administration, the former problem of an absence of archival traditions in the record-keeping system is not only probable, but enhanced by the ambivalent social and professional status of the artist. The latter problem of archivists not comprehending the "unique problems" associated with appraisal both in terms of understanding the operative creative process and identifying the functional context of each record is true of the records of artists working in both public and private circles.

Ostensibly, art and science are antithetical in nature. However, it is possible that circuitous paths of creation, strange symbols of communication, and the mythical image of "absent-minded professors" and their equally dreamy artistic counterparts, who either throw records out or store them in ways undecipherable to anyone else, are shared by both disciplines.

The neglect on the part of many Canadian archivists to appraise and acquire the records of artists may be due to their uncertainty about the nature of archives and the goal of appraisal, and to their mystification of artistic activity and its records. This is not to suggest that Canadian archivists are going about their professional duties in the wrong way, but that when it comes to appraising the products of artistic activity, archivists seem to feel that different standards for identifying archival nature and appraising archival records are necessary. The confusion most likely arises out of the propensity of most people to

assume that all of the artist's activity is cloaked in mystery.

Of course, these are not the only reasons why the appraisal and acquisition of artists' records in Canada has not been widely practiced. Beyond these two issues are many others related specifically to acquisition, such as the relationship between artists and archivists, the competition for artists' records by art galleries, institutional territoriality, and the lack of tax incentives which prevent artists from donating their records to archival repositories.

These are important issues and ones that should be discussed, but they relate more to dynamics which occur out in the community rather than being at the heart of what archivists believe to be archival and the values they use to select archives.

It would be beneficial to survey archivists throughout Canada about their perceptions of archival nature, their practices of appraisal, and their experiences with and feelings about artists and their records. However, it is first necessary to examine the theory which defines the nature of archives, the goal of appraisal, and the suitability of the records of artists to be appraised and acquired by archival institutions. It is essential to determine, from a theoretical perspective, which part of the artist's output may be considered to be of archival nature and how archivists may go about appraising this output for acquisition and permanent preservation.

If it will be determined that some part of the artist's output does possess archival nature, that there is a purview to acquire artists' records, and that they can be appraised in concert with the theoretical principles of archival science, then it will be possible, in other studies, to

examine those dynamics within the archival and art communities in Canada which either facilitate or impede the acquisition of artists' records as a viable part of institutional mandates.

This thesis thus investigates the validity and effectiveness of traditional appraisal principles for the evaluation of the permanent value of records generated and received by artists.

Chapter one discusses the nature of archival records. Here the seminal definitions of "archives" are discussed and the ramifications of these definitions evaluated. Chapter two examines the function of appraisal. Traditional theories of appraisal are discussed from both archival and cultural perspectives and a process of appraisal is proposed. Chapters one and two thus establish terms of reference and a foundation for investigation based on the theoretical framework of archival science.

Chapter three uses this foundation in order to describe the basic components of artistic activities and their records.⁷ The popular image of the artist's studio has been viewed for centuries as a profoundly private place, the contents of which hold meaning only for the artist. An archivist's trepidation to appraise the contents of a studio is completely understandable; hence the third chapter of this thesis aims to de-mystify the enigma of the artist's studio and its records.

Finally, chapter four applies the process of appraisal proposed in chapter two to the records identified in chapter three in order to reach an understanding of some of the conditions and circumstances in which artist's records can be evaluated as demonstrating permanent value

⁷ A full account of the artist's perspective is not within the scope of this study.

such to justify preservation in institutional and non-institutional archival repositories.

My discussion of archival theory is based on published works of archival science written from both European and North American perspectives. My interpretation of artistic activity and its records is formed from study of published interviews with artists, secondary sources of aesthetic philosophy, business, and law, and analysis of the few *fonds* of artists' records at the University of British Columbia Special Collections and the Provincial Archives of British Columbia. Unfortunately, these usually consist of little more than collections of correspondence and printed material rather than of organic *fonds* reflecting the necessarily interrelated aspects of an artist's activity. There are to date no extensive studies on artists' records in an archival context. The study principally takes into consideration the Canadian archival situation.

The principal source of information for my description of artistic activities was constituted by unstructured interviews conducted with four British Columbian artists between January and March, 1988. The artists were selected according to their varying levels of experience as painters. Sylvia Connley and Uri Pierce were chosen as young artists still struggling for identity in their vocation, while Leslie Poole and Toni Onley were chosen as mature artists who have gained international recognition in their field. When possible, the interviews centered around watching the artist at work, touring the studio, and going through records with the artist in an attempt to reconstruct his or her activities from the documentary evidence preserved.

The significance of this study is twofold. First, in carrying out the function of appraisal, the archivist engages in the profession's central and most challenging function: the formation of society's documentary heritage. This undoubtedly carries a great social responsibility. However, the goal of appraisal is too often misunderstood and the demanding practice of appraisal too often abbreviated for ease by busy archivists or altogether bypassed by negligent archivists. Therefore, it is vitally necessary to attempt to explain the theoretical foundations of appraisal in order to clarify the role and responsibilities of archivists as trustees of society.

The second significant aspect of this study is that it recognizes that regardless of an artist's personal conception of what his art represents and what it attempts to do, the artist either consciously or unconsciously expresses and crystallizes the dynamic forces of the time to which he belongs. If the responsibility of the archivist is to preserve that part of the society's memory which is functional to its comprehension and evolution, then it is clear that archival repositories should encompass the appraisal and acquisition of the records of artists within their mandates.

In view of the problems which appear to obstruct the archivist's healthy understanding and management of the records of visual artists, it is important to investigate whether or not these records are suited to be appraised for acquisition and selection by archival repositories in concert with the theoretical principles of the profession.

Chapter One

The Nature of Archival Records

An investigation into the nature of archival records is essential to understanding the process of appraisal. The question "what are archives" is inextricably bound to the question "when do records become archives?" This is so because there exists in the seminal literature of archival theory an ostensible conflict between the belief that archival records are born with their archival nature and the belief that archival quality is something that records acquire and is thus not part of their nature.

These opposing ideas shape one's understanding of appraisal in a significant way. If the concept that archival quality derives from the circumstances of record creation is upheld, then appraisal ascertains whether records qualified as archival by those circumstances have an enduring value and whether the recognized enduring value is such to justify the costs involved in preservation. However, if archival quality is seen as something that a record acquires, then appraisal primarily ascertains whether records deserve to become archives by being selected by an archival institution; that is, appraisal determines their archival quality.

Given the radical conceptual differences accorded by these ideas, it is evident that an explanation of the theories on which they are founded is necessary.

To North American archivists, the foundation of the profession's theory has been enunciated principally by the Dutch archivists S. Muller, J. A. Feith, and R. Fruin, English archivist Hilary Jenkinson, and

American archivist Theodore Schellenberg. The views of these theorists will form a central part of this chapter. Although not widely read in North America, Italian archivist Eugenio Casanova offers some significant comments on the nature of archival records which will also be discussed.

Muller, Feith, and Fruin define archives as

the whole of the written documents, drawings, and printed matter, officially received or produced by an administrative body or one of its officials, in so far as these documents *were intended to remain in the custody of that body or that official.*¹

To the Dutch archivists, any documentation received or produced by a single source during a practical activity is of archival nature. The source may be a public or private organization or individual. Archival nature is intrinsic to records generated in this way; they constitute archives from the moment they are born, independently of their possible preservation in an archival repository. In fact, they may never be selected for preservation but this does not diminish their archival nature.

Casanova likewise defines the nature of archival records independently of any association with long-term preservation in an archival repository. His theory postulates that records which are born out of a particular activity, are accumulated in a determined, invariable order, and are used by the creator for the accomplishment of practical purposes, whatever these may be, are of an archival nature.²

¹ S. Muller, J. A. Feith, and R. Fruin, *Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives*, trans. Arthur Levitt (New York: H.W. Wilson, 1968), 13.

² [archives are] "the orderly accumulation of documents which were created in the course of its activity by an institution or an individual, and which are preserved for the accomplishment of the political, legal, or cultural purposes of such an institution or individual." Casanova cited from *Archivistica* in Schellenberg, *Modern Archives: Principles and*

The elucidation of the nature of archives receives its most extensive expression by Jenkinson in his *Manual of Archival Administration*. Jenkinson's theory of archives envelopes the representatively European views of Muller, Feith, and Fruin and Casanova;

A document which may be said to belong to the class of Archives is one which *was drawn up or used in the course of an administrative or executive transaction (whether public or private) of which itself formed a part; and subsequently preserved in their own custody for their own information by the person or persons responsible for that transaction and their legitimate successors.*

... Archives were not drawn up for the interest or for the information of Posterity.³

Here is the same emphasis on records possessing an archival nature from the moment of their birth due to their circumstances of creation. Indeed, that Jenkinson would include in his manual meticulous instructions for the "Archive-maker"⁴ makes it obvious that his understanding of archives is that they are born with their archival nature.

Considered as complementary ideas, the statements of Muller, Feith, and Fruin, Casanova, and Jenkinson suggest two observations. First, archives are created to accomplish a practical purpose. To the Dutch archivists this is "administration," to Casanova, "activity," and to Jenkinson, "transactions" both public or private. All three terms refer to that which is vital, dynamic, and in process. The second observation is that once the immediate purpose of the creator is accomplished, records

Techniques (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956): 12.

³ Sir Hilary Jenkinson, *A Manual of Archival Administration* (London: Percy Lund, Humphries, and Co., 1922; rpt. 1965), 6.

⁴ Jenkinson, *Manual*, 21-22 and 152-154.

have continuing uses for the record-generating body. This is the reason that they are retained. These uses may be still administrative in character, or as Casanova articulates, "political, legal, or cultural," or all of them. After fulfilling both the purposes for which records have been created and the continuing needs of the creator, archival records may acquire a further value: they may have uses for persons other than the creator. Described generally by Casanova as "cultural purposes," this secondary value permits virtually any use of the information in the records by any person.

These secondary uses, however, are only incidental to what archives are in a fundamental sense: records of process, created during the course of a practical activity as a means of carrying out that activity, which demonstrate continuing values to the creator, who preserves them for his own memory or because of a legal obligation. Archival records are thus born with their archival nature.

This brings us to the definition of archives propounded by Schellenberg. If one adopts Schellenberg's definition of archives, there is little reason to discuss the nature of archival records before appraisal. This is because to Schellenberg records can never be defined as archival on the basis of their nature. In fact, records are only qualified as being archival at the moment that they are selected for permanent preservation. Thus archives are restricted to being

Those records of any public or private institution which are adjudged worthy of permanent preservation for reference and research purposes and which have been deposited or have been selected for deposit in an archival institution.⁵

⁵ Schellenberg, *Modern Archives*, 16.

Records become archives once they have been selected for preservation and not a moment before. The sole criteria records must meet in order to be accepted into a repository -- and by implication, to become archival - is to have research value. Consequently, whereas according to the European definition of archives not all archives will be selected for preservation in an archival repository, Schellenberg maintains that only those records which are selected are archives. Thus outside of archival repositories there are no archives.

The qualities that, according to the Dutch archivists, Casanova, and Jenkinson, characterize the nature of archival records are by Schellenberg attributed to all records. This limits his concept of both "records" and "archives." Interestingly, Schellenberg's definition of "records" is for all intents and purposes identical to the European definition of "archives." Schellenberg's "records" are any documentary materials made or received by any public or private body during the course of the transaction of business and which are preserved by the creator because of useful information contained within for the creator's continuing purposes.⁶

If this is indeed what Schellenberg understands as records, why would he qualify the transformation of records into archives by an artificial determinant such as "reference or research" suitability? This is "artificial" because it has nothing to do with the reasons for which the records were created or the uses they fulfilled. The North American interpretation of appraisal derives from Schellenberg's influential definition of archives which stipulates that the only element records need

⁶ Schellenberg, *Modern Archives*, 16.

to become archives is a research potential such that can justify their preservation in an archival institution. There is no other difference between archival and non-archival materials. Consequently, North American archivists use appraisal to acquire records having a foreseeable research use without founding their evaluation on the organic nature of archival records.

It is curious that although Schellenberg was determined to be different from Jenkinson⁷ by adapting as his definition of "records" Jenkinson's definition of "archives" and then completely changing its conceptual purport by his own definition of "archives," the success of his determination is questionable. In many instances, Schellenberg actually discusses archives and behaves like an orthodox Jenkinsonian.

Schellenberg makes unconditional statements by distinguishing "records for current use" from "records for research use." He then stipulates that the former becomes the latter only when they are deposited with "custodians of research material - archivists, manuscript curators, and librarians."⁸ These records can never have an archival nature. They can have only an archival quality because they were not born as archives. However, Schellenberg contradicts himself on this very issue of when records become archives. In *Modern Archives* he states that

... whenever historical manuscripts become part of the documentation of an organized activity -- as, for example, when love letters are introduced as evidence in divorce proceedings--

⁷ see Richard Stapleton, "Jenkinson and Schellenberg: A Comparison" in *Archivaria* 17 (Winter 1983-84): 75-85 which includes suggestions of their adversarial relationship.

⁸ Schellenberg, *Management of Archives*, ix-x.

they may also be considered to be archives.⁹

Here Schellenberg is defining archives like Jenkinson. He ascribes the word "archives" to records that are part of the documentary process of an activity but which have not yet been selected for permanent preservation. In another instance, Schellenberg deconstructs his own theory: he states that "most recent private records have the organic quality of public records and are therefore archival in character."¹⁰ He openly admits that records have an archival character before being submitted for evaluation for possible acquisition by archival repositories. There is a serious conceptual difference between "archival nature" as something that records are born with and express for ever and "archival quality" as something that records acquire only as they are selected by an archival repository and retain only as long as they demonstrate research value. If, as it appears in his writings, Schellenberg does not really uphold this difference, then his definition of archives is questionable. If his definition is questionable, then we may suspect that his theory of appraisal is also. A brief discussion of four elements described by Jenkinson as characteristic of archives will further both an understanding of his theory on archival nature and the suggestion that Schellenberg essentially upholds it.

According to Jenkinson, archives present four qualifying elements: impartiality, authenticity, natural accumulation, and interrelationship. His identification of these elements is shared by

⁹ Schellenberg, *Modern Archives*, 17-18.

¹⁰ Schellenberg, *Management of Archives*, 65. Added emphasis.

Jenkinson's first element of archival nature is impartiality. In his definition of archives he states that "Archives were not drawn up in the interest or for the information of Posterity." Consequently, if the records were created for the purposes and uses of the creator, then the information in them is theoretically impartial and more or less truthful. Later research uses "will not be the purposes which were contemplated by the people by whom the Archives were drawn up and preserved."¹² Because archives are created during the course of an activity, their purpose, in their original conceptual context, is to carry out that activity. They are saved as a record of actions¹³ not as items for dissemination or material for research. Moreover,

archives are *unselfconscious* by-products of human activity, they have the objective formlessness of raw material, compared with the subjective roundness of literary artefacts like books, whether printed or manuscript.¹⁴

¹¹ Schellenberg also discusses these elements, but of course according to his theory these cannot be "elements." An element is a component part of and intrinsic to something that is a natural entity. Because Schellenberg's definition of archives ostensibly stipulates that the state of being archival is a condition that is acquired by records rather than a nature with which records are born, then Jenkinson's "elements" must be to Schellenberg "characteristics." Characteristics refer to the traits of a condition. To avoid confusion, the term "element" will be used in the discussion to refer to the comments of Jenkinson, the Dutch archivists, and Schellenberg. The inconsistency with which Schellenberg ascribes the elements of archives to both archives and records emphasizes just how unclear his idea of archives really is.

¹² Jenkinson, *Manual*, 2.

¹³ O. W. Holmes, "History and Theory of Archival Practice," in *University Archives*, ed. Roland E. Stephens (Champaign, 1965): 1-2.

¹⁴ J. H. Hogson, *The Administration of Archives* (Oxford: Pergamon PRes, 1972), 4.

Although this statement anticipates the element of natural accumulation and the observation that archival records are never autonomous, the word "unselfconscious" is central to the discussion of impartiality.

Muller, Feith, and Fruin's stand on impartiality is consistent with that of Jenkinson. They qualify that in order for records to have archival nature, they must have been "intended to remain in the custody" of the creator¹⁵, implying that they were created for the use of the creator only. Impartiality would naturally arise from this implication. Schellenberg, who maintains that records become archival because of the purport of their research value to those other than record creators, also maintains that research value has little in common with the reasons for which records were originally created.¹⁶ And the fact that he speaks of "archives" and reasons for the creation of records in the same breath again suggests his affinity to Jenkinson's theory of archival nature.

Authenticity is the second of Jenkinson's elements of archival nature. "Archive quality," he states, "is dependent upon the possibility of providing an unblemished line of responsible custodians."¹⁷ Unbroken custody thus ensures authenticity, for in such cases records are "free from suspicion of being tampered with."¹⁸ Muller, Feith, and Fruin assume a more lenient attitude about the necessity of unbroken custody in order to ensure authenticity. Their view of custody is realistic in situations where creators lose track of their records. This is common in

¹⁵ Muller, Feith, and Fruin, 13.

¹⁶ Schellenberg, *Modern Archives*, 13.

¹⁷ Jenkinson, *Manual*, 11.

¹⁸ Jenkinson, *Manual*, 12.

both public and private contexts. The Dutch archivists believe that a group of records can retain its archival nature as long as the records were "*intended to remain in the custody of that body or that official*."¹⁹ This allows for the event of mistake, calamity, and in some cases, malicious treatment.

In archival terms, a record is considered authentic or not in relation to its creator, not in an absolute sense. That is, an activity can have been carried out by means of false records, consciously produced by the creator. They are authentic in an archival sense, even if they are false in a diplomatic sense. This authenticity as to the creator can in fact be guaranteed only by a line of unbroken custody.

Schellenberg's stand on authenticity develops out of the rationale of Muller, Feith, and Fruin. He feels that if there is a "reasonable assumption"²⁰ that the records concerned are actually those generated by the creator as testified by donor information or information in the records themselves, then they pass the test of "archival quality."²¹ Once again, he is mixing concepts by referring to "records" and "archival quality" together. If his definition of archives is to be upheld, then the sole criteria for records to be archival is the research value they possess. Authenticity should be irrelevant. In combination with his thoughts on impartiality, his comments on authenticity suggest that he is talking about "archival records" in the Jenkinsonian sense, not just "records." And if this is so, then it is clear

¹⁹ Muller, Feith, and Fruin, 13. Added emphasis on "intended."

²⁰ Schellenberg, *Modern Archives*, 14.

²¹ Schellenberg, *Modern Archives*, 15.

that both the European and North American archivists deem that some measure of custody, whether intended or actual, is requisite for determining archival nature.

The third element of archives is natural accumulation or organic unity. Jenkinson explains the ideas behind this element by contrasting the artificial collection of objects in a museum with the natural accumulation of documents "in offices for practical purposes."²² In a segment from "The English Archivist: A New Profession" which is worthwhile to cite in its entirety, he makes this dichotomy clear:

Archives are not collected; I wish the word "Collection" could be banished from the Archivist's vocabulary, if only to establish that important fact. They are not there, or they should not be, because someone brought them together with the idea that they should be useful to students of the future, or prove a point or illustrate a theory. They came together, and reached their final arrangement, by a natural process: are a growth, almost, as you might say, as much an organism as a tree or animal. They have consequently a structure, an articulation, and a natural relationship between parts ... Archive quality only survives unimpaired, so long as this natural form and relationship are maintained.²³

The concepts of natural accumulation are first, organic growth out of purposive action, second, a relationship between parts, and third, evidence of a natural process of information in records. In their *Manual*, Muller, Feith, and Fruin describe these concepts in similar terms.²⁴ Schellenberg likewise articulates "process"²⁵ as a concept central to the element of

²² Jenkinson, *Manual*, 53.

²³ Jenkinson, "The English Archivist: A New Profession," in *Selected Writings of Sir Hilary Jenkinson*, ed. Roger Willis and Peter Walne (Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1980): 238-239.

²⁴ Muller, Feith, and Fruin, 16.

²⁵ W. L. White, "Foreword", *Modern Archives*, viii.

natural accumulation. It is worthwhile to digress in this direction for a moment.

Because records are primarily significant in relation to activity and only secondarily in relation to subject, they represent dynamic events rather than the static "fact" or conclusion resulting as the product of the activity. The accumulation of records in an archive-producing situation actually represents vital decisions, transactions, and ideas that can be re-experienced due to the organic manner in which they are accumulated. Schellenberg rightly identifies that "all records arising from a particular activity have a cohesive character and are part of one another ... They lose their significance if they are dealt with as single items rather than as collective units."²⁶

Indeed, the Dutch archivists state that a group of archives is a "'whole' as soon as it ceases to be a part."²⁷ Giorgio Cencetti describes archives as "something more than and different from the arithmetical sum of single components."²⁸ Oliver Holmes defines an organic group of archival records as "a whole which has a meaning different from and greater than the sum of its parts."²⁹ These are extremely important distinctions. They point to the fact that archival records can never be autonomous. The finished product of an archival process such as a building constructed from architect's drawings, specifications, and plans is

²⁶ Schellenberg, *Management of Archives*, 67.

²⁷ Muller, Feith, and Fruin, 14.

²⁸ Giorgio Cencetti, "Il fondamento teorico della dottrina archivistica," *Archivi*, 1 (1939): 7-13. Abstract in *The American Archivist* 3 (July 1940): 279.

²⁹ Holmes, 3.

autonomous. It has its own purposes which it reaches with its own means. Records relating to its construction which may help to clarify its meaning do not touch its autonomy. The autonomous work, like that building, a painting, or a manuscript, needs no elaboration or interpretation to make it whole. It is the final product of a practical activity or an expression of the intellect and soul of an individual meant for diffusion.

Archives, as they have been defined, are nothing like this. They are never created for diffusion. They have an internal character. They are testaments of process. They need the support of context in order to be understood. This introduces Jenkinson's fourth element, interrelationship. Interrelationship is difficult to discuss apart from the element of natural accumulation. The principle behind interrelationship is that "any Archive is potentially related closely to others both inside and outside the group in which it is preserved ... its significance depends on these relations."³⁰ Indeed, according to Cencetti, the bond which links each record to the preceding and the following, fixing the place it occupies in the group of which it is part, is original, determined, necessary, and invariable.

This reinforces the fact that autonomy is a principle alien to archives. It also introduces the concept that "records follow functions" since they are the results of functional activities. Muller, Feith, and Fruin perceive that "Experience teaches ... that if the functions or rights of one administrative body pass to another, the archives accompany them."³¹ In this, the interplay between the new

³⁰ Jenkinson, 65.

³¹ Muller, Feith, and Fruin, 24.

function and the old records is still vital and requisite for the total organic nature of the *fonds*.

It is artificial to discuss the elements of impartiality, authenticity, natural accumulation, and interrelationship separately and analytically as it has been done above. The concepts behind these theories are, like the records of a *fonds*, inextricably bound in meaning and identity. Each of the elements sheds some light on the nature of archives, but theoretically speaking, all must be intrinsic to the records discussed if those records are to be considered to possess archival nature.

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If society's documentary heritage is to be preserved, archivists must be able to identify that which constitutes it. In this chapter, two dialectical views of the character of archival records have been discussed. Jenkinson, as representative of a dominant strain of European archival theory, maintains that records produced under certain circumstances are born with archival nature. Schellenberg, the pioneer of what has become a distinctly North American position, believes that archival "quality" is something that certain records acquire when they are selected for preservation and is therefore not part of their nature. The ramifications of each of these theories on interpretations of the function of appraisal is understandably great.

Muller, Feith, and Fruin, who pre-date Jenkinson in their articulation of archival theory, discuss the elements of archival nature in

the same language and to the same end as the English archivist. Schellenberg's tendency to discuss the "archival character" of records when, according to his theory, they are still only "records", suggests that he also essentially agrees with the elements accorded by Jenkinson as formative of archival nature.

With or without Schellenberg's "endorsement," this thesis uses as a theoretical foundation Jenkinson's theory that archival records are born with their archival nature. Consequently, the basic view of appraisal supported is that appraisal ascertains whether archival records have an enduring value and whether this value is such to justify the costs involved in preservation. The question of records being "archival" is not an issue of appraisal in this sense because, if archival nature is predetermined by the conditions of record creation and use, the activity of appraisal will be concerned only with archival records. As the theoretical foundation of this thesis, the concept of archival nature will be touched upon in subsequent chapters. Before proceeding to discuss the function of appraisal in the next chapter, it is useful to summarize the principal aspects of the nature of archives.

Records which demonstrate archival nature are created during the course of a practical activity. They are not created for dissemination (although their end products may be), but for use by the creator. Once the records have been used for their creating activity, they are retained by the creator to serve as his memory. After being used for purposes of memory, archives may have a secondary use. This is associated with value to those other than the creator.

Therefore, records have an archival nature if:

1. they were created or received for the purposes and uses of the creator in order to carry out a practical activity;
2. they are authentic as to their creator;
3. they constitute an organic accumulation;
4. they are linked to the other records generated by the same creator through a necessary and invariable bond determined by the activity which was carried out by means of their creation.

Finally, "the outstanding feature of the Archive," states Jenkinson, "is that it is by nature unique, represents some measure of knowledge which does not exist in quite the same form anywhere else."³² The universality of archives lies in the fact that they reflect every conceivable human interest and aspiration. The nature of archives arises out of the reality that they are the immutable, tangible part of the dynamic past and because of this, would be created independently of the existence of archival repositories, researchers, and archivists.

³² Jenkinson, "Reflections of an Archivist," in *A Modern Archives Reader*, ed. Maygene F. Daniels and Timothy Walsh (Washington: National Archives and Records Service, 1984), 15.

Chapter Two

The Function of Appraisal

The function of appraisal is one of evaluation. Appraisal is the process of determining the value of archival records in order to select those deserving permanent preservation for custody in an archival repository. In carrying out this function, the archivist engages in the profession's central and most challenging activity: the formation of society's documentary heritage. Documentary heritage has been defined as "the totality of the existing evidence of historical activity, or as all the surviving documentation of past events."¹ In appraising archival records and determining whether their value justifies permanent preservation, "the archivist performs the constitutive act by which societal data are converted into 'historical sources.'"²

The archivist thus performs a professional function which carries the greatest social responsibility. He is the person who analyzes those events in social life that are transmitted to us through the archival record and decides which archives are to be preserved to form a part of society's memory and which are not. Archivists are unavoidably subject to the fundamental orientation of the cultures in which they live. Their individual behaviour is inevitably dependent upon a life experience shaped

¹ Hans Booms, "Society and the Formation of a Documentary Heritage: Issues in the Appraisal of Archival Sources," trans. Hermina Joldersma and Richard Klumpenhower, *Archivaria* 24 (Summer 1987): 76.

² Booms, 78.

by the environment. Can one defend, on ethical grounds, the fact that archivists form the documentary heritage on the basis of conceptions derived from a socially-conditioned subjectivity? We must accept the fact that the activity of appraisal is ultimately the result of a subjective process. Archivists can never achieve a state of total objectivity; this is an impossible goal because they are rooted in humanity. Naturally, this is a contingency which cannot be avoided. But it can be controlled through the development and application of a scientifically based process of appraisal. Thus archivists can maintain the balance of their dual roles as public trustees and cultural mediators.

I stated that the function of appraisal is to evaluate archival records and to select those which have an enduring value. Why is this done? There are two reasons for archivists to preserve records of enduring value. One arises out of obligation and one arises out of desire.

Society must preserve a large portion of its archival documentation for the survival of its legal, administrative, patrimonial, moral, and political structure. Society also desires to preserve the documentary heritage for a number of other reasons including cultural, ideological, religious, even sentimental reasons.

Given the dual impetus of society to preserve, two questions come to mind. First, what portion of the total documentary heritage is to be preserved? Second, from what perspective and with what standards does the appraiser select? It is necessary to turn to the theoretical foundation of appraisal in order to address these questions. This foundation will provide direction for the discussion of the appraisal of artist's records in chapters three and four.

The first and most obvious question regarding appraisal is what portion of the total documentary heritage is to be preserved? There is a choice. Either the whole of the archival documentary heritage or a representative portion of the whole can be preserved. The latter is indeed what appraisal strives towards. The reasons for not preserving the documentary heritage in its entirety casts in relief some important aspects of appraisal.

The lack of physical space is perhaps the most obvious deterrent to total retention. However, the actual reasons for avoiding this practice are conceptual; German archivist Johannes Papritz arrived at the conclusion that archival appraisal and destruction must "never be made dependent upon the availability of existing space in a repository."³ One of the most significant reasons for avoiding total retention is the consequent flood of record information. Reducing quantity while condensing archival material qualitatively is the task of the appraiser. His responsibility is to create, out of an overabundance of information, a socially relevant documentary record that is humanly usable. Indeed, the result of indiscriminate acquisition would be the debilitation of research and use.

On the other hand, it is difficult to find objective justifications for the selection of only a portion of the total documentary heritage from either an historiographical, juridical, or archival perspective. In fact, the act of selection seems inimical to the purposes and principles of history, juridical doctrine, and archival theory.

³ Johannes Papritz, "Zum Massenproblem der Archive," *Der Archivar* 17 (1964):220, quoted in Booms, 77n.

Historical research is, by definition, a retrospective activity that concerns itself with an already completed reality. It relies on the concrete evidence of the past which has come down to the present in the form of documentary sources. However, faced with the totality of a society's documents, it is impossible to ascertain with absolute certainty that some sources will never be used for historical purposes. Even copies of seemingly valueless material may one day acquire research value if all other sources are destroyed.

Consider also the case of juridical doctrine. The juridical nature of archival records is that a record can represent or actually constitute a legal relationship between parties.⁴ It is not possible to say that a record which has no obvious juridical nature may never acquire a juridical value in the future. It is impossible to establish that some records can never be used for legal purposes. In fact, records are either created in observance of legal requirement or have a potential legal value, being produced in societies governed by law, common or customary. The process of selection can thus compromise the events of the future.

Finally, the selection of some archives from the totality of the documentary heritage conflicts with the principle of the archival bond, that is, with the element of interrelationship that is intrinsic to the nature of archival records. Every archival record is related closely to

⁴ Probative documents represent the right. For instance, a birth certificate is a probative document because with or without it, the person to whom it belongs still exists. Dispositive documents, do not merely represent the juridical action; they are the action. An example of this kind of document is a will. If a will is lost or destroyed, its named beneficiaries can not claim the legacies noted in it and the writer of the will is considered intestate.

others both inside and outside the group of which it is part. This bond exists since the moment of the record's creation. The underlying principle of organic unity necessitates that archival records are dependent on their context for meaning and comprehension. Although the bond created between them at the moment of their birth will always be retained by the records, selection affects the integrity of archives. Selection is thus arbitrary, because, on the basis of the archival bond, all records are equally important, as they are organically interrelated.

In consideration of these issues, it is evident that appraisal cannot be oriented towards prophesy. Appraisers cannot assume the role of the clairvoyant who anticipates the future from the signs and evidence of the past and present.⁵ It is almost certain that what is selected can never be enough and what is left behind will contain some value which was not predicted. Thus the theoretical foundation of selection cannot be other than the "law of economy" which is central to the concept of evolution. Only those elements which are functional and essential to the course and development of every historical phase are preserved. These elements, whether they are related to law, philosophy, politics, religion, or culture, are represented in archival records. It is a civilization's need to leave a vital, and as such selected, testimony of itself that establishes the criteria of source selection.

The foundation of selection is therefore not related to the

⁵ Michael Cook appropriately comments that "The most difficult part of appraisal is the prediction of future research value." He then, however, falls in to the trap that appraisal easily sets; "Yet at the same time, appraisal is necessarily based on the prediction of likely lines of development in research." *The Management of Information from Archives* (Aldershot: Gower Publishing Company, 1986), 76.

availability of physical space. It is a need to protect those manifestations of civilization alone which enable and favour its evolution. It has been observed that the idea of a city where no demolition, only the addition of new buildings, has occurred is inconceivable. The archival equivalent is the repository which retains the total documentary heritage of decades, even centuries, producing a mass of information and social testimony that is indecipherable and whose functional relevance is lost. Archives are not about staticity, but about dynamic growth and change. Archives constitute the memory of society and memory must be selective in order to be functional.

Appraisal fulfills the need of preserving those records considered by contemporaries as necessary to the protection, comprehension, and progress of their society. West German archivist Hans Booms clearly articulates this theory;

In constructing the conceptual grid of history which will serve as a model for the documentary heritage, archivists must not follow the value concepts of their own time period, but rather, those of the time from which the material originated. Just as the question of sources is the most fundamental for every historical research inquiry, so the question of value ascribed by those contemporary to the material should become the most fundamental of every archival endeavour to form the documentary heritage ... If there is indeed anything or anyone qualified to lend legitimacy to archival appraisal, it is society itself.⁶

If appraisal strives to capture a contemporary perception of the centrality of certain archives to the society's own identity and development, where does this leave the interests of historiography?

Research value is present in any manifestation of human thought or activity whether it is found in archival sources or not.

⁶ Booms, 104.

Perhaps the worst fear of the historian is that records displaying research value will not be selected for archival preservation. Conversely the illusion of the historian is the equation of "more archives" with more historical understanding. But archives will never provide a definitive answer to the problems of historiography due to the natural human biases of the records, which are never facts, but interpretations. Moreover, it is unfair to demand that the appraiser predict the historiographical interests of the future, acting at the same time with unbiased objectivity⁷. Jenkinson aptly states that

to define archives by the research use made of them is like producing a rabbit from a hat and then saying that that is what hats are intended for; and to mask the fact that Archives have been subject to selection of this kind ... is to mask the fact that our generation is bringing Archives a long step nearer to the status of those artificial "Collections" to which Dr. Schellenberg ... assigns in agreement with me, an inferior quality as evidence.⁸

Indeed, the duty of the appraiser is to understand his or her time and to select in harmony with it. The records chosen because they are what the society needed to function and progress will provide the historian with the most concentrated and essential information anyway. And although complete "objectivity" can never exist in this context, the selection of archival records founded on the values of the society which created them will ultimately prove more "objective" than that guided by a

⁷ Booms questions the relative "objectivity" of the sources historians have been using since appraisal became the function of the archivist. Variations of the "intuitive approach" of appraisal, the historical prophetic approach, the Marxist perspective, and the "strict guideline derived from record function" approach have alternatively reflected different kinds of archival representation, ultimately subjective in nature. Booms, 82-87.

⁸ Jenkinson, "The English Archivist," 240.

forecast of future research interests.

Thus, even though historiographical, juridical, and archival principles do not justify selection from the total documentary heritage, there is a need for selection based on the fact that society is evolutionary and tends to value only that part of the past which is functional to its development.

This concept reflects the essentially impartial nature of archives. Indeed, Jenkinson observes that

the Archives which the past preserved it did not preserve for our information but for its own: how, then, can we blame it if, preserving only for this practical purpose, it found no interest in certain things (it now appears) we should have been very glad to have.⁹

In effect, Jenkinson says that we can criticize the past only if it failed to maintain its own standard of values, because the records were not created for Posterity but for the uses of the owners. Accordingly, the individual entrusted with appraisal should value "Archives as Archives, not as documents valuable for proving this or that thesis."¹⁰ The appraiser should act as a trustee for the future as well as for the present, considering more than his or her own interests.

The relationship between archives and society has always been determined by political and legal factors.¹¹ Democratic and socialist societies have made public administrations accountable to their citizens; the administration produces documentation not only for its own need to

⁹ Jenkinson, 139.

¹⁰ Jenkinson, 144.

¹¹ see Ernst Posner, "Some Aspects of Archival Development Since the French Revolution," in *A Modern Archival Reader*, 3-14.

function but also for providing evidence of its activity out of a duty and social responsibility to the citizens, the ultimate owners of the documentation. The right of citizens to consult archives derives from their ownership of documentary sources.

If society, through its administration and its citizens, is the creator and owner of archives and archivists have served as society's trustees by maintaining what Jenkinson calls a "moral and physical responsibility" for archives, the society itself is entitled, through its trustees, to decide what archives are essential to its own functioning and development in a political, legal, and cultural sense.

To paraphrase Jenkinson, society and its trustees, that is, the archivists, can be criticized only if they fail to maintain their own standards of record value. For a society to destroy what it no longer needs is a matter entirely within its competence. It is an act which future ages cannot criticize as "illegitimate or as affecting the status of the remaining archives."

Regarding appraisal from this social point of view identifies the perspective from which appraisal "standards" should be formulated and used. Schellenberg observes that all archivists assume that the minimum record to be preserved by repositories is the record of organization and functioning, in other words, those records considered by the creator as vital to its day to day operations. Beyond that, he continues, the values of records become more debatable. Archivists therefore depend on two possible methods of appraisal. The first, Schellenberg maintains, is an intuitive approach. This is problematic in itself, for as Booms has observed, success in the appraisal process can be

attained only when archivists select according to principles which allow them to make concrete value judgements.¹²

Schellenberg's second approach is to select, beyond the minimum record, "extra records"¹³ which are to be identified on the basis of their "informational values." Informational value refers to the information records contain "on persons, corporate bodies, problems, conditions, and the like."¹⁴ It is calculated by, first, assessing whether or not the information in the records is "important,"¹⁵ and second, by taking into account the actual research methods of various classes of person and the likelihood that they would under ordinary circumstances make effective use of the information.¹⁶ The appraisal of informational value is thus a subjective task at best. It depends upon lists of standards for guidance, as is the tradition in North America.¹⁷ It is obvious, however, that guidelines and specific standards cannot

12 Booms, 101.

13 Schellenberg, *Modern Archives*, 140.

14 Schellenberg, *Modern Archives*, 139.

15 Schellenberg, *Modern Archives*, 66.

16 Schellenberg, *Modern Archives*, 67.

17 Generally speaking, the goal of appraisal as interpreted by many North American appraisal manuals and archival glossaries endorse Maynard Britchford's view that "in general, we should select records with the greatest potential value to researchers covering the broadest range of activities for the longest time with the smallest amount of easily understandable records." "Appraisal and Processing," *College and University Archives: Selected Readings* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1979), 49. Although it is impossible to estimate what percentage of North American archivists endorse this view, the way in which appraisal is presented in professional literature suggests that it is high.

conceivably apply to every appraisal situation and every record form.¹⁸

On the basis of my previous discussion of appraisal, I suggest that appraising beyond the "minimum record" is not necessary. I maintained, in agreement with Booms, that regarding appraisal as a prophetic means of selecting archives for future research use is self-defeating in that it misrepresents the social memory, and, in agreement with Jenkinson, that retaining only those records regarded by a record creator as necessary to the organization, function, security, and development of his particular activity both preserves record impartiality, offers the best "objective" view attainable of his experience, and ultimately relays the same kinds of "informational value." These records are in fact what Schellenberg calls the "minimum record," that which he assumes all archivists will naturally appraise favorably.

Is it then not superfluous to preserve "extra records" if this minimum record represents all that is essential and representative? My answer is in the affirmative, and I believe that by agreeing with the theory that those archival records considered by the creator as essential to his activity are those which contain the richest record information, the archivist can follow a logical and effective way of going about appraisal.

Here it is useful to differentiate between the appraisal of

¹⁸ A general review of the current literature on appraisal in Canadian and American archival journals reveals that this is the case. Reports of the experiences of archivists in implementing appraisal guidelines for a particular record type or media invariably reflects the difficulty of appraising beyond the "minimum" values such as legal and administrative value; value that is "tangible." When the issue of "research value" is discussed, the guidelines either get too specific to justify general use or too dependent on the judgement of the historian.

archival records of public and private organizations such as governments, agencies, societies, and businesses which are preserved by an institutional repository and the appraisal of archival records of private individuals and organizations which are not preserved by an institutional repository.¹⁹ One cannot differentiate between institutional and non-institutional repositories without discussing institutional and non-institutional acquisition. Institutional archives may make non-institutional acquisitions, such as the case when the National Archives of Canada, whose primary mandate is to acquire the records of the federal government, acquires private papers. However, an archivist will not appraise institutional and non-institutional records in the same manner. The appraisal of records of organizations which are preserved by institutional repositories constitutes selection among records while the appraisal of records of individuals and organizations preserved by non-institutional repositories first concerns the acquisition of records and then selection among them.

Archival repositories that preserve the records of organizations are usually part of the organizations. Such repositories exist as a service to the creating body. Either through a formal or informal system of records management, records are transferred to the archives. The archivist then selects from among these records those which are representative of the organization's structure and function.

¹⁹ By institutional repository, I refer to an archival repository that exists for the preservation of its creator's records and performs a service to the creator, such as the National Archives of Canada which preserves the records of the federal government. A type of repository that is not associated with a specific institution or organization is the Community Archives of Mission, B.C. which acquires and preserves the records of private individuals and organizations operating in the area.

There is no question that the records transferred to the archives will be outside of the scope of the repository's mandate and acquisition policy because the repository exists primarily for the organization.

Records of private individuals and private organizations that are acquired through non-institutional acquisition are appraised in a slightly different manner. These repositories have an acquisition policy which identifies the types of records to be acquired and, in this context, the first function of appraisal is related to acquisition in that it determines whether or not records offered to or solicited by the repository fall within the parameter of the acquisitions policy. This part of appraisal is ideally carried out before the records are accepted into the repository. The second function of appraisal is then to select among the records accepted by the repository to ensure that those identified for preservation represent those essential to the activities of the creators. This aspect of appraisal is identical to that carried out by institutional repositories in making institutional acquisitions, indicating that aside from the fact that appraisal on the private side takes acquisition factors into consideration, selection among records of organizations and records of private individuals can be performed in the same way.

Thus in the case of institutional acquisition, appraisal is equivalent to selection. Non-institutional acquisition encompasses first, evaluation for acquisition, and, second, if applicable, selection among the records. This last, however, depends upon the terms of the contract between owner and repository.

A flexible way in which to approach appraisal may be to view it as a process of four phases. Three of the phases concern the

preparation of the archivist and the final phase involves evaluation. The four phases are carried out in the same manner in situations where organizational records are transferred to an institutional repository and where private organizational and personal records are acquired by a non-institutional repository. Due to the fact that acquisition is related to appraisal in the case of records of private individuals and some private organizations, causing slight variations in the way in which appraisal may be carried out, I will discuss the four phases of appraisal separately for both types of records.

A. The appraisal of records of organizations which are preserved by institutional repositories.

The appraisal process begins with the archivist's understanding of the society in which the records to be appraised were generated. If the archivist is contemporary to this society, then he will have a fundamental knowledge of the moral climate, political atmosphere, economic concerns, and other elements of which it is comprised. Otherwise, he must learn and follow the value concepts of the period in which the records were generated, reconstructing the entire milieu which influenced their creation.

The significance of this phase to the archivist's ability to appraise is great. It is crucial for the archivist to appraise with integrity and this integrity must come from a fundamental understanding of the environment. As context and interrelationship between records qualify archives, in order to evaluate them, the archivist must understand

in the most general and assimilative sense, the social, political, legal, moral, geographical, and cultural context which influenced their creation.

The second phase of the appraisal process is more specific. **The archivist must become knowledgeable about the history, structure, functions, objectives, and activities of the creator of the records.** Synthesizing his understanding of the social milieu in which the record-creator lived and operated, the archivist must absorb in the "mind-set" of the administration which instigated or participated in, or both, the activity documented in the records.

In the case of appraising the records of public and private organizations, the archivist's task is one of administrative analysis. The archivist may have to draw upon the work of related disciplines such as law, public administration, political science, sociology, and commerce for the insight they provide about the nature of organizations. Depending on the type of organization, further research into the special subject field of that organization may also be necessary. For instance, if the archivist is responsible for the archives of an engineering company which specializes in the design and construction of oil refineries, then, in order to assess the value of operational records, the archivist must learn about the technical aspects of this activity.

Ultimately, the purpose of the first two phases of the appraisal process is to enable the archivist to evaluate records as a member of the society in which they were created and, virtually, as the organization that created them. This involves as much imagination as it does insight; this should not suggest that the process of thinking like contemporary record creators is to be regarded as a flight of fancy.

Rather, the element of imagination helps the archivist uncover unusual or atypical sources of information on which to base his understanding of the record-creator and its society.

The third phase of appraisal involves the archivist's acquisition of knowledge about the specific activities documented in the records and the types of records generated out of these activities. The success of this phase is dependent upon the information gathered in the first two phases of appraisal. Recourse to procedure manuals and policy, consultations with record creators or their successors, and if possible, observation of or participation in the key activities of the organization will assist the archivist in understanding the function and significance of the records.

A breakdown of the record-generating activity and an identification of the record types created during each phase of this activity further provides a structure from which to derive relative values. This type of activity is common in Europe and has recently and successfully been carried out in the United States at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.²⁰

Basically speaking, if the records concerned in any appraisal inquiry are indeed of archival nature, then they will document the activity which generated them. Every activity regardless of its character will have certain procedures and identifiable stages, and they too will be reflected in the records. Due to this fact, the archivist should always be able to understand a record-creating process from a

²⁰ Joan K. Hass, et al., *Appraising the Records of Modern Science and Technology: A Guide* (Cambridge Mass: MIT, 1985).

direct study of the records. The knowledge of this process is essential for a systematically-approached appraisal aiming for effective results and decisions.

The fourth and final stage of the appraisal process is that of evaluation. It is at this point that the information gathered in the three previous phases synthesizes to enable an informed appraisal. The way in which evaluation is carried out is of course unique to each situation; for this reason there can be nothing other than an understanding of the function of appraisal with which to guide the archivist. **The archivist must select those records which were essential to the functioning, protection, and future development of the record-creating body.** Those records favorably appraised will be preserved in archival repositories, the others will be destroyed or disposed of in an appropriate manner.

The archivist thus appraises with an awareness of the social environment that produced the records and, in effect, as part of it. The records selected will represent the most impartial testament possible of the activity which generated them. In supplying the future with a concentrated and essential documentary record, the archivist permits the future to use that record in a myriad of ways without compromising the integrity of the past.

B. The appraisal of records preserved by non-institutional repositories and by institutional repositories through non-institutional acquisition.

As I mentioned, the methodology and goal of appraisal is no different for records preserved by non-institutional and institutional

repositories. The appraisal of records destined for non-institutional repositories concerns the selection among records but appraisal is also used to acquire records since there is no mandate for records to be transferred automatically to their own repositories. The variation in carrying out appraisal for records of private organizations and individuals is one of perspective. In the first case discussed, the records to be appraised are already a part of the institution or organization and the function of appraisal is to select among them. In the present case, the records are not associated with the repository in any way and the function of appraisal is first to evaluate whether they are suitable for acquisition and then to select among them.

The first phase of appraisal constitutes the archivist's education about the society in which the records to be appraised were generated. In the case of records of private organizations and individuals, the process and significance of this stage is identical to that of the records destined for institutional repositories, and is even more important because for the records to be appraised, a decision on acquisition must be made. Because the scope of non-institutional acquisition is usually more general, the repository involved has a great responsibility to acquire both within the bounds of its acquisition policy and with a sensitivity towards society as a whole.

The second phase of appraisal which involves the archivist's education about the record creator is also carried out in the same way and with the same objectives as in the case of institutional records. Where the records of an individual are concerned, the archivist must study the life, activities, interests, ideas, spirit, and any other element

that may shed light on the personality and work of the person who created the records. Auxiliary fields of study may be useful to learning more about the records creator.

During this phase of appraisal, the archivist will probably begin to have a sense of the pertinence of the records concerned to the repository's acquisitions policy. For instance, if a policy states that the repository acquires the papers of individuals active in the community of Mission, B.C., and an examination of the biography of the creator of a group of records offered for acquisition reveal that the creator lived and worked in Ireland, had never been to Mission, and had no association with the community, then the second phase of appraisal will have established that the papers are not suitable for acquisition. In situations such as that described above where, on grounds of territorial relevance, a group of records is proven unsuitable for acquisition, then the appraisal process can cease at the second phase. However, where there is a positive indication that the records do comply with the conditions of the acquisitions policy on the basis of information gathered in the first and second phases of appraisal, it is wise to complete all four phases of the appraisal process before making a definitive decision.

The third phase of appraisal involves the archivist's understanding of the activities which generated the records and the types of records these activities produce. The archivist appraising records destined for institutional repositories has a slight advantage over the archivist appraising records of private individuals and organizations in this matter. It will be remembered that in the former case, the archivist ideally observes and perhaps even participates to a certain extent in the

work processes generating the records. This is possible because the record-creating organization is still functional. When records of private individuals and organizations are offered to an archival repository for acquisition or are solicited by the archivist, on the other hand, there is a good chance that the record creator is deceased, in the case of individuals, or defunct, in the case of organizations. In such situations, the evidence of the creating activity as indicated in the records must speak for itself to a certain extent. In addition, a reconstruction of the creating activity of the records may be possible from the evidence provided by other sources.

Where the record creator is not deceased or defunct, then the archivist has the same appraisal opportunities as the archivist appraising records institutionally acquired. For example, interviews with record creators and research of topics that may shed light on the record-creating process are two options that the archivist carrying out the third phase of appraisal may want to investigate. Because the archivist in this situation does not have the same service relationship to record creators as the archivist who works for the record creator in an organizational context, private individuals (or their heirs or associates if the individual is not accessible) and past or present employees of private organizations may misunderstand the archivist's investigative motives. However, if the record creator or its representative comprehends that the necessity of the archivist's knowledge about all aspects of the activity that produced the records being appraised is directed towards forming solid appraisal decisions, then cooperation is probable.

The selective phase of appraisal is carried out with the same

objectives and methods in situations concerning records of private individuals and organizations as in situations concerning records destined for institutional acquisition. In selecting among records which have either been acquired based on the evidence of the earlier phases of appraisal or which are still being considered for acquisition, **the archivist establishes which records were essential to the functioning, protection, and future development of the creating organization or individual.** This final evaluation identifies some or all of the records for acquisition and preservation. In cases where appraisal has determined that records do not comply with the acquisition policy of the repository, the appraisal process is over.

The archivist who acquires and selects among private records is dealing more directly with society than the archivist selecting among the records destined for their institutional repository. Of course in both cases the result of the appraisal process is the preservation of the social memory, but the activity of appraising and acquiring private records requires the strongest commitment from the archivist to act in concert with acquisition policies and to keep the dichotomy of individual and society always in mind.

This process of appraisal may appear to be too general in scope, but it is based on the idea that archivists should not make evaluative judgements solely on the basis of, or only within the purview of, their archival environment. The archivist must understand society in all its multiplicity in order to appraise even the most seemingly self-contained archives.

The interests and needs of society center around its own

preservation and development. Central to that preservation and development are all archival sources vital to the functioning of political and administrative structure, to the protection of the rights of citizens, and to the formation of their cultural, moral, and civic identity.

If North American archivists can methodologically reorient themselves away from treating appraisal as a prophetic means of securing research material for the future to treating the appraisal process as means of identifying those records that represented the fundamental aspects of society at a given time, then they will have accomplished impartially and completely their mandate.

The four phases of appraisal outlined above appeal to the theoretical foundation of appraisal, are based on the fact that the archivist possesses the social right to appraise, place the integrity and impartiality of the record as the paramount consideration, and are applicable to every situation where archives have been generated. They support the process by which records are evaluated for their enduring value, signified by those elements necessary to the comprehension and progress of the activity documented.

Chapter Three

Artistic Activity and its Records

Now that the nature of archives and the function and process of appraisal have been identified, it is opportune to discuss the artist's record types which are to be assessed in terms of the four-phase process of appraisal.

The examination of the issues in the appraisal of artists' records is meant to serve a dual purpose: first, to suggest ways in which these records may be effectively appraised on the basis of an enhanced awareness of their cultural value, and second, to expand and practically apply the theoretical discussions about archival nature and the function of appraisal.

Visual art is an integral part of life. The world's galleries, museums, monuments, and private and public collections of art testify to this fact. Hence the unavoidable questions: what is art, how is it created, what does it represent to man, society, and history? Twenty-five centuries of analyses and arguments by philosophers and artists have provided many answers to these questions, but none of them final.¹ In fact, to define in any ultimate sense art, its processes, and its cultural significance only compromises the true nature of art which is imaginative and unique, beyond definition.

All we can really acknowledge is that the human urge to create art is natural;

¹ See Moshe Barasch, *Theories of Art from Plato to Winckelmann* (New York and London: New York University Press, 1985).

man's first instinctive response to any challenge from across the threshold of knowledge, from the numinous void, is to strive to make it evident to the senses, visually and haptically.²

And if this urge is natural, then its products inevitably reflect something about civilization. Indeed, art is inherent in man as a social being, and our notions of it partake of this basic reality. On one hand, we have the concept of art as a spiritual aspiration of man as an individual, and on the other hand, as an expression of the moral beliefs, politics, and economic tensions of society.

Joseph Chiari states that

Art not only mirrors the present, but it has, at its best, an archetypal validity which expresses both the individual creative mind at a given historical moment and the mind and history of a race, of a civilization, and of man himself...

Art exhibits the unfolding of the changing aspects of the forms or ideas that animate man through time.³

This suggests that, regardless of an artist's personal conception of what his art represents and what it attempts to do, the artist either consciously or unconsciously expresses and crystallizes the dynamic forces of the time to which he belongs. These forces may be apparent or more or less obscured by fashionable and superficial currents, physical realities imposed by political or religious controls, or environmental conditions. Whether or not these forces are permanent, they give the impression of being the real dynamic forces of society at a given moment.

For archivists, whose responsibility it is to preserve society's memory through the documentary record, this is an important realization.

² Sir Herbert Read, quoted in Estelle Jussim, "The Research Uses of Visual Information," *Library Trends* (April 1977): 776.

³ Joseph Chiari, *Art and Knowledge* (New York: Gordian Press, 1977), 6 and 41.

It establishes the archival purview to appraise and acquire for permanent preservation the documentation of art. Artists' records document the development of the artists' creative life and reflect the society in which that artist lives and works. They provide valuable insights into artists' attitudes about themselves, the processes they engage in to create and disseminate their works, and their place in the community.⁴ It is therefore natural that archivists would want to appraise and acquire the records of artists as part of society's documentary heritage.

It is true that any discussion of appraisal must include some consideration of acquisition. In the introduction I suggested some problems associated with the acquisition of artist's records in Canada, identifying one major factor as the likelihood that many archivists are intimidated by the artist's studio and the strange processes that transpire within.⁵

In previous chapters of this thesis, I have drawn from the theoretical foundation of archival science to discuss the nature of archival records and the function of appraisal. In the first chapter, I concluded that records demonstrate archival nature when they are created during the course of a practical activity. In the second chapter, I appealed to the social and organizational foundations of civilization in

⁴ Although dated, the article by Kenneth MacFarland on "The Use of Archives in the Field of Art by Graduate Researchers," *The American Archivist* 30 (July 1967): 549-64, indicates the methodology and results of several research projects using artists' records in the United States during the 1960's.

⁵ There is also another major problem that will be discussed in this chapter which centrally concerns the archivist's understanding of the artist's creative process.

order to first, clarify the necessity of appraisal to the memory of the past and the continuing function of the present, and second, to propose a process of four phases through which of appraisal may be carried out.

The process prescribes that the preparation of the archivist in three matters, each of which comprises a phase in the appraisal process, is necessary for the effective completion of the final phase during which selection takes place. These three matters are 1) the social context in which records are created, 2) the history and background of the records creator, and 3) the process of the activity that created the records and the types of records generated out of it. The findings of the first and second phases of appraisal will always be absolutely unique to each appraisal situation, as will the factors considered in the evaluative phase. This is not strictly so for the third phase of appraisal.

Most human activities follow a recognizable pattern or process and therefore, even when executed by different people in different situations, generate similar record types. In other words, it is not impossible to generalize about the process of a certain activity and the types of records it generates. Understanding the basic processes of and the records generated by a specific human activity can assist the archivist in appraisal by producing a model that can be adapted during the third phase of appraisal. This kind of study is becoming widely used in the archival profession as a general aid to understanding individual groups of records.

Accordingly, if one of the major problems faced by archivists in appraising and acquiring the records of artists is understanding the nature of artistic activity and its resulting records, then a general

description of this should help archivists to make effective appraisal decisions. In this chapter I will describe the components of artistic activity and the records it generates as it relates to visual artists such as painters.

This interpretation of artistic activity is, through necessity, ordered around an idealized sequence of events. Two main categories of activity in the artistic process have been identified: **Personal and Professional Activity** and **Creative Activity**. Although artistic activity is rarely so neat, orderly, and predictable as it will be presented here, it is to a certain extent common among artists in that all artists engage in most of the activities described and generate the many similar kinds of records. Of course, in some situations not all the records included in the model will have been generated, and in others, additional activities and record types will be found. Nonetheless, it is the common aspects and basic records of artistic activity that archivists need to be familiar with in order to appraise with competence and effectiveness.

The intent of the following description of artistic activity and its records is to help archivists during the third phase of appraisal in recognizing record types discovered in the artist's studio and fitting them into an overall scheme of creation. Consequently, in the fourth and final phase of appraisal, when the archivist selects for preservation those records which were essential to the functioning, protection, and future development of the artist, the integrity and impartiality of the documentation selected will be ensured by the archivist's ability to reconstruct the conditions in which the records were created.

I. Personal and Professional Activity

Artist's personal and professional lives may be documented in the records of transactions: personal relationships, travel, financial and legal matters, political, religious, or civic involvement, recreation, education, teaching and non-artistic employment, and professional affiliations. This documentation is often crucial to understanding the environment in which artists actually worked. Records generated out of Personal and Professional Activities are familiar to archivists. Table I (p. 54) describes these activities and their resulting record types.

In artistic activity, personal and professional interests usually overlap, making the distinction between personally-related and professionally-related records difficult to establish. However, to make this distinction is irrelevant when considering the records of artists, because the artist does not administer his personal and professional activities independently of each other; as a perceptive and expressive being, the artist is always conscious of the link between himself, the environment, and his art. Every activity therefore has potential to influence the artist's work.

Table I Personal and Professional Activities

Components of Activity	Records Generated
Personal Relationships	Correspondence, diaries, journals, calendars, photographs, notes, videotaped, printed material, date books
Travel	Photographs, correspondence, diaries, journals, financial records, sketches, notes, logbooks, subject files, press clippings
Financial and Legal Matters	TAX: Cash receipts, retail tax returns, vendor's permits, record of items sold, realty tax records, municipal tax statements, copies of income tax returns, studio inventory. Employment: Cheque stubs, printed material. Legal: Wills, inventories of personal assets, newspaper clippings, articles, interviews, court summons, case summaries, fee statements, copies of registration forms, Incorporation: Certificate of incorporation, copy of articles, registers, minutes, financial statements
Political, Civic, & Recreational Involvement	Correspondence, reports, agenda, scrapbooks, awards, mailing lists, printed material, photographs, programmes, diplomas. Writing: Manuscript drafts, notes, lists of publishers, galley proofs, contracts, royalty cheques, printed material
Education	Transcripts of marks, essays, notes, certificates, examples of student work
Teaching and non-Artistic Employment	Teaching: Lecture notes, outlines, examples of artists' work, photographs, correspondence, examples of student work. General: Cheque stubs, printed material
Professional Affiliations	Newsletters, routine mailings, agendas and minutes, printed material, correspondence, photographs
Book Publishing	Correspondence, publication contracts, copyright agreements, copies of artists interviews, annotated manuscripts, printed material, publicity material, financial records
Collecting Biographical Data	Curriculum Vitae, photographs, slides, reviews, articles, publications

Personal Relationships

Relationships with family and friends play an important role in the lives of artists and the works they produce. The stereotypical image of artists as withdrawn, self-sufficient, and introverted,⁶ may hold some credence in that these traits allow a tolerance of the solitary and subjective conditions under which works of art are created. Nonetheless, artists are more often friendly, sociable individuals, and have as much claim to involvement with and dependence upon friends and family for support, inspiration, and guidance as other human beings. Contact with fellow artists is very important for an artist's development. So is the participation of family members in the deliberation of major decisions which may affect an artist's life and career. Because of these dynamics, many artists record their perceptions of issues and problems, inquiries, and reports of news to communicate with friends and family.

Probably the most common form of recorded communication among the archival records of artists is *correspondence*⁷. Artists send and receive letters, many of which, when written by or concerning other artists, become valuable for the information they contain on them. Toni

⁶ Jacob W. Getzels and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, *The Creative Vision: A Longitudinal Study of Problem Finding in Art* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1976).

⁷ Record types are italicized.

Onley's long friendship with Canadian sculptor Robert Murray has, for example, resulted in a considerable amount of Murray's correspondence in Onley's records. In most cases, the artist's outward correspondence will remain with the recipient, except in instances where the recipient has returned the correspondence to the creator. In addition, sometimes the artist keeps copies of his letters.

There are several other forms of recorded communication which evidences artists' personal relationships. *Personal diaries and journals* will record events and ideas, some of which concern other people. When artists retain *calendars*, essential information about their relationships with others is also relayed.

Interplay with family and friends may also take the material form of *photographs* and other visual media such as *videotapes* or even *cartoons*; Emily Carr, for example, relished this latter type of communication.⁸ If friends and family are artists, the artist may also possess a collection of *invitations* to and *catalogues* of their showings.

One aspect of the artist as a professional bears directly upon his relationships with family, friends, and colleagues: development of an identity as artist. The artist's loft or studio is an informal yet important symbolic institution for launching artists in their careers. It is not enough to paint and enjoy one's own work if there is no one else to appreciate it. The artist may therefore throw parties and gatherings in his loft in order to display works in progress, to compare ideas with colleagues, and to make contact with possible agents or customers. In

⁸ Maria Tippet, *Emily Carr: A Biography* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1982), 184.

addition to many of the record types indicated above, *informal invitations* and *date books* may be other sources documenting this type of activity.

This activity should not be equated with the formal showing of works in a gallery. The latter situation does not expressly call upon and strengthen the artist's relationships with others whereas the informal situation which transpires in the studio does.

Travel

Artists, ever in search of new experiences and insights into their own responses to the environment, often love to travel, both on expeditions planned with the intent of discovering material for works and on "pleasure" holidays where the productive response is accidental or consequential. The record types generated when an artist travels are various, and includes as more common types *photographs, correspondence, diaries or journals, financial records, and printed material such as maps, guidebooks, and pamphlets*. *Sketches or studies* of things observed or experienced on a trip are also possible record types that may be kept with the artist's travel records or perhaps among the records generated out of the work on a specific painting. More specific and unusual record types may also be generated out of travel depending on the artist's unique tastes, interests, and opportunities. For example, Toni Onley bought a Wilga 80 ski-plane in the early 1980's in order to make painting expeditions into the bush of northern British Columbia. Preserved among his archival records are *aircraft journey logbooks, files* pertaining to all aspects of the airplane and air travel,

press clippings about the plane's crash in 1982, and *photographs* of the plane and the adventures it made possible.

Financial and Legal Matters

Artists undeniably contribute to the life of their country and their contributions are of inestimable value. Their investment is, however, not only talent but very often all their other resources as well. A recent government publication claims that current average income levels for artists in Canada consistently fall below the poverty line.⁹ The fortunes of artists, even of those who prosper, fluctuate, and in view of this, financial and legal records often comprise a large and closely monitored part of their record holdings.

The artist is not singled out for special treatment by provincial or federal taxation authorities in Canada. The specific types of taxes affecting artists are provincial sales tax, municipal taxes, and income tax.

Provincial sales tax affects most Canadian artists when both buying materials and selling works. Only residents of Alberta escape this consumption tax, although in Ontario an artist can obtain goods exempt from provincial retail sales tax if all the goods are to be incorporated into a "tangible personal property,"¹⁰ or in other words, a work of art. Ontarian artists must file and retain for five years *cash receipts* of all goods purchased and sold in order to compile *retail sales tax returns* for

⁹ Canada, *The Status of the Artist: Report of the Task Force* (Ottawa: Supplies and Services Canada, 1984), 25.

¹⁰ *British Columbia Sales Tax Act*, II, sct.3, p.54.

reimbursement. Any artist in Canada who sells works directly to the retail market through a studio or art fair is required to charge provincial sales tax. Artists are consequently required by law to have a *vendor's permit* in order to remit tax to the province. These records must correlate to a *record of items sold* which is submitted annually to the government for audit.

Municipal taxes are the second type of tax that affects the artist and which results in the accumulation of records. Realty taxes on an artist's studio may be included in the rent, but in some cities are issued separately. Because artists can sometimes deduct this tax, *realty tax records* must be retained for evidence. Business tax is another municipal tax which is levied on the studio when it is regarded as for a commercial use. Some city authorities, at the request of the Canadian Artist's Representation, have stopped charging business tax on studios even though occasional sales may take place there. For those artists who must pay business taxes, copies of *municipal tax statements*, issued annually, are necessary to retain for income tax purposes.

The other important tax of concern to artists is income tax. Income tax is levied at both federal and provincial levels although all provinces except Quebec issue their taxes as a percentage of the federal tax. The fact that only one in five artists earned \$5,000 or more from the sale of their works in 1978 and only one in three exceeded this amount in 1987¹¹ indicates that on the basis of art earnings alone, many artist do not have to pay income tax. However, they must still file

¹¹ *Status of the Artist*, 87, and The Canada Council, *Selected Arts Research Statistics*, 6th edition, (Ottawa: The Canada Council, 1986), 22.

returns and this activity generates several types of records commonly found among artist's files.

Artists may or may not be self-employed. Artists who are employees have the benefit of coverage by their employers under both the Unemployment Insurance Act and the Canada Pension Plan. Employed artists will thus likely have among their financial records *cheque stubs* recording deductions and *published information pertaining to their unemployment and pension benefits*. Artists who are self-employed cannot be covered under the Unemployment Insurance Act and must pay their own contributions to the Pension Plan based on their net earnings.

Because artists are subject to a taxation system that makes few exceptions for the artist's unique position, there are stringent requirements for record keeping under the Income Tax Act and according to Revenue Canada, which will disallow expense claims that cannot be proven. According to statute, artists must retain *all receipts for payment towards art supplies, office supplies, professional fees, and other disbursements, receipts of revenue cheques, and copies of income tax returns filed in the past*. The Act stipulates that these documents must be retained for five years, and written permission must be obtained from Revenue Canada to destroy older records.

The calculation of art income for tax purposes generates another record type: the *inventory*. Self-employed artists are required to calculate income tax on the accrual basis. This method requires that all materials, works in progress, and finished works still in the studio must be inventoried and appraised at fair market value. The theory behind this is that income has been made available to the taxpayer artist;

he could have sold all of his finished works, partially-completed works, and even his supplies during any period up to the filing of the tax return, but did not. This obviously ignores the reality of the situation, and conflicts related to this have arisen in the past and will doubtless arise again although the Canadian Artist's Representation and several individuals have instigated reform action. At present, however, the *studio inventory* remains a vital record for the artist's protection.

Wills are another record commonly found among the financial and legal records of artists. A will is, of course, useful for anyone, but it has particular advantages for the artist. If an artist dies intestate (without a will), his estate will be dealt with under the Devolution of Estates Act and divided as the government sees fit. The value of having a will is that the artist can assist the promotion of his reputation after death by selecting knowledgeable and interested executors to administer the art assets. It is possible to name executors to deal with personal assets and to nominate separate executors to manage the art and to dispose of it in a manner advantageous to the memory of the artist. Because *inventories of personal assets* are necessary for the compilation of the will, drafts of such records are likely to be included among the artist's other estate documentation.

Occasionally, the artist may be involved in legal matters relating to his work. One such example is when art is used as evidence in court cases. Indeed, art and artists have been on trial for various reasons throughout history.¹² In her study of litigation involving works

¹² See Laurie Adams, *Art on Trial* (New York: Walker ar 1976) where the following trials are discussed: Whistler v. Ruskin, Brancusi v. United States, Hahn v. Duveen, Van Meegeren v. Vermeer, The

of art Laurie Adams points out that, regardless of the detail of the legal action in a particular case, whenever art is used as evidence it is inevitable that issues regarding the nature and "truthfulness" of art arise. In these situations, the painter of the work may chose to retain, in addition to routine legal records, *newspaper clippings, articles, or interviews* documenting the controversial aspects of the case. Of course, artists or their works (or both) can be involved in legal matters which are neither controversial nor precedence-setting. Among the numerous record types possibly retained by artists involved in routine legal matters are *court summons, case summaries, fee statements, and copies of registration forms* as well as records reflecting specifically the reasons for the artist's involvement.

Sometimes, the way in which an artist chooses to conduct business necessitates the maintenance of records required by law. Such is the case when an artist decides to incorporate himself. Incorporation has certain tax benefits and can also be a useful vehicle for a commercially successful artist during his lifetime and for his estate after his death. However, the process of incorporation is complicated. Incorporation essentially means to become a company; in other words an artist who incorporates can be known as "John Doe, Ltd.," "John Doe, Incorp," or John Doe and Co." In British Columbia, the minimum requirements for a corporation are to register under the *B.C. Company Act* (RSBC 1979, ch. 59), to hold an annual general meeting with the shareholders, and to perform a yearly audit. Among the numerous record types that are

People of the State of New York v. Stephen Radich, Mark Rothko v. United States.

required for the fulfillment of these requirements are *certificate of incorporation, copy of articles and amendments, register of members, minutes of every annual general meeting, copies of audited financial statements, and copies of mortgages created or assumed by the company*. It is possible for an individual to incorporate and to have no shareholders, and therefore it is possible for an artist to incorporate, but the expenses and complications suggest that not too many artists would attempt it. Because it is possible, however, archivists should be aware of the types of records they may encounter.

Political, civic, religious, and recreational involvement

Because artists tend to be individuals with strong commitments to their ideas, many are likely to be involved with political, civic, or religious activities (although the converse may also be true when the artist in question tends to be critical about society and its organizations). Involvement with committees, participation in rallies, or membership in organizations produce records familiar to archivists such as *correspondence, reports, agenda, scrapbooks, mailing lists, posters, photographs*, and the like.

Recreational pursuits such as musical performance, theatre, and sports may also generate records retained by the artist for sentimental or professional purposes such as *programmes, scrapbooks, diplomas, awards, photographs, and correspondence*.

Writing is one aspect of "recreation" that deserves separate treatment. Many artists preserve *manuscripts* of published or unpublished (or both) poems, fiction, and non-fiction in their records.

Although we may assume that it would be more logical for an artist to spend his time painting, writing can be important to a visual artist for many reasons. For instance, poetry can be an outlet for frustration experienced in the studio or because of personal problems, treatises and other forms of non-fiction can represent a means of imparting an aesthetic philosophy or technique; an autobiography can enhance the public's interest in an artist. If the artist has published his manuscripts, there are numerous possible resulting record types that may have been retained such as *successive drafts, lists of prospective publishers, annotated copies of the manuscript, galley proofs, contracts, royalty cheques, copies of the published work, and newspaper reviews*, to name the most common. Where writing is not the first priority of the visual artist, however, it is probable that the only records of writing activities will be the manuscripts, the published editions of the manuscripts (if they exist), and fragments of publication information.

The publication of copies of an artist's visual works for inclusion in a catalogue or the writing of a an artist's biography by a second party represent matters entirely distinct from the "recreational" writing activities of the artist as discussed above: they relate to the dissemination of the artist's creative visual output and are treated as a component of creative activity later in this chapter.

Education

One can become a successful artist without being a good student, or even without going to art school at all. Because there is no consensus on what creativity is or how it can be taught, inside or

outside of the studio class, artists must learn for themselves the best way in which to express themselves. An artist's education may consist of taking informal studio classes at a community arts centre, studying towards a degree in fine arts at a university or institute of art, or maybe no structured education at all. The spectrum of educational possibilities is endless and the relative formality of an artist's education will be reflected in the quantity and types of records created and retained. Of course, technically speaking, an artist's education is never complete, and each finished work is a testament to this fact. Nonetheless, most artists regard a certain part of their lives as the period during which they received their education, formal or otherwise.

Transcripts of marks, essays, notes, certificates or diplomas may be retained by artists who have attended art school or even the occasional art class. However, it is more likely that the only record of education created and treasured by the artist will be *examples of drawing and painting styles and techniques developed during studio classes* in the various phases of education. These may be retained for sentimental or functional reasons, but as either, they represent a tangible part of the artist's experience.

Teaching and non-artistic employment

In order to fully understand the experience of artistic activity, it is necessary to examine the artist's participation in other occupations.

Only the most commercially-successful artists can support themselves and their families exclusively on the income gained from

their artistic vocation. Most artists must supplement their art income with permanent or part-time work, no matter how much time they would prefer to devote to the creation of art. Teaching is a common professional choice which allows the artist to interact with other artists, to clarify ideas about stylistic and philosophical matters, to communicate with students of all abilities and ages, and to spend time in the studio. Depending on the formality of the teaching situation, several record types may be generated out of the instructor's activities. *Lecture notes, curriculum outlines, examples of styles and techniques for students, photographs, correspondence, and perhaps even examples of student work* are the most common of these.

Some artists feel that teaching responsibilities and the concerns of academic routine affect their motivation and spontaneity as creators. They may therefore decide to work at high paying jobs unrelated to the art field such as manual labour or at lower paying jobs on the fringes of the art world, such as framing and crating paintings, printing, or working at a gallery. These types of work are unlikely to produce any documentation other than salary *cheque stubs* which record payment amounts and deductions. These will be retained for tax purposes. Mention of an artist's work in these areas may be signified only by a passing comment in his *personal papers*.

All of these occupational activities are in a sense irrelevant to the artist's role in that they do not advance his status or ability as an artist. They take away precious time from the essential task of producing a body of personally meaningful work. Most artists would agree that interference with time used to both think and conceptualize

and create a steady output of art breaks intense involvement with one's creative powers. After disruptions, it is very difficult to summon the courage to face oneself in the studio again and to recover the attention of the world. Nevertheless, when the artist's ability to rent studio space, buy materials, and market his works are in jeopardy because of financial constraint, non-artistic occupation becomes a necessity. In view of the difficult decisions that the artist must make in the process of establishing himself, evidence about the types of professional choices made as revealed by records retained by the artist is significant.

Professional Affiliations

Unlike the members of most professions, Canadian artists do not belong to one national professional association that solidifies an individual's professional status, educates the profession on matters central to its protection and development, and provides a forum for communication among the profession's members. When artists are members of organizations, these are usually small, regional groups that coordinate group shows and similar events and deal with local issues affecting local artists. The Vancouver Artist's League is an example of this type of arts organization.

There are also several organizations and art groups that monitor political actions and cultural situations affecting the status and activity of artists in Canada. These organizations include the Canadian Arts Foundation, the Canadian Art Therapy Association, the Canadian Artist's Representation, the Canadian Conference of the Arts, the

Committee for Women Artists, and Visual Arts Ontario.¹³ Artists may support some of these groups through membership or donation, but by and large, many arts organizations in Canada exist as publically-funded committees that investigate issues and disseminate information to the art world. The forerunner in this category of arts organizations is the Canadian Artist's Representation which lobbies for artist's rights.

Among the records of artists may be found *newsletters, routine mailings, agendas and minutes of meetings, or articles* sent from arts organizations or resulting from an artist's participation in their activities.

The Royal Canadian Academy of Arts constitutes the only Canadian arts association to which artists are nominated for honorary membership on the basis of their artistic achievements. Among the records of an artist elected to the Academy may be *correspondence, notice of awards, certificates, press clippings, catalogues, or photographs*.

II. Creative Activity

The life and work of artists has been studied many times in the hope of discovering the secret origins of creativity. Although there are many explanations of why a person may want to make a work of art, there are few observations dealing with how it is produced. Psychoanalysts, for example, have written a great deal about the

¹³ *Canadian Almanac and Directory* (Toronto: Copp, Clark, Pitman, 1988).

unconscious motivations underlying the creative process, and how the process serves the individual; sociologists have written about the social forces underlying the creative process and how that process serves society. What the artist actually does has been largely neglected.

There is one obvious firsthand source for knowing what artists do: artists themselves. But they are usually too involved in doing to describe analytically what they do.¹⁴ Usually, artists give only tantalizing, inconclusive hints such as Kandinsky's definition of the artist's work as "The expression of mystery in terms of mystery."¹⁵

Virtually all accounts of artistic creativity agree that it springs from a unique subconscious impulse. As archivists, this is all we need to know; we will attempt to find our understanding of the artist and his activity from a conceptualization of the steps he engages in to fund, create, and disseminate his works of art, leaving the philosophical aspects of creativity to the philosophers.

The following description divides artistic activity into three functions:

a. administrative activities

b. activities involved in the creative process;

¹⁴ Several collections of interviews with artists have been recently published. These include Paul Cummings, *Artists in their Own Words* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1979) and Franz Geirhaas, *The Creative Act* (New Hope, Penn.: International Print Society, 1984). Unfortunately these interviews shed little light on the actual process which occurs during the creation of a work of art.

¹⁵ Wallisy Kandinsky, *The Art of Spiritual Harmony* (1910), in *Artists on Art*, ed Robert Goldwater and Marco Treves (New York: Pantheon Books, 1945): 448.

c. activities involved in disseminating the finished work of art.

This, however, is a schematization, as artistic activity is complex and not orderly. Usually artists work on several paintings simultaneously, and at different stages of completion. Also, archivists will not find records neatly arranged according to the component activities of the artistic process. Moreover, the amount of records generated out of a given activity is not necessarily in proportion to the activity's importance. For instance, thinking and conceptualizing is one of the most important stages of the creative process, but it is often not documented in the written record. The creative act is the most important stage, yet it produces only one output: the finished work.

The description of artistic creative activity presented in the following pages, however, will aim to provide archivists with an understanding of how records are created and where they fit into the process. Table II (p. 71) presents a graphic description of this activity and related records.

Table II Artistic Activities

Components of Artistic Activity	Records Generated
Administration of Artistic Ability	
Applying for Grants & Awards	Lists, directories, grant brochures, copies of completed forms, letters of reference, proposals, correspondence, shipping records, photographs, activity reports/summary reports, award notices, newspaper clippings
Patronage (Public/Private)	Commission proposals, slides, contracts, other legal records, employment records, newspaper clippings
The Creative Process	
Thinking, Conceptualizing, Visualizing	Diaries, journals, correspondence, grant proposals
Studying & Designing	Pocket sketchbooks, loose papers, (notes & sketches), journals, photographs, videotapes, maquettes
Creating	(Finished work of art), card files, ledgers, slides, photographs, tapes
Dissemination	
Maintaining Copyright	Copyright licensing forms, other legal records, correspondence
Negotiating with Dealers	Correspondence, contracts & drafts, other legal records, consignment sheets, statements, invoices, purchaser information, printed material
Negotiating with Agents	Correspondence, agreements, printed records, photographs, slides, shipping invoices, printed material
Exhibiting with Cooperatives	Minutes, loan agreements, insurance records, photographs, printed material, shipping invoices, printed material
Exhibiting with Public Galleries & Museums	Correspondence, loan agreements, slides, insurance records, photographs, printed material, shipping records, submissions
Importing & Reporting	Applications for export, correspondence, permits, insurance records

A. Administration of Creative Activity

Until artists are well-established, their financial situations are precarious. I have explained how artists usually depend upon teaching or non-artistic occupations in order to maintain themselves, their families, and their vocation. There are other options for financial support: these usually take the form of a grant given to the artist for support during the creation of a specific painting or project, and therefore the artist's efforts to secure grant funding in effect becomes the first part of the process of creating that particular painting. This "administrative" phase is not carried out by every artist, but most artists do apply for grants and awards and many are selected for commissions, and so it is a valid topic for discussion.

Grants

Grants and awards are similar in that they involve the conferral of funds from one party to another but they differ in the results expected. Whereas awards and prizes are usually given to an artist on the strength of work already completed, grants are usually made to permit work to be undertaken. The pursuit of a grant requires an awareness of funding opportunities. In his *grant files* the artist will likely have *lists and directories* of granting bodies in Canada.

The Arts Awards Service of The Canada Council offers the most prestigious and sought-after grants. The Canada Council is an organization which was created by Parliament in 1957 to promote the

arts in Canada. Its funds come from an annual Parliamentary appropriation which is supplemented by revenue from an endowment fund and private bequests. The Arts Award Service grants are designed to give artists the free time necessary for personal creative activity and to help them improve their skills. Forty-five hundred applications are submitted each year and are selected by a jury of artists.

There are two forms of assistance available. "A" Grants are awarded to artists who have made a nationally or internationally-recognized contribution to their discipline over a number of years and are still active in their profession. In 1988, "A" Grants are worth a minimum of \$20,000 to cover living expenses and up to \$28,000 for the deferral of extra material costs. "B" Grants are intended to assist less nationally-recognized artists with the improvement of their skills. These grants award \$14,000 and may cover living expenses or extra project costs at \$1,000 per month. The duration of these grants ranges from four to twelve months.¹⁶ In view of the plight of artists who must take non-artistic jobs to earn enough money to survive, let alone to paint, the value of such awards is obvious.

Since many artists in Canada apply for Canada Council grants at some stage in their career, *grant files* are a common record form. *Grant brochures, photocopies of completed application forms, curricula vitae, letters of reference, proposals and other supporting documentation, and correspondence* are some of the most basic record types found in grant files. Artists are usually requested to submit examples of past

¹⁶ The Canada Council, "Arts Awards Services" brochure, Ottawa, 1988.

work for adjudication and, resulting from this, *shipping receipts*, *photographs* of the works sent, and perhaps *telegrams* notifying the artist of the work's arrival may be retained by the artist for security reasons. Some granting bodies require that a *report* or *summary of activities* be submitted at the completion of the grant. If so, copies of these documents would probably be retained by the artist.

Awards and prizes

Awards and prizes are a form of funding usually administered after the completion of a work, but may be the sole means of beginning another. The receipt of awards may thus be regarded, as in the case of grants, as the first step towards the creation of a new work. Among the recognized Canadian awards for artistic merit are the Banff Centre School of Fine Arts National Award, the Canada Council Molson Prize, the Gershon Iskowitz Prize, the Sylvia Gelber Foundation Awards, the Jaqueline Lemieux Prize, Ontario Arts Council Awards, the Status of Women Persons Award, the Royal Society of Canada Prizes, and the Toronto Arts Foundation Awards. In some cases, receipt of awards depends upon application procedures similar to those required for grants, and therefore similar record types will be generated and recieved. Sometimes, artists are simply nominated for awards and the resulting documentation may be limited to *correspondence*.

Patronage

Throughout history, many artists existed only through the patronage of a particular church or royal family. Even today, it is not

uncommon for artists to have a particular private patron, especially during an artist's formative years. Patronage essentially constitutes the employment of the artist to paint a specific subject according to the patron's specifications. Artists may have to submit *commission proposals* in order to bid for a commission. Specifications for a work or project requested by the commissioner may be general (for example, an artist is told to paint anything as long as it fits physically into a certain space) or specific (an artist is told to paint a certain subject in a certain colour in a certain style). Due to these kinds of restrictions, many artists will not work under commission. The ones that do in effect enter into employment and may generate the types of financial records discussed earlier in this chapter.

One record form that is central to the patron-artist relationship is the *contract*. Whether the artist is commissioned by a private individual or a public body or corporation, in most cases the commissioner will have formulated a contract for the artist to sign and honour. The artist will retain a copy for his own protection. This is important because commissioned works can sometimes incur legal problems as in the obvious case where the finished product is not to the patron's liking or the artist deviates from his original agreement with the patron. The contract exists for the protection of both the artist and the patron, but it has been observed that too often, commission contracts are unfair to the artist and exist primarily for the benefit of the patron.¹⁷ In these cases, the artist may engage the services of a lawyer to alter the

¹⁷ Garth Drabinsky, *Motion Pictures and the Arts in Canada: The Business and the Law* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1971), 54.

contract in order to ensure his own protection. *Legal recordy* would be generated out of this service and would likely be retained by the artist as evidence of his intentions to be fairly represented and, in turn, to execute the commission with fairness.

Like the grant, the receipt of a commission in effect serves as the initial step of the creative process because the artist must have at least a general idea of the type of work he is going to paint. The artist does not always engage in the stereotypical activity of being seized with an inspiration and flying to the easel to give it expression. Of course this does happen, but sometimes the artist has to suppress his urges until he has funds enough to purchase materials and the security of a work space. Artistic creation is certainly romantic, but as I have suggested, it is also pragmatic.

B. The Creative Process

The creative process is distinguished by three activities: 1) **thinking, conceptualizing, and visualizing**, 2) **studying and designing**, and 3) **creating**, the point at which what will become the finished painting or drawing is begun.

Of course, some artists will omit the second activity of studying and designing and each artist will adapt the sequence of activities to suit his style and work habits. The artist who sits down in front of a subject and begins to paint is generally, like anyone doing anything, acting from mixed motives. Only through painting or drawing does the experience of creating art define itself; thus one artist may have

intended to use studies of a subject for a painting but does not, while another who never uses preliminary drawings in his work may feel the need to execute some in the midst of painting a final work. What the artist plans to create and what he ends up creating is very often two different things. Artists are frequently surprised by the end results of their labour.

Because the creative process is unique to each individual and the variations with which it is expressed infinite, it is helpful for the archivist to understand the nature of the three basic component activities which constitute the creative process.

Thinking, conceptualizing, and visualizing

At some point during the creative process, artists must **think** about what they want to paint, **conceptualize** about the way in which they will portray a subject, express an emotion or intellectual concept, or demonstrate an aesthetic theory, and **visualize** the way in which this concept will be translated into material form. The time spent on this activity, the emphasis placed on it, and the place where it occurs during the creative act varies between artists. For example, a photorealist (an artist who strives to re-create a photograph-like fidelity to the subject painted) will probably engage in this activity for a considerable amount of time before physically approaching the final work. An automatic painter (one who believes that the paint expresses its own vitality and that the artist serves as a passive mechanism to get the paint to the canvas), on the other hand, may think and conceptualize about his art and its implications only after the painting is completed.

Most painters need at least a general idea and visual sense of what they will create before they start studying and painting¹⁸ or sculpting and so the activity of thinking, conceptualizing, and visualizing usually occurs at the beginning of the creative act¹⁹ although it will be repeated throughout the activities of studying and creating as the work and the ideas behind it change in accordance with the artist's deeper involvement.

These activities often do not generate documentary records because they are mental and non-verbal. However, suggestions that the process is occurring or has occurred may be evident in records of personal activities, especially *diaries*, *journals*, and *correspondence* with friends, family, and colleagues. When the artist must submit idea proposals for projects, manifestations of thinking, conceptualizing, and

¹⁸ Even artists who simply start painting and wait for a material form to emerge on the canvas inevitably have to think about what they are doing or what they have done. Henry Moore describes this transition from formless impulse to controlled expression;

"I sometimes begin a drawing with no pre-conceived problem to solve, with only the desire to use pencil on paper and make lines, tones and styles with no conscious aim, but as my mind takes in what is so produced a point arrives where some idea becomes conscious and crystallizes, and then a control and ordering begins to take place."

Henry Moore, "Notes on Sculpture," in B. Ghislen ed. *The Creative Process* (New York: Mentor Books Ltd., 1955), 77.

¹⁹ It is difficult to use the term "beginning" because it imposes a definite boundary around the creative act. An artist just doesn't sit down and say "o.k.; I'm going to start a painting today"; what he does is an ongoing activity where ideas are diffused out of the artist's everyday experiences. To impose boundaries is artificial, but as I have said, it is necessary to do so if the archivist is to have any guide to understanding the basic sequence through which the artist operates. The same applies to referring to a painting which is for all intents and purposes complete as a "finished work." The work of art is never technically complete; it requires the participation of the viewer to complete it, and furthermore, artists are rarely satisfied with their works; there is always more that they can do but because of time and financial constraints, they must impose a physical finality upon their paintings.

proposals for projects, manifestations of thinking, conceptualizing, and visualizing activities may be identified in *grant proposals*, *commission proposals*, and *award submissions*. The activity of thinking, conceptualizing, and visualizing, despite its lack of material records, is central to the artist's creative activity because it represents the core of what will appear on the canvas. Whether it is conscious or unconscious, it ultimately yields tangible results.

Studying and Designing

Once the artist has developed an idea for a work, he may go straight to the canvas without doing any preliminary composition, or he may develop studies and designs for the painting. The artists that I visited and observed had practiced both methods depending on the effects they were trying to achieve, the ideas they were expressing, and the styles they had developed. Artists who paint directly on to the canvas consequently bypass designing and studying activities, preferring to limit their energy to handling the materials and working directly with the actual size of the final work. Artists who do produce preliminary works, on the other hand, engage in what American artist Thomas Hart Benton has called "controlled composition."²⁰

The results of controlled composition vary in detail and volume. Some artists work out the composition of the canvas and the

²⁰ Paul Cummings, "Thomas Hart Benton," *Artists in their Own Words* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1979), 27.

essence of their subjects by sketching a few lines, some meticulously executed, some mere suggestions of a form or impression. Scribbled in *pocket sketchbooks* or on *loose scraps of paper*, these may not even be what we would call pictures, but visual concepts, germs of ideas, statements of problems. Most artists keep such pocket sketchbooks, filling them, over the years, with ideas that may or may not be used.

Other artists are even more controlled in carrying out their studies and designs. They may produce carefully-drafted layouts of the canvas, studies in perspective and colour, or experiments in a certain technique with a polished quality akin to that of the finished work. The variations on what an artist may "practice" before beginning the final work or even during the execution of the final work are endless. Common record types revealing this type of creative activity are, in addition to the pocket sketchbooks noted above, *loose paper portfolios*, *journals*, even *photographs* of interesting things or the subject being studied and *maquettes* (plaster or paper mache models which are often used by mural painters).

Creating

The point at which the artist begins painting what will become the final work of art is where the archivist is, in effect, left behind. Of course it is possible to keep track of an artist's progress in his work through comments in *correspondence* and *journals* or in *preliminary studies* executed during the painting's creation, but as far as understanding the specifics of the personal relationship between the

artist and his work of art, the archivist is excluded from the private realm of creativity.

There is often a curious suddenness to the artist's decision to begin painting at a certain moment. Why it should happen at some times and not at others is something of a mystery. Possibly, inspiration may be seen as the result of strong intuitive or unconscious mental processes which take over the rational mind and allow the artist to "think," "feel," and "see" in terms of plastic form without the need of logical cause-and-effect reasoning. Graham Collier likens the unconscious mind to a storeroom and powerhouse combined;

When the artist is affected by the current from this source, he retreats and has little to say in the shaping of the image and little control over the tide of pure feelings. Further, the artist cannot control the mechanism by which these primary deposits of imaginative experience move into consciousness. It is not possible for him to will these elemental images to come or to suppress their coming. ²¹

The artist may compose a small part of his work in his head by thinking, conceptualizing, and visualizing, he may relate to friends and family aspects of the themes, techniques, or subjects he will be working on, and he may produce documentary evidence about the way he thinks the final work may appear through preliminary drawings and designs. However, these preparations are only a beginning;

The vision of the whole does not exist in the artist's mind, it grows with the work, for, while he works, this vision progressively emerges and only reaches its full development at the end of his efforts. In art there is no foreseeing the end

²¹ Graham Collier, *Art and the Creative Consciousness* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1972), 42.

product or the future, for if it were so, one would fall into conceptualism - which is not art but exposition or explanation; there is only the doing, and of course there is the discovery and knowing through doing.²²

Therefore, it is impossible for the archivist to understand the "mechanics" of the creative act through documentary records because it is not documented in any form. The results of the creative process are manifested in the finished work of art but this cannot be identified as an archival record except under certain circumstances.

In chapter one, I identified the theoretical foundations underlying our understanding of archival records as evidence of the process of a practical activity. In terms of the records of artists, all records created out of the practical activities of pursuing personal and professional matters and creating and disseminating works of art have archival nature because they are created for the use of the artist, not for diffusion. When these records have fulfilled their uses, they are retained to serve the artist's memory or to fulfil legal obligations. And although records which are archival in nature are used to prepare the artist for the painting of works of art, the moment that the artist pronounces the work of art finished and complete, it becomes the final result of his creative activity; it is an autonomous object, meant for diffusion. Unlike the archival records created and received by the artist which depend upon each other for contextual relevance, the final work of art does not require the presence of the records that went into its creation in order to be understood and appreciated by others. The work

²² Chiari, 30.

of art says all it needs to say; it is autonomous.²³

Furthermore, the work of art, independently of its autonomous nature is not part of the artist's holdings. We can compare it with a piece of correspondence. When a letter is written and sent away, a transaction occurs, passing the ownership of the letter from the author to the recipient. Any drafts and copies of the letter generated during the process of its creation represent the process of the letter's creation, and belong to the author's archival holdings, but the finished copy sent to the addressee belongs in the archives of the addressee. Similarly, the moment that the artist sells, donates, gifts, or bequeaths a finished work of art to a body or individual, a transaction occurs. The work is no longer his own and would have no right to be considered as part of his archives even if it did possess archival nature.

Thus the fact of the autonomy of the finished work of art and the fact that its custody passes from the artist to another individual or body prevent it from being part of the archives of the artist.

There are only four instances in which a finished work of art can be considered to possess archival nature. The first instance in which a completed work of art possesses archival nature is when it is created in order to be a record, as a component of a larger process. In this case, the painting is born with archival nature. For example, in South America, historically, the signing of treaties and important matters

²³ Some post-modernists would argue that many works of art have to be accompanied by a videotape or statement made by the artist in order to be understood. This is quite true, however, the "supporting documentation" that is presented with the work of art is, archivally, at the same level as the work of art. It was consciously crafted and purposely created with dissemination in mind like a manuscript or a work of art; it is not a means, but an end, together with the work of art.

of the state were not documented in textual form, but by painters who visually documented the various phases of the official deliberations. These paintings then manifested dispositive evidence of the event. Another example is that British artists, such as James Pattison Cockburn and Thomas Burrowes, sent to British North America and Quebec in the eighteenth century, created topographical views of those areas for purposes of survey and defence. These works of art are archival in that they are merely part of a greater process. They are not autonomous and are not intended for dissemination, but represent a record used by the army in conjunction with other records for the practical activity of surveying and defending its territory. A final example of art created for use as a record in a practical activity is the incidence of the portrait of a young European noblewoman which was painted and then sent to King Henry VIII for his (critical) perusal. The situation was that of an arranged marriage, the woman was the King's intended bride, and the painting thus represented a record created during the course of matrimonial transactions.

The second instance in which a work of art can be considered to possess archival nature occurs when it is not completed. As I noted, philosophically the work of art is never complete; Picasso comments that even when the artist deems the painting finished, "it changes further, according to the condition of him who looks at it."²⁴ As archivists we must leave this contention in the realm of aesthetic philosophy and look at the pragmatic and physical aspect of finishing a work of art.

²⁴ B. Zervos, "Conversation with Picasso," *The Creative Process* (New York: Mentor Books, 1952), 57.

Conceivably, if an artist changes and re-paints a portrait every day and dies before it is finished, the portrait can be considered to be an archival record because it lacks the physical completeness that gives it autonomy, was meant as a step of a process which was not concluded.

The third instance is if a finished work of art is drawn into the process of another activity. For example, when a painting becomes part of a legal proceeding, it acquires archival characteristics because it is no longer an autonomous object, but a part of a greater whole. In the context of the proceeding, the painting becomes an "exhibit," a document used to prove a right or a fact. It depends upon the other records created out of the legal activity to give it meaning in that context and it becomes functional to the understanding of the other records. Naturally, there are a myriad of situations similar to this, and the essential point is that in order for a finished work of art to assume archival status, it must become part of the process of another activity. In this case, it will be preserved as an archival record among the records of the person or body that administered the activity, not among the records of the artist who created the work in the first place.

The fourth instance in which a work of art may be considered to possess archival nature is when a work of art was never intended by its creator for dissemination. The conditions of J. M. Turner's will, noted on page one, suggests such a contingency. Turner's reason for not wanting to disseminate his finished works of art may have been in response to the brutal critical attacks launched against his artistic objectives and style. This was certainly the case with Whistler who, between 1880 and his death in 1903, destroyed or left unfinished most of

the works he began.²⁵ Of course, such reasons for not wanting to disseminate the labours of one's creativity will not be experienced by all artists. Some artists simply paint for themselves and never intend their works to be publicized through gift, exhibit, or sale. When it can be ascertained from the artist himself or his records that a work was never intended for dissemination for any reason, like the unfinished work it can still be considered as part of the process that created it, still linked by the archival bond to the records which formed it, and still in the custody of the creator.

In Canada, the distinction between the archival nature of artists' records and the non-archival nature of most finished works of art has not been recognized by archivists. In fact, certain types of artworks are actively and expensively acquired by many archival institutions and this activity has seriously retarded the understanding of issues central to the appraisal for acquisition and selection of artists' records.

The Canadian situation is characterized by a dramatic emphasis away from the preservation of records revealing the processes and avenues of creation and the experience of any type of artist in favour of the preservation of individual works of art created by "documentary artists." The National Archives of Canada (formerly the Public Archives of Canada) defines the products of such artists as "documentary art" : "works of art which have been collected primarily

²⁵ Adams, "The Brush or the Pen? Whistler v. Ruskin," 34.

because of the importance of their subject matter or iconography."²⁶ The subject of certain artworks has thus taken precedence over the functional integrity of the total record unit generated by the artist. In doing so there has been an irrevocable mixing of logic; the practice is comparable to a Canadian archival repository's refusal of the archives of any type of Canadian writer and acceptance only of the published works of realistic writers. For if in the most basic sense that which is archival is the "raw material," the impartial tangible form of an activity's process, then the finished work of art transferred from an artist to another person or body through a transaction of sale, gift, or commission is comparable to a "published" work, complete, autonomous, self-conscious, and intended for diffusion.

A brief examination of the ways in which "documentary art" is defined, supported, and appraised by Canadian archivists suggests the problems inherent in the acquisition of this type of material.

The National Archives of Canada has traditionally influenced archival practice in repositories at the provincial, municipal, and local level. The NAC's methods of acquiring and appraising documentary art have likewise diffused throughout the nation to become an accepted practice. This is especially true in British Columbia. The Visual Images Division of the Provincial Archives of British Columbia holds over 20,000 works of "documentary art." Although the Manuscripts Division acquires records of artists, the collection of documentary art is considered to be more prestigious and important than that of the records. The City

²⁶ Public Archives of Canada, *The Painted Past* (Ottawa: PAC, 1984), 2.

Archives of Vancouver also has considerable holdings of documentary artworks "recording" visual aspects of the history of the city.

What influenced the NAC to acquire the documentary works of artists in the first place? The NAC was the product of the surge of nationalistic sentiment and nation-building that followed fast on the heels of Confederation. What Canadian historian Adam Shortt referred to as "the necessity for a thorough presentation of the facts of history which will give at one unity and inspiration to the people of Canada"²⁷ was impetus for the repository's organization. Accordingly, by 1906 the minister in charge of the Archives Branch was given official authorization for the purchase of paintings, drawings, and prints reflecting Canadian life and culture. Built on broad subject lines, the art collection -- an artificial collection in the truest sense -- included portraits of historical, public, and aboriginal personalities, pictures of historic events and their reconstructions, landscapes, and topographical views -- in fact any image which gave an impression of the cultural, geographic, political, or economic character of Canada.²⁸ By 1925, the collection had grown to 25,000 items including prints, oil paintings, watercolours, drawings, and book illustrations all falling under the category of documentary art. At present the collection is still expanding, and between 1984 and 1987 a travelling exhibition of forty paintings is further impressing upon archives and art galleries the archival purview over this type of art.

The NAC has long proclaimed that it serves a dual purpose of

²⁷ quoted in Ian Wilson, "Shortt and Doughty: the Cultural Role of the Public Archives of Canada," *Archivaria* 15 (Winter 1982-1983): 16.

²⁸ Greg Spurgeon, "Pictures and History," 60-74.

"an archival image-bank and a gallery of beautiful pictures"²⁹ countering early criticisms by the National Gallery that in order to be documentary, paintings reflected inferior aesthetic value. The debate over the aesthetic value of documentary art needs no discussion in the context of this study, except to mention that the NAC believes that many of its holdings "could easily find a place of honour in our most prestigious art museums"³⁰. According to the theoretical concepts of archival nature discussed in chapter one, I would suggest that the art museum is the appropriate repository for works of art, "documentary" or otherwise.

The concept of documentary art as archival material is problematical in many areas, but the most serious issues are related to appraisal. In the eyes of its supporters, it is informational value which establishes documentary art as archival. Three Canadian archivists, Hugh Taylor, Brian S. Osborne, and Greg Spurgeon³¹ have argued strenuously for archivists to accept visual information as nourishment for researchers. They admit that the appraisal of informational value is really the only archival appraisal "criterion" applicable to the assessment of documentary art, but even here there is a compromise;

If... art is conceptual, documentary art cannot be true or false, but only more or less useful and reliable for the formation of descriptions.³²

²⁹ *The Painted Past*, 2.

³⁰ *The Painted Past*, 3.

³¹ respectively, in "Documentary Art and the Role of the Archivist," *The American Archivist* 41, no 4 (October 1979): 417-428, "The Artist as Historical Commentator: Thomas Burrowes and the Rideau Canal," *Archivaria* 17 (Winter 1983-84): 41-59, and "Pictures and History: The Art Museum and the Visual Archives," *Archivaria* 17 (Winter 1983-84): 60-74.

³² Taylor, 424.

The method of appraising whether or not a painting is "documentary," and thus archival, is subjective and tenuous, for appraisers will have varying opinions as to the informational merit of an artwork. There is little doubt that many works of documentary art do have informational value and that this value is of great benefit to researchers. As I said in chapter one, however, everything has potential research value, but research value is only secondary to what archives are in a fundamental sense: records of process, created during the course of a practical activity as a means of carrying out that activity, which demonstrate continuing values to the creator who preserves them for his memory or because of legal obligations.

Finished works of art are not of archival nature but they do have informational value and there is no reason why researchers should not be encouraged to study documentary art in art galleries and museums, institutions which are equipped to preserve and display this type of material.

One final comment on the issue of documentary art as archival record. When dealing with non-representational works of art, the question of documentary validity, and thus archival fitness, is even more elusive than with representational works created under the influence of stylistic conventions. Terry Cook, who supports the archival acquisition of documentary art, states that "the abstract, or non-representational works of Picasso - any other [non-representational] artist - have no place in an archives"³³; this is

³³ Terry Cook, "Media Myopia," *Archivaria* 12 (Summer 1981), 149.

presumably because they do not have the kind of documentary "research value" that archival researchers require. Cook's words would ring true to any archivist who subscribes to the NAC's widely-accepted definition of documentary art.

Thus I pose two questions. First, how can archival repositories attempt to preserve the cultural memory as a whole if a significant part of this memory, in the form of "non-documentary art" (abstract art, for example), is excluded? Who would argue that the vision or contribution of the abstract artist is any less representative of society than that of the nineteenth century Royal Engineer who drafted topographical drawings? Second, if documentary art must present some "impartial" and visual pictorial representation of a person, place, or thing relevant to Canadian history, is it still created today and will it be created in the future? Or are archivists who acquire documentary art faced with a "dying market?"

Given both the historical dynamics behind the reasons that documentary art was acquired in the first place and the influence of Schellenberg's emphasis on research value as the primary standard of appraisal, it is not surprising that the situation concerning the appraisal and acquisition of documentary art has progressed as it has.³⁴ However, according to the principles of archival theory, under ordinary

³⁴ Nonetheless, it is worthwhile to note that in the United States, where the influence of patriotism in the form of the archival preservation of visual art and the influence of Schellenberg's emphasis on informational value has been even greater than in Canada, the acquisition of "archival" documentary art has been overshadowed by the much-publicized acquisition of artists' records. Several specialized institutions exist to acquire these records, including the Archives of American Art, which is affiliated with the Smithsonian Institute.

circumstances, the finished work of art, regardless of its research value, does not have archival nature. Therefore, finished works of art should not be preserved in archival institutions as works of art, that is, as discrete items (the exceptions are represented by the four instances I mentioned above).

Even if the finished work of art is not an archival record, its completion generates other artistic activities which in turn generate several types of records which are archival in nature. All artists maintain some system of recording details about their works as soon as they are finished, although the complexity and sophistication of these systems vary. Presumably, as the artist's output expands and his contact with dealers and customers increases, his dependance upon a system of keeping track of what has been created and the sophistication of that system likewise increases. In fact, the more successful an artist is, the more orderly and complete will be his records, especially the records of what he has created in the past.

Records documenting the details of completed works are absolutely vital to the artist in a legal, functional, financial, and sentimental sense because they represent the only evidence of the artist's output. These records vary in form, but the most common is the *card file* or *ledger book* which document the following basic information: painting title, date completed, medium, and size. Some artists elect to assign a number to each painting for greater control and in this case, the number is listed on the card or on the ledger. Information on purchase dates and exhibition dates are also commonly recorded. Leslie Poole's system of recording details about his completed

works is so extensive that, in addition to all of the above elements, the cards are colour-coded according to whether the work is a painting on canvas or paper.³⁵

Slides and *photographs* often complement file cards and ledgers as a visual record of completed works. For the artist's efficiency, these slides are numbered to cross-reference to the file cards. Cautious artists duplicate these records and store them in more than one location for they, more than any other record created by the artist, are the vital records of his activity. Whatever form the artist uses to document the evidence of the fact that a particular work has been created, it will be a record that is usually carefully maintained and protected because it represents the foundation of the artist's activity.

The creative act generates a small number of records in proportion to the significance of the activity of creating, which is the artist's substantive activity. Artists are always thinking, imagining, and sketching, building on one experience to create another. If the archivist will be able to identify the stage during which a record related to the creation of a work of art was generated, his ability to appraise records of creative activity, an activity virtually impossible to define, let alone to evaluate, will be enhanced.

III. Dissemination

Once the artist completes a work of art and records the details of

³⁵ Incidentally, Poole's agent, Gary Meir, suspects that the working records of most artists will be automated on personal computers in the near future. This is certainly of interest to archivists.

its title, size, and appearance, his involvement with that work of art is far from over. The third and final aspect of the creative process is marketing and dissemination. It represents the efforts of the artist to diffuse his works. Although some artists paint only for their own recreation, most artists attempt to sell their works and enter the business world in order to do so.

Understandably, there is a set of obstacles built into the very centre of the artistic role, and determined by the tension between the intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of the creative process. On one hand, making a painting should be the artist's own reward: an artist should be satisfied with the pleasure inherent in creative activity alone. On the other hand, part of one's identity as an artist of worth is associated with success, derived from exhibitions, sales, and attention from the outside world, not to mention the earning of money necessary to keep painting. Surviving in the world of business requires skills at odds with the artist's natural propensity to be sensitive and to observe, think, and paint. The artist must use social contacts, organizational skills, and economic judgements to effectively exploit the channels which offer opportunities to disseminate his work.

Thus is it logical to assume that the more seriously an artist views his role as an artist who must operate in the world of business, the more orderly, extensive, and complete will be his records. As his activities become more complex, he will have to increasingly depend on the memory and security provided by his records.

When an artist attempts to market and disseminate his works of art, he may participate in several or all of the following activities:

understanding, establishing, and maintaining copyright over his works, negotiating with commercial dealers, dealing with agents and cooperatives, negotiating with public galleries and museums, importing and exporting works, doing business with publishers, and maintaining a body of biographical information. These are some of the most common activities associated with marketing and disseminating from the artist's perspective, activities which generate a considerable body of textual and visual record information.

Copyright

Copyright confers the sole right to produce or reproduce a work of art, or any substantial part of it, in material form. Under the Canadian **Copyright Act**, once an artist has created a work of art he has the right to prevent others from producing or reproducing it. Essentially, what is protected is the form given to the expression of an idea.

Because national and international legislation concerning the status and rights of artists has always tended to lag behind general advances in technology, the development of the media of mass communication, and advances in mechanical reproduction of works of art³⁶, artists have been largely unaware of copyright law and their rights within this law. This is, though, no fault of their own. It is important for artists to realize that as possessors of copyright, they hold dealers, institutions, and purchasers of their works responsible to them. As archivists, it is equally important that we understand the dynamics of copyright as it

³⁶ *Status of the Artist*, 37

affects artists and the records they produce.

In the first place, copyright is contingent upon ownership, but ownership of the physical object must be distinguished from ownership of the copyright. The ownership of the copyright by law rests with the artist, who is regarded as the "first owner." There are, however, three exceptions to this. First, in situations where an artist produces work under commission, the patron who commissioned the work is the first owner. Second, if an artist is under employment while he produces a work of art, the employer is the first owner. Third, where a work of art is created under the direction of a federal or provincial government, the copyright belongs to the Crown. Crown copyright tends to be flexible; if an artist paints a mural on a public building, for example, it is possible for the artist to obtain joint copyright.

In any of the above circumstances and in the instance where a purchaser of a work of art (the "second owner") wants to claim copyright, it is possible to have copyright transferred. This transaction requires *copyright licensing records* which are issued by the federal government and which are dispositive documents: if they are lost or destroyed, the copyright reverts back to the first owner. If the artist has been involved in such a transaction, his records relating to the transfer are vital to his protection.

Incidentally, under the new copyright law, the artist has moral right over his works of art even if he is not the first owner. In other words, even if copyright has been legally transferred to another person or body or if the artist did not possess copyright in the first place, the artist has the legal right to restrain any distortion, mutilation,

modification, or intellectual misuse of his creation. The clause concerned with moral right dictates that the artist is entitled to sue for copyright infringement within three years of the incident: such an action will generate *legal records* as discussed at the beginning of this chapter. The artist can also immediately issue an *injunction* to prevent further misuse of his work.

Commercial dealers

Most professional artists have their work handled by dealers associated with commercial galleries. In addition to being a crucial legitimizing factor in the artist's credibility as a professional, the private, commercial gallery enables the artist to have his work shown to the largest possible audience. Commercial dealers often have connections in several cities and even in other countries, thus they would expand the artist's opportunities for exposure. Finally, having his works handled by a professional liberates the artist from the difficulties and embarrassments of selling his own paintings and leaves him time to spend profitably in the studio.

The relationship between an artist and his dealer is essentially a business relationship, although dealers can often assume the role of friend, counsellor, and critic. In any case, working with a commercial gallery requires a managerial attitude and a degree of financial sophistication sufficient to control potential hazards such as receiving cash advances on future works (which inevitably produces tension, for the creative powers of the artist and between the artist and the dealer), negotiating commission percentages, and dealing with idiosyncratic

accounting procedures.

In order to maintain control over business with commercial dealers, artists usually keep *gallery files* which include *correspondence, statements, invoices, consignment sheets, contracts, documentation about purchasers*, and other similar records. Consignment sheets and contracts are the most important of these records.

Consignment is the process through which the dealer acts as the artist's agent for the purposes of selling a work. The work is not sold to the gallery; rather, the artist retains ownership of the work until it is sold and merely "rents" the gallery space and the services of the dealer. The dealer receives a commission for his services based on the ultimate sale price of the work. If the work is not sold, it is returned to the artist. Consignment is a popular manner of conducting business, probably because it gives the artist control over his work and the price range within which he will negotiate. *Consignment sheets* are vital to both the dealer and the artist. They are usually drawn up by the artist and record the artwork's number, title, date of completion, media, size, whether it is framed or unframed, retail price, and date of sale or of return to the artist. Consignment records are essential to the artist's legal protection in cases where he must prove his ownership of works located in a place other than in his studio.

Contracts between dealers and artists are not always necessary, and, especially when the two parties are friends, the request of a contract by one party may indicate a lack of trust. However, in instances where the relationship between dealer and artist becomes tenuous, where the dealer's creditors are seizing assets of the gallery in

which the artist's paintings are on consignment, or when there is a disagreement with a third party such as a customer, the value of a contract is obvious. Contracts may be oral, but written agreements are ultimately more binding. Some of the more important matters for consideration by the artist and dealer are exclusivity (is the gallery the exclusive dealer for the artist?), commission rates, outside sales by the artist (is the artist free to sell from his studio?), costs of framing, insurance, damage, and receptions and publicity, control over dates of shows, hanging, and so forth, copyright, and payment negotiations.

Because these matters are always technical and often legally-defined, there will usually be several *drafts* of a contract and the artist will tend to retain them in case of future problems. When lawyers are invited to draw up the contracts, *legal records* will be generated and, even if the dealer retains them, the artist may request copies for his own files.

Agents and Cooperatives

The artist's agent acts as a "broker" or middleman between the artist and the public. He can represent one or several artists, usually administering all relevant business dealings and representing the artist in areas where he is not represented by a dealer. An artist's relationship with an agent is likely to produce the same record types generated out of an artist's relationship with a dealer such as *correspondence, printed materials, financial records, contracts, agreements and other forms of legal records.*

Independent artists whose reputations have not yet grown to the point where their works interest a commercial dealer may form

artist's cooperatives as a way to display publically. The group may select an interesting theme for show, rent space in an arts centre or minor gallery, and use commissions from sales to maintain and operate the cooperative. Since the aim of the cooperative is to attract enough attention to be reviewed by art critics in local newspapers, much emphasis is placed on advertising. Core records generated out of such a venture will usually be maintained by one member of the cooperative. They will include records common to most organizations: *informal minutes of meetings and brainstorming sessions, correspondence, invoices* (for invitations, posters, rental spaces, and similar services), *guestbooks, photographs, newspaper clippings, posters, invitations, brochures, and financial records*. Other members of the group may not possess any of the cooperative's vital records, but may retain photographs and ephemeral records, such as posters and invitations, for sentimental reasons.

Public galleries and museums

Another option for the artist to disseminate his works is by showing at public galleries and museums. It is common for galleries to request various works of art, still owned or retained by the artist, for exhibits such as group shows, retrospectives, or travelling shows. It is also common for dealers to lend works for such exhibits, as they enhance the reputation of the artist and at the same time give credibility and publicity to the commercial gallery. Because of the artist's moral right over works that he even no longer owns, second owners of an artist's work (such as a customer or commercial gallery)

who wish to display it must receive permission from the artist or his heirs. In addition to *correspondence* dealing with these matters, the artist's public gallery files may include *loan agreements, printed material* (pertaining to shows), *photographs, invitations, and shipping invoices and related financial records*.

Juried institutional shows provide another opportunity for artists to disseminate their works and gain public attention. These types of shows are organized by major art associations and museums, and can thus bestow a great deal of artistic legitimacy on those selected to exhibit in them. Juried shows are not easy to enter. Artists must know far in advance of the application deadline about the conditions of acceptance and application procedures. These will be indicated in *brochures and other printed material* acquired by the artist, and often in *newspaper announcements, circulars or posters*. With the application, the artist submits a *resume* which includes a list of previous shows and qualifications and *slides* of appropriate works, and usually a *written submission* about his interpretation of the theme of the show. If the slides are favoured by the jury, the artist will be invited to submit actual examples of his work, which must be crated and shipped at the artist's expense. This will generate *shipping invoices and insurance records*. In some cases, the shipping of works of art for professional purposes is tax deductible, so the artist will likely retain all evidence related to this for financial reasons. If his work is accepted for the show, the artist will receive *correspondence, invitations, documentation pertaining to a rental contract, and documentation pertaining to the publication of an exhibit catalogue*. Because exhibiting at public galleries

and museums through juried or special shows enhances prestige as well as offers further opportunities for exposure, many artists try to exhibit in this manner and will thus generate, receive, and retain most of the record types described.

Importing and exporting

Occasionally, an artist may want to export works of art to other countries for sale, consignment, gift, or donation. In this case, export proceedings must be carried out in accordance with the **Cultural Property Export and Import Act**. The act both controls the movement of cultural goods in and out of Canada and provides tax incentive for artists in order to encourage gifts and sales of national treasures to cultural institutions. The artist who wants to export a work of art must first consult the control list issued by Canada Customs, specifically Group V of the list which concerns fine art. An *export permit* and *supporting documentation* is required for any object or work which is identified by the control list unless the work is less than fifty years old or its creator is still living. Obviously, artists applying to export their own work will not require a permit. The artist will, however, be required to submit and retain for security purposes copies of an *application for export*, which is different from the permit, and possibly other forms obtainable from Canada Customs.

Book Publishing Agreements

It is a common practice in Canada to publish trade books and exhibit catalogues dealing with one or several artists. This is very

desirable for the artist as it represents a means of diffusing examples of his work through prints or photographs. The publication of a selection of an artist's work is not necessarily a privilege restricted to successful and established artists. Even an "unknown" artist who exhibits in a group show or gallery that is publishing a catalogue can have his work included. Most artists, therefore, will have records relating to publication in their files.

Once an artist is approached by an author, publishing company, or gallery representative, negotiations begin and records likewise begin to be generated. *Correspondence* with the author, publisher, or printer of the book or catalogue, copies of *interviews* with the artist given to the author for biographical information (these may be in textual, video, or audio form), *copyright agreements*, *publication contracts*, *accountant's statements*, and *printed material related to publicity* are among the most common record types of this activity.

Because many of these records will deal with matters such as artistic control over the design and presentation of the book or catalogue, the perspective in which the artist is presented, the obligations of the publisher to the artist (financial and otherwise), the obligations of the artist to the publisher (such as obligations to attend book-signing parties, and financial matters such as subsidiary rights, and so forth), they are necessary not only for the information of the artist but for his legal and financial security.

Biographical information

Artists constantly maintain and update their collection of

biographical information because it is always in demand by dealers, prospective customers, galleries, award and contract committees, employers, critics, and the media. An artist who is conscious of his public image will retain copies of any form of information dealing with his career, especially *reviews and critiques*. Although what individual artists may consider to be of biographical relevance differs, the most common forms of biographical information include the *curriculum vitae*, *photographs of the artist*, *slides of major works*, *copies of critiques and reviews in textual, audio, and video form*, and *catalogues and publications* as discussed above.

The curriculum vitae is far more than a resume listing education and work experience. Often accompanied by a statement describing the artist's goals and attitudes, it will contain information on education, solo exhibitions, group exhibitions, awards, private and public collections which have purchased or accepted the artist's works, lists of commissions that have been undertaken, bibliographical information referring to articles, reviews, catalogues, and books that have discussed the artist's work, and teaching and art-related work experience.

As I have suggested throughout this chapter, most artists are constantly applying for awards, grants, commissions, and exhibitions, and even when an artist is so-well established that he need not apply for such honours and opportunities, the bodies that award them always request biographical information for their own promotional purposes.

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These, then, are some of the common situations, activities, and issues encountered by artists which generate records central to their function, security, and memory. These are the records of modern artists that archivists are most likely to encounter when appraising the contents of the studio or office. When archivists are dealing with the records of an artist from other centuries, and even decades, they will notice that although the specific record types generated out of the artist's activity differ, the essential activities of engaging in personal matters, and administering, creating, and disseminating their works of art will be the same. In other words, the same types of functional series will have been generated, but the specific records types comprising these series will differ.

The results of this study suggest that if one quantitatively compares the records generated out of Personal and Professional Activities with the records of Creative Activity, activities which involve actually creating the work of art generate the fewest records. Conversely, the most records are generated out of business-related activities, personal and professional activities, and activities associated with the preparation for a work of art rather than with its actual creation in final form.

It is also interesting to see that artists must retain many records for their own security and because they have legal requirements as to their retention periods. This, coupled with the fact that if these records are not retained in an orderly fashion, the artist's activity is retarded and sometimes threatened, dispels the myth of the artist as the flighty soul living entirely in his own world of imagination. Just like a

business or an organization, an artist must maintain his records for efficient functioning. It is a contradiction in artistic activity that the artist must be a shrewd businessperson, sometimes an opportunist, a social "networker" capable of cocktail party prattle with potential customers, and somewhat of a lawyer and accountant combined in addition to his fundamental character as a sensitive and imaginative individual who, for the most part, does live inside a world inaccessible to anyone but himself, a world antithetical to the outside life of rules, routines, and requirements.

One final contradiction of artistic activity with which I will conclude this chapter is that, although the creation of the work of art is the artist's substantive activity, and although this activity generates few records, without the experience of all the other activities described in this chapter, the artist could never create. Each record generated out of each activity, whether it is the mundane records produced during the completion of an income tax return or the inspirational sketches of a journey in the Swiss Alps, comprises the artist's experience, and experience is what the artist paints or draws out of. All types of activity ultimately combine to form the artist's experience which is, in the moment of inspiration, compressed, direct, clear, and unexplainable in verbal terms. Thus American abstract expressionist Robert Motherwell claimed,

"All of my life I've been working on this work - every canvas a sentence or paragraph of it. Each picture is only an approximation of what you want. But it is entirely what I am: a totality of my experience."³⁷

³⁷ Robert Motherwell, review, *New York Times*, 3 February, 1976, 33.

Chapter Four

Appraising Artists' Records for Acquisition and Selection

I already suggested that there is a difference between appraising institutional and non-institutional records: the appraisal of records of organizations which are preserved by their institutional repositories constitutes selection among records, while the appraisal of records of organizations and individuals which are destined for preservation by non-institutional repositories first constitutes selection among archival fonds and then selection among records within each acquired fonds.¹

Therefore, *fonds* of private artists will first be evaluated for acquisition. Later, selection will occur among the records constituting the *fonds*. However, in cases where an artist is employed by an organization, such as a government agency, there are additional considerations to make. Archivists need to realize that records of artists generated within organizations are only a small part of the total record documenting the artist's activity. For instance, an artist working for a municipal government on a special mural project will generate his own records relating to the activity of planning, creating, and publicizing the mural. He may distribute some of these records, such as written proposals, sketches, progress reports, and budget information to the

¹ Appraisal of private archives has been generally described as the assessment of their value to the archival repository evaluating them, that is, the determination of their relevance to the repository's acquisition policy and of the costs involved in the housing, processing, and servicing of the material.

various departments to which he is responsible or with which he is involved. Moreover, the artist will also cause the generation of records about him in the offices of his supervisors and associates, in the payroll and personnel departments, and perhaps in a policy department. Although records generated about him may not be accessible to him and are not operationally a part of his activity as an artist, they are both important to the artist as they regulate and define his activity and are central to his security as an employee of the municipality, and to the understanding of his activity. How will the existence of these kinds of additional records affect appraisal decisions? The archivist will have to take into consideration the relationship between the artist and the total bureaucratic environment and will have to carefully investigate for record duplication.

A. Appraising the Records of Private Artists for Acquisition

Hans Booms observes that "archivists hold the monopoly over an activity which dictates what kind of cultural representation of society... will be handed down to future generations."² In view of the influence of the archivist in determining how the future perceives the past, the appraisal of artists' records for acquisition is a significant issue.

The result of this kind of appraisal should be the acquisition of archives of artists who are representative of their contemporary society,³ and, among such archives, of those which are complementary to

² Booms, 78.

³ This is a provenance-based evaluation (if the creator is important, his records must be important), as opposed to the pertinence-based evaluation (independently of the importance of the

the primary and secondary sources preserved in the area in which the repository acts and in the repository itself, and relevant to the acquisition policy of the institution involved. The completion of the first three phases of the appraisal process -- that it, the archivist's education about the artist's contemporary society, his life, and his work -- will enable the archivist to attain these results.

What are the theoretical principles guiding an acquisition as envisaged above and how can they be practically administered? First, we must determine how archivists can decide when an organic group of artists' records is worthy of permanent preservation.

If organic *fonds* of artists are to be acquired when their creators are representative of their contemporary society or had a determinate influence in their area of activity, the archivist must be aware of the character of that society, the artist's place in it, and his understanding of it. As I suggested above, this knowledge will be gained through the archivists' completion of the first three phases of appraisal which should be carried out as soon as an acquisition possibility presents

creator, his records are important when their subject matter is important). When we are to determine the general area of acquisition in order to represent in the documentary heritage the whole of a society (business, broadcasting, labour, art, and so on), a pertinence-based decision gives the most complete results. But if we have to make an evaluation for acquisition within a determined area, such as visual art, the only effective choice is one provenance-based. It is generally true for all archives of private individuals that we acquire them to know about the contributions of an individual to his field, not because of the information contained in the records about other persons or events. To have that information is useful, but it is not the primary purpose of acquisition of a person's *fonds*. We must also consider that such information is biased by the subjective situation of the record creator, and would need a verification in other complementary sources when it is used in ways other than to understand the attitude of the record creator towards the specific persons and events.

itself, that is, when the private archives of an artist becomes, or is about to become, available through gift, purchase, bequest, or other legal action, and when an archival repository is consequently approached by or approaches a prospective donor.

In the archivist's attempt to evaluate the contribution of the artist to his society and his times, the commercial and popular success of the artist and the monetary value of his works should not be considered decisive factors. In fact, the popularity of an artist may have little relationship to the significance of his vision; many artists do not attain respect and understanding until long after death. If artists' records were to be acquired on the basis of popularity and fame, then the avante-guard would often be neglected.

Then how can archivists identify and measure the significance of an artist? Significance is a relative, ambiguous concept. Its usefulness to appraisal depends on what it is related to. If in matters of selection significance refers to the relationship between the records and their creator, in matters of acquisition significance relates to the relationship between artists and their contemporary society. In this sense, the popularity of an artist and the monetary value of his works are not decisive, and neither is the material or technical aspect of his works.

For example, Monet's vision was significant to his time and to ours not only because he painted his world with new techniques of colour, light, and form which are appealing to those who appreciate his paintings. Monet's vision is significant because he offers a new and vital way in which to, literally, see things. The way in which Monet

chose to paint his understanding of light and reality is irrelevant. He wanted to paint in a way that would best relay his ideas about light and visual perception but his ideas are more significant than the techniques used to relay them. In this way acquisition decisions should be based on an understanding of the artist and his times or the influence of his spirit and intellect on his society. The following considerations should also influence acquisition decisions.

Where appraisal should never be geared towards prophesy-- in the sense that acquisition and selection should not depend on the relevance of records to the predicted research interests of the future-- a particular form of prophesy intervenes in the process of appraisal for acquisition. It requires a particular and educated sensitivity to understand which artists are expressing today those elements and forces of our times which perhaps will be uncovered and identified only tomorrow. Thus archivists should call upon critics and historians of art in order to evaluate the relevance of an artist's work to the enduring comprehension of his times. However, the identification of artists' archives which are worthy of permanent preservation constitutes only one step in any acquisition decision, that is, one actually founded on a well-defined institutional policy.

This leads us to the question of which principles should guide the determination of acquisition policies and which institutions should include in their acquisition policy the *fonds* of artists. Acquisition policies are usually formed on the basis of geographical areas of intervention or of specific themes. Institutions which acquire archives generated only within a defined geographical boundary follow the

principle of territorial provenance, which prescribes that records be preserved where they were created.⁴ Antithetical to such a principle is acquisition by pertinence, or subject relevance. This allows for records related to the same subject to be preserved in the same repository, regardless of their provenance. Provenance and pertinence are arrangement principles, but it is clear that they have a relevance for appraisal too, at least as long as appraisal refers to acquisition.

There are several problems associated with an acquisition of artists' records founded solely or primarily on territorial provenance. This principle could and has in fact been often interpreted as dictating the preservation of the records in the geographical areas in which their creators were born. Thus, for example, in the case of an artist who was born in Japan, moved to British Columbia before the Second World War, and whose paintings are a striking expression of the racial and economic tensions suffered by Japanese-Canadians during the internment years, his records should be preserved in the Japanese village where he was born. Although the identity and vision of the artist is rooted in the milieu of his life as a Japanese-Canadian, his records would be preserved and used in another cultural context.

A similar problem occurs when institutional policies adapt the principle of territorial provenance to acquire records of artists who worked in a particular geographical area. This poses limitations in that first, the place where an artist worked is often irrelevant to his vision, and second, most artists work in more than one place. This type of

⁴ A variation of geographical acquisition is acquisition according to the area of significance of the records creator: national, provincial, local, and so on.

policy would have Gauguin's works preserved in the South Pacific and Emily Carr's works preserved in Paris because she studied and painted there. While Gauguin did paint in the Pacific and used the landscape and inhabitants of the islands as a basis for many of his works, his vision transcends a merely geographical referent, containing many more elements of European society than of the society of the Pacific Islands, and had its major influence on European art. Equally, the vision of Carr is more a reflection of Canadian society than of French society and had a direct bearing on Canadian art.

A final problematical aspect of geographical boundaries as the only or main basis for acquisition is that the focus could easily be moved from the artist to the work of art and institutions could end up acquiring the records of artists who painted about a particular area, thus both assuming a thematic emphasis and promoting a fragmented constitution of their archival holdings. On one hand, an artists' work will never be solely about one place, and on the other hand, the exclusiveness of this type of policy means that records of artists who did not paint about the area concerned but do have some claim to be acquired by the repository will be neglected.

Even when repositories attempt to cover all aspects of geographical territoriality by acquiring the records of artists who were born in, who painted and operated in, and who painted about a certain area, there are still problems. The influences that an artist receives from and has on society do not have territorial limits. Art is representative of a society and a time, not necessarily of a specific place. In the few cases in which this last situation occurs, it may be

appropriate to preserve the records of the artist in the place where they were produced. Generally speaking, however, territorial boundaries should be national and the consideration of them should be subordinate to the existence of other factors, which I will indicate later on.

If territoriality cannot be a principle on which to found the acquisition of artists' records, is a thematic emphasis more appropriate? "Thematic" is an attribute which may refer to two kinds of repositories: repositories whose acquisition policy concentrates on a special subject such as women or labour, and repositories whose acquisition policy refers to a category of creators, such as writers, teachers, politicians, or artists. Both types of thematic acquisition result in the collection of groups of records rather than in a natural flowing together of *fonds*, determined by the dynamics of the archival bond. From this point of view, thematic archives are very similar to libraries, museums, and galleries. They all are bodies in which single components subordinate their individuality to the bond of their common destination, constituting a collective unit (like traditional archives). But the destination is not preconditioned by the nature of the material. It is a free choice of the collector, who arbitrarily decides to put together various individualities according to a system or a characteristic which is external to them. Thus whereas a traditional archival repository is a spontaneous accumulation of naturally correlated *fonds*, a thematic archives, like a library or a museum, is a voluntary collection of *fonds* (sometimes also of discrete items) linked by an artificial bond which can be identified with the criterium, more or less scientific, more or less practical, more or less specialized, that each single repository decides to adopt.

Take the example of the repository which acquires the records of artists who painted women; thus "women" is the characteristic around which the individual *fonds* should form. Aside from the fact that, as I said, artists rarely paint only one subject, the *fonds* of the artists have nothing in common aside from the fact that the end-products of the processes documented in them are paintings of women. They are artificially collected in order to create a museum-like display of the records of artists who may be thematically similar in their work. Of course the extreme of this is that since all artists probably paint women in some form, any of these have a right to have their records acquired by such a repository. Of such a situation there are as many examples as there are criteria which a thematic repository can put as the basis of its acquisition policy.

When archivists designate the scope of their institution's acquisition policy on the basis of an artist's birth in, operation in, or work about a specific geographical area or on the basis on an artist's work on a certain theme or existence as a member of a certain profession, they contribute to the fragmentation of knowledge. These acquisition categories are not mutually exclusive; an artist's life and records will likely apply to several of them. Furthermore, the evaluation of the applicability of these categories to an artist's records is inevitably based on an analysis of the subject content of the finished work of art, not of the artist's vision, which is rarely restricted to one subject or one place.

I said earlier that the appraisal of an artist's records for acquisition should not be based exclusively on his final works of art; the

study of them is functional only to the understanding of the significance of the artist with respect to his times and his society. Splitting the *fonds* of an artist according to the acquisition areas of several repositories is, of course, far from the answer although this too does occur sometimes.

We must remember the nature of archival records, those elements that qualify archives and differentiate them from other materials, and for this purpose it is opportune to make reference once more to Jenkinson's theory of interrelationship as constitutive of the archival bond. He says

Any Archive is potentially related closely to others both inside and outside the group in which it is preserved ... its significance depends on these relationships.⁵

If acquisition decisions cannot be made solely on the basis of territorial provenance or pertinence -- because these principles can be inconsistent with the activities of artists and can actually threaten the archival bond among their records -- it is necessary to base acquisition decisions on Jenkinson's concept of interrelationship, which we may call complementariness.

The principle of complementarity dictates for a repository to acquire only those organic groups of records for which the repository itself or other institutions in the area have supporting sources, primary or secondary. Of course, this principle is valid also in the case of acquisition by repositories having a territorial jurisdiction or an institutional acquisition function. For instance, if an artist works

⁵ Jenkinson, 65. My emphasis.

significantly for the Anglican Church of Canada in a part of the church administration based in Vancouver, it would be opportune to preserve his archives together with the archives of the church, because these contain the primary supporting documentation for the artist's records: the records of the artist are thus complementary to the records of the church related to the artist's work.

Complementariness supports the existence of the archival bond because its principle is based on the relationship among *fonds*. These relationships may be expressed in endless ways. For instance, artists who are members of an artistic school create their own *fonds* out of their own artistic activities but the *fonds* of all the artists of the school are related to each other because the activities of the artists are related. The fact that the artists may have lived in the same geographical area or may have painted the same types of subjects in a similar style is not significant as a reason for the existence of a bond between the artists of the school; it is significant as a result of it. Because the records of the school are complementary, they might be retained all together in a private archival repository or in the archives of the gallery where the school held exhibitions, because part of the gallery's records would be concerning business with the artists or perhaps the gallery owns the major part of the artworks created by them.

If an artist taught at a University or was associated with a University in some way, the University archives may also have complementary records and would thus be a promising repository for the artist's *fonds*. Another example in which complementariness can be considered a basis for acquisition is in the case of a government or

corporate organization which acquires for its repository the records of artists who made significant contributions to the organization through commissioned projects. When artists have a national significance, their records might be preserved by the national gallery which preserves their works of art, or by the national archives of the country where the artist acted. It may be that the artist has an international fame and his works of art are spread around the world, like those of Rubens or Rembrandt or of some Impressionists. In such a case the best repository I can envisage for his records is the national archives of his country of origin. This choice is dictated by simple common sense: the records of an artist who has worked in different countries, has influenced different cultures with his art, has absorbed in his art various elements of those cultures, are very likely to be needed for innumerable kinds of research by scholars of many different countries. These scholars would look at the national archives of the artist's country as the most logical place for their studies, and also as a place which can provide them with a variety of other sources functional to the comprehension of the artist's background and milieu.

This example constitutes an indication of how dangerous the principle of complementariness can be if rigidly applied. We are social beings and as such we have relations in the course of our lives and in the accomplishments of our activities with an indefinite number of individuals and organizations. The records we create express this broad variety of relationships and they are complementary to the records of each of the individuals and of the organizations with whom we have had contact. The ultimate result of a strict application of the principle of

complementariness would be a splitting of organic *fonds* among various repositories. This is the last thing we want because it would destroy the *fonds* and eliminate any possibility of research in them.

Thus, common sense and good judgement are essential elements in the application of the principle of complementarity. We need to identify in the artist's activities a mainstream: did the artist act primarily as a member of a specific artistic current? Did the artist always use the same gallery for showing his works? Was the life and work of the artist particularly linked to a determined geographical area? Did the artist accept commissions primarily by a specific church? Did the artist teach in a university for the major part of his life? Did the artist work only with government grants? The number of questions is endless. A positive answer to any of them would indicate the place where the artist's *fonds* would naturally flow to join the records complementary to it, separated from them in its independent organicity and integrity, but close to them in an ideal representation of the closeness between their respective creators. Thus, the artist's *fonds* would preserve its natural context and the comprehension of the researchers would be enhanced.

The conclusion of this argument is that institutional and non-institutional repositories, art galleries, universities, museums, and special libraries all present possibilities for the acquisition of the records of artists as long as their holdings complement, in the organic sense of the archival bond, these records. It must be the necessity to preserve the contextual understanding of an artist's archives, both inside and in its relationship to other records, that forms the basis for acquisition. This

is automatically the basis for acquisition by institutional repositories. If individual records within an artist's *fonds* are not autonomous, depending on others created out of the same activity for comprehension, so too the *fonds* as a whole entity should be preserved with its complementary documentation, whether this is the *fonds* of other artists, individuals, or organizations or secondary materials such as the artist's works of art. This is both advantageous to the scholar, because it offers him a holistic, rather than discrete, perspective of the artist, and primarily reflective of the integrity of the archival bond.

Deciding which repositories are suitable for the acquisition of an artist's records on the basis of complementarity is more challenging for the archivist than to appraise on the basis of provenance or pertinence-based designations. Two things are required: the knowledge gained through the first three phases of appraisal, and the existence of a clearly-written acquisitions policy which explains the repository's purview to acquire certain records based on the complementarity of its holdings.

If the archivist is committed to educating himself about the society, life, and work of an artist, the result of the evaluative phase of appraisal in which records are assessed for acquisition will be the acquisition of organic bodies of records which are representative of their contemporary society, and contextually usable by researchers. Artists' records will be acquired on the basis of both the artist's understanding of and contribution to his times and the extent to which these records are related to other institutional holdings. In this sense, the integrity of the archival bond and the impartiality of the artist's records will be

preserved, and their treasure of information will be enhanced.⁶

B. Appraising the records of artists for selection

Once the records of an artist have been acquired by an institutional or non-institutional repository, selection among them for permanent preservation occurs. At the outset, it is necessary to consider an aspect of artistic activity that affects selection decisions.

Because creators of archival records generally tend to retain only those records which are functional to their activity, necessary for their security, and auxiliary to their memory, "natural selection" occurs as creators use and review their records, discarding useless and space-wasting documentation. Artists are no different in this respect. They discard records which have either served their purposes and are not useful to retain and ephemeral records which never had any active use but which made their way into the studio files.

In this sense, artists perform their own records selection, and do so from the best possible perspective because they are impartially

⁶ Ideally, the artist's *fonds*, being natural accumulations of records and not collections, should be preserved by archival repositories, not by cultural institutions whose mandate is to collect discrete items organized in a collective unit on the basis of arbitrarily determined criteria. But, out of respect to Canadian historical development and tradition, I have considered it acceptable for galleries, museums, and special libraries to undertake archival acquisition as long as it is based on sound archival principles. Even if this is a theoretical thesis, a consideration of actual practice, which may be justifiable also in principle because it refers to "respect for context," is an element of that "common sense and good judgement" I mentioned above as an essential component of any application of theory.

selecting out of the context of their experience. When artists engage in "natural selection," their decisions are ultimately of inestimable value to the archivist because some identification of important material has incidentally been made. Thus in most cases, archivists will find that all of the records of an artist will be worth keeping. Indeed, it is generally true of papers of private individuals that the weeding of ephemeral and duplicate documentation at the item level is the only selection that is necessary once the records have been acquired.⁷

The function of selection is to retain for preservation those records regarded by the archivist as having been necessary to the organization, function, security, and memory of the artist's activity. The four main series of records generated by artists (personal and professional activities, administration of creative activity, creative process, and dissemination) are vitally interrelated, and having all been essential to the artist's activity, are indispensable to the comprehension of that activity. In light of this fact it is unlikely that entire series of records will be eliminated. Of course, this can never be taken for granted; the archivist must appraise the entire *fonds* at the series level and then, because *fonds* of artists' records are not likely to be too large, the archivist must select within the series in order to weed out ephemeral or duplicate records.

This must be done from a contemporary perspective and in

⁷ The selection of records of public and private organizations, on the other hand, constitutes more than the weeding of discrete records. The selection of the records of a government office, for example, will comprise the destruction of whole series of records in order to leave behind for preservation only those series which were essential to the function of the office and thus constitute evidence of them.

light of the first three phases of appraisal. The result of selection, when administered in this manner, is therefore the most impartial testament attainable of the activity which generated the records. In supplying the future with such a concentrated and essential record, the archivist permits the future to use that record in any way without compromising the integrity of the past and misrepresenting the activity of the artist.

Some might argue that to determine which of an artist's records were necessary to the organization, function, security, and memory of his artistic activities requires the same kind of subjective judgement used to anticipate the future research uses of records, a methodology that I consider inimical to the purposes of archival appraisal. Others might demand a list of criteria and a set of specific guidelines that establish precisely those attributes that the records must possess in order to be considered central to the activity of an artist.

I maintain that the only way an archivist can perform an objective selection is to carefully administer the first three phases of the appraisal process and to allow the information derived from this activity to define the centrality of the artist's records to his experience as an artist. Specific guidelines and criteria that are said to be applicable in every archival situation and that, in effect, make the selection decision for the archivist are debilitating to selection.

Only the archivist's understanding of the period in which the artist lived, the values through which he worked, the legal system that governed his society, and, most importantly, of what the artist did, why he did it, and how he did it allow to perform and justify an informed appraisal. This system of appraisal can not be construed as artificial or

restrictive (in terms of the requirements of future use) because it takes into consideration the uniqueness of the individual, his time, and his records.

This, then, is the context in which selection should occur. How is it to be practically administered? The archivist shall evaluate those records, within the series in which they were generated and maintained, which may be considered as having been

- 1) necessary to the legal and financial security of the artist;
- 2) necessary to the artist's day to day operations;
- 3) necessary to the artist's memory for future work; and
- 4) marginally necessary to the artist's security, operations, and memory.

The four categories of selection values are based on the assumption that the goal of appraisal is to retain for preservation those records regarded by the archivist as having been necessary to the organization, function, security, and memory of the artist's activity, because these same records will be essential to the comprehension of that activity.

Because the components of artistic activity are vitally interrelated, records can be described in terms of more than one category of value. For instance, most records which are necessary to the financial and legal security of the artist also serve as records necessary to the artist's day to day operations at one point. Similarly, records generated out of one activity may serve useful for another activity at a later time. Values can, therefore, be coexistent. This is generally true of any activity which generates records.

The first three categories of record value are self-evident. Records that are necessary to the legal or financial security of

the artist are records whose retention is either required by law or is in the best interest of the artist for the protection of his rights, of his work, and of his goods. Selected examples of these records are income tax returns and associated records generated out of personal and professional activities, specifically the pursuit of financial matters. The retention of these records serves as a means of protecting the financial security of the artist as legal evidence of his assets. Another record type which may apply to the first category of selection value is the artist's card file or ledger book which records details about every work of art as it is completed. Because this record may represent the only cumulative documentation of the works of the artist, it is essential to both his day to day operations and his security. On the basis of this record, he can prove that he actually created a particular work of art and can simultaneously monitor the movement of other works as they are passed from gallery to gallery.

The second category concerns records which are necessary to the artist's day-to-day operations. These are records that the artist constantly uses in order to carry out his activity as an artist. They may or may not demonstrate continuing legal or financial values. An example of these types of records may be the documentation of grant files, generated out of the process of administering artistic activity or correspondence generated out of any of the personal, professional, or artistic activities.

Records which were necessary to the artist's memory for future work are identified by the third category of selection value. These are records which may be generated for an immediate purpose and preserved for possible reference or received and

not used immediately, but saved because they may be useful in the future. Preliminary sketches and studies are good examples of this kind of record. Because artists are constantly in search of new modes of expression and subjects for inspiration, the collection and retention of records which might be used some day for a painting or project is common.

The fourth category includes records which are considered to be marginally necessary to the artist's security, operations, or memory. Whereas records in the previous three categories of value can usually be clearly and immediately distinguished if the archivist is familiar with the specifics of the artist's activity and his records, the fourth category identifies records which are difficult to classify. Records such as exhibit invitations retained for sentimental reasons or photographs showing the layout of an exhibit, for example, may not ostensibly represent records necessary to the artist's activity. In such cases, the archivist will have to carefully reconsider the artist's activity in light of the other records which have been evaluated as having been necessary to the security, operations, and memory of the artist.

Records that are duplicated among the artist's files or in other source locations may be considered for disposal. Within the artist's records, exhibit invitations are an example of this kind of record; artists may cross-file several of the same invitations in order to optimize the many reference functions this record serves. Evidence of duplication does not necessarily infer that the duplicated materials should be discarded because the context in which each identical record is used will significantly alter its meaning. It is simply important for the archivist to

realize when records are duplicated because this may be a source of unnecessary replication that can be reduced. The challenges represented by records which apply to the fourth category necessitate careful and insightful work during the entire selection process.

The way in which value categories, like those described above, may work for the archivist during the selection phase is that by categorizing different kinds of functional necessity, the archivist can more clearly visualize just what records the artist actually needed to carry on his activity. I suggest that records falling into the first three categories literally fulfill the goal of appraisal and therefore should be retained. Records falling into the last category, on the other hand, demonstrate a more questionable necessity to the artist's activity and require further consideration in order to assess their disposition. Practically, what is suggested is not the elimination of whole categories of records, because it is likely that the artist retained only what was functional to his activity, but a classical weeding.

Because, during my description of artistic activities and their records, I gave some evaluation of the centrality of most records to the activity that created them, it is not necessary to assess each of the described record types in terms of selection. This is because to do so may suggest that the value categories assigned to the records and the explanations used to justify their categorization will be applicable for the records of all artists. As I have suggested, selection decisions made by the archivist must always be dependent on and justified by information gathered in the three previous phases of appraisal.

Records generated out of the activity of negotiating with

commercial dealers (a component of the activity of disseminating works of art) are suitable for a brief example of evaluation because they fall into all four categories of value.

In this category, records deemed necessary to the legal and financial security of the artist may include *contracts, contract drafts, consignment sheets, statements, invoices, and correspondence*. The contracts literally protect the artist's relationship with the dealer and his gallery as they describe the terms of operation and delegate responsibility. Drafts of contracts, drawn up by lawyers or by the dealer and artist, are also central to the artist's security as they may indicate important issues which were not included in the final draft of the contracts. In cases where the contract is breached, either by the artist or the dealer, the drafts may reveal some aspect of the artist-dealer relationship which protects the interest of the artist. Consignment sheets, as I have emphasized, are essential to the artist's protection because they indicate his ownership of paintings when they are out of his immediate custody. If the assets of a gallery currently showing some of the artist's work on consignment are seized, it is possible that the artist's consignment records are the only documentation that establishes his ownership of his works. Consignment sheets are also essential for taxation purposes, and must be retained by law, if used for these purposes, for a minimum of five years after the artist's claim is filed. Statements and invoices issued from the dealer to the artist are necessary to the artist's financial security because they indicate his earnings. Again, in cases where a gallery's assets are seized, the artist may be required to prove that some of his works were already purchased. The

gallery should have these records as well, but when the artist's security is at issue, he will more likely trust his own records. Correspondence discussing details of a business deal or a showing at the gallery may also be considered to be of great necessity to the artist's security. Where agreements are informally conducted through correspondence or where information which affects the artist's livelihood is mentioned, correspondence becomes an important record documenting an artist's right or grievance. Of course, the specific activity of the artist concerned will generate other records central to his legal and financial security, but listed are the most common records generate out of the artist-dealer relationship which protect the artist's rights.

Many of the records above evaluated as being necessary to the artist's legal and financial security may also be used on a day to day basis in the artist's dealings with the dealer and gallery. Contracts, for instance, may be referred to during the negotiation with another dealer or gallery. Agreements may be drafted every time the artist chooses to exhibit at the gallery. Consignment sheets are constantly consulted by the artist or his personal agent in order to monitor the location and purchase status of various works of art. In addition, printed information about the gallery or dealer in the form of *brochures* may be used in everyday operations as the artist gives information about the gallery to potential customers or other galleries. *Purchaser information* which is given to the artist by the gallery after a work is sold is also used during day to day business operations. The artist may follow up on his sale, he may be requested by a public gallery to locate one of his purchased works of art for a special exhibit, or the purchasers may be in contact

with the artist in order to arrange a commission or other sales. Correspondence between the artist and commercial dealer is also a record type which is generated out of normal business operations and, when the artist and dealer are in different cities, is necessary for extended and formal matters of communication.

Few records which are necessary to the artist's memory for future activities are usually generated out of the artist-dealer relationship. Records which are retained for their centrality to the artist's security will, of course, be useful to the artist as a basis for comparison when negotiating with a new gallery, for instance. Purchaser information might likewise be retained for a future use such as compiling a list of major purchasers for an autobiography or for approaching corporate buyers.

Records of apparent marginal necessity to the artist's security, day-to-day operations, and memory for future activities might include *invitations to exhibits, gallery circulars and newsletters, and exhibit catalogues*. On the other hand, the invitations and catalogues are necessary to the artist's collection of biographical material which is in turn of great importance to his career. In the context of the artist-dealer relationship, however, these records will likely have been retained for sentimental, rather than operational, reasons. If they are duplicated in the artist's biographical files, the archivist may consider discarding them.

Thus records falling into the first, second, and third categories of value should be preserved in light of the goal of appraisal supported in this study.

Selecting with confidence and effectiveness is dependent upon completing the four phases of the appraisal process with thoroughness and insight. Archivists appraising the records of artists might use the description of artistic activities and their records presented in chapter three in order to identify components of activities, recognize the related records, and to schematize the artist's activity as a whole. Most importantly, however, archivists must understand the function of appraisal and their responsibility to select, in this "age of abundance," a documentary record that is both representative of the artist's activity and humanly usable in terms of content and extent. The appraisal of artist's records, like the appraisal of any type of documentary record, depends upon the archivist's ability to understand the record-creator's time, life, activities, and values, but it also depends upon the archivist's ability to understand the nature of archival records and the social functions and implications of appraisal. There will always be difficult selections to make, both among *fonds* and within *fonds*, just as there will always be records which seem to promise some research use in the future but which do not warrant preservation in light of the goal of appraisal. Archivists can never be certain of the future, but they can take what has been significant in the past and what is functional to present understanding, and ensure that its most vital attribute, its impartiality, is preserved.

Conclusion

This thesis has investigated the validity and effectiveness of the theoretical principles of archival appraisal as it applies to the evaluation of permanent value of records generated and received by visual artists. I set out to determine whether some part of the artist's output can be considered to be of archival nature, whether there is an archival purview to acquire the records of artists, and whether these records can be practically appraised for acquisition and selection in concert with the theoretical principles of archival science. Having discussed the nature of archival records, the function of appraisal, artistic activity and the records it generates, and the process of appraisal for the records of artists, I can now offer some conclusory remarks.

The appraisal of records of visual artists involves a decision about acquisition and a decision about selection. Both decisions are to be taken on the ground of knowledge acquired through the first three phases of the appraisal process: the archivist's acquaintance with the contemporary societal context of the artist, the artist's life, and the artist's activities and records.

The result of the first decision will be the acquisition of organic bodies of records which are functional to the comprehension of artistic activity and of its societal context in the past, and complementary to the primary and secondary sources preserved in the area where the repository acts and in the repository itself. Records will

be acquired on the strength of the artist's vision of his times and of those values that made the artist significant to his own society and to the future. They will also be acquired according to the principle of complementariness, so that the archival bond between the artist's *fonds* and other related records will be preserved together with the impartiality and integrity of the records within the artist's *fonds*.

The result of the second decision, selection, will be the preservation of those records considered necessary to the organization, function, security, and memory of the artist's activities. In many cases, selection will constitute little more than a classical weeding of duplicate or ephemeral records. This is because artists generate inextricably interrelated series of records during the course of personal, professional, and artistic activities and therefore most records demonstrate relevance to all those activities: unlike the selection of public records, entire series of artist's records will rarely be discarded. Furthermore, artists are likely to retain only what is useful and necessary for their security, day to day operations, and memory.

Appraisal is not prophetic in the sense that the archivist is not to base the evaluation of an artist's records on a "futurology of potential issues in research scholarship."¹ Appraisal must take a retrospective approach by considering the elements of the artist's contemporary society and assessing the value of his records and the centrality of his records to his activity in the context of these elements.

This process of appraisal is based on the belief that the artist offers civilization more than an isolated, personal view of the world. The

¹ Booms, 92.

offers civilization more than an isolated, personal view of the world. The vision of the artist has an "archetypal validity which expresses both the individual creative mind at a given historical moment and the mind and history of a race, of a civilization, and of man himself."² If the responsibility of archivists is to acquire, select, and preserve society's memory through the documentary heritage, then the records of artists should represent an essential component of the archival holdings of societies.

In Canada, the acquisition of works of documentary art has, historically, been the primary means of preserving the artist's representation for archival purposes. Works of art collected primarily because of the fact that their subject matter documents some aspect of the Canadian landscape, population, history, and culture have been called "archival records" and have been actively and expensively preserved. However, rather than contributing to a complete and diverse representation of the visions of Canadian artists, the acquisition of documentary art is restrictive in that it includes only the finished works of artists who, archivists must prove, were consciously "recording" an event or scene for posterity. Even if the archival preservation of works of art as works of art came within the purview of archival repositories, the acquisition of documentary art would be further restrictive and non-representative of Canadian art and artists in that artists who actually revealed a deep and fundamental vision of their society and times, but whose work could not be considered "factual" and "documentary" by archivists, would be excluded.

² Chiari, 6.

Except under certain conditions, finished works of art should not be preserved in archival repositories. They should not be removed from the physical and intellectual environment for which they were meant and to which they were destined: art galleries and museums. That documentary art possesses research value is undeniable, but researchers can as easily go to galleries for their research.

Artists' records can offer a contribution to the understanding of artists' societies and their times and they should be preserved in archival repositories out of respect for their organicity and integrity.

I have attempted to present artistic activity in general as an activity clearly divisible into functional components and productive of many basic record types. Artistic activity resembles any other activity in that it generates records instrumental to the legal and financial security of the creator, his ability to operate on a day to day basis, and his memory. If archivists can see artistic activity in this light, then the tenacity of the mythical image of artists as non-producers of archives will be dispelled.

Because of the pressures and requirements of the often-conflicting worlds of business, law, and art, artists must depend on their records as much as on their imaginative powers in order to be, at the very least, operative. Of course I do not infer that archivists should view artists as record-keepers before artists. Nor should artists become self-conscious about the records they generate and preserve during the course of their activities. The artist's first task is to create art, and in this process, he spontaneously creates archives.

By learning about the artist's society, life, and work in order

to make acquisition and selection decisions, and by appraising in concert with the goals of acquisition and selection as identified by archival theory, archivists will preserve the impartiality of artists' records.

Artists and archivists have a significantly similar mission. Both professions are concerned with man and society at large: both offer to the future what is ultimately an interpretation of this as it is reflected in a work of art or in the documentary heritage. But the parallel ends here. The representation provided by the artist is supposed to be subjective, whereas that determined by the archivist in his appraisal decisions should be objective. The values held by the contemporary society of the artist and the archivist, however, exert an influence on the artist's vision, making its representation more objective than expected, and on the archivist's judgement, giving it an indeterminable degree of subjectivity. The fact that the artist's work reveals objective data together with subjective interpretation is a very useful "accident" for any researcher who tries to understand the artist's context. This in no way diminishes the value of the artist's output. The artist is ultimately responsible only to himself and to his art. But the archivist is responsible to society, which has entrusted him with the selection of a documentary record of the past that is functional to an evolution towards a better future.

Thus archivists are obligated to strive towards objectivity. The only way for them to get close to such an unreachable goal is to understand the motivations, processes, and records of artistic activity as well as the aims functions, and theories of their own professional activities.

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