The convergence of technology and aesthetics has brought about a multitude of innovative artworks but also a variety of problems. New media artworks fall far outside the art historical canon and defy traditional modes of criticism and classification. Because new media works are multi-faceted, issues of retention and preservation are beyond the scope of many curators and conservators. Installation artworks that incorporate moving images are particularly problematic in that they incorporate sculptural and architectural elements with digital, video or film and uniquely situate the viewer within the work. Curators have begun to work in league with archivists and information specialists to preserve the physical components of "immersive" installation artworks but fail to take the viewer into account, thereby missing a crucial component of these works. This paper discusses the problems inherent with "archiving" these artworks and urges that more active practices take place to preserve the essence of the installations while on exhibit through viewer interaction. Suggestions are made for inclusion of the viewer and further attempts towards long-term retention.

Headings:

Art and technology

Digital Art – Exhibitions

Installations (Art)

Video art –Themes, motives – Exhibitions

ARCHIVAL APPROACHES TO THE PRESERVATION OF MOVING-IMAGE,
IMMERSIVE INSTALLATION ARTWORKS

by
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Purpose and Background:

Art media of the twentieth and twenty first centuries has become increasingly experimental and endows the artwork with the ability to simultaneously engage and agitate the viewer, who is situated in a unique relationship that has neither cause nor effect. Artists such as Duchamp used the "found object" to create a new sort of art, one that forced the viewer to question the very nature of its status as art object. Marchel Duchamp's *Fountain* (a urinal) in 1917, Joseph Cornell's surrealist, found object, assemblage shrines of the 1930s; and later Pop and Fluxus works including Robert Rauschenberg's *Canyon* (1959) that incorporates painting on wood, buttons and a stuffed eagle, all move beyond aesthetic considerations and embed conceptual notions on the nature of art within the work. This new or found media brings about physical considerations as well and found objects are often less physically stable than traditional art media such as painting and sculpture so that long-term retention is a more difficult process.

The introduction of computers to the art making process brought with it the much used term "new media art." New media covers a range of types and media including internet art, video installation and projection, and imagery created with programs such as Photoshop, but is not limited to computers. Other media types include devices such as LED lights and lasers. "Computer art" and "electronic art" are other broad terms under which new media may be grouped. One commonality among these works is that their size and time span (for video and digital moving images with specific time lengths) lend

themselves to temporary installation within galleries. Many of these works are also dependent upon the conceptual, and the viewer is therefore an integral part of the artwork. Like its modernist predecessors, technologically based materials and formats bring about complex issues for long-term retention. Non-traditional formats raise questions with conservationists who have traditionally worked with more stable media such as painting and sculpture. Digital components for instance, have dubious life spans and their playback devices are outmoded very quickly.

Paradoxically, as archivists and museum professionals struggle to retain these works, the accessibility of digital formats allows a wider range of artists to use them in the creation process. The additions of New Media faculty members to fine arts departments in major institutions is a strong indicator that the media will continue to flourish and that the numbers of those working with it will increase as will the numbers of works that need preservation. As the numbers of works grow, so do their natures. Works are created with a variety of programs and devices that change or are outdated as quickly as technology moves forward. How to classify these works remains as large a problem as retaining them. Custodianship is another large issue as museum curators and conservators look to archivists and information professionals to deal with digital components. The digital components of installations works are naturally a focal point for the viewer and must be preserved for future scholars, but they are only a component and other parts of the installation must be preserved as well. Installations are temporal in nature and archivists and curators struggle with how best to document or actively archive them for posterity.

In 1981, a quote by Hans Haacke appeared in the <u>Village Voice</u> that was initially predictive but is now descriptive of the art world. He wrote: "purely visual art is increasingly unable to communicate the complexities of the contemporary world" and looked to "hybrid forms of communication, mixture of many media, including the content in which they are applied as signifiers."[1] Where "new media" differ from the physical, found object, is that they produce new and complex questions in the relationship between technology and art, that cannot be fully reckoned with because the future implications of retaining new media is only now being examined. The very nature of these works is bound to time, both as physical formats and as conceptual states for the viewer. Increasingly, user interaction is considered central to fields such as Information Architecture that describe the communications between media and viewers. However, art has been historically considered as a product or something outside of human experience after its origination and generation by the individual. These new media works are fully dependent upon the viewer for status as art.

The purpose of this paper is to call for a better integration of traditional art theoretical practice with preservation and archival efforts, shot through with a better understanding of user interaction and reaction to a very specific genre within new media art; that of immersive, moving image installation artworks. This art form is dependent on its conceptual underpinnings and is user-centered rather than having reliance on physical form for both art status and its life span as an art object. This user-centered approach forces the archivist from a passive role to an active one, from collecting data to creating

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[1] Hans Haacke in the <u>Village Voice</u>, March 25-31, 1981. Quote reprinted in Lucy Lippard, <u>The Lure of the Local: Senses of Place in a Multicentered Society</u>, (New York: New York Press, 1997) 284.

it, and from arranging materials to content management, where relationships are forged between the artwork components, balanced with digital preservation.

Work for archivists, preservationists, librarians, curators, and conservationists must begin with standardized languages to describe new media artworks that more fully reflect the media. "New Media" is a term that encompasses digital, computer, internet, electronic and installation artworks. During the course of this paper, I will examine a type of new media format that is specific to its environment, but not specific to digital or analog technology, only that it will contain "moving-image" components. I believe this is an important art medium because it relies heavily on multiple theoretic viewpoints, including those of the "flickering image;" and it brings about an interaction between viewer and screen not unlike that of film. Installation art is generally exhibited in galleries and museums, but is becoming prominent as a public art medium. Often enigmatic in nature, this form of installation calls upon a team of professionals to decide how it can be maintained for future audiences. Curators and conservators need to discuss the nature of the work and draw from art history, film theory and other interdisciplinary areas to better describe the parts of these works, terminology and standardize common concerns of the artists and works. Library and information professionals must suggest means of digital archiving, metadata and other encoding schemes; and what ancillary materials should be archived along with the artwork components.

For the purpose of this paper, I will use the term "moving image installation art" to describe installations that combine an environment and moving image to situate the viewer. Subject headings have been slowly developed to classify artwork dependent on technology but broad terms such as "electronic art" and "computer art" are too inclusive

for this paper. I will summarize the accomplishments of museum collaboratives on the subject and will suggest how we may approach experience in more standard ways as to ensure the long-term retention and more interdisciplinary understanding of these works. To arrive at more standard approaches to this art medium, I will explore the common features of specific works from within the genre. In the context of a literature review, I will first discuss specific writings of these professionals and collaborative groups to compare the priorities of each and how they differ. After the literature review, I will discuss the place of the viewer in such works and why this holistic approach is essential to the understanding and long-term retention of the works.

Chapter 1:

Introduction and Review of the Literature:

As the rapid development of technology has blurred the lines of traditional artistic media, so too has it redefined the role of the professional librarian. Artists increasingly turn to digital media to create images, installation works, internet art and a range of other works that seems to defy classification. Art and information professionals race to describe and organize this work for posterity, and in doing so, battle obsolescence of technological media and playback devices. These opposing forces seem to be a dominant component of preservation and retention efforts, and most closely involve professionals from other disciplines, such as information science.

Curators, artists, conservators and information specialists must work in concert to save and retain these works. They need to develop new approaches to installation art that fall outside traditional art historical canons and have integrated terminology for use by both arts and library professionals. Three major initiatives have been formed to address these issues, but their strategies have been very dependent on physical attributes of the artworks, rather than more conceptual/user-centered qualities, which are ultimately harder to classify and describe. Installation works with moving image components spatially situate the viewer between reality and the unreal, presenting the viewer with a physical environment and the significant flickering and/or digital image. The proliferation of these works that have been described as "immersive environments" by L.A. Weekly critic Doug Harvey could in some ways be indicative of a post-modern state

of mind, but certainly by sheer numbers and their prominence in museums make them a viable art medium, situated strongly as post-modernist texts.[2]

There are a number of publications available that document installation artworks in all formats, the authors attempting to classify the works in terms of performance, traditional art practice, and film and media theory. Curators are acutely aware that their writings and accompanying photo-documentation may be the only means the public has to experience this temporal medium. Catalogs for some installations include film stills, photographs and texts of didactic, reading material or audio files. Interactive websites are often created by artists or museums, perhaps a more suitable means to replicate experience long after the exhibition. Most of the best sources on moving image installation are available on the web. Traditional art books on these works can seem outdated or too abbreviated, but in a survey format do allow the writer to work through theoretical consideration.

One of the more concise publications to document recent installation work is Installation Art in the New Millennium.[3] Although the text covers a variety of installation types, many involve digital and moving-image components. Within the introduction and throughout the text, its authors discuss the place of the viewer as integral to these works. He places installation within the contexts of theatricality, performance and the technological modern world, all positions from which to examine the viewer in the context of the work. Moving image installations are considered in their relation to cinema, and in their ability to be "immersive." For de Olivera, "Cinema provides the

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[2] Doug Harvey.
[3] Nicolas De Oliveira, et al., Installation Art in the New Millennium, (London: Thames and Hudson, 2003).

dominant cultural experience that Installation must explore."[4] The text closely examines the work of architect/installation team Diller+Scofidio, of which I will use in later descriptions. De Olivera and his co-authors also cite a discussion between two critics, Jeffrey Kastner and Mary Jane Jacob. They recognize a shift from art as object to be maintained, to art as indicator of cultural machinations an essentially time based medium that may or may not leave artifactual evidence.[5] Here, the author makes distinctions as an art critic, highly pertinent to the concerns of professionals who strive to archive these works. The loaded question is asked "should conceptual works remain in the temporal?"

Michael Rush's survey of video, multi-media and digital art places these installation works within a post-modern lineage. New Media in Late 20th Century Art is a "World of Art" book that covers a variety of artworks, some of the inherent issues associated with these works and sets new media in the context of 20th century film, video and art history.[6] It is a concise survey that is not able to delve too thoroughly into conceptual matters, but rather classifies the work into standard categories with the chapter headings for better reading comprehension. Rush's survey has been used as a course textbook for its ability to provide the reader with a strong framework for understanding, a framework that could also be used in the context of archiving projects. The chapters break new media into "Video Art", "Video Installation Art" and "Digital Art." Chapter Three deals with "Video Installation Art" and the writing quickly acknowledges that "context, for these artists, is paramount; and they wish to exercise control over the content by explicitly creating an environment which, in its totality,

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[4] De Oliveira 23.
[5] De Oliveira 47.
[6] Michael Rush. New Media in Late 20th Century Art, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1999).

constitutes the art."[7] Rush then subdivides installation work by content, examining the

medium in relation to the socio/political, surveillance and the sculptural tradition. His

subheading "the lyrical" examines work such as that by Bill Viola that engages aesthetic

considerations and presents a fragmentary narrative. Rush's subheadings in Chapter 3 are

a less standard approach to the medium than the chapter headings, but they are

nonetheless approaches for grouping types of work for better understanding.

In February 2003, an article was published on the site, First Monday called

"Reconciling Interiors: The Screen as Installation."[8] The author, James Charlton,

discusses the component of the screen and monitor in relation to the traditional art format

of painting and frame. He uses this parallel structure to discuss interiority and exteriority

of installation works with screens. He draws from film and television theory in a

discussion of apparatus (the screen and monitor). From binary systems, he theorizes that

"vectors" connect the apparatus, image and space that contain the viewer. While Charlton

draws careful distinctions between the components of moving image installations, he

does not conceive of the viewer as one of them. Installations do not immerse or absorb

the viewer, but rather present apparatus through "which the viewer must navigate." One

term in his text resonates with what many archivists have presented as a standard for

dealing with installation work. Charlton expands upon the "image," based in art historical

terminology, and describes a common trait of all artwork that is more encompassing than

the physicality, based in the experiential. The image is what the viewer walks away with

from the artwork. Charlton's "image" is analogous to painting, while Jon Ippolito of the

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[7] Rush 116.

[8] James Charlton, "Reconciling Interiors: the Screen as Installation." First Monday 8:2, February 2003
<www.firstmonday.org/issues/issue8_2/charlton/index.html>

Guggenheim and the Variable Media Network has drawn the analogy to the essence of these works and music with what he terms as the "score."

Ctrl + [Space] is an exhibition catalog for a show that took place at the Center for Art and Media in Karlsruhe, Germany in 2001-2002.[9] The exhibit focused on artworks that deal with aspects of surveillance, classified by their viewer/subject relationships. Again, the catalog documents installation artworks and further augments the experience of the viewer with additional scholarship. One essay describes *Inner and Outer Space*, an early video and film work by Andy Warhol that featured two depictions of Factory girl, Edie Sedgewick. Warhol used new media to step beyond his iconic celebrity portraits.[10] In *Inner and Outer Space*, he shot a video portrait of Edie in profile. He later shot a film that depicts Edie frontally, sitting next to the first video playing on a television, so that it would appear she is communicating with both the video and with the camera.[11] Through the use of a portrait format, the viewer sees the outer Edie while the sound and movement of the video provide the inner Edie. Warhol presents the viewer with a more substantial, yet more enigmatic portrait of the sitter. As an archival document, the essay by Callie Angell gives some indication of the experience of the viewer, but pays much closer attention to artistic intention and art historical context. The essay is accompanied by several "clean" film stills but fails to notify the viewer of the disorienting effect two simultaneous videos can have on the viewer, or how the flickering of each projected video and accompanying sound effect experience. [12] The viewer does not necessarily

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[9] Thomas Y. Levin, et al., Ctrl + [Space]: Rhetorics of Surveillance from Bentham to Big Brother, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002.)
[10] Callie Angell. "Andy Warhol: Outer and Inner Space," Ctrl + [Space]: Rhetorics of Surveillance from Bentham to Big Brother, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002) 280.
[11] Angell, 279.
[12] Installation viewed at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, October 2001.

derive the fuller, more metaphysical view of Edie that Angell suggests, but rather may feel alienation and confusion upon viewing the work. Such documentation misses an essential part of the work, viewer experience, and only creates a partial view of this temporal medium.

Another essay focuses on several pieces by Diller+Scofidio, installation artists/architects who install video works in places that are not places, public spaces such as hallways and airport corridors that are not lived in, only traveled through. Ctrl + [Space] is an important work that sets a standard by which these installations are grouped and considered. Classification is paramount to the understanding and retention of installation works. In this exhibition, surveillance implies that the viewer and the viewed are the subject of the artwork. Surveillance is a common theme in many installation works however, as are multiple viewer relationships. The viewer holds simultaneous positions in relation to the installations, and is essential to the artwork's status as art.

Catalogs for specific works or retrospective exhibits, as is the case with the Worlds of Nam June Paik, are archival records of both how a work was first presented and how it was reinterpreted for a second installation. The catalog provides the scholar with a photographic record of Paik's installations, a somewhat fragmentary image of the whole, but an archival document of installations and of curatorial decision making. Paik is a pioneer of video art, and achieved a level of synthesis of multiple media, performance, music, video, sculpture and installation, with such works as *TV Bra for Living Sculpture*, performed by cellist Charlotte Moorman. Paik began using video as a

medium in 1965 after Sony produced the first portable video recorder.[13] The catalog builds a contextual background for Paik's work, tracing the development of video art from the mid 1960s onward. Artists such as Bruce Nauman and Vito Acconci worked with video, and like Paik, presented their work within the framing medium of the television. During this time period, works were presented in alternative art spaces, environments that raised questions about the relationship of the artwork to gallery. The popularity of the presentations led to the development of new art spaces.[14]

Paik viewed television as a transformative medium for artists, an empowering means for self expression.[15] The catalog is retrospective, beginning with Paik's performance work and ending with his laser installations for the exhibition, or as he has termed "post video." The staging of the exhibition raised many questions on presentation of Paik's work. Analog copies were migrated to DVD (digital format) for constant playback. The curators worked in concert with Paik to make such decisions in the reinstalling of early works—works that were placed in the "high art" world of the museum rather than their original alternative art space. The catalog mentions none of this, but the strides made by the Guggenheim to engage the artist in the process of archiving and documenting their works was monumental, the foundation of which became the Variable Media Initiative, a multi-institutional collaborative effort to study and archive new media artworks in museum collections.

The Paradise Institute is a published document that fully emulates the corresponding installation. Artists Janet Cardiff and George Burres Miller presented their

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[13] John G. Hanhardt, The Worlds of Nam June Paik, (New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, 2000) 96.
[14] Hanhardt 100.
[15] Hanhardt 198.

work in the Canadian Pavilion at the 49th Venice Biennale in 2001.[16] Their installation

was truly immersive, the viewer entering a dimly lit theater environment, where a

fragmentary narrative is viewed. This specific installation will be discussed further in the

paper, but the catalog is important in that it documents the intentionality of the artists,

provides supporting documents such as essays and interviews, photographs of the

installation with descriptions and film stills with dialog and important scene elements.

The artists discuss the ways in which they involve the viewer, the installation acting as a

catalyst for independent experience and thought rather than a projector. The installation

environment mimics that of a theater, calling upon film and apparatus theory. Aware of

the potential relationship video installation has with the viewer, the artists have

intentionally engaged with film/TV theory, and attempt to work through the conceptual

issues of film, theater and the spectator with a physical replica. In this way, the book also

mimics the theater, produced in wide movie-screen format, the boards covered in crimson

colored, movie-theater velvet. Produced for the Venice Biennale exhibition, it is a catalog

but embodies much more. It is an archival document that considers the entire piece,

viewer and environment, setting up a framework for documentation that can then be

combined with a strategy for actual, physical preservation of components. The book

attempts to embody the "score" of the original installation. The artists write about the

theory they engaged with while creating the work, and include film stills as well as

photographs of the installation.

Howard Besser, professor of Library Science at UCLA and program head for the

new NYU program for Moving Image Archiving and Preservation has been involved in

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[16] Janet Cardiff and George Burres Miller, The Paradise Institute, (Winnipeg, Manitoba: Plug-In, 2001).

the preservation of electronic art since the late 1990s. He approaches the retention of

moving-image installation work from a strongly archival standpoint and advocates saving

this material as part of the cultural record. Besser publishes many of his conference

papers and other publications from his website. He addresses moving-image retention in

two such papers. The first, "Digital Preservation of Moving Image Material?," focuses

specifically on the moving image. In this paper, Besser calls for a change in approaches

to preservation of this material due to evolving technology.[17] Besser terms "the viewing

problem" in which he separates moving image media that are dependent upon a playback

device from traditional art objects that have physical form and may be retained through

physical means. He writes that the solution lies in not saving the exact work, but the

supporting material that surrounds the work. Besser advocates the archivist taking an

active role, where the archivist is involved before the final product is finished. Because

moving images are composed of frames, digits and the fragmentary image, Besser feels

that there will be an increased desire for the fragmentary image in the future. This image,

along with supporting material and early intervention, are the parts of a policy that

manages the assets of the work rather than the original.[18] Whereas Charlton refers to the

"image" of the work and Ippolito calls it the "score," Besser calls the essence of the

artwork "assets," a term more rooted in archival practice than in aesthetics. Overall,

Besser believes that there must be a shift in how archives are approached to preserve this

type of artifact. He writes: "Archivists need to shift from a paradigm centered around

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[17] Howard Besser, "Digital Preservation of Moving Image Material?" March, 2001,
<www.gseis.ucla.edu/~howard/Papers/amia-longevity.html>
[18] Besser, "Moving Image Material."

saving the completed work to a new paradigm of saving a wide body of material that contextualizes the work."[19]

Besser mingles traditional archival practice with media concerns to conceive of questions rather than answers. In "Digital Preservation of Moving Image Material," he refers to his own work in an earlier publication, where he outlines "the translation problem," "the custodial problem," and the "inter-relational problem." The translation problem involves playback and storage devices, and the change that may be rendered to the visual object once migrated to play on a more up-to-date system. The custodial problem addresses who is responsible for insuring the integrity of the artwork (or in this case, moving image.) The inter-relational problem is more specific to works with hyperlinks and how the web context of an internet work may be preserved. All of these "problems" are rather questions that Besser states carefully, but for which he has no answers. Two problems in particular, the custodial and translation, are very specific to moving-image installations. Translation of electronic image from one viewing device to another, or one media storage device to another can result in loss of image, as from analog to digital or from one digital device to another. The playback device can alter aspects of a work as well. In the case of Nam June Paik's work, the playback device is a sculptural element of the work. Who is to make the decision on how to maintain the work, and how can the work be maintained if the screen(s) are outmoded by technology and time? Howard Besser asks the right questions and has set this movement in search of standards and answers.

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[19] Besser, "Moving Image Material."

In "The Longevity of Electronic Art," given for the International Cultural Heritage Informatics Meeting in 2001, Besser directly addresses the long-term retention of "electronic art."[20] Again, he addresses hardware and software issues associated with this artistic medium as well as suggesting a change in approach and theory. At the crux of his discussion he deals with a change in media format, through either migration or emulation. These methods have become standard practice in digital preservation, where the digital file is either migrated to a more stable medium, or recreated in a new digital format, emulated in form. For digital art, a crucial meeting of archival practice and art theory must be negotiated to work through the relationship of object to original. Small changes in an installation, in terms of media format or playback device can alter the original form and hence intrinsic value of the work, or its very stature as "art." Besser states that "Electronic works lack fixity." Fixity is that which binds the work in a state of permanence or that which can be physically maintained, such as binder to pigment in paint. Besser further discusses the original object in context to authenticity that is protected by the guardianship passed down of a work over time. With emulation and migration, these definitions shift and must be more carefully reconsidered.

Besser deconstructs electronic art to the physical components that must be dealt with to maintain the work. He acknowledges that many post-modernists find the "work's value" in the interpretation [by the viewer?] hence putting less emphasis on artistic intention. Besser quickly turns to artistic intent as what he feels should standardize how curatorial staffs in the future make decisions on restaging, migration and emulation.

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[20] Howard Besser, "The Longevity of Electronic Art." February, 2001,
<http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/Longevity/>

Finally, Besser discusses the importance of "ancillary materials" to support electronic

works, such as photographs and other archival material. From this, he calls for a

standardized approach to maintain electronic artworks. For Besser, the primary archival

focus on electronic art deals with the physical components. He has organized the

arguments in a very constructive manner and pulled all the relevant ideas from archival

practice that must be considered by arts professionals. Besser's work however is only a

part of a complex equation where the assets, essence or value of the work must have

standardized means of defining it, but is of yet, indeterminable because of its reliance on

the conceptual.

Howard Besser's work is collaborative in nature, ideas he has continued to

develop from the 1998 "Time and Bits" conference held by the Getty Conservation

Institute, followed by the subsequent publication.[21] Besser's overall interest lies in digital

preservation and so his further writings focus on digital components and archival

documents that support the viewing of these components. As with Besser, the Variable

Media Initiative, (now the Variable Media Network) focuses on one part of the

installation artwork, intentionality. This collaborative was spearheaded by the

Guggenheim and includes such institutions as the Berkeley Art Museum/Pacific Film

Archive, Walker Art Center and Franklin Furnace (New York) among several other

members. Their works and publications center on artistic intention as central to the work,

and a questionnaire has been produced in an attempt to record intention. The archivist is

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[21] Margaret MacLean and Ben H. Davis, <u>Time & Bits: Managing Digital Continuity</u>, (Los Angeles: Getty
Conservation Institute, 1998).

secondary to the process of recording how the work should be maintained and becomes a guide to the artist who is the primary caretaker who ensures the work in futurity.[22]

Similar to what Besser terms as "value," the VMI has worked towards the development of a questionnaire that identifies "medium-independent, mutually-compatible descriptions of each artwork, which we call 'behaviors.'" [23] The works may be performed or installed, but such archival principles such as emulation and migration may be directly approached with the artist's intention in mind as opposed to just the medium. In a recent catalog, Permanence through Change, migration and emulation are acknowledged to permit "slippages" when the artwork is recreated, or restaged. Slippage is a term commonly used in conjunction with postmodern studies, where consciousness occurs between former binary systems that were once understood, and in this new place we possess an incomplete lexicon. In Jon Ippolito's essay within Permanence through Change, he addresses slippage in terms of something that must be negotiated by when restaging, with the help of artists.[24] For him, slippage results in loss of the original artwork but what he does not address is the possibility that slippage is inherent in the work, and referential of the viewer rather than the work itself.

The questionnaire formulated by the Variable Media Network ultimately relies on the artist to make such decisions as to how the work will be reinstalled, reinterpreted or if the work is temporal in nature and does not outlive the duration of primary installation. The questionnaire calls for a reconsideration of professional duties within the museum, blurring the lines between conservation and curation, and asks artists to be a part of this

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[22] Jon Ippolito, "Accommodating the Unpredictable: the Variable Media Questionnaire." Permanence Through Change: The Variable Media Approach, (New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, 2003) 47.
[23] Ippolito 48.
[24] Ippolito 46.

process. The viewer or "user" is only addressed in the questionnaire under "interactive" rather than context, participant or experiential.

Richard Rinehart is a media artist and curator who heads the collaborative "Archiving the Avant-Garde." In his 2000 article, "the Straw that Broke the Museum's Back…" he considers perspectives from Information Science and Archives professionals before calling upon Arts professionals to merge collection and preservation, a move from a more traditional, "static" preservation to a more aggressive means to maintain quickly outdated systems and files.[25] Otherwise, Rinehart constructs an outline of the major lines of thought for this type of digital preservation. He breaks these areas down to: "preservation strategies, context, collecting and intellectual property, and access."[26] Rinehart is the first to consider context in a more open manner. For Rinehart, context is a third mission for museums, between preservation and access. Artworks are given further context by their installation and grouping. The author recognizes that context cannot be completely collected and that preservationists must be satisfied with a "snapshot" of the work for posterity. Overall, Rinehart suggests an emulation strategy, but acknowledges that museums must find ways to describe or classify these works that deal with "events rather than objects," and record relationships within the artworks rather than the individual components.

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[25] Richard Rinehart, "The Straw that Broke the Museum's Back: Collecting and Preserving Digital Media Art Works for the Next Century, Switch, June 14, 2000, <http://switch.sjsu.edu/nextswitch_engine/front/print.php?233>.
[26] Rinehart.

Chapter 2:

Toward a Greater Understanding of the Problem:

Writing and talking about installation works with video/digital components is problematic, because multiple components are portrayed as a unified work of art. A system is caught between the aesthetic concerns of art, and structures of thought outside of the realm of traditional art criticism. The moving image however, demands that other strategies of thought be approached and conveyed. Furthermore, the physical aspects of the installation work are considered to be the artwork and the viewer is rarely situated. In the following examples, I will show how the installation works effectively embed the viewer within them. The challenge of the archivist/preservationist is to document experience. These works all replicate the postmodern experience for the viewer. The larger problem may come about once scholars are no longer positioned within a postmodern context.

James Charlton identifies one aspect of this tension that occurs between sites of the artwork, the first being the site at which the subject of the video is filmed and the second being the site at which the installation occurs, both as very specific points in time. Charlton notes that there is a lack of understanding installation works because of this breakdown and he attempts to position the viewer within the work as a part of the overall apparatus. He creates an analogy of video and installation as painting to the frame, thus placing the work in very traditional contexts, yet he uses terms that are more specific to film and television, such as apparatus. Furthermore, he sees the viewer as occupying a

point in space and time, between the two sites and split between them. Through manipulation of environment and moving image, artists create installation works that pull together binaries, using the viewer as the bridge between them.

In this argument, the viewer's position in the space of the installation and opposing points in time brings about a breakdown for scholars who are unable to discuss the work as unified. "Site specific" is a term usually applied to installation and public art works that are created to interact with a particular environment. Charlton relies on the traditional definition of this term, applying it to works with and without video or projection devices. I would argue that the use of technological media within installation pieces however, changes the relationship of viewer to site. The viewer is no longer involved only with an environment, but is rather at a crossroads of least two sites. The viewer, located between the video and installation, becomes a part of the overall apparatus, and possesses the unique position of acting as a third site or subject, rather than a bridge between a more modernist binary. This relationship is further investigated by the artist's use of traditional structures, such as domestic architecture, around which the installation is built.

An installation that mimics a movie theater or television set has access to the range of expectations brought with the viewer. This mimicry is between the real and the unreal, a location held by the viewer, at yet another point between sites of entry into the work. Strangely, this position between sites mediates between engagement and alienation. One could further argue that the term "site specific" can be redefined to refer to the viewer/subject that does not simply interact with the artwork, but rather is a part of it—the site emanating from within the artwork, not outside of it. To document the site is

not an easy task, as it is rooted in context. A future scholar may never fully understand

the impact of these works on the audience for which it was created. It would seem that

this is a larger issue for archival practice—the loss of contextual understanding.

Artists use video and projection in installations to recognize the "disconnect"

between sites and are able to dislodge the viewer who is placed in a "set" that mimics

another environment beyond the gallery. These installations force the viewer to interject a

personal range of experience in order to rationalize, engage and interact with the artwork.

The viewer becomes an integral part of the artwork, and the status of the installation as

"art" is reliant on this third site. In "Identification, Mirror" from The Imaginary Signifier,

Christian Metz wrote on the real and unreal natures of the cinema.[27] For Metz, cinema

was both real and false, in that its chains of signifiers were "more perceptual" in their

number, but false in that it does not present the viewer with an object, but rather its

"shade." [28] Installation artworks that include moving images and static environments,

present the viewer with the real and unreal, their environment created by the artist as an

analogy to what the viewer may find inside. The viewer, operating as the third site, is the

mediator between two sites.

In "Identification, Mirror," Metz also made distinctions between the signifiers of

cinema and those of art.[29] The traditional art object as seen by Metz is absent "of certain

important dimensions such as time and movement." Furthermore, Metz felt that this

single image was "not inscribed in a precise and ordered time sequence forced on the

viewer from the outside." The cinema, for Metz, provided a chain of signifiers through

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[27] Christian Metz, "Identification, Mirror *From* The Imaginary Signifier," Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings, (Oxford University Press, 1998) 785.
[28] Metz 785.
[29] Metz 783.

multiple images. The viewer must negotiate between the significant environment and signifiers of the video, film, or digital media within a larger installation work. The creation of an environment such as the theater may provide the viewer parameters from which to deal with the perceptual differences, to synthesize the continual movement of film and video with that status of "art." Ultimately, the structure provided by the artist brings the outside to the inside, and vice versa. The artist provides the viewer with a structure in which to mediate between rather opposed binaries. The viewer knows that the structure he/she is entering is not "real" yet mimics the world outside of the gallery, one that is more familiar and everyday. The viewer, then enters the ultimate cave in which the viewers own thoughts are as substantial as the images in which he/she will see.

The archivist must have an awareness of the viewer's place within installations. The environment can be preserved both physically and through sight/sound recordings such as photography and video, written descriptions and renderings. Viewer experience is more problematic to document and requires that the archivist take and active role in archiving the work while it is still on display rather than dealing with components after the work has been taken down.

Throughout his career, Nam June Paik has consistently used the television to bridge video and installation. Paik's long career in video art is rooted in the avant-garde art movement Fluxus, known for merging performance, sound and new media to experiment with the nature of art media. Fluxus was also the convergence of international artists, musicians and performers who challenged the nature of art from varied cultural backgrounds. In an early installation work, *Zen for Film* (1962-1964), Paik projected blank film on the gallery wall, forcing the viewer to interact with the possibility of the

moving image. While Paik was experimenting with extreme minimalism within the aesthetic senses of the Fluxus artist, he also presented the viewer with a "tabula rasa"[30] that allowed the viewers to become the subject, projecting their thoughts upon the blank screen, the signifiers coming from within rather than from a chain of projected images. When the Sony Corporation released a portable videotape and player to the market in 1965,[31] Paik's creative focus turned from film to video and a multitude of experimental works in which Paik defined a new media for artists. As a medium, video had the capacity to record the everyday and merged Pop sensibilities with performance.

Paik's collaborative work with fellow Fluxus artist and cellist Charlotte Moorman, allowed him to combine technological installation with performance and sound. Their work, *TV Bra for Living Sculpture* (1969), was a performance work, in which Moorman played cello while wearing a bra created by Paik made of two small TV tubes incased in plexi-glass. The performance/installation work was performed at the first show to address the new media of TV, "TV as Creative Medium" at the Howard Wise Gallery in 1969. [32] As with Paik and Moorman's later work Concerto for TV Cello and Videotapes (1971), TV Bra joined the medium with the performative. The tubes played either video or close circuit television or were connected to the cello, connecting the video with instrument.[33] In these works, Paik and Moorman create the cyborg for the viewer and subjectivity in a shared, if not mirrored experience. The sexualized body emerges from its technological components, and the nature of the cyborg is external, while the nature of the viewer's experience is internal. Television possesses the ability to

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[30] Rush 25.
[31] Hanhardt 108.
[32] Hanhardt 53.
[33] Hanhardt 62.

disembody, presenting the viewer with a headless body. If the screens of *TV Bra* do

literally make up an undergarment, then they contain and embrace Moorman, rather than

disembodying her. The viewer has the ability to disembody her however, by focusing on

the tube and watching the images. Vito Acconci, performance and installation artist

wrote: "Television is a rehearsal for a time when humans no longer need to have

bodies."[34] For Acconci, television was already an internal process, where it existed in the

self and would eventually "replace or displace" the person.[35]

From 1963 onward, Paik experimented with the television as artistic medium,

often combining TV with performance and installation. The artist fully embraced the

capabilities of portable video recorders in 1965, but continued to experiment with the

possibilities of the television. In many cases, they were used as separate media, the

television tube manipulated down to its most essential components to create minimal

images. Paik manipulated broadcast images in his 1963 installation *Exposition of Music—*

Electronic Television, where 13 televisions were faced upward and the image so

manipulated that it was reduced to minimal elements. Paik laid one television "Zen for

TV" on its side, to create a vertical line.[36] He used "tools" such as the Degausser, an

instrument used to lessen electrostatic charge on televisions, to manipulate television's

images.[37] Magnets too could be used to create more intentional images on the cathode

ray, the artist literally drawing onto the television in *Magnet TV* (1965). Both of these

works were dependent on the artist's interaction and performance in their temporality, but

certainly could not exist without the artists' interaction. In his manipulations of a

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[34]Vito Acconci, "Television, Furniture and Sculpture: the Room with the American View," Illuminating Video: An Essential Guide to Video Art, (San Francisco: Aperture, 1990) 126.

[35] Acconci 126.

[36] Hanhardt 35.

[37] Hanhardt 117.

standardized media for communication, Paik "broke the standardized and engineered moving image."[38] He both reduced and fragmented a mode of communication to a minimal aesthetic, where the viewer must engage with the fragmentary, again a "tabula rasa" for the viewer's own experience and thoughts. Acconci's view that television blurs the boundaries of internal and external, allowing the viewer to project onto it as it projects onto the viewer is echoed by these early Paik works.

Paik's later works encapsulate this early period of merging mediums, experimentation and interplay between art, viewer and artist. His works have become increasingly complex yet continue to challenge the viewer through use of the fragmentary video image, repetition of monitors and the structure of installations. Paik's use of "vintage" television sets from the 1950s in small scale installations harkens to the early days of television and reminds the viewer of the ironic idealism associated with the age. Televisions in turn have the ability to be used as the unit, or pixel that becomes a retro robot, a structure that brings about immediate references for the viewer. Each TV however plays the fragmentary video image, sometimes fragments of "broadcast" and other times reduced to swirls of color, movement and light.

Paik's works redefine curatorial process, but more importantly to archivists and librarians, issues of collections management. In redefining a medium, new problems emerge of classification and retention. Paik's works have been the first to be migrated to modern playback formats under the direction of the artist. Curators collaborated with Paik to restage his works during the Guggenheim retrospective in 2000. Many of these works were thirty or more years old so instructions issued by the artist for restaging and

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[38] Hanhardt 35.

migration were not completed in original context and were not fulfilled with

consideration of audience.

Video was used as a means to document performance and installation from 1965

as well. Artists contemporary with Paik used video to this end. These videos are

important documentary evidence, but cannot fully represent installation and performance

works. Again, the archivist must actively engage with the artwork, both artist and

audience, and build supporting materials to further document the work for future

scholars.

The 2002 Whitney Biennial was comprised of many large scale immersive

installations. Electronic artworks and installations provoked curiosity and involvement in

the viewer because they forced viewers to reconcile binary systems of real and unreal.

Biennial curator, Lawrence R. Rinder recognized this tendency as he grouped artworks

into three categories: beings, spaces and tribes. [39] He recognized that artists tended to deal

with "spaces of habitation" in all media and they used "subtle qualities of color and form

to elicit visceral sensations of occupiable space."[40] Through his curation of the Biennial,

Rinder classified, grouped and exhibited works that were dependent upon the viewer and

the viewer's notion of familiar environments and structures. If one follows Rinder's

logic, the viewer of the installation synthesized the moving image into recognizable

space. Several installations in the Biennial were subtle agents, bringing about "visceral

sensations," most notably, *Welcome Major Gnome* (2000) by the artists' collective

Forcefield repelled most viewers within mere minutes of their entrance to the gallery,

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[39] Lawrence R. Rinder, "Introduction," Whitney Biennial 2002 Catalog, (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 2002) 15.
[40] Rinder 15.

their synthesis of moving image to environment an immediate and overwhelming process.

Forcefield is a four person artists collective, that began as a band but now creates multimedia, performance, installation and video works. The group is cloaked in anonymity and fantasy, a collective identity of which seeps into their work. Members go by such names as Patootie Lobe, Meerk Puffy, Gorgon Radeo and Le Geef, names that remind one of bad Sci-fi, "B" rated movies. Physical identity of individual artists is shrouded on their website, where images from their works appear. Like Paik, their work has emerged from collaborative efforts that synthesize music, performance, installation and video. Unlike Paik, they do not create the cyborg but are instead cyborgs themselves. As artists, they have put themselves in league with the viewer/subject, and speak in a frenzy of electronic sounds and media. What they communicate to us is both startling and confusing but amusing with no direct message, forcing the viewer to alternate between emotional state and recognition of classic sci-fi pop culture. Even the group's name makes reference to this.

At the Biennial, *Welcome Major Gnome* sent its viewers running from the installation within moments of entry, but in laughter. The installation was comprised of a video shot in soft, fuzzy colors that portrays members of the collective moving about a tree. One walked into it as if walking into the theater already late for the intended feature. A screen hung on a far wall, and the room's deep darkness forced the viewer to focus on the screen while their eyes adjusted. As sight returned, there was the realization that what surrounded us were not other participants but monsters from movies of the past 40 years, including Star Trek. These creatures surrounded the viewer and from them emanated the

sounds one would expect a morphic gorilla-alien with glowing eyes or gigantic robot to make. Viewers expected to be in a theater, but the realization that we were somewhere else expelled us. The installation made reference to many viewers' childhood pop culture references, yet in multiple form that became overwhelming. As Rinder wrote for the catalog: "Forcefield's work takes great advantage of the material and imaginative possibilities that lie dormant within the refuse of late-industrial society."[41] *Welcome Major Gnome* was mentioned in many of the reviews of the 2002 Biennial, obviously leaving a lasting impression.

The New York Times review of the exhibition by Roberta Smith was not surprisingly somewhat negative, yet discussed Forcefield's work in terms of "a discovery" and "confusing." Smith tried to break the work down to elements she could deal with, but failed in doing so on any specific level. While Smith failed to express to the reader exactly what she has witnessed, she stands as a typical witness to the work, one who tries to negotiate between the real and unreal, familiar structures placed in unattainable relationships to one another.[42] As integral to the work, the reviewer was filled with the same feelings as the viewers I witnessed, unable to negotiate between moving image and environment—the lingering feeling of confusion and whimsy existing in the third space which is the artwork.

Viewer interaction with Welcome Major Gnome was undeniable and the artists deliberately set the viewer within the framework of the installation. Each viewer's experience was completely subjective, however. The archivist would then be presented with a difficult task of extracting collective experience from the audience. Archivists are

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[41] From the online exhibit of the Whitney Biennial, <www.whitney.org>.
[42] Roberta Smith, "Bad News for Art, However you Define it," New York Times, 31 March, 2002.

presented with a difficult talk in regards to user experience. The viewer's museum experience has been traditionally isolated from curatorial decision making and scholarship. The active archivist must consider the viewer and attempt to record some type of collective user experience while making decisions of custodianship. This more aggressive type of archivist must assign custodial responsibility in regards to who collects this data, how and what format by which it is maintained and standardized approaches that will be taken in the future. User experience remains the most nebulous area to record however. User studies, surveys and questionnaires might be used to harvest individual reactions and look for common experience, but these approaches must have some standard reference that is clearly documented for future users as well.

Another installation site at the Whitney enticed audience members into it that soon did not want to leave. The installation provided the viewer with such a sense of comfort and familiarity that viewers were soon seen planted on the shag carpet of the 1970s romper room, sitting Indian-style. Like *Major Gnome*, Sanford Biggers and Jennifer Zackin's work *A Small World*, spoke to the pop-cultural memory of the audience. The viewer entered into large installation space that was structured like a family den or romper room. A solitary sofa in 1970s colors faced a screen on the far wall where home movies played repeatedly. Side by side, a six minute loop of super-8 home videos from each artist's family played simultaneously. The families displayed were racially diverse, one African American and the other, Jewish but their day-to-day rituals and celebrations are the same.[43]

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[43] Online 2002 Whitney Biennial Catalog.

The audience of *It's a Small World* must decide if the elements of the installation allude to the Disney-like qualities that the title would imply. While the ride and song from Disneyworld implies that everyone can and should get along, not everyone does. The viewer of this work is made comfortable by references from childhood, but the room is not in a suburban tri-level but rather maintains much of the sterility of an art gallery. The juxtaposition of the home movies forces the viewer to ponder the nature of race. Even though "it is a small world", where day to day life is more similar than different, racial constructs often prevent these worlds from touching.

In both *It's a Small World* and *Welcome Major Gnome*, important pop cultural references are situated in the work and relate directly to the viewer. Any attempt to archive the work in its entirety would deal with another type of subjective context. Pop culture is temporal in nature and is strongly rooted to a particular society and time. Iconic information and signifiers may not hold the same meaning for an audience twenty years later, yet actively archiving the work would entail preserving the context and providing entry to collective social memory for future viewers. Archivists much decide how extensively to record contextual history and pop cultural data surrounding the work. Context points to a more overarching question in regards to new media work. Because this work is rooted in the moment, is it meant to be retained for posterity? Are archivists and curators doing the original work/artists intent a disservice by keeping it or should there simply be better strategies employed to record the work as an historical event?

Paradise Institute by Canadian artists Janet Cardiff and George Burres Miller was installed at the 49th Venice Biennale in 2001. The installation mimicked a theatre balcony, guiding the viewers up a stairway into a balcony, to view a theater within a

theater. The large scale installation relied less heavily on pop cultural imagery and was based on the structure of the theater, in physical manifestation and in viewer response to dark and the flickering image. First viewers entered after entering a balcony, complete with theater chairs and velvet décor, and were then shown was an incomplete film narrative and the "hyper perspective" image of an empty theater floor below the balcony in the old-style movie house. Sounds emanated from different positions, creating further unrest in position for the viewer. The audience was in a space that should be part of a theater, yet it was disembodied. A narrative was presented to the audience on the screen in the projection that involved the intermingling of life and technology to "enact anxieties about history."[44] The viewer was meant to remain in a state of confusion, the narrative and environment bringing about this state in the viewer, who negotiated between a number of spaces—the cinema within a gallery, the cinema within what is or is not a theater, a projection that displays a narrative being displayed in a theater, a narrative that involves the future contacting the present and the involvement of robots, the ultimate human that is not human. This installation not only involved and engaged the viewer, but hinged on the viewer's position within the work to merge the technological elements with what the viewer knows to be "real."

Paradise Institute was thoroughly documented by its accompanying exhibition catalog that included artist interviews, photographs, essays and film stills. The framework of the catalog is an excellent example of how materials can be collected to present a more full view of the work long after it is disassembled. The artist's use of theater structures directly situates the viewer within the artwork, however the catalog fails to take the

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[44] Scott Watson, "Ghosts: Janet Cardiff and George Burres Miller," Paradise Institute, (Winnipeg, Manitoba: Plug-in Editions, 2001) 33.

viewer's experience into account despite essays that address theory of theater and viewership and the artists' engagement with early theories of Walter Benjamin. The type of supporting materials collected here are a strong example of those that should support the various components of the work, but the archivist must try to collect user experience. One way to record interaction would be to simply record average time spent in the installation work. Time could indicate levels of engagement with the work for the viewer. A shorter visit might indicate such responses as confusion, frustration or dislike. A longer time might imply that the viewer had more interest in the work, spent more time looking at the facets or that something essential in the work intrigued the viewer and provoked curiosity. Measurements of time, physical attributes of the viewer and return visits could be one way to record viewer response without interrupting the viewer's experience with surveys or questionnaires. Observations might also lead the archivist to other strategies from which to approach the work. In this way, the essence or score of the work would create the framework from which to archive it.

Video/projection installations works have risen in popularity as public artworks, where their environment is quite literally the everyday. The artist may now install the work in a public space, often through ways, hallways and public plazas; spaces which one must travel from one site to another. In doing this, the artist has placed art where it otherwise would not be, the inverse to bringing the everyday into the gallery. It is for these installations that the term "site specific" can be used in its most traditional sense, yet through the use of video, the sites of the artwork and entry into it for the viewer have changed. Artist Paul Pfeiffer has installed video and plasma screens in the very public and now poignant spaces of memory at the World Trade Center. Architect/artist team

Elizabeth Diller and Ricardo Scofidio design spaces that interact with technology. They are well known for their installation at the International Terminal of JFK airport and not surprisingly, have designed the upcoming Eyebeam Atelier, the first physical gallery space and archive devoted to new media artworks, to open in 2007. Eyebeam is a truly ambitious project in that it will attempt "to develop a focused understanding of the relationship between new media artworks and the spaces and structures that will enable and support them."[45]

The design firm of Elizabeth Diller and Ricardo Scofidio integrate architectural design with new media installations. Technology for Diller+Scofidio is a tool in which to bring the outside in, integrating space. A renovation project on the Brasserie, a restaurant in Manhattan, was refurbished with over 55 monitors that display both the exterior world and freeze frames of the last fifteen people to walk through the doors.[46] An established restaurant, the images displayed at the Brasserie portray a sense of time frozen and of history. As a restaurant, the space is public yet private and the viewer did not choose to go to an exhibition or installation, rather must deal with the integration of technology in the everyday world, even when this technology allows heightened awareness of the world around us and of the outside.

Another work called *Travelogues* was produced by new media technologies would not be dependent upon electricity or moving parts. Diller+Scofidio installed a number of lenticular images in a passageway at JFK's international terminal. Lenticular images are minutely bi-folded and backlit, giving the viewer the impression of movement

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[45] "Eyebeam Atelier" 22 June 2004 <http://www.eyebeam.org/museum/exhibit.html>.
[46] Jessie Scanlon, "Making it Morph: Elizabeth Diller and Ricardo Scofidio Want Architecture to Change Everything," Wired 8:02, Feb 2000, 22 June 2004
< http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/8.02/diller.html>.

and depth. For the viewer, these works expand space to the sides of perception in the periphery, in addition to normal facing forward-facing perception. They redefine space that is not here or there, but rather a passage from one side to another. The viewer, whether aware or unaware of these installations, is engaged by them—and perception of space and movement is altered. Both perceptually and physically, the viewer is between spaces and in newly defined space simultaneously. The images are dependent on the movement of the viewers for their own movement. The space in which they are installed forces movement in one direction. The viewers are limited only to those getting off a plane in the international terminal and proceeding quickly to customs. Their orientation to time and ability to engage the viewer would be very different from a museum installation, yet the archivist could start at a similar point—duration of viewer engagement with the panels.

The prominence of moving-image installation works brings them about as a medium to be reckoned with by the art world. These installations have moved beyond the walls of the gallery by use as public art and by bringing the everyday experience, the cyborg that modern life creates in the viewer to the gallery. Their very nature hinges on the conceptual, dependent upon the viewer at the intersection of the idea and apparatus. From an understanding of exactly how the work positions the viewer, a greater understanding of the meaning, score, or binder of the work can be derived. A classification of common experience may allow a more full description of these works to be recorded.

In each of these works, I have shown how the viewer is integral to the artwork for its very existence as "art." Without record of viewer experience, an essential part of the

work is missing for further scholarship and study. But how does the archivist record this experience and in a new, active capacity, is the archivist overstepping duties formerly undertaken by curators and registrars? Through training in archival and library practice, the archivist may be better able to conduct user studies on site. Museums currently engage and use think tanks to help guide decisions on visitor access and needs. This format may be useful to solicit viewer response and reaction to particular artworks. Questionnaires could be given, but also discussions could be recorded for future use. This might be most feasible during an exhibition that features several of these works.

The prolific nature of these works brings about other issues of custodianship and responsibility. All new media artworks cannot have this level of scrutiny and documentation performed on them. There must be decisions made as to which works are actively archived and which will be left to more passive means of documenting. Collaboration between archivists and curators would be essential at this point, as would in determining custodial responsibility for the works and their documentation in the future.

Ultimately, there must be a merging of interests to maintain these works. Archivists would be employed to maintain physical formats such as film, photographs, video and digital media and record and document both artistic intent and user response. This mix of materials must be maintained for long term use in a manner that portrays the collective whole of the artwork. Collaboration with curators would be necessary to establish which works should be fully documented and to contribute other aesthetic documentation. Ultimately, if a framework is established that can be used to organize the supporting documentation and component parts of the installation work, archivists and

curators will have to decide how much information is gathered for each work. This framework should include archival storage systems for the new media components and catalog records or web interfaces for supporting documentation from both artists and users. Clear connections between the parts of the artwork and its documentary evidence need to be established.

Chapter 3:

Museum/Library Collaboratives and Initiatives

Archiving the Avant-Garde

Collaboration is certainly a necessary part of determining standards in any community. Determining standards for the preservation of digital artworks has thus far involved an array of professionals, from conservators, curators, archivists, librarians, registrars, theorists and information specialists. "Archiving the Avant-Garde," is a consortium project that includes many institutional members such as the Guggenheim, Rhizome.org, Franklin Furnace and the Walker Art Center among several others. These institutions hold some of the largest collections of variable media works in the United States. There are many other institutions that hold electronically based artworks and some of the larger collections are not mentioned, such as SFMOMA and MOMA. However, the project coordinators feel that they have selected a small yet representative group of institutions, varying in size and geographic location to help create a set of standards. Once standards of classification, documentation, preservation and retention are in place, it proposes that contributing institutions will evaluate a small portion of their digital collections in this manner for further evaluation. It is attempting to become a system to be used internationally but they initial research is being conducted by a very small, American group of institutions.

In some ways, the website for Archiving the Avant-Garde is a portal, and provides access to the ideas of the consortium and to the writings of its members. A project description including suggested fields for encoding works in Dublin Core, MARC and EAD will merge the abilities of art professionals to evaluate artistic medium with archivists who can deal with it as electronic media. It proposes to do this in three integral ways. First, Archiving the Avant-Garde proposes to continue the work already done by the Variable Media Initiative in archiving artistic intent from the artist. Secondly, the project relies heavily on preservation models developed for use in digital archives and refining these models to deal with art. Finally, Archiving the Avant-Garde will create standards "in an area which currently has none" and train "a new generation of curatorial and conservation experts" to use this system. [47] Standards will be published in a "Guide to Good Practices" manual to be published online and available widely. The project goals of Archiving the Avant-Garde provide a strong framework for preservation of new media artworks, however there is no consideration of the viewer. As new media artists and curators, the members of Archiving the Avant-Garde view the works in their physical state and hope to maintain their attributes. Only recently has member, Richard Reinhart addressed what he has deemed to be the "score" of the work. This is an important distinction because the score of the work is something around which standards of treatment can be developed. The score is something to be extracted from the work, but determining what the score is requires viewer/user interaction with the work.

One objective of Archiving involves the use of a preservation model/content management system such as OAIS (Open Archival Information System.) Specific uses of

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[47] Archiving the Avant-Garde website.

this system are not expanded upon but in many ways, implementing the OAIS system with some modifications would be a useful tool. OAIS can allow an institution to preserve the original digital file, maintain metadata, ease of migration and provide access. OAIS will allow for long term preservation and use of digital art through storage and access of any digital files associated with the work.

Where the specific applications of the OAIS model have not been worked out through Archiving the Avant-Garde as of yet, a simple metadata scheme is presented in the proposal. The schema is presented with elements for Dublin Core, EAD and MARC. While the schema is thorough and covers all the superficial elements of the work, like medium, equipment, format and copyright, there is no record of intent or original form. Again, the development of metadata focuses only on the digital object and not on the larger work. Members of Archiving the Avant-Garde have focused primarily on the digital object and not on how to preserve the supporting materials that support what would be the "score." A strong content management system is imperative to any project that wants to manage digital files and have the ability to create web interfaces for access, but it may not take into account all of the materials surrounding new media artwork, particularly installation. There must be a framework that is more inclusive of all archival information from which future users can derive the score of the work.

In adapting OAIS to the needs of art, Archiving the Avant-Garde has proposed standards that are already simply modified from standards used by digital libraries and repositories. Throughout the initial report is terminology borrowed from archival practice. Even the title reflects this, acknowledging that variable media artwork must be archived as opposed to simply preserved. Archiving the Avant-Garde proposes that

professionals be trained in these standards to deal with emerging media, thus addressing the issue of custody. Very few other publications have addressed what type of professional will deal with preserving digital media artwork for the long-term. Archiving specifically calls these professionals curators and conservators, however I believe there needs to be a greater inclusion of fields, particularly given the strong reliance of this project on archival practice. The technological background needed to deal with variable media artwork is consistent with LS training. A new type of archivist will emerge with a sense of art theory and the nature of art; yet also rooted in archival theory and practice.

Variable Media Initiative/Network and the Guggenheim

The Variable Media Initiative was initiated at the Guggenheim, New York and has recently become the Variable Media Network that includes many other institutions holding major collections of electronic artworks. The VMI and its accompanying conference, "Preserving the Immaterial" in March 2001, seems to have set precedents on preservation of new media artwork, but also served as a catalyst for Archiving the Avant-Garde. The findings of the 2001 conference were published in 2003 in a catalog named Permanence Through Change: the Variable Media Approach.

The preservation model for digital art established by the Variable Media Network puts artistic intent and collaboration as central to its mission through migration and emulation of restaged artworks as directed by the artist. The collaborative project was founded by the Guggenheim, the Daniel Langlois Foundation for Art, Science and Technology, Rhizome.org, and the Walker Art Center. The project proposes that the artist

may decide what forms of emulation may be acceptable in future restaging. [48] The major

contributing member of the VMN, the Guggenheim, has created an online form to be

completed by the artist to help future arts professionals transcribe intent. According to the

Guggenheim, the results of this form are not meant to be absolute instructions, but rather

a tool "intended to spur questions that must be answered in order to capture artists'

desires about how to translate their work into new media once the work's original

medium has expired." [49] Archiving new media artwork must be an active process as

suggested by the intentionality surveys used by the Guggenheim. As with these forms,

surveys given to the user should also provoke further lines of inquiry. Archiving the

Avant-Garde focuses on the physical attributes of the work, while the materials generated

by the processes of the Variable Media Network are dependant upon the artist. Both

collaborative groups focus on one part of the artwork and fail to see more holistic

approaches that include the viewer.

The VMN prefers that artists set the standards for emulation of their own artwork,

by recording intent and offering alternatives. The Guggenheim migrated moving image

elements of artworks for its exhibits, specifically for the 2000 retrospective of Nam June

Paik's work. The Guggenheim went a step further, however and "cleaned up" the original

Paik analog tapes, converting them to DVD to provide a "much nicer" view for museum

patrons and preserve the originals that would have been terribly degraded by ongoing

replay. According to Metropolis Video who performed the conversions, Paik was a

pioneer in the 60s and 70s with new media and comparatively, the use of DVD to convert

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[48] "Variable Media Network," 22 June 2004 <http://variablemedia.net/e/welcome.html>.
[49] "Variable Media Network, Questionnaire," 22 June 2004
<http://www.guggenheim.org/variablemedia/variable_media_initiative.html>

his artworks is a pioneering method as well. Ironically however, while DVD was felt to have enhanced the works, ultimate quality checking was done by eye, comparing a playback of the original to a playback of the DVD copy. [50] Truly, the interplay of art and science is hard to define in these processes. The Guggenheim also documented the migration process in the retrospective, making clear to the viewer that original images were copied for exhibition.

A recent exhibit at the Guggenheim tracks the aesthetic changes of emulated and migrated variable media works. The VMN put theory into practice with its *Seeing Double: Emulation in Theory and Practice*. Many works from the 1960s onward, including those by Paik and other video artists were migrated or emulated to other media and playback devices. The original was exhibited next to the new version for comparison by the museum visitor. Perceptual differences were noticeable, and where digital took the place of analog, images and sounds were cleaner and less dense. The new media and image were completely isolated from the context of the work. The works featured in *Seeing Double* were new media works that were not the part of an installation, however issues of originality, authenticity and playback devices persist.

Howard Besser

Thus far, I have discussed the results of collaborative groups and conferences that have been generated by arts professionals and museums. From such efforts as Archiving the Avant-Garde, there are proposed sets of standards that rely on the work of library and archives professionals. In his paper "Longevity of Electronic Art," Besser best merges the

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[50] Paul Beddoe-Stevens, "DVD Saved the Analog Star," <u>Wired</u>, 22 June 2004
<www.wired.com/news/print/0,1294,34251,00.html>.

two disciplines of art and library science.[51] He describes the relationships between artist,

curator and archivist, as well as describing the difference between web based electronic

art and electronic media used in installations. Besser discusses not only the technical

aspects of dealing with digital media, but also the theoretical issues curators are faced

with in dealing with digital art in the scope of how art and more traditional media are

perceived. He outlines the issues, coupled with possible solutions. He advocates (or

rather documents) increased participation of the artist in the process of archiving the

work, however he does not discuss any sort of metadata scheme to support the

technology and provide some background information, instead referring to supporting

materials as ancillary.

I find it strange that while Besser advocates archiving the object, he considers the

materials other than the object itself, ancillary and not a part of the digital object. And

while Besser discusses emulation, fully emulating these artworks in the future would be

almost impossible without archiving the work's context. For Besser, archiving the

context is secondary to technical concerns. Besser places responsibility with curators of

the digital artworks, to act as archivists in many respects, recording and maintaining the

history of the artwork because it lacks fixity. He does not propose any schemas or

systems in which to do this however.

In the conference papers and collaborative reports I have examined thus far, there

are commonalities that form a foundation for future development of standards and means

of dealing with digital art. All these writers acknowledge that the expertise of

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[51] Howard Besser, "Longevity of Electronic Art: Submitted to International Cultural Heritage Informatics Meeting," 2001, 22 June 2004 <http://www.gseis.ucla.edu/~howard/Papers/elect-art-longevity.html>.

professionals from multiple and varied disciplines are needed for this single cause. While

using the discipline of art history to understand the artwork or re-evaluate how we view

the new media compared to more traditional ones, arts professionals are willing to place

these "objects" within the structure of the digital archive. Information specialists such as

Besser are then able to describe digital artwork in terms of authenticity, longevity and

other technical issues. In short, these papers all complement one another, forming a full

body of information that if integrated will be a strong foundation for the preservation of

digital artworks.

In the Fall of 2003, Howard Besser, Jon Ippolito of the Variable Media Network

and Richard Rinehart of Archiving the Avant-Garde were brought together on a panel

called "Digital Preservation: Paradigms and Partnerships" for the Theatre Library

Association's Performance Documentation Symposium. Besser, now heading the Moving

Image Archives program at the University of New York, spoke on the archival elements

of ephemeral artworks and performance. He expanded upon many of the principles from

his earlier writings and explained that there must be "paradigm shifts in thinking." [52] He

recommended that digital art preservationists begin to employ FRER, an international

cataloging standard developed through IFLA initatives, to catalog these works. Besser's

paradigm changes include radical thinking about archival objects, where there is a

departure from authentic originals and how they are preserved.

Jon Ippolito and Richard Rinehart also spoke on at this symposium on their

collaborative groups' efforts to preserve digital art. Rinehart spoke on a range of topics of

interest to the library community, such as physical location of the art work in server

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[52] Howard Besser, Paper at "Digital Preservation: Paradigms and Partnerships," Theatre Library
Association Symposium, October 10, 2003.

space. This is one component of content management, but a new way of viewing "art storage" for any art professionals. Rinehart asked a very loaded question that related to the conceptual nature of many of these works: should they all be preserved or "kept alive." He did feel that new hardwares in the technological future would allow us closer to maintaining authenticity of the works and to preserving the "score" or essence of the work.

Ippolito built on the idea of the "score" and compared it to a musical score; something that could be repeated if using the proper instruments. For Ippolito, the score is static, while a recording is dynamic. Scores are therefore catalysts for activity. According to Ippolito, the score "captures work in its most highly potential form, for repeat in the future." [53] The issue of the score is essential to preserving installation works with moving image components. Because they are an environment that actively situates the viewer, the essence of the work comes from several sites and can only be located by the viewer who is situated among and between the installation environment and the moving image.

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[53] Jon Ippolito, Paper at "Digital Preservation: Paradigms and Partnerships," Theatre Library Association Symposium, October 10, 2003.

Conclusion:

This study fills a void in both the archival and art worlds. It attempts to situate the viewer within the artwork, as opposed to outside of it. It combines film theory with art theory to this end and brings about a natural reconsideration of artistic media that were not formerly considered by the art historical canon. Archiving moving image installation works is problematic in that archivists must negotiate between the physical needs of particular formats, instructions by the artist and more subjective attributes of the artwork as derived from user experience. User experience is difficult to deal with because it is subjective, but also because there must be a method that derives collective experience of many viewers. This type of experiential evidence is also deeply rooted within contexts of popular culture and the historical moment. Archivists must employ a strategy for connecting experiential evidence to its context without rewriting history books. This process is frustrating, and not unlike efforts to archive webpages in the context of their hyperlinks that are long since dead.

Archiving the Avant-Garde, the Variable Media Network and the writings of Howard Besser offer only partial answers and deal with these works one component at a time. These collaboratives are still too dependent on traditional concepts of originality and focus primarily on the media itself—how to preserve it and how to emulate what cannot be preserved. Howard Besser recommends that paradigm changes be made in the way archivists perceive original objects, yet still deals with the problems of translation and emulation. Other paradigms of archival process need to be re-evaluated. Temporal

mediums need to be archived and preserved as they are created and exhibited. Passive treatment will only lead to their destruction as formats deteriorate and systems are outmoded.

Archiving the Avant-Garde strongly advocates the use of the Open Archival Information Systems for content and metadata management. While this deals once again with digital formats and physical components, it is the first step toward setting up a framework with which to deal with new media artworks. For future access, content management can work well with web interfaces. Other structures need to be put into place however, such as more structured finding aids that integrate all components of the work. A central finding aid could be implemented with a standard Encoded Archival Description language. The finding aid itself could link to digital components directly, catalog records, data sheets from artists and users, and scanned images other archival material such as photographs and ephemeral material. MARC formats should be revised to deal with these works as well, based on formats for graphic materials. Library of Congress subject headings need to be revised often to keep up with evolving mediums and that specify medium types further than "computer art" and "electronic art." After these standards are in place, centralized databases could be created between institutions and access could be placed to users on the publicly on the web or privately not unlike such projects as ArtStor.

To preserve moving image installation artworks, professional roles must change radically. Curators and conservators must turn to those outside the museum professional to deal with issues of retention, digital formats and archival material. These works can no longer be dealt with by specific professionals in terms of their components but need to be

documented in ways that address all components and multiple viewpoints. Moving image

installation artworks need to be archived by active archivists.

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