PHYSICAL STORAGE

ARCHIVING

A THREE STEP GUIDE

The Basic Tenants of your Physical Storage and Organization:

**Customization**
follow a system that fits your needs and workflow

**Convenience, visibility, portability**
keep things nearby, within eyesight, and mobile to facilitate easy use and access

**Location**
use archival containers in an environmentally stable and clean environment

STEP ONE: ECHOING WORKFLOW

CUSTOMIZE your archive

examine your own workflow and needs and build your archive system around that. here are some common personal organization styles (and strategies for each):

**piler**
Pilers stack their materials in piles around their studio or office space.

ARCHIVE STRATEGY:
Boxes will likely work better for you than folders. Keep them in locations where you often build up materials, so that you can label and clear away the box when it gets full.

**filer**
Filers like to tuck things away into folder systems right away to keep a clear workspace.

ARCHIVE STRATEGY:
Set up a filing system with categories that are common to your workflow, so that you can continue to file away material with similar content. Chronology will occur naturally.

**spring cleaner**
Spring cleaners let papers pile and then periodically clean and clear off space.

ARCHIVE STRATEGY:
Set up regular appointments to clear out materials, and then label their date range.
STEP TWO: HOUSING MATERIALS

CONVENIENT, VISIBLE, PORTABLE

ORDERING THE PHYSICAL MATERIALS
Many studios organize their materials first by media type, then by project, then chronologically. Organizing by media type (all VHS tapes together) is useful because media of a certain type are often of similar size and share similar needs for long-term preservation and security. will use storage space most efficiently, storing by media type and then chronologically will help you respond to each media’s need at certain times. CDs have a life span of 7-10 years, keep papers out of sunlight

Also common: all materials relating to a single exhibition or project are together (more challenging organization style for preservation, but if it fits your needs, go for it)

THINKING ABOUT STORAGE CONTAINERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>storage container</th>
<th>protection from dust</th>
<th>protection from moisture</th>
<th>protection from fire</th>
<th>protection from critters</th>
<th>acid-free</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No container</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cardboard and banker</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None, unless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boxes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>noted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rigid, plastic containers</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Good, definitely better than cardboard</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Better than most (no bugs)</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filing cabinet</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Good, definitely better than cardboard</td>
<td>Better than paper or plastic</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper file folders</td>
<td>Minimal to none, unless placed in further enclosure</td>
<td>None, unless placed in further enclosure</td>
<td>None, unless placed in further enclosure</td>
<td>None, unless placed in further enclosure</td>
<td>Check the packaging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archival storage boxes</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SOME ARCHIVAL BRANDS TO CONSIDER

Archival Methods (http://www.archivalmethods.com/)
Gaylord Archival (http://www.gaylord.com/)
Hollinger (http://www.hollingermetaleedge.com/)
Metal Edge (http://www.metaleedge.com/)
STEP THREE

LOCATION  where is your archive?

A Space for an Archive
-things to avoid: pests, potential water leaks, fluctuating temperatures, sources of heat (radiators, heaters), windows (can cover with heavy shades)
things to look for: accessible, affordable, a space you can (re)arrange according to the size/shape of your archives

Brainstorm spaces within/near your studio that suit your needs:

Again, LOCKSS
lots of copies keeps stuff safe — keep multiples of VIP (very important papers) in various, safe locations

RESOURCES

Links for Preservation/Conservation of Paper-Based Materials

Smithsonian Institution Archives: http://siarchives.si.edu/services/preservation
National Archives How to Preserve Family Papers: http://www.archives.gov/preservation/family-archives/

Links for Preservation/Conservation of Computer Drives/Hardware

National Archives, Optical Storage Media + Storing Temporary Records on CDs and DVDs: http://www.archives.gov/records-mgmt/initiatives/temp-opmedia-faq.html