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	filer	spring cleaner
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.	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 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 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

storage container	protection from dust	protection from moisture	protection from fire	protection from critters	acid-free
no container	none	none	none	none	none
cardboard and banker boxes	good	none	none	none	none, unless noted
rigid, plastic containers	good	good, definitely better than cardboard	none	better than most (no bugs)	good
filing cabinet	good	good, definitely better than cardboard	better than paper or plastic	moderate	good
paper file folders	minimal to none, unless placed in further enclosure	none, unless placed in further enclosure	none, unless placed in further enclosure	none, unless placed in further enclosure	check the packaging
archival storage boxes	good	none	none	none	good

SOME ARCHIVAL BRANDS TO CONSIDER

Archival Methods (http://www.archivalmethods.com/)
Gaylord Archival (http://www.gaylord.com/)
Hollinger (http://www.hollingermetaledge.com/)
Metal Edge (http://www.metaledge.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

Library of Congress Care, Handling, and Storage of Works on Paper: http://www.loc.gov/preservation/care/paper.html
Smithsonian Institution Archives: http://siarchives.si.edu/services/preservation
National Archives' How to Preserve Family Papers: http://www.archives.gov/preservation/family-archives/
National Archives on Paper and Parchment: http://www.archives.gov/preservation/formats/paper-parchment.html
Northeast Document Conservation Center Preservation Guidelines: https://www.nedcc.org/free-resources/preservation-leaflets/2.-the-environment/2.1-temperature,-relative-humidity,-light,-and-air-quality-basic-guidelines-for-preservation

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
Library of Congress, NIST/LC: Optical Disc Longevity Study: http://www.loc.gov/preservation/resources/rt/NIST_LC_OpticalDiscLongevity.pdf