PHYSICAL STORAGE

ARCHIVING

A THREE STEP GUIDE

Basic Guidelines for 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

Customization -- 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. 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. STRATEGY: Set up a filing system with categories that are common in 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. STRATEGY: Set up regular appointments to clear out materials, and then label their date range.

STEP TWO: HOUSING MATERIALS

Convenient, Visible, Portable -- order and store physical materials

Many studios organize their files 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, and 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: for example, CDs have a life span of 7-10 years, papers should be stored out of sunlight.

Also common: all materials relating to a single project are together. This is more challenging for preservation, but if it fits your needs, it is still the best strategy.

CHOOSING 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	none	better than most (no bugs)	good
filing cabinet	good	good	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 packaging
archival storage boxes	good	none	none	none	good

STEP THREE: SPACE FOR YOUR ARCHIVE

Location --where is your archive?

- Things to avoid: pests, potential water leaks, fluctuating temperatures, sources of heat (radiators, heaters), windows (unless can be covered with heavy shades)
- Things to look for: accessible, affordable, a space you can (re)arrange according to the size/shape of your archives
- LOCKSS: Lots of copies keep stuff safe, so keep multiples of very important papers in various, safe locations

UNC COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
Art and Art History