

Ensuring the Legacy of Self-Taught and Local Artists: A Collaborative Framework for Preserving Artists' Archives

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Abstract:

Many institutions collect the papers of prominent artists, but similar efforts have rarely extended to the archives of self-taught artists and artists of local renown. The author recommends that institutions establish collaborative relationships with local artists, supporting these artists' personal archiving efforts with guidance and resources, and providing an archival repository for long-term community access to these materials. This article presents a case study of such a relationship between Durham-based painter Cornelio Campos and the Durham County Library. The author analyzes this effort to articulate a general framework for establishing strong relationships between local artists and cultural heritage institutions.

Keywords: archives | Cornelio Campos | cultural heritage | preservation | Durham County Library

Article:

***Note: Full text of article below

Ensuring the Legacy of Self-Taught and Local Artists:

A Collaborative Framework for Preserving Artists' Archives

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Abstract—Many institutions collect the papers of prominent artists, but similar efforts have rarely extended to the archives of self-taught artists and artists of local renown. The author recommends that institutions establish collaborative relationships with local artists, supporting these artists' personal archiving efforts with guidance and resources, and providing an archival repository for long-term community access to these materials. This article presents a case study of such a relationship between Durham-based painter Cornelio Campos and the Durham County Library. The author analyzes this effort to articulate a general framework for establishing strong relationships between local artists and cultural heritage institutions.

INTRODUCTION

When maintained and preserved, artists' personal archives promise many benefits for artists, as well as for a broader base of potential researchers, including art historians, curators, and the general public interested in the arts. Supporting both day-to-day business and long-term legacy concerns, personal archives help artists to keep track of works previously sold or exhibited, document unique materials and techniques, compile a catalogue raisonné, and inspire new art. In addition to these uses by the artist, art historians and other interested individuals can benefit from artists' archives to gain insight into artists' careers and their participation in local arts scenes. However, all of this depends upon the long-term preservation of and access to artists' archives. Especially in the cases of self-taught artists and artists of limited regional

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renown, artists may lack the knowledge, resources, space, technical skills, or impetus to create and sustain personal archives. Without proper support and encouragement from local information professionals, artists may fail to realize the archival value of their personal materials, disposing of items they may have otherwise saved in archival collections.

While institutions like the Archives of American Art, the Getty Research Institute, and the Fales Library at New York University have led the way in developing collections of archival materials of some of the most prominent artists of the past sixty years,¹ the personal archives of local artists have remained sparsely collected. Although the interest in collecting artists' archival materials continues to gain traction in many museums, libraries, and archives, countless artists remain outside of the collecting purview of these institutions. This paucity is especially hard-felt for archives of self-taught artists, who may work largely outside of the traditional art world and thus escape the view of cultural heritage institutions altogether.² Many artists of regional renown operate in networks of individuals and alternative exhibition spaces that escape the attention of museums and other institutions that might collect these archival materials. While major museums, such as the Tate,³ are a logical place to house the archival materials for artists included in their collections, there exists no such equivalent for artists working outside the scope of these institutions. The original source materials for these artists are exceedingly valuable for understanding the cultural history of a community; however, many such bodies of archival materials exist in a gray area, perhaps maintained for a time in the homes and studios of artists and family members but not collected and preserved for the long term.

In a 1924 essay, Ruth Wilcox argues that cultural heritage institutions have a responsibility to document their local arts scenes, observing that information about the current arts and cultural activities in the community will not be located in books or periodicals; rather, this information resides in material created by and in the custody of local artists.⁴ In the years since Wilcox first made this case, a variety of public and academic libraries have developed artist files, gathering together exhibition notices, catalogs, and other ephemera related to local artists. In this same vein, artists' personal archives contain a wealth of primary sources that vibrantly describe and document the history of local arts. Unlike artist files, which librarians can typically de-

1. Anita Lemke describes the historical development of institutional interest in collecting arts materials. Beginning in the shadow of World War II, the Archives of American Art in particular became a model for a national arts archives collection. Antje Bultmann Lemke, "Art Archives: A Common Concern of Archivists, Librarians, and Museum Professionals," *Art Libraries Journal* 14, no. 2 (1989): 5–11.

2. As Leslie Umberger, curator of folk and self-taught art at the Smithsonian, discussed in a recent interview, self-taught art occupies a unique position in the broader art world. While self-taught art has received increasing commercial and institutional attention in the past several years, museums still grapple with models for incorporating self-taught art into their collections, and scholars still argue over how to position self-taught art within art history. Richard Vine, "The Other Art World," *Art in America* 102, no. 1 (January 2014): 43–46.

3. Sarah Fox-Pitt, "The Tate Gallery Archive of Twentieth-Century British Art: Its Formation and Development," *Archives* 17, no. 74 (October 1, 1985): 94–106.

4. Ruth Wilcox, "The Library's Responsibility in Collecting Source Material Concerning Local Art and Artists," *Bulletin of the American Library Association* 18 (1924): 296–98.

velop with limited involvement of the artist,⁵ the preservation and collection of artists' personal archives requires active and sustained collaboration between institution and artist. Artists may not be willing to part with archival materials until later in (or at the end of) their careers, but without the support and encouragement of institutions, artists may not retain and manage key archival materials long enough for them to enter institutional collections at all. To ensure the long-term preservation of artists' personal archives, institutions need to work collaboratively with artists in their local communities, offering artists the skills, resources, and support necessary to create and sustain personal archives.

For this kind of collaborative relationship to succeed, institutions will need to develop new models for working with potential donors, emphasizing skill-building and support for the artist to manage his or her personal archives as critical goals, in addition to the acquisition of the material itself into institutional holdings. One example of such a model is the collaborative relationship between the North Carolina Collection (NCC)—the local history archives at the Durham County Library (DCL) (Figure 1)—and Durham artist Cornelio Campos (Figures 2 and 3).⁶ Campos transferred physical custody of his archives to the NCC while retaining intellectual control over his materials. Campos actively participated in the processing of this collection, through which he gained a foundation of archival skills and knowledge. This arrangement offers Campos a secure and nearby place to build his personal archival collection, while also ensuring that these valuable materials will survive for the Durham community.

The results of this project suggest a potential framework for building successful relationships between local artists and cultural heritage institutions. The primary tenets of this framework are to maintain the artists' agency over their materials, to utilize collaborative methods for appraisal and description, and to develop flexible donor agreements that give artists continued access to and control of their materials and the ability to add to their archival collections easily throughout their careers. In this article, I describe how this framework emerged out of the project between Campos and the DCL and how this collaborative model and framework address broader issues involved in the long-term preservation and management of artists' archives.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The project with Cornelio Campos's archives was part of the larger IMLS-funded program *Learning from Artists' Archives*⁷ (Figure 4) that took place at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC) from August 2014 to May 2017. The impetus

5. As Samantha Deutch and Sally McKay articulate in an article detailing the recent activity of the ARLIS/NA Artist File SIG, traditional modes for developing artist files will need to adapt to facilitate the collection of artist and gallery websites and other digital materials. This will also require increased collaboration with other institutions and more direct work with content creators. "The Future of Artist Files: Here Today, Gone Tomorrow," *Art Documentation* 35, no. 1 (2016): 27–42.

6. For information on Cornelio Campos's life and career as an artist, visit <http://corneliocampos.web.unc.edu/>.

7. More information about the Institute of Museum and Library Services program, blog posts from participants, and other related resources may be found at <http://artiststudioarchives.org/>.



Figure 1. The main branch of the Durham County Library. Photograph by Colin Post. Please see the online edition of *Art Documentation* for a color version of this image.

behind the program was to develop practical solutions to educate and assist studio artists in building, managing, and sustaining personal archives that can serve both the day-to-day business activities of studio art practice as well as long-term legacy and estate concerns. In addition to educating artists in personal archiving strategies, another



Figure 2. Cornelio Campos's artworks on display at the 19th Annual Latino Diamante Awards in Cary, North Carolina. Cornelio Campos Collection, North Carolina Collection, Durham County Library. Photograph by Cornelio Campos. Please see the online edition of *Art Documentation* for a color version of this image.



Figure 3. Cornelio Campos, *Realidad Norteña*. 2004, 5'×8', oil on canvas. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Photograph by Cornelio Campos. Please see the online edition of *Art Documentation* for a color version of this image.

goal of the program is to train future librarians, archivists, and information professionals to meet the unique needs innate to the growing body of artists' personal archival materials. Attending to both sets of goals, the *Learning from Artists' Archives* grant funded six graduate student fellows enrolled in the art history and library science dual master's degree program at UNC to coordinate several of the projects constituting the broader program. This took the form of two personal archiving workshops each for up to twenty-five North Carolina artists, internships for each of the fellows in cultural heritage institutions with artists' archival materials, and internships for each of the fellows with a North Carolina artist to develop and complete a semester-length personal archiving project.

I took a fellowship position in August 2014 at the beginning of the *Learning from Artists' Archives* program, and the project with Campos and the DCL grew out of my second internship through the grant program. The idea of facilitating a collaborative and sustainable arrangement between a local artist and memory institution evolved through conversations with Glenn Hinson, a faculty member in the Anthropology Department at UNC whose primary research interests include self-taught artists and vernacular poets.⁸ Hinson has conducted oral history interviews with countless

8. Glenn Hinson, "Every Drawing That I Do, I Think About the Lord': Thornton Dial's Journey of Faith," in *Thornton Dial: Thoughts on Paper*, ed. Bernard L. Herman (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 91–127.

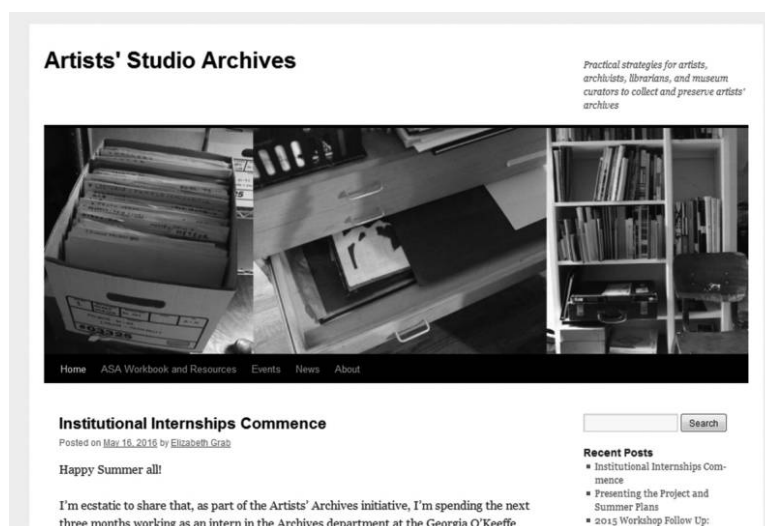


Figure 4. Screenshot of the *Learning from Artists' Archives* program website, <http://artiststudioarchives.org/>. Please see the online edition of *Art Documentation* for a color version of this image.

self-taught artists in North Carolina and has otherwise researched these artists' creative habits and studio practices, so he was able to relate firsthand experience about the dire conditions of many of these artists' personal archival materials. Hinson's own research has a strong preservationist bent, documenting the work by these artists in tandem with developing a critical and historical understanding of these artists' cultural significance. Hinson previously transferred archival research materials to the Southern Folklife Collection at Wilson Library⁹ and fastidiously keeps photographs, newspaper clippings, and recordings organized in both digital and analog forms.

Hinson is attuned to the challenges many of these artists face in maintaining personal materials that document their lives and careers as artists. These artists lack stable methods for storing and documenting the artworks they create, exhibit, and sell, let alone more precarious materials like sketches, letters, and digital documents. In conversation, Hinson and I envisioned a potential strategy to address this need: establishing a collaborative and sustainable relationship between an artist and a local cultural heritage institution early on in the artist's career so that he or she can build an ongoing archive of personal materials that will be securely preserved in that institution's collection while remaining accessible to both the artist and the broader community. As I had an existing relationship with the archivists at the DCL, we decided to approach them with this idea along with a list of potential artists in the community to target for the project. Hinson derived this list of artists from his own extensive research and oral history interviews with self-taught North Carolina artists.

9. One example is a collection of audio recordings of the Badgett Sisters, a group of North Carolina gospel singers: Glenn Hinson archive collection, 1990, #FS543-547, Southern Folklife Collection, Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

From the start of the project, I wanted to be sure that the expectations and needs of all stakeholders would be addressed, namely those of the DCL and Cornelio Campos. As I was in the role of an intermediary, I had a responsibility to ensure that this project would be mutually beneficial for both the archive and the artist. Before I inquired with Campos specifically, I first met with Lynn Richardson, the archivist at the DCL, to discuss the project and to present her with a list of possible artists. As I was external to the institution, I wanted to be sure that the artist participating in the project would fit the collecting scope and mission for the NCC. Richardson selected Campos as the artist whose materials would best meet the institutional collecting goals. At this meeting, I also made clear the intention of including Campos in the appraisal, arrangement, and description of his materials. Even though this meant Richardson would give up some control over the archival process, she recognized the importance of utilizing this collaborative method. Richardson also affirmed that the NCC would provide all material resources, such as archival boxes and folders and staff support necessary for the processing and transfer of Campos's archival collection, as the IMLS funding did not directly cover these costs.

After meeting with Richardson and articulating the NCC's specific role and responsibilities in the project, I reached out to Campos (via Hinson) to assess his interest in participating in the project. From this initial meeting, Campos was enthusiastic about the prospect of building a personal archival collection, transferring these materials to the DCL, and initiating an ongoing relationship with this institution. Although Campos admitted that he had a limited awareness of what such an archiving process would entail, he expressed excitement over finding a permanent and secure location for his valuable personal materials, as well as making these resources accessible to a broader community of users. As Campos observed in conversation with me, personal archival materials are often in a precarious state, especially at the end of life: "When people pass away, I have witnessed that other people threw away their stuff without even looking at it. That is sad to see . . . it is important to keep this stuff with someone who knows how to preserve it for a long time." Campos also noted throughout the course of the project that students, scholars, and other community members had approached him in the past about the possibility of accessing his personal materials for research into his artistic career, and Campos was glad that he would now be able to direct these requests to the DCL.

Over the next several months, Campos and I met regularly at his home studio to build a personal archival collection (Figure 5). With archival supplies from the DCL and my laptop, we slowly worked through Campos's personal materials, first amassing documents and items from all of the nooks and crannies in Campos's home, then appraising these materials for archival value, organizing the selected items into archival folders and boxes, and finally writing a finding aid for the collection. Campos and I consulted with Richardson and Kristen Merryman, another archivist at the DCL, throughout the project and referred any questions that arose through the archiving process. The bulk of these questions concerned how we should handle items unique to an artist's archival collection, such as large sketches and paintings. With Merryman, we worked out the best ways to house these special items securely. In early De-



Figure 5. Colin Post (left) and Cornelio Campos working with Campos's personal archives in his home studio. Photograph by Denise Anthony. Please see the online edition of *Art Documentation* for a color version of this image.

ember 2015, we transferred this body of archival materials to the NCC, marking the first step in what we hope will be a long and fruitful relationship between Campos and the DCL.

STEPS TOWARD A COLLABORATIVE FRAMEWORK

MAKING THE CONNECTION

The first, and perhaps most difficult, step is forging the initial connections between artist and institution. For this connection to germinate into a collaborative relationship, artist and institution need to establish a shared sense of the archival value of the artist's materials. From the artist's perspective, personal archival materials may exist in relation to his or her career, artworks, and personal life in many different ways, and these varying relationships will affect how materials have been kept, organized, and ultimately valued by the artist. In an interview with the artist Gustav Metzger, Victoria Lane and Clive Phillpot discuss how these issues have manifested in Metzger's personal archiving practices.¹⁰ Metzger's archival materials are scattered across Europe and the United Kingdom, and many materials from throughout his career have not been kept at all. This is partly the result of Metzger's nomadic life style but also a reflection of Metzger's own aesthetic practices as a creator of auto-destructive art. As Metzger describes, abandoning artworks and materials throughout his life pro-

10. Clive Phillpot and Victoria Lane, "An Interview with Gustav Metzger," in *All This Stuff: Archiving the Artist*, ed. Judy Vaknin, Karyn Stuckey, and Victoria Lane (Oxfordshire: Libri Publishing, 2013), 19–30.

duced both “good feelings” for him as well as regrets.¹¹ “The erasing [of materials from early in his career] . . . had to take place” as this allowed Metzger to develop his aesthetic stance of destruction in art, and thus “[re-integrate] with the avant-garde.”¹²

If the development of his artistic practices was intricately linked to his personal archival materials earlier in his career, his statements in the interview suggest that the management and transfer of his materials to archival institutions is intricately linked to how Metzger is thinking of his legacy later in his career. He expresses a desire to leave the materials scattered across many institutions so that they can be used by many different groups of people, but also as a means of security. As Metzger states, “it’s more vulnerable if it’s all in one place.”¹³ At the close of the interview, Phillipot observes that Metzger’s attitude towards his records is reflective of his broader aesthetic philosophy of auto-creation and auto-destruction: “Sometimes you will actively create them and conserve them, other times you will actively destroy them.”¹⁴ As this example demonstrates, archival materials often gain particular value for artists through their specific creative practices—values that may be at odds with how information professionals typically conceptualize and handle archival materials. The artist and institution can negotiate throughout the archival process to ensure that the artist’s values are represented in how the collection is maintained over time.

In order to spark a connection with artists, archivists and other information professionals need to be proactive in identifying these individuals in the community and raising awareness of the archival value of personal collections. Recognizing this as a pertinent need for digital materials, which are especially prone to obsolescence and loss, organizations like the Library of Congress¹⁵ and the American Library Association¹⁶ have developed resources for institutions to host personal digital archiving day workshops for community members to learn basic archival skills to preserve digital materials for both present and future users. Similar to these events, the *Learning from Artists’ Archives* grant team developed and delivered two personal archiving workshops targeted at North Carolina artists. The first was held in October 2015 at the North Carolina Museum of Art in Raleigh and the second in October 2016 at the Mint Museum of Art in Charlotte. The initial workshop generated a significant amount of interest with nearly three times as many applicants as available seats in the workshop. Based on a survey conducted at the close of the first workshop, 94 percent (n=19) responded that the workshop exceeded their expectations. One of the greatest take-aways mentioned by many of the participants was a newfound sense of the archival value of their personal archives and an awareness that cultural heritage institutions are interested in collecting materials documenting local arts scenes.

11. *Ibid.*, 23.

12. *Ibid.*, 23–24.

13. *Ibid.*, 27.

14. *Ibid.*, 29.

15. Library of Congress, “Personal Digital Archiving Day Kit - Digital Preservation,” <http://www.digitalpreservation.gov/personalarchiving/padKit/index.html>.

16. Erin Engle and Association for Library Collections & Technical Services (ALCTS), “Hosting a Personal Digital Archiving Day Event,” webinar, <http://www.ala.org/alcts/confevents/upcoming/webinar/pres/032013>.

A cultural heritage institution could make great strides in forging connections with its local population of artists by hosting such an event. To build upon the success of the relationship formed with Campos, the DCL held a program featuring Campos and his archival collection on October 30, 2016. At this event, Campos spoke about the importance of this project and encouraged members of both the local arts scene as well as the Durham Hispanic community more broadly to consider creating their own personal archival collections for donation to the NCC. As the project with Campos demonstrates, however, these collaborative relationships between artists and institutions do not necessarily have to develop through formal programs and workshops. Archivists need to be responsive to local social networks, reaching out to individuals invested in the local arts scene. As is the case in Durham, home to a strong local arts tradition, there are countless motivated community members willing to contribute time, effort, and resources to ensuring the preservation of local cultural heritage. In support of collecting programs and other functions, cultural heritage institutions thrive on such community enthusiasm,¹⁷ and information professionals need to capitalize on this energy for collecting artists' materials as well.

MAINTAINING ARTISTS' CONTROL

Once the connection between artist and institution is established, the most important tenet of this framework is to maintain the artist's agency over personal materials. Even as the physical custody of the materials transfers to the institution, the artist should retain intellectual control, which means that the artist also has a stake in the archival appraisal, arrangement, and description of the materials. At the foundation of this relationship is the understanding that the artist's materials have significance to the greater community; preserving and providing access to these materials serves a cultural heritage mission. However, one must recognize that these materials will continue to have both symbolic and use value for the artist throughout the rest of his or her career.

One of the primary means for collecting institutions to maintain the artist's control is to facilitate the artist's participation in the processing of the archival materials. In the project with Campos, this involved direct collaboration as we appraised, arranged, and described all of his materials together. This collaboration gave Campos the opportunity to learn about how archives work as a kind of cultural technology, as well the ability to apply that knowledge to his own personal materials. Ultimately, I shared my authority as an archivist with Campos, giving him the agency to shape the story of himself captured in his archives. As Sue McKemmish describes, the kinds of records that individuals keep—including how, why, and where they keep them—constitute a narrative about that individual, or in McKemmish's words "evidence of me."¹⁸

17. This is further evidenced by the widespread implementation of crowdsourcing projects by a variety of cultural heritage institutions, from public tagging projects in the form of interactive games (<http://www.metadatagames.org/>) to volunteer transcription efforts (<https://transcription.si.edu/>). See also Jessica Short, "Take Ten to Tag! Smithsonian Gardens Public Tagging Initiative," *Technical Services Quarterly* 31, no. 4 (October 2, 2014): 319–31, doi:10.1080/07317131.2014.943005.

18. Sue McKemmish, "Evidence of Me," last modified November 23, 2012, <http://infotech.monash.edu/research/groups/rcrg/publications/recordscontinuumsmckpr.html>.

Andrew Flinn, a prominent researcher on community and independent archives, has suggested that participatory archiving efforts, in which the community members actively work to build their own archives outside of the purview of mainstream cultural heritage institutions, can create not only a place where “the past is documented and passively collected but, crucially, also a space in which the archive can become a significant tool for discovery, education, and empowerment.”¹⁹ Independent archives constructed by and for underrepresented communities can play an essential role in enabling individuals in these communities to recover and tell histories otherwise expunged from the cultural record. While the framework that I am proposing calls for artists to participate with cultural heritage institutions, the importance of the artist actively participating in the archival processing of their materials very much applies here.

There is some cause for concern here that affording Campos—or any donor of archival materials—too much control over the shape of his archival collection will potentially affect the neutrality or objectivity of the collection. As the International Council on Archives (ICA) Code of Ethics states, archivists need to appraise records “impartially,”²⁰ a standard that might be obscured if the donor is able to assert control over the appraisal, arrangement, and description of his or her archival collection. While this is a valid concern, one can counter this with two points. First, donors already have many opportunities to exert self-censorship throughout the life cycle of their documents and can work to destroy or erase aspects from their documentary record before they walk through the door of an institutional archive. Second, the archival profession increasingly has scrutinized the capacity of archivists to be impartial and objective. Randall Jimerson summarizes this sentiment effectively: “However much we protest our objectivity and neutrality, as archivists we cannot avoid casting our own imprint on these powerful sources of knowledge.”²¹ Archivists can recognize the authority they exert over the archival record and critically reflect on how this might affect their decisions throughout the appraisal, description, arrangement, and preservation of materials.

Archivists can and should also use this recognition to motivate a sharing of their authority. Terry Cook describes this change in archival thinking as a paradigm shift that affects not only the archival profession, but also the broader cultural conception of archives and records.²² According to Cook, archivists have moved through four such paradigms, from “passive curator to active appraiser to societal mediator to community facilitator,”²³ with each paradigm involving a different approach to records. In this current paradigm of community facilitator, archivists not only recognize their powerful role in shaping the meaning of archives but also the significance that documents and records of all kinds have for the individuals and communities from

19. Andrew Flinn, “Archival Activism: Independent and Community-Led Archives, Radical Public History and the Heritage Professions,” *InterActions: UCLA Journal of Information and Education Studies* 7, no. 2 (2011): 9.

20. International Council of Archives, “Code of Ethics,” September 6, 1996, http://www.ica.org/sites/default/files/ICA_1996-09-06_code%20of%20ethics_EN.pdf.

21. Randall C. Jimerson, “Embracing the Power of Archives,” *The American Archivist* 69, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2006): 21.

22. Terry Cook, “Evidence, Memory, Identity, and Community: Four Shifting Archival Paradigms,” *Archival Science* 13, no. 2–3 (June 28, 2012): 95–120, doi:10.1007/s10502-012-9180-7.

23. *Ibid.*, 116.

which they originated, and ultimately to which they still in some sense belong even after custody transfers to an institutional archives. For the present project, I found it to be crucial for Campos to have a role and a stake in maintaining his archival legacy because these materials are of central importance to his very identity and will communicate his life and career to current and future users. Campos reflected on this: "These materials are now more than my personal memories. They can serve other purposes, and now other can people can know about me and get access to these materials. The process transforms the value: it is no longer personal, but it is for the community, for research."

In addition to empowering Campos to shape his own archival identity, this collaboration proved to be an important learning experience on which Campos will be able to draw in the future. He will now be able to think about future accruals of materials documenting his artistic career in terms of archival value. Building on the positive relationship established with the DCL, he has a secure place to deposit these valuable materials. With this knowledge base of archival processes in place, Campos is better equipped to manage his archives and shape his legacy, ensuring that a richer body of materials will be included in the cultural record.

The project with Campos was a unique situation, and not all archival institutions will be able to devote the time and resources necessary to cultivate the artist's full, hands-on participation in the archival process; however, collections of artists' materials do require institutions to engage with the artists and give them a voice throughout arrangement, description, and arrangement processes. As Rob Fisher writes, "Exploring the complementary and competing interests of donors and archivists will help forge more inclusive, dynamic, and open models that accord donors an active role in shaping archival memory."²⁴ This is especially apt for artists' archives. As noted above, artists often have idiosyncratic ways of thinking about their artistic practice; capturing their personal knowledge can dramatically influence otherwise straightforward appraisal, arrangement, and description decisions. Campos asked questions and made suggestions throughout our work together on the project, and our conversations presented learning opportunities for both Campos and me. Although we followed archival standards and best practices, archival processing methods are not set in stone. For example, Campos raised important questions about how we should handle a significant amount of Spanish-language materials in a collection that would be used by English speakers, Spanish speakers, and bilingual individuals. As Anne Gilliland and others have written of similar post-custodial approaches, direct participation by marginalized and underrepresented peoples in the archiving of their materials engenders a much-needed pluralization of the archival paradigm, diversifying the dominant Anglo-European archival standards and creating inclusive spaces for a wider body of cultural heritage materials.²⁵

24. Rob Fisher, "Donors and Donor Agency: Implications for Private Archives Theory and Practice," *Archivaria* 79 (April 29, 2015): 93.

25. Anne Gilliland et al., "Pluralizing the Archival Paradigm: Can Archival Education in Pacific Rim Communities Address the Challenge?," *The American Archivist* 71, no. 1 (2008): 87–117.

Capturing the complexity and vitality of an artist's life and work in the staid order of archival boxes and folders is a difficult task. The archivist has to arrange these materials so that they can be more readily preserved and more easily accessible to researchers, but this process can transform how an artist is represented in the collection. One particular way of arranging the collection might encourage one interpretation of the materials while obscuring another. Archivists can compensate for this by providing rich descriptive documents, but regardless, the institutionalized archival collection is ultimately and transformatively mediated through the archivist's decisions. As Anna McNally writes, "These are now no longer the remnants of someone's life but their Archive, numbered, filed, boxed and preserved for future generations. The transformation is complete."²⁶ McNally states that "archivists need to have a good knowledge of the artist's work to understand the potential significance of what they find."²⁷ By working directly with the artist, archivists can gain this firsthand knowledge about the artist's career, informing the appraisal, arrangement, and description of materials while also ensuring that the artist has a direct role in shaping the archival legacy.

ACCESSIBILITY OF COLLECTION

Another key tenet in this framework is the accessibility of the institution for both the artist and the community of users. This was an important factor when I first decided to approach Richardson at the DCL with this project. Located in downtown Durham, close to several bus lines and with plenty of free parking, community members can easily visit the DCL. For Campos in particular, the DCL is located just a few blocks from his home, and so he continues to be in close proximity to his personal archival collection even as it now resides in an institutional collection. At the start of the project, I discussed with Campos the choice of transferring his materials to the DCL, and he agreed that this would be the optimal location, providing a secure location for the long-term preservation of his materials without sacrificing accessibility for himself or the broader community.

In addition to the physical accessibility, the mission of the DCL is focused on the local Durham community. As a public library, the DCL's primary goal is to serve the information needs of the immediate community, and for the NCC, this includes documenting the social, political, and cultural histories of this community. Housed at the DCL, Campos's collection will not only be accessible to the Durham community, but it will also exist within a broader context of archival collections constituting the cultural record for the community in which Campos lives and works. While Campos's materials would have fit in the collecting scopes for the archival collections at other nearby institutions, the Durham-specific collecting focus of the NCC made this repository an ideal home for Campos's collection. When we transferred his materials in early December 2015, Campos expressed great joy, seeing this as both a symbolic and actual incorporation of his artistic work into the cultural history of Durham: "By learning the

26. Anna McNally, "All That Stuff: Organising Records of Creative Process," in *All This Stuff: Archiving the Artist*, eds. Judy Vaknin, Karyn Stuckey, and Victoria Lane (Oxfordshire: Libri Publishing, 2013), 107.

27. *Ibid.*, 100.

purpose of preserving and archiving things for other people, it made me feel good because I contributed to something bigger . . . it serves a bigger purpose.”

The physical accessibility and public service mission of the DCL also ensure that Campos’s materials will be available to a wide base of community users and open to a variety of potential uses. Containing sketches, artworks, photographs and other intriguing multimedia materials, artists’ archives are unique collections that can interest users who may not otherwise visit their local history archives. Institutions can take advantage of these special collections to draw in new visitors and encourage innovative uses of materials. Kathy Carbone, for example, describes institutional artist-in-residence programs that encourage creative research uses of archival materials.²⁸ Institutions can also take advantage of the flexibility and accessibility afforded by digital spaces to present artists’ archival collections to international audiences through interfaces that break with the perhaps stultified descriptive standards of the traditional finding aid. An example of this is the inventive web portal to the John Latham archives²⁹ that offers users three diverse means of browsing Latham’s archival materials, each based on a different aspect of his aesthetic philosophy and artistic approach.³⁰

As Sue Breakell extols, new digital technologies and web tools allow archivists to maintain both the standard archival structure of a collection as well as a “many-to-many, infinitely repeatable nodal or rhizomatic structure, where, in the user’s personal environment, connections can be made and shared in ways which were previously unimagined.”³¹ Opening collections up to social media platforms and other participatory online tools allows users to repurpose archival materials creatively, making the archive into a test bed for new cultural production—a way of thinking about the archive that is very attractive to artists. The DCL hopes to encourage this expanded usage of Campos’s collection through public outreach programming as described above. The DCL is also holding open the possibility of creating an online exhibition featuring items from Campos’s collection that will serve to publicize the materials to an audience beyond the Durham community. Immigration and the movement of people and ideas are common themes in Campos’s work, himself an immigrant from Mexico; it is only fitting that his archival collection reaches a global user-base.

FLEXIBLE DONOR AGREEMENT

The final tenet is the importance of a flexible donor agreement that preserves the artist’s intellectual control and copyright over creative materials like sketches and artworks. Copyright and intellectual control are tricky areas for all cultural heritage institutions, and for many kinds of collections there is a benefit for the institution in

28. Kathy Carbone, “Artists in the Archive: An Exploratory Study of the Artist-in-Residence Program at the City of Portland Archives & Records Center,” *Archivaria* 79 (2015): 27–52.

29. *Archive as Event*, <http://www.ligatus.org.uk/aae/>.

30. Athanasios Velios, “The John Latham Archive: An Online Implementation Using Drupal,” *Art Documentation* 30, no. 2 (Fall 2011): 4–13.

31. Sue Breakell, “For One and All: Participation and Exchange in the Archive,” in *Revisualizing Visual Culture*, ed. Chris Bailey and Hazel Gardiner (Farnham, Surrey, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010), 104.

gaining full control over all materials. Acquiring copyright enables institutions to make essential decisions about the long-term preservation and access for materials without having to cut through inordinate red tape in an attempt to clear these decisions with the copyright holder—if he or she can even be identified. However, the collaborative and sustainable relationship between artist and institution is a unique case that requires flexibility, especially concerning copyright and intellectual control. Campos is still an active artist and will have recourse to use and reuse the materials in his archival collection throughout the course of his career for the purposes of setting up exhibitions (Figure 6), updating his curriculum vitae, connecting with dealers and art buyers, and creating new artworks.

Copyright and intellectual control become an especially pressing issue when the line between artwork and archives is unclear. Many contemporary artists have an expanded notion of what constitutes an “archives” in relation to their work, possibly conceiving of archives or the practice of archiving as the artwork itself. Neal White describes this practice as it has manifested in contemporary art as the “expanded field of the archive,” which encompasses a variety of ways in which the production and/or accrual of information and documentation by an artist comes to constitute the art-



Figure 6. Cornelio Campos installing the *American Dreams* exhibition at the Fed Ex Global Education Center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Cornelio Campos Collection, North Carolina Collection, Durham County Library. Photograph courtesy of Cornelio Campos. Please see the online edition of *Art Documentation* for a color version of this image.

work.³² Simone Osthoff calls attention to the ways in which individual artists, such as Paolo Bruscky and Eduardo Kac, have blurred the “distinctions among the artist and the theorist, the curator, the archivist, the historian, and the cultural critic.”³³ For both Bruscky and Kac, active research is a part of the creative process and must be considered as part and parcel with the art “objects” they produce. As White observes, drawing on Michael Schwab, the artist-as-researcher produces knowledge that is differentiated from the symbolic value traditionally ascribed to artists. However, for museums accustomed to collecting static objects and for archives not used to collecting artwork, it can be difficult to parse out who might be responsible for preserving bodies of material that blur the line between archive and art.³⁴

This should not be an obstacle for archives wishing to develop collections of artists’ archival materials, but it should certainly be a primary consideration when preparing the donor agreement. Campos should not be limited or uncertain of how he can make use of his own personal materials just because they are physically housed in an institutional collection. From the perspective of the institution, ceding intellectual control demonstrates trust and respect for the artist, thus forming the basis for a strong and lasting relationship. This flexible and mutually trusting relationship should serve to encourage Campos to continue to make use of his personal archival collection, further recasting the DCL as not just the physical repository for the safe storage of his materials, but also as a generative space open to artistic creative activity.

Establishing this trusting relationship benefits the institution, as it is on this foundation that the artist will continue to grow the collection over time, adding richness and depth to the institution’s holdings. The success of one such collaborative and sustainable relationship also sets the precedent for further such relationships. An institution may start by collecting the materials of one local artist, but go on to build a more comprehensive collection of the local arts scene as other artists become aware of the possibilities and benefits afforded by transferring materials to this institution. These artists will be much more inclined to contribute to such a collection if they know that their participation will not come at the expense of the intellectual control over their materials, but instead offers the opportunity to engage in a mutually beneficial and trusting relationship with a local institution. For Campos’s donation, we altered the language of the NCC’s standard donor agreement so that Campos would continue to hold copyright over all of his materials until his death, at which point copyright would be transferred to the NCC.³⁵ This ensured that Campos would retain control over his materials for the rest of his career while guaranteeing that the DCL

32. Neal White, “Experiments and Archives in the Expanded Field,” in *All This Stuff: Archiving the Artist*, ed. Judy Vaknin, Karyn Stuckey, and Victoria Lane (Oxfordshire: Libri Publishing, 2013), 47–61.

33. Simone Osthoff, “Elsewhere in Contemporary Art: Topologies of Artists’ Works, Writings, and Archives,” *Art Journal* 65, no. 4 (Winter 2006): 8, doi:10.2307/20068494.

34. White, “Experiments and Archives in the Expanded Field,” 55.

35. I am grateful to Marvin Taylor, director of the Fales Library at New York University, for help in navigating the issue of copyright. Taylor has had great success developing the Downtown Collection, a special collection at the Fales that documents the New York arts scene. Taylor shared with me a boilerplate agreement that he uses for donations to this collection and allowed me to adapt the language for use in Campos’s donor agreement.

would not be caught in copyright limbo in the event of Campos's death. The donor agreement also specifies that Campos may continue to add to this collection over time, establishing terms for a long relationship between himself and the DCL.

CONCLUSION: CONSIDERATIONS FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

The overarching goal of this specific project, as well as the broader framework, is to forge a sustainable and mutually beneficial relationship between an artist and an institution, supporting both the artist's professional needs as well as the long-term preservation of cultural heritage for a local arts scene. In this respect, the project with Campos and the DCL has thus far been a success, and through future research and projects, I hope to advance the viability for this framework in both Durham and other communities. However, in reflecting on this project, there are definite areas for improvement and considerations for ongoing efforts with artists' archival materials. First, a more structured system is needed for incorporating future accruals of personal archival materials after the initial donation of an archival collection to an institution. With Campos's materials, we arranged the archival collection to accommodate future donations with relative ease; however, there is no system in place for when these future donations might occur. Although Campos built a personal relationship with Richardson, the DCL archivist, Richardson retired shortly after the conclusion of this project. Thus, the sustainability of this arrangement is dependent on the personal effort of both Campos and the future archivists at the DCL.

A second area that requires further research is the issue of copyright. Although we were able to articulate an agreement that serves the needs of both Campos and the DCL, other institutions and artists will most likely have unique needs that do not completely match up with this present case. This issue becomes increasingly fuzzy with digital materials. Questions about how institutions might handle artists' e-mail messages, websites, or social media content still need to be addressed.

Finally, the viability of this framework will need to be borne out by the study of additional cases of collaborative relationships between artists and institutions. The project with Campos and the DCL was in many ways a unique case as it was initiated and driven by an entity external to the DCL and partially funded by a grant program affiliated with another institution. However, the overall tenets that constituted the basis for the successful relationship between Campos and the DCL can be applied to artists and institutions in other arts communities. Every such project will be unique in some regard, as no two relationships between artist and institution will be entirely analogous. To advance this framework as a viable option for a variety of artists and institutions, several other cases will need to be studied, compiled, and compared, analyzing the overall strengths, deficits, and challenges presented.

The first opportunity to investigate the ongoing viability of this framework is with the DCL itself. Although both Campos and the institution consider the results of this project a success, the DCL would like to build on this project by engaging further with both Durham artists as well as members of the Durham Latinx community, initiating archival projects similar in style and scope to the present project. At the time of this writing, there are no formal plans to continue this collecting program, but the DCL

and Campos are both actively reaching out to these communities. As noted above, the DCL recently hosted an outreach event featuring Campos and his archival collection that was attended by over forty individuals; beyond this event, Campos is an outspoken promoter of donating materials to the archives, communicating the benefits of working with the DCL to friends, family, and other artists. I also plan to follow up on this project with further research into artist- and community-driven archiving projects both at the DCL and in North Carolina more broadly.

As many local arts scenes and self-taught artists remain marginal and outside the scope of institutional collections, this research program will serve to address pressing needs in the cultural heritage sector. A framework for strong and sustainable relationships between artists and institutions developed from hands-on research will be a vital tool in ensuring the long-term preservation of and access to this important body of cultural heritage materials.

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