

GENERAL PROCESSING GUIDE

CARDINAL RULE: ASK IF UNSURE IN ANY WAY!

1. Survey the file and judiciously correct order of documents.

- First assume the order is correct, and look for the reason that a document may be out of order. Discuss possible changes with Archivist. If an item is determined to be in the wrong place, move it and anything that is clipped with it to the correct place. Always keep things together that have been clipped together, even though you will eventually remove the fastener.
- If file is more than about ¾" thick, divide at a logical point(s). The folder title will be the same, but with 1 of 2, 2 of 2, etc. added at the end.
- Arrange contents of folder in chronological or alphabetical order depending on existing order of file. NB: Many files will be in reverse chronological order. Keep groupings of materials together if found clipped together. Loose items with no dates should be placed at the front of the folder. If an undated item is found with a group, keep with the group. If it will be unclear to a researcher that the materials were found in a grouping, consider placing items in a folded piece of acid free bond paper in order to alert researcher to original groupings of materials.

2. Remove all foreign objects.

- Remove all paperclips, rubber bands, staples and fasteners.
- Post-its (can photocopy if information on post it appears to be helpful or relevant).

3. Unfold all folded pages and flatten.

- Remove legal-size pages to legal-size folder, large sheets to map case folder. Add a separation sheet (see separation sheet description below). Documents such as invitations may be left folded if: no information runs across fold, and there are not so many that it will cause a lump in the folder.
- Orient pages in folder so that researcher can use them easily. For "landscape" format, bottom of page goes toward fold of folder.

4. Flag items with preservation needs.

- As you are processing, flag items that need to be photocopied on acid-free paper for preservation purposes (it is easier to do this in one go when you have finished the box rather than copying item by item). Examples of items to be copied include the following: deteriorating pages; yellowed or brittle pages; large tears; glued or taped paper; thermofax. Note that some paper is naturally yellowish--check for an acid shadow on the next sheet to see if it is "safe" yellow or not. See "deteriorated samples" folder and ask if unsure.
- Flag any other questionable items and consult with Archivist (i.e. folders that have many handwritten notes on the folder, or anything else you are unsure about).
- For preservation photocopying instructions see # 10 below.

5. Re-house and transcribe folder title.

- Re-house contents of folder into brown acid-free archival folders.
- Transcribe original folder titles. PLEASE WRITE LEGIBLY, IN PENCIL. Capitalize beginning letter and proper names only, end with period (with the exception of exhibition titles, which should use exact capitalization from exhibition index. Examples of punctuation for CURREC database as follows:

Alterations and additions.

Loans received (legal-size folder).

Board of Education.

Departments: Prints and Drawings.

- For exhibitions use formal title, not working title. Include exhibition dates in folder title (see below). Always check the exhibition index on Museum website for formal titles and dates. Also check CUREXH to see if there are existing files in database that may have incorrect dates or titling.
- The folder title may be adjusted slightly in order to group materials effectively. Discuss with Archivist before doing this. E.g. New York Historical Society loans, Met loans can be changed to:

Loans: New York Historical Society

Loans: Metropolitan Museum

- Include SRG (sub-record group) and SERIES on center right separated with forward slash. Include inclusive folder dates on the right hand side (examples below). To determine series, please see #6.

Loans: New York Historical Society.	P&S/O	(1984-1986)
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Louise Bourgeois: The Locus of Memory, Works 1982-1993 [04/27/1994 - 07/31/1994]. [01] general corresp.	P&S/E	(1991-1995)
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6. Determine series

Curatorial files generally fall into the following five series. Some collections may include additional series, please consult Archivist if unsure.

Departmental Admin (DEP)

Use this for general correspondence, inquiries from artists, proposals for exhibitions (only proposed exhibitions, cancelled exhibitions these go in EXH series), general correspondence regarding the use of paintings, grants, annual reports, de-accessioning information, invitations to events, financial information.

Exhibitions (EXH)

All materials relating to BM exhibitions such as correspondence, prints, invoices, contracts, loan agreements, articles, catalog, didactic and wall labels, research related to the exhibition. For files on "installations" see objects (installations involve work in the collection of the BM, not work that is loaned). Also include files regarding exhibitions cancelled. See note below on how to title exhibition folders.

Objects (OBJ)

Contains documentation on objects in the BM collection (exclusive of exhibitions). May include loan forms, statements, correspondence regarding loans, purchases, conditions of objects, inquiries regarding objects, collection development, dealer and owner correspondence etc. Also includes files on installations of BM objects.

Research and Writing (R&W)

May contain professional records, research and publications of department staff. Includes correspondence regarding scholarship, publications, research notes etc.

Extra Curricular Activities (EXT)

Contains information regarding staff participation in outside organizations/functions.

FOR EXHIBITION FOLDERS (PROPOSED AND CANCELLED):

Used this format if file is a proposed exhibition:

Exhibition proposals: Things With Wings	DEC/DEP	(1999)
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Use this format if cancelled exhibition (include date that the year was intended to happen and file at beginning of that year:

Tapestry exhibition (cancelled) [--/--/2009 - --/--/2009]	P&S/EXH	(2008-2009)
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7. Keep folders in original order, unless clearly out of place.

- Before moving anything, discuss with Archivist.
- Folders will be arranged in alphabetical, chronological or numerical order at the end of processing.
- Folders in the exhibition series are the exception as these should always be arranged chronologically.

8. Remove select materials during processing.

NOTE: All materials removed during processing must include a separation sheet indicating specifically where materials have been transferred to (see separation sheet guidelines below).

<u>Item removed</u>	<u>Where to</u>
Press releases	Archives: Press release collection
Artist bios	ARL: artist files
Museum staff CVs (only staff, not temp hires)	Archives: REF: Department files
BM invites, program cards	Archives: Ephemera collection
All published BM family guides, gallery guides, exhibition catalogs	Archives: back stock or ARL if not in back stock
Published materials	Transferred to ARL
Photographic materials (slides, photos, transparencies, negatives etc.)	Archives: photograph collection (see photographs processing guide for more information)
Duplicates (keep one copy in file, the original, if possible, or the clearest carbon. Do not discard any that are annotated, corrected, or written on in any way without discussing with Archivist.)	Discard un-annotated duplicate copies

Separation sheet guidelines.

- During processing, any time an item is removed it must be noted by the use of a separation sheet. The separation sheet must be marked with the date, your initials and the place the item has been removed to. Also provide a good description of the item so that it can be easily found when requested by a researcher. Items are generally removed to the following places:
- Oversize storage (mark whether the item is now in a map case, legal size box or print box)
Photo collection (see photo processing guide for further instructions when removing photos)
Library
Discarded
Other (always note where the other location is)
- When describing the item(s) removed, include the size of photographic materials. For example:

Two black and white 8"x10" photographs of Jain Rest House.
20 color slides of installation images from *Sensation* exhibition.
Periodical: Artforum International., v.42 Jan-Mar 2004.

- Transcribe in pencil folder information (folder title, SRG/Series, dates) on the removed items (top right side or on the back of the document). If a large group of material is removed from a folder, can create a duplicate folder for all the items removed from original folder and transcribe folder information onto the duplicate folder. (see Processing Guide for Photographic Material for detailed procedure)
- The following materials may be discarded without a separation sheet. These items are scheduled for automatic discard as they are not of enduring research value.

Purchase orders (with the exception of Museum object purchases)
Work orders (except if in regards to a Museum object)
Photo requisitions & requests for photographs
Staff timesheets
Vouchers (non-collection only)
Memos if recipient copy is one of many/large distribution list (ask Archivist)

9. Restricted materials.

- Sensitive materials should be indicated in the folder description (in Access database) and on the front face of the folder. Examples include artist letters (considered high risk of theft), and any materials containing personal materials such as social security numbers. Write in pencil on front flap of folder "N.B. Restricted materials (artist letters)" or "N.B. Restricted materials (personal information)".

10. Make preservation copies.

- When you have finished processing a group of folders, copy flagged items on acid free copying paper. The photocopy must include the copy tag which includes the date of the copy, and whether the original copy was retained or discarded. Place "copy tag" across top or side of copier plate before copying, make sure you have entered the correct date.
- Keep copies to 8.5x11 size: use reductions if necessary. Make two-sided copying where it makes sense.
- We discard only carbon copies and news clippings of no significance to TBM. Note disposition on copy tag line.
- Old and brittle originals are generally kept. Place retained originals in separate folder marked "Deteriorated originals retained"; series title at right. These items will be stored separately, discuss with Archivist.

11. Description.

- Description can be done as you are processing by keeping notes, or at the end of processing a box of materials.
- Describe the contents as you go through file. First construct descriptions by type of format (e.g., correspondence, memos, lists, press release, etc.). Then separate subjects/topics with SEMICOLONS, use commas within semicolon phrases. Include names of other important respondents. Be clear and concise. See below for the only abbreviations that are used in description.

ca. (used for circa)
n.d. (used for no date)
corresp (used for correspondence)

re (used for regarding)

memo (used for interoffice memo)

- Corresp. is used to describe back and forth communication, letter is used if communication is one way.
- Note principal correspondent (usually curators) in the name of creator field. Always use the Archives authority list for standardized usage of names (ask Archivist). If there is more than one principal correspondent, include additional names at the end of description (see samples below).
- When adding exhibition titles to CUREXH database, use exact punctuation from exhibitions index, including period at end of sentence and capitalization used in exhibitions index. Exhibitions index can be found at <http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/exhibitions/>
- See Access databases or finding aids for folder descriptions. Some examples below.

Leon Polk Smith: American Painter. [09/09/1995 - 01/07/1996]. Rapaport, Brooke Kamin

[01] corresp. (1993-1996)

Corresp re documentary on artist; objects; artist's archives; nomination of artist into Oklahoma Hall of Fame; publicity. Memos. Notes. Letters re reaction to exhibit. Thank you letters for loan of objects.

Corresp: Canby, Sheila. (1983-1986). Canby, Sheila

Corresp re lectures; slides; dissertation; translations; articles; exhibitions; resume; professional experience; performance review; objects for purchase; books; inquiries, including objects, references; catalogs; employment. Memos re research grant & consultant. Letter of recommendation. Postcard. Notes. Lists. Additional curator: Poster, Amy.

Registrar's forms: Notice of Arrivals. (1961-1967).

Registrar's forms. Memos. Notes. Incoming gift information. Loan receipts. Lists of objects with valuations. Corresp re incoming objects. Catalog records.

Tours: India and Nepal. (1967). Katz, Lois

Letters re study tour, including visits; department activities; objects; photographs. Text re trip.