SASAH Experiential Learning: Stratford Festival Archives and Collections Management

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Part of the Museum Studies Commons, and the Theatre History Commons
Julia, my partner in the internship

We worked in the “high bay” of the archives
Role

- Photograph backlogged costumes, as well as any costumes pulled and not returned
- Input costume data
  - Year, production, designer, cutter, actor, role, item, box, condition
  - Update or create accurate description of costume
  - Research in textual archive any missing material
- Store the costumes according to proper conservation practices
- Assist with exhibitions and tours as needed
Challenges

- Cataloguing system with sub-bar entries
- Backlog of costumes
- Confusing storage procedures
- Lack of funding
Tunic from Richard III (1964)

Doublet from Henry V (1956)

Robe from inaugural production of Richard III (1953)
Outcomes

• Detailed and organized inventory system
  • Could eventually be used for digital collection
• Stronger collection system
• Backlog of work reduced for permanent employees
• Increased knowledge of collection practices and procedures
• Successful exhibitions in Stratford and Toronto
• Happy visitors!
COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT
• Manage the client’s private art collection
• Create a new, comprehensive inventory
• Catalogue and photograph furniture for eventual sale
• Complete market research looking into comparable prices for artworks
• Connect with galleries and auction houses to learn about selling artworks
• Interview artists for biographical material
• Create context sheets for provenance
• Arrange professional photographer to document artworks
• Properly wrap and store artworks
Challenges

- Poorly done existing inventory needed to be redone
- Lack of provenance for works, meaning they are unable to sell
- Difficulties in properly wrapping and storing large mixed media pieces
- Scale of the work to be completed in timeframe
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entry Number</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Title of Work</th>
<th>Dimensions (Height x Widths)</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>Signed/Unsigned</th>
<th>Series</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>071.EM1</td>
<td>Ernesto Manera</td>
<td>Microcosmos V</td>
<td>61 x 39.5</td>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Mixed media on burlap</td>
<td>Signed</td>
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<td>071.EM2</td>
<td>Ernesto Manera</td>
<td>What it is that I’m evoking</td>
<td>33 x 33</td>
<td>1997</td>
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<td>Unsigned</td>
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<td>North is in the mind of the beholder, OH Lady chance</td>
<td>40 x 47.5</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Mixed media on paper, mounted on wood</td>
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<td>n/a</td>
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<td>There Must be Something Else</td>
<td>31 x 42</td>
<td>1998</td>
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<td>Unsigned</td>
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<td>Study</td>
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<td>Out of Context</td>
<td>46 x 58</td>
<td>2004</td>
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<td>n/a</td>
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<td>23 x 58.5</td>
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<td>Study for a Probable Gesture</td>
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<td>2009</td>
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<td>n/a</td>
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<td>Philosophy Made Simple</td>
<td>23 x 58.5</td>
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<td>083.EM10</td>
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<td>#7</td>
<td>73 x 48</td>
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<td>Embrace of an Eagle Eye</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Outcomes

• Detailed and organized inventory system
• Biographical information collected for eventual catalogue
• Provenance authenticated for eventual sale
• Art wrapped and stored to industry standards
• Increased knowledge of the art market
QUESTIONS!