

CRISTA DAHL MEDIA LIBRARY & ARCHIVE ACQUISITION AND DISPOSAL POLICY

Version - October 2018

1 INTRODUCTION

The Satellite Video Exchange Society (SVES, now known as VIVO) was incorporated as a non-profit in 1973. Known publicly as Video Inn, its library connected and facilitated an international video “exchange” network of alternative media producers whose goal was the sharing of information and experimental art. Through subsequent decades SVES has remained central to the development of Canadian media art and expanded its public programs. Today, VIVO is accessed by its membership for equipment rental and production support, media arts training and community knowledge sharing, distribution services, curated public programs, and its reference library and archive. VIVO serves a large community of artists at different stages of their practice, with different levels of understanding of media technology and media arts history. VIVO’s Crista Dahl Media Library & Archive (CDMLA) remains integral to SVES and its activities. It houses Western Canada’s foremost repository of videotapes by artists, activists, and independent producers, and represents 50 years of production, currently preserving 7400+ media titles. 75% of our collection was produced in B.C.

VIVO is dedicated to creating a vibrant community of media artists through innovative programs and opportunities, and inspiring artistic development by creating a space for incubation and creative exchange. We value risk-taking and radical paradigms and encourage, facilitate, and inspire artists to take on challenges beyond those taken up through established art forms. VIVO’s mandate is to directly support artists, independent community-based producers, and the public through access to all services required by media artists. The Crista Dahl Media Library & Archive mandate is to collect, preserve, and make accessible video, media art, documentaries and experimental narratives by media artists, activists, and independent producers; the organizational history of the SVES; and Special Collections of individual artists and the archives of Vancouver-based media organizations and community cable programs.

2 POLICY OVERVIEW

The purpose of the Collections Management Policy is to provide a framework for the Board and Management of the Satellite Video Exchange Society, the Archive Committee, CDMLA employees, and CDMLA volunteers, to understand and effectively execute the business of the CDMLA with regards to collections development and management.

Acquisition and disposal policy explains, in broad terms, the CDMLA’s interests and objectives from the point of view of collecting. It defines criteria used by CDMLA’s management and staff in selecting collections, works, or items for the collection. It describes the formal process by which

material is added to the collection (acquisition) and by which material can be removed (disposal).

3 ACQUISITION

The CDMLA develops, cares for, and interprets a collection that:

- Contributes to a deeper understanding and appreciation of video art, media arts, and independent non-commercial media production, in both a local and global context.
- Preserves and provides access to the ongoing organizational history and records of the activities of the Satellite Video Exchange Society.
- Preserves media acquired through Video Out distribution.
- Strengthens and enriches the public programming of the VIVO Media Arts Centre.

3.1 SCOPE

The CDMLA is committed to the acquisition of materials related to SVES, including internal documentation and administrative materials. Other materials acquired by the CDMLA should relate directly to the work of video and media artists, activists, and relevant organizations/events (non-profit media centres, community cable programs, collectives, related solo events, etc.).

The CDMLA's collecting activity is international in focus, with priority given to items of local significance (Vancouver and British Columbia). In order of preference, primacy is given to materials from:

- SVES pre-incorporation activities;
- Present or former Satellite Video Exchange Society Management, Board, or staff members;
- Present or former members of the SVES;
- Canadian media artists and activists;
- USA and global media artists and activists

We collect items on physical media of all types, and in digital file formats that are independent of physical media.

We collect objects and records related to the process of video and/or media art creation, promotion, distribution and consumption. These include personal papers of individuals involved in video and/or media art, scripts, designs, stills, posters and other ephemera, especially where these relate to the moving image collections.

We collect books, periodicals and other information resources that support research into the politics, history, technology, and impact of video and/or media art.

We commit to ensuring continued collection of productions and materials by/about those who are women-identified, LGBTQ2+, Indigenous, people of colour, and from other marginalized communities underrepresented and/or misrepresented in mainstream media.

3.2 EXCLUSIONS

3.3 QUALITY AND SIGNIFICANCE

As a specialized archive supporting media that falls outside of the acquisition policies of government or other established archives, and in recognition that the responsibility for preserving non-commercial, activist, and experimental art production has resided almost exclusively with the communities that produce it, the CDMLA prioritizes a broad representation of practice over mainstream standards of production quality. However, certain factors of quality and significance do play a role in selection and acquisition of media collections and individual works, as outlined in the following section.

3.4 SELECTION CRITERIA

Unless a work is acquired through its distribution by Video Out, to qualify for inclusion in the collection an item or work must meet at least one and preferably more than one of the following criteria:

- Aesthetic—the work is deemed to have significant aesthetic value or influence
- Historical—the work contributes significantly to the history or appreciation of video and/or media art; it provides essential evidence of the workings or output of the industry; or it has a significant value as a representation of social, cultural or political events, trends, movements, and phenomena
- Impact—the work is innovative, had a significant impact on video/media form or practice, or is widely regarded as a significant cultural reference point
- Technical—the work illustrates a significant development of a specific technique, and increases the understanding of a certain method of production
- Completion—the item completes or enhances the value of a film, collection or object already in the collections.

These criteria apply both to moving image works and to objects and records related to video/media art and promotion, distribution and consumption of such art.

3.5 PRESERVATION AND ACCESS

The CDMLA collection is intended both to be used, and to serve as a site of ongoing conservation. Therefore, access and preservation have equal priority as objectives. Decisions about acquisition format are informed by this dual objective.

The CDMLA strives to acquire the best quality materials, which can be used to make copies for access, thereby meeting access requirements without risk of loss or damage to preservation material. The highest quality materials tend to be those used in the original production of a work. Hence, the CDMLA will generally seek to acquire original production materials whenever possible.

Where original production materials are not available the CDMLA will seek to acquire high quality copies. Failing that, it will acquire distribution or viewing materials. There is in principle no lower limit to the quality of copy it will accept.

Where material is preserved elsewhere the CDMLA may prioritise the acquisition of materials best suited to access.

If there is doubt about the survival or availability of a work elsewhere the CDMLA will prioritise the acquisition of materials best suited to preservation. It will treat whatever copy it holds in the same way as original production materials.

3.6 TITLE AND RIGHTS

As an artist-run centre, and in recognition of Moral Rights guaranteed creators under Canadian copyright law, VIVO's policies support and prioritize the rights of artists and producers over their material. The CDMLA believes it is important for artists to maintain copyright and to have access to all materials they donate to the collection, when desired. As such, all copyright remains with the producer during the course of their lifetime, unless otherwise stipulated. Whenever possible, SVES encourages the producers to grant SVES licensing rights and to transfer all rights to SVES upon their death.

When acquired directly by the CDMLA, agreements about title and rights will be worked out between the CDMLA and the donor, and will be expressed in a Deed of Gift. When works are acquired through Video Out, agreements about title and rights will be worked out between Video Out and the producer, and will be expressed in a Video Out Contract.

3.7 ACQUISITION PROCEDURE

The Archives Manager is responsible for ensuring that acquisition decisions are made in line with this policy, including assessment against the criteria. Items may be acquired by donation, purchase, transfer, exchange, copying, recording, deposit or loan.

4 DEACCESSION AND DISPOSAL

A case for deaccession or disposal may be made when:

- The item is a duplicate copy in excess of the needs of preservation or access
- The item is on deposit or loan and return has been requested by the owner, in accordance with the deposit or loan agreement
- The item is lost, damaged or deteriorated beyond repair or use
- The item or work is found to no longer meet the selection criteria in the Acquisition Policy.

Items that have been deaccessioned may then be disposed of by transfer to another institution, return to owner, sale or destruction, depending on the terms of the pertinent deed of gift. If no deed of gift exists, method of disposal will be determined by the Archives Manager.

4.1 DEACCESSION AUTHORITY

The Archives Manager is responsible for ensuring that recommendations for deaccession and disposal are made in line with this Policy, for ensuring that relevant staff and stakeholders are informed and involved, and taking into account the views of donors, stakeholders and user communities.