



Media Arts Centre

CDMLA Guiding Principles

Version: November 2020

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to outline the CDMLA's guiding principles. In combination, they provide guidance to staff in a variety of contexts including how to navigate situations related to (re)use of works/records when creator guidance isn't available or is insufficient, responding to feedback/criticism, and navigating sensitive materials. Since the CDMLA is a community archive in the context of an artist run centre with a focus on stewarding media arts history, alternative scenes, and artworks/records from alternative communities, principles relevant to our context and are important for those who may be interested in using/donating to the archive as well as staff.

Implementation

The CDMLA draft principles will be distributed amongst staff and volunteers, then revised as needed. The principles will be made available on our website and in the CDMLA space. As new principles are needed or principles shift, the document will be modified.

Revision History

As of winter 2020, This policy has been a collaboration between Karen Knights (Archives Manager) and Syr Reifsteck (Archivist) in dialogue with past archivists, librarians and staff across time at the CDMLA. Future changes to this policy, including changes from the Archives Committee, will be outlined here as they occur.

Background

The CDMLA, as a part of the Larger VIVO organization, strives to engender equity through our shared organizational values.

VIVO Media Arts Centre's values (2020) are the following: **experimental, artist run, equitable stewardship, responsible stewardship, responsive, Indigenous sovereignty, and inclusive** [For more detail and exploration go to <https://www.vivomediaarts.com/about>]
These organizational values guide our work as a library and archive.

We also act by our own guiding principles and act in accordance with our ethics to steward materials, facilitate access and research, and serve our communities.

These principles were developed in dialogue with professional codes and calls [See the archive's living bibliography].

CDMLA Principles

The principles that guide the CDMLA's policies and practices, alongside VIVO's values, as of 2020, are:

1. **Access**

As an archive and library, we have a responsibility to provide reasonable and equitable access to our holdings. Sometimes access is in tension with preservation needs of materials, and thus we have a duty to hold both access and preservation in mind. As an alternative/community-based library and archive, we work to provide access to all who might be interested in the records we hold.

We work to notice when we might be able to provide better access or more transparent decision making and do our best to do so.

2. **Preservation**

We seek to preserve and protect the materials and histories in our care as appropriate to the materials.

3. **Democratization**

Building upon SVES' relationship to the media democratisation movement, the CDMLA values creatorship, affordable access to media technology, access to distribution networks, alternative media arts, and the right of artists, producers and community members to tell, disseminate, and respond to their own stories.

4. **Privacy**

Given the wide ranging and sometimes sensitive subjects of the materials in the CDMLA's care, we have a duty to consider the personal and privacy concerns of creators, artists, and community members in our holdings. We use various strategies to consider these concerns including direct agreements with creators and our best judgement balancing the needs of privacy and access to materials. (This may mean different kinds of access to materials)

5. **Agency/Autonomy of Creators**

The CDMLA upholds the autonomy of creators, artists, and community members to determine how and in what ways their records are seen, viewed, and used. As caretakers of various histories, we strive to let those records, individuals, and communities speak for themselves. As a counter-archive holding the histories of oppressed communities we support the creator's right to control the how and the where their works can be accessed or disseminated.

6. **Consent**

Building upon the previous principles, informed consent is a central practice for the CDMLA for how works arrive and are shared. When works of unknown origins are found or donated to the CDMLA we do our best to steward them.

7. **Context**

The CDMLA strives to convey the context of materials and records in our care.

8. **Reciprocity & Relationships**

The CDMLA values mutual exchange between the media arts communities, artists/producers and the archive. We seek to be in active relationships of reciprocity, promoting exchange between

current makers and their communities and the histories we steward. We hope to be of service. We aim to be situated in community.

9. **Anti-Oppression**

The CDLMA seeks to align itself with the work of anti-oppression in our cataloging practices, access practices, acquisition practices, and services. The CDMLA also strives to support the work of anti-oppression in the larger world and communities, through sharing histories and documentation.

10. **Response**

We recognize and support the creator's right to criticize, examine, and educate through the appropriation of commercial and political materials without citation. We support appropriation as a historic and necessary strategy for criticizing and revealing the mechanisms of control, suppression, erasure of, and as acts of violence upon marginalized people.

11. **Community Based Archival Practices**

We are a community-based archive situated within an artist-run centre. We organize from within that context.

12. **Feedback**

The CDMLA values feedback related to our principles, practices, and policies.