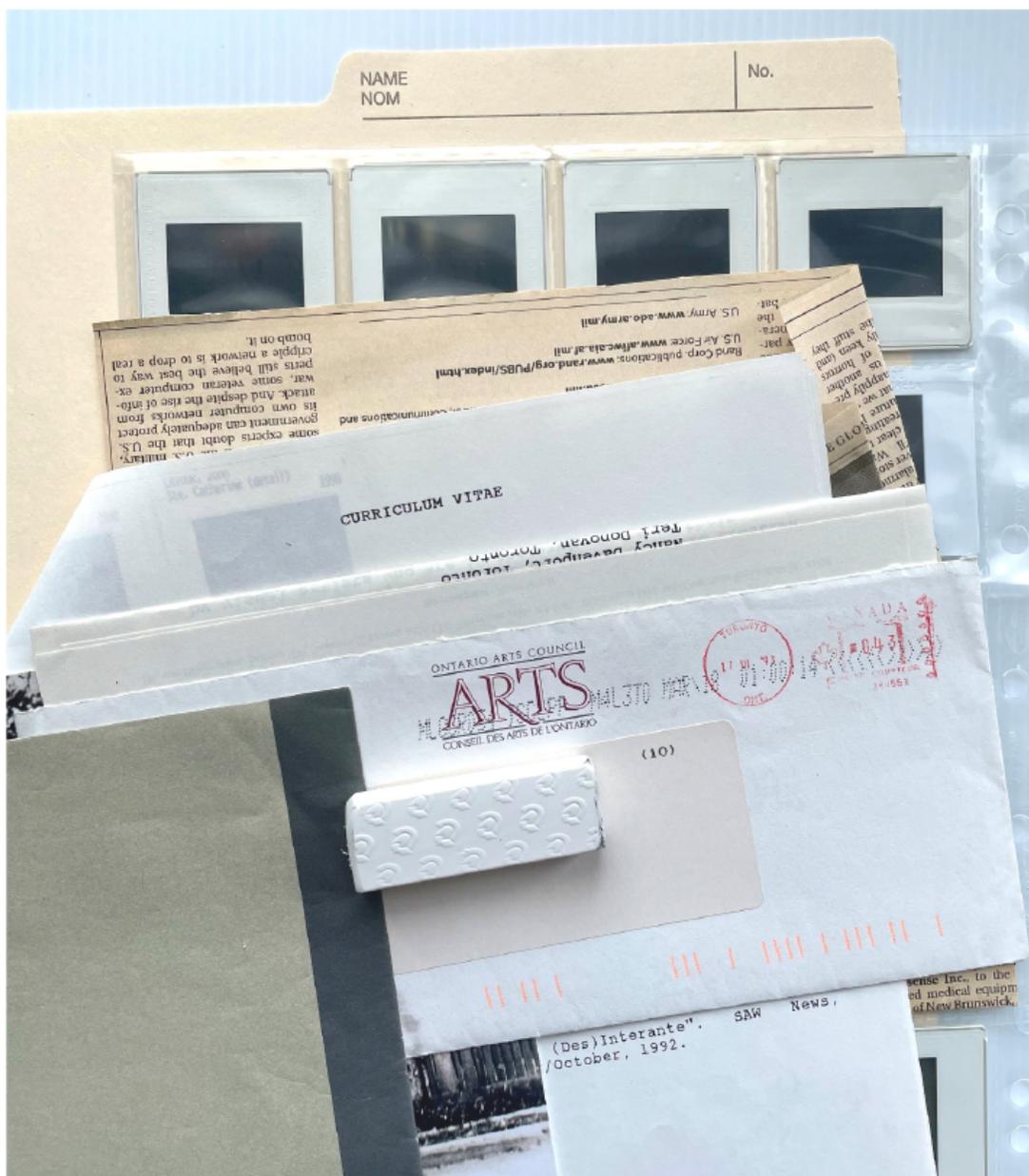


# The State of Artists' Files in Canadian GLAMs & ARCs: Report



by Sara Ellis & John Latour

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Montreal: John Latour, 2022

*The State of Artists' Files in Canadian GLAMs & ARCs: Report*

by Sara Ellis, Art & Visual Literacy Librarian, University of British Columbia Music  
Art & Architecture Library

and John Latour, Teaching & Research Librarian - Fine Arts, Concordia University

Montreal: John Latour, 2022

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## INTRODUCTION

Artists' files (sometimes referred to as artists' vertical files) document the careers of artists over time and can reflect the history of the organizations that collect them. These files serve as an important source of information for researchers in art history and the visual arts. Sometimes they are the only source of information on particular aspects of artists' careers and our cultural history, as they can hold content that is not published in other formats or that is not found elsewhere.

Historically, the collection, organization, and accessibility of artists' files in Canada has been under documented. Very little has been published on this topic in relation to galleries, libraries, archives and museums (GLAMs) in Canada and, based on the research conducted so far by the authors of this report, no studies have been carried out on the subject in relation to Canadian artist-run centres (ARCs). Currently, the only pan-Canadian program that identifies artists' file collections is the Government of Canada's [Artists in Canada](#), an online, bilingual union list that lists the documentation files on Canadian artists for twenty-five GLAMs. No ARCs are included in this union list.

By recognizing that the collection and management of artists' files is likely far more prevalent than is documented, this project, titled *The State of Artists' Files in Canadian GLAMs & ARCS*, seeks to identify the current state of artists' file management behaviour at GLAMs and ARCs across Canada. This report provides context for a survey that was conducted in March 2022; collected responses; and preliminary findings. The intended audience includes Canadian GLAMs and ARCs, and more broadly, art information professionals.

We thank everyone who participated in this stage of the research project! Further to this, another phase of the project will include an article with a literature review and additional research and analysis.

## HYPOTHESIS

The primary motivation for this project is to test the hypothesis that artists' file management is being carried out throughout Canada in much greater numbers than is currently known, albeit in a fragmentary way.

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## METHOD

This project employed a bilingual (English/French) online questionnaire to survey GLAMs and ARCs from across Canada in order to better understand their artists' file management behaviour. The questionnaire included 30 multiple choice responses and open text options, and the expected time to complete the questionnaire was 20 minutes or less.

## ETHICS REVIEW

*The State of Artists' Files in Canadian GLAMs & ARCS* project received ethics approval from both the University of British Columbia's Office of Research Services, Behavioural Research Ethic Board (H21-03841) and Concordia University's Research Ethics Unit, Office of Research (30016271).

## PARTICIPANTS

Project participants were identified by the authors of this report based on the following criteria. Selected individuals included information professionals and cultural workers from Canadian GLAMs and ARCs. Selected organizations are located in Canada and are recognized within the cultural sector through their membership to one or more of the following professional associations: the [Artist-Run Centres and Collectives Conference](#) (ARCA), the [Art Libraries Society of North America](#) (ARLIS/NA), the [Canadian Art Museum Directors Organization](#) (CAMDO) and the [Universities Art Association of Canada](#) (UAAC); or members of the [Artists in Canada Union List](#) maintained by the Library & Archives of the National Gallery of Canada. Academic libraries, archives, and special collections from Canadian universities and colleges were also included within the purview of participating organizations. The survey was not sent to "for profit" organizations (e.g. commercial art galleries) as these do not traditionally offer public services.

## DATA COLLECTION & USE

Selected participants were sent email invitations March 1, 2022, with a closing date of March 25, 2022. These invitations included survey instructions and a hyperlink to access the online questionnaire, which consisted of 30 multiple choice and open text questions provided in both English and French. All responses were optional and are shared in this report in the language in which they were provided.

Data was collected using Qualtrics (UBC's Survey Tool/Research Core platform, which complies with the British Columbia Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA)). Only the co-investigators have access to the collected data, used in the preparation of this report, and it may be used to support subsequent publications. Collected data will be retained for five years after which it will be destroyed.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

The survey was anonymous, but participants were given the option to publicly identify themselves at the start of the questionnaire if they wanted to do so. All other responses have been anonymized or de-identified using: [redacted] in the report.

## **RESPONSE RATE**

Invitations to participate in an online survey were sent to 214 distinct email addresses at 166 organizations. Some large organizations, that have more than one unit or department that could conceivably maintain artists' files, received more than one invitation email.

In total, there were 90 respondents to the survey. The response rate for distinct email addresses (i.e., from an individual, a unit, or a department) was 42.0% and the response rate from organizations was 54.2%.

Early on in the questionnaire, some 20 respondents indicated that their organization did not hold artists' files and so they were automatically brought to the end of the survey. For this reason, the number of participants who answered all 30 questions was reduced.

We are pleased to publish the summary results from these responses below.

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## QUESTIONNAIRE

**Note to reader:** This section of the report includes the original questionnaire with responses following each question.

### Consent

#### **A. Do you consent to being surveyed?**

- Yes
- No (If your answer is 'No', you will automatically be directed to the end of the survey)

**Responses:** Yes (90) / No (0)

**B. By default, your name and your institution's name will remain anonymous in all research outputs for this project. However, you have the option to make your institution's name publicly known, if you wish. Do you want your institution to be identified in the report?**

- Yes (If yes, What is the name of your organization and the specific department or branch, if applicable?)
- No

**Responses:** Yes (45) / No (40)

**Yes (If yes, What is the name of your organization and the specific department or branch, if applicable?):**

Alberta University of the Arts/Luke Lindoe Library

Art Gallery of Hamilton

Artex

Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec

Bill Reid Gallery of Northwest Coast Art

Canadian Clay and Glass Gallery

Canada Council Art Bank

Canadian Women Artists History Initiative, Concordia University

Carleton University Art Gallery

DAZIBAO

E.P. Taylor Library & Archives, Art Gallery of Ontario  
FOFA Gallery, Concordia University  
Galerie UQO  
Gallery TPW  
InterAccess  
Leonard & Bina Ellen Art Gallery  
London Public Library  
McGill Library Rare Books and Special Collections  
McMichael Canadian Art Collection  
Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery  
Musée d'art de Joliette  
Museum London  
Museum of Anthropology at UBC - Audrey & Harry Hawthorn Library & Archives  
National Gallery of Canada  
OCAD University  
OPTICA, centre d'art contemporain  
PAVED Arts  
Regina Public Library/Dunlop Art Gallery  
The Rooms  
Ryerson Image Centre  
Struts Gallery  
Tom Thomson Art Gallery  
Thunder Bay Art Gallery  
UNIT/PITT Society for Art and Critical Awareness  
University Art Collection, University of Saskatchewan  
University of British Columbia, Music, Art & Architecture Library  
University of Calgary, Libraries and Cultural Resources  
University of Guelph, Archival and Special Collections  
University of Lethbridge Art Gallery  
Vancouver Public Library  
Visual Collections Repository (VCR), Faculty of Fine Arts, Concordia University  
Vivo Media Arts Centre - Library and Archive  
Western Front  
York University Libraries, Clara Thomas Archives & Special Collections  
YYZ Artists' Outlet

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## Questions about your organization

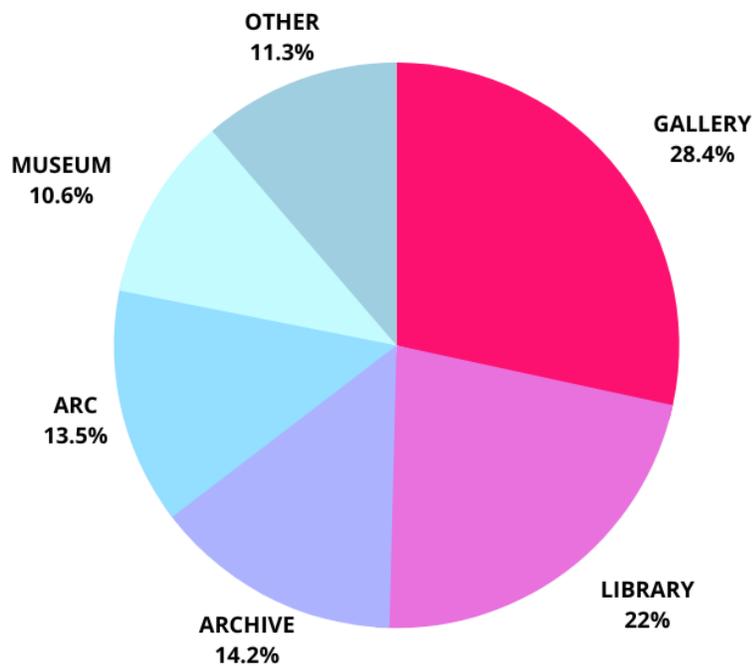
### 1. How do you define your organization?

Choose all options that apply to your situation.

- Gallery
- Library
- Archive
- Artist-run centre
- Museum
- Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

### Responses:

Gallery (40) / Library (31) / Archive (20) / Artist-run centre (19) / Museum (15) / Other (16)



**GALLERY - 40**

**LIBRARY - 31**

**ARCHIVE - 20**

**ARTIST RUN CENTRE  
(ARC) - 19**

**MUSEUM - 15**

**OTHER - 16**

**Other (please specify):**

Indigenous Art Museum  
Centre d'exposition  
Academic visual resource  
Craft and Design College  
Performing Arts Theatre  
University art gallery  
Arts Organization  
Government Heritage Collection  
Programme éducatif public  
Documentation Centre  
Art rental collection  
Special collection  
Galerie universitaire  
Research Centre  
Publisher  
Production Centre

**2. If you selected more than one option in Question 1, is there any additional information you would like to provide?**

**Responses:**

[Redacted] is an art museum which features contemporary Indigenous art of the Northwest Coast, and is concerned with raising awareness of art, artists, cultural connections and contemporary issues. We are an educational organization.

Les centres d'artistes ont évolué!! Nous ne correspondons plus tout à fait à la définition originale du centre d'artistes mais privilégions toujours des instances décisionnelles ou agissent une majorité d'artistes.

We straddle both archival and library work by managing an extensive collection of slides and films, as well as their digital assets. Our mandate is to provide visual resources to the [redacted] to support teaching and research.

We are a library and archive located within an artist-run centre.

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I did not select archives as a separate entity as the institutional archives is under the umbrella of the University Library.

[Redacted] is a department of [redacted] responsible for acquiring artists' fonds and published material (books about Canadian art and artists, exhibition catalogues, and artists' books) that support research, teaching, and learning by faculty and students.

L'organisme [redacted] est composé de [redacted] et [redacted]. Cela dit, les dossiers d'artistes sont conservés par [redacted].

We are a non-collecting university art gallery. Our scale and focus on experimental/emerging contemporary art practices means we function similar to an artist-run centre.

[Redacted] is devoted to supporting Inuit artists.

We are a library and archive inside an art museum. "Gallery" kind of depends how that is defined. So I selected all of those.

Our organization is a Federal Heritage Collection that is managed/promoted through a Federal Government Program. Accompanying the Collection is an archive and resource library that supports the institutional history of the Collection and the artists it represents.

Archives : nous détenons un fonds d'archives qui est géré par [redacted].

We are an academic institution, but our libraries, archives, and galleries are converged in one building. Each unit operates independently, although we frequently collaborate.

Just perhaps to add that we don't define ourselves as an archive because we don't generally collect primary source material.

Our collection includes over 17000 artworks by more than 3000 artists. We use the collection for art rental, exhibition and outreach activities.

We have two collections: Visual Art and Historical Artifacts.

Nous sommes une bibliothèque au sein d'un musée.

[Redacted] is an independent, public collection. It is not connected to a museum or academic institution.

Research, teaching and exhibition of photography and related media.

Predominantly known as an artist-run centre, but with gallery, archives, and library facilities / services.

We have a publicly accessible fine art library which one can access in person or online at [redacted]. We have a permanent collection and are working on developing our vertical files and archive.

I noted that we are an "Archive," but that's more aspirational. Our archive isn't set up for public access, and access to files is managed by an Archive Committee. We do not have the funding to properly store our archive in a facility that allows researchers to access it.

We are a combination of contemporary art gallery and local history museum and archives. We maintain a historical collection related to the history of our region, but we do not keep a collection of contemporary art.

[Redacted] is a non-profit, artist run centre for production, presentation, research and dissemination of contemporary media arts [redacted]. [Redacted] exists to support artists who work in these media.

[Redacted] is a collecting art gallery focusing on contemporary art.

We are a provincial museum, art gallery and archive.

### **Questions about the artists' file collection**

#### **3. Do you collect and manage artists' files?\***

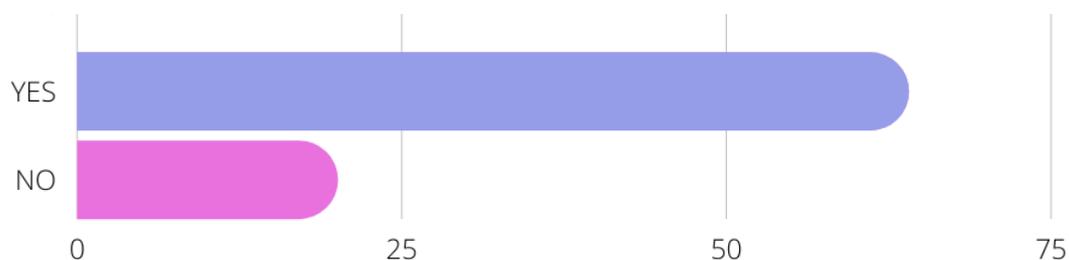
- Yes
- No (If your answer is 'No', you will automatically be directed to the end of the survey)

\*\* For the purposes of this questionnaire, the term "artists' files" refers to files that are intended to document artists, their careers, and their artistic practices. Artists' files may

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contain print and/or digital documents. Here, the term “artist” is used to describe creative practitioners in the visual arts (e.g., architects, craftspersons, designers, painters, performance artists, photographers, sculptors, etc.). Artists whose primary practice is within the performing arts (i.e., drama, dance, music) are considered out of scope for this project.

**Responses:** Yes (64) / No (20)



**Note:** Those who answered “No” to this question were brought to the end of the survey. Therefore, the total number of participants for the remaining questions was reduced.

#### 4. What is the size of your artists’ file collection in terms of the number of files?

Choose one.

- I don’t know
- Between 1 and 100
- Between 101 and 200
- Between 201 and 500
- Between 501 and 1,000
- Between 1,001 and 5,000
- Between 5,001 and 10,000
- More than 10,000
- Or, identify the specific number of files in the collection, if known: \_\_\_\_\_

**Responses:**

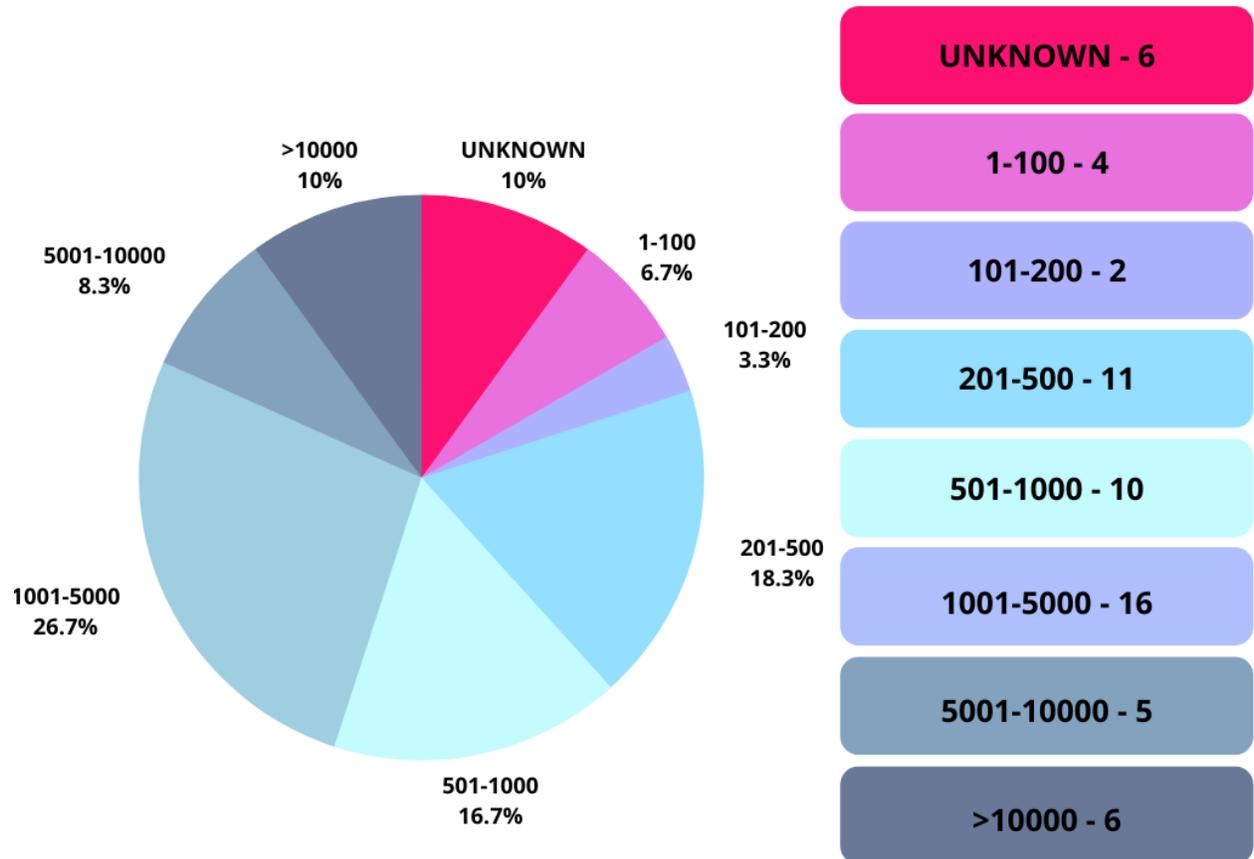
I don’t know (6) / Between 1 and 100 (4) / Between 101 and 200 (2) / Between 201 and 500 (11) / Between 501 and 1,000 (10) / Between 1,001 and 5,000 (15) / Between 5,001 and 10,000 (4) / More than 10,000 (5) / Or, identify the specific number of files in the collection, if known (3)

Or, identify the specific number of files in the collection, if known:

Roughly 60 000 Canadian artists' files; also non-Canadian artists' files but number unknown.

3150.

8800.



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## 5. What type of documents do you collect in your artists' files?

Choose as many document types as are applicable to your situation.

- Artist's books, zines or other artist publications
- Artist's CVs
- Artist's multiples
- Artist's statements
- Newspaper clippings or articles (originals and/or copies)
- Computer printouts (paper documentation of online content)
- Documentation in digital format (images or texts on CD-ROMS, DVDs, etc.)
- Documentation in analog format (slides, photographs, film, cassettes, tapes, etc.)
- Exhibition ephemera (printed matter such as cards, programmes, press releases, brochures)
- Publications (catalogues, biographies, etc.)
- Unpublished manuscripts
- Works of art (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_
- Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

### Responses:

Artist's books, zines or other artist publications (34) / Artist's CVs (54) / Artist's multiples (8) / Artist's statements (51) / Newspaper clippings or articles (originals and/or copies) (53) / Computer printouts (paper documentation of online content) (48) / Documentation in digital format (images or texts on CD-ROMS, DVDs, etc.) (36) / Documentation in analog format (slides, photographs, film, cassettes, tapes, etc.) (42) / Exhibition ephemera (printed matter such as cards, programmes, press releases, brochures) (57) / Publications (catalogues, biographies, etc.) (48) / Unpublished manuscripts (17) / Works of art (please specify) (14) / Other (please specify) (7)

### Works of art (please specify):

Small works on paper can be found - handmade cards, etc. but we do not actively collect these.

Sketches and maquettes, some paintings.

We have a permanent collection of visual artworks.

Mostly ours are costume and set designs as well as 150 set models.

Oeuvres acquises pour la collection de prêt.

We have a separate collection of works of art.

Occasionally - small prints, or other small scale printed art forms.

Non-predominant, but a few artists mostly related to the founders of the organization.

Art that was left over from solo and group exhibitions, artists did not return or chose to leave with [redacted].

Clay, glass and copper enamelling only.

**Other (please specify):**

Ephemera, potlatch gifts, etc.

Information Forms filled out by artists.

Member files/training.

Uncertain; some are unprocessed.

Research notes.

Information supplémentaire sur l'artiste et son oeuvre, jointe à celle-ci.

Purchase receipts, conservation information.

**6. Does the artists' file collection have particularly strong representation in any specific areas (e.g., women artists, artists working in a particular discipline, format, or medium; artists of a particular geographic region, cultural group, or nationality; etc.)?**

Yes (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

No

**Responses:** Yes (51) / No (8)

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**Yes (please specify):**

Women's movement.

Inuit artists.

Northwest Coast, Indigenous, BC

1. Local 2. Canadian 3. Indigenous (Inuit) 4. European.

Alberta.

Contemporary Indigenous Artists.

Canadian artists.

Canadian only. Especially Indigenous.

Media arts.

Artists from the [redacted] collection.

Geographic region (regional artist) and artist in our collection.

Geographic: focuses on alumni and Alberta artists.

We primarily collect media artists, and a significant portion of the files are artists who have practiced in BC.

[Redacted] faculty and Canadian Artists.

Canadian and Quebec contemporary art (1960-present).

British Columbia, especially Lower Mainland. We also have a separate Indigenous Artists file collection.

Women, Italian-Canadians.

Northwest Coast Indigenous Artists.

Artistes québécois, dont les oeuvres sont conservées dans les collections d'estampes, de reliures ou de livres d'artistes de [redacted].

Artists that attended this institution.

Inuit Artists.

Performing arts (theatre, opera)

Artists working in Canada.

Sérigraphie, québécois.

Architects / architecture.

Indigenous artists.

Par exposition.

Toronto and Canada.

It definitely skews to Western Canada/Prairie region, but overall it is a Canadian Artists File Collection.

We have a stronger representation of artist files for artists who have lived or worked in [redacted] and the surrounding area.

Artists with affiliation with the university.

Canadian, women, born generally before 1930.

Relates to artworks in our collection which are primarily regional artists.

Canadian contemporary art from the 1970's and 80's from across the country.

Regional artists.

Saskatchewan Folk Art.

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Artists canadiens et designers internationaux.

Indigenous artists, Queer artist, Canadian artists.

Western Canada (BC, AB, SK, MB)

Artists in Canada.

Saskatchewan artists.

Canadian Artists, International Artists, General Subject: Canadian, General Subject: International, Technical.

[Redacted] has records on any artist that has been involved in a program, exhibition or event that has taken place at the organization. This includes national, international, and multi-disciplinary artists.

We are currently reassessing this but we do have extensive collections tracing the development of an artist's career. We have a focus on local, regional and provincial artists and an interest in the work by women.

Vancouver and surrounding regions; queer artists and queer themes; activist art; art that deals with text/art-writing; punk/DIY/underground art scenes.

London, Ontario region.

Vancouver/BC 1960s-70s.

Primarily artists from the region (GTA) and Inuit artists, with a focus on Baker Lake.

Atlantic Region/film and video/performance art.

Clay, glass and copper enamelling artists only.

Artists from Newfoundland and Labrador/artists in our collection.

## Collection Development & Management

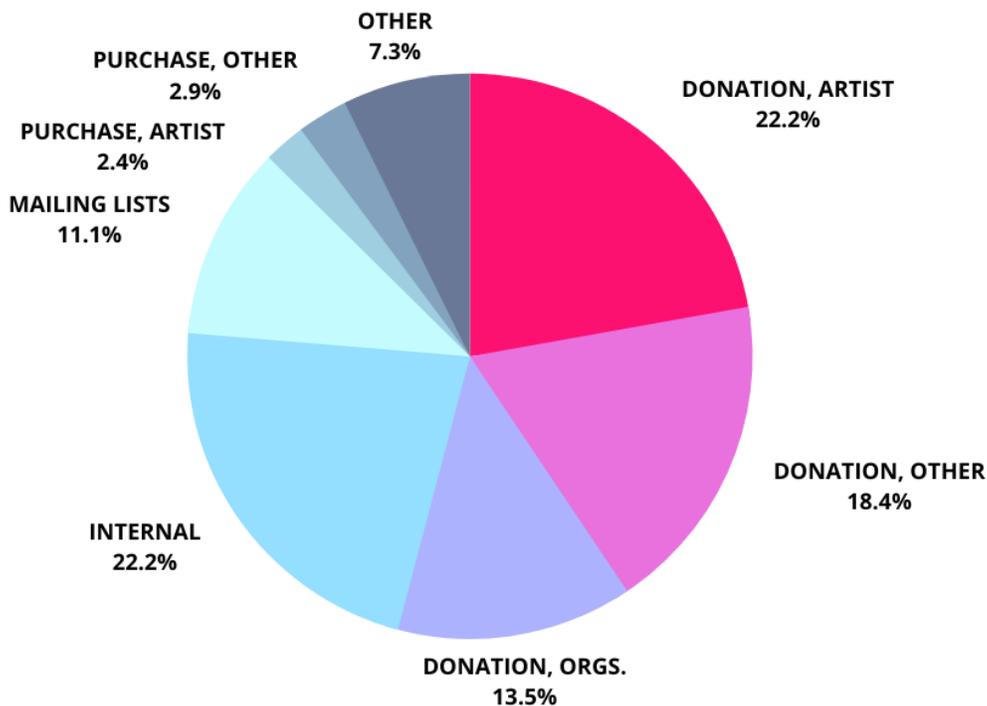
### 7. Through what channels do the documents that make up the artists' file collection come from?

Choose as many options as are applicable to your situation.

- Donation from the artist (including bequests)
- Donation from persons other than the artist
- Donation or exchange from other organizations
- From internal channels through my organization
- From mailing lists
- Purchase directly from the artist
- Purchase from persons or organizations other than the artist
- Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

#### Responses:

Donation from the artist (including bequests) (46) / Donation from persons other than the artist (38) / Donation or exchange from other organizations (28) / From internal channels through my organization (46) / From mailing lists (23) / Purchase directly from the artist (5) / Purchase from persons or organizations other than the artist (6) / Other (please specify) (15)



**DONATION, FROM THE ARTIST - 46**

**DONATION, FROM OTHER PERSONS - 38**

**DONATION, FROM ORGANIZATIONS - 28**

**INTERNAL CHANNELS - 46**

**MAILING LISTS - 23**

**PURCHASE, FROM THE ARTIST - 5**

**PURCHASE, OTHER SOURCES - 6**

**OTHER - 15**

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**Other (please specify):**

Collected and researched by staff and students.

Ephemera in the truest sense.

These days a lot is printed from the web, which we are directed to via electronic things such as newsletters, distribution lists, etc.

Librarian sourcing materials.

Gathered from past exhibitions or at a time of acquisition.

Primary donations.

Documents constitués par exposition.

Gallery visits and through mail.

Librarians put them together by collecting resources.

Our own research.

Conservator reports.

Documentation pertaining to the acquisition of artwork as a part of the Art Rental and Permanent Collection.

The organization used to collect proposals for exhibitions that would often include CVs, bios, slides or photographs, and often the organization would keep those proposals (regardless of whether or not the artist was offered a show). This was in the '80s-'90s.

Clippings services (once upon a time, long ago); Internet searches; there's an element of opportunism.

Research.

**8. What is the main source of documents that make up the artists' file collection?**

Choose one.

- I don't know
- Donation
- Exchange
- Purchase
- Community outreach
- Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

**Responses:**

I don't know (11) / Donation (24) / Exchange (2) / Purchase (1) / Community outreach (3) / Other (please specify) (18)

**Other (please specify):**

Collected and researched by staff and students

From artists/internal documentation

Newspapers / invitations, etc.

Collection? Most of the material is either documentation of events in [redacted] or clippings from magazines, exhibition flyers which have been sent to us, or material that staff members pick up at exhibits.

Les documents sont principalement reçus grâce au [redacted], les artistes fournissant parfois un dossier avec leurs oeuvres.

Internal research and purchasing.

Dossiers constitués par exposition.

Staff research.

Information collected by internal staff.

From purchasing artwork or receiving a donation. In-house research about artists.

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Documents related to the artist on a project basis: internally generated or sourced from media/online.

Internal research on the internet, newspapers, publications.

Staff, part time workers, students, photographers.

Internal research.

Research.

Generated by our Programs/ Activity.

Exhibition files, old mailouts.

**9. Do you have written collection development policies or procedures for the artists' file collection?**

- Yes
- No

**Responses:** Yes (16) / No (43)

**10. If yes, are these policies or procedures available to the public?**

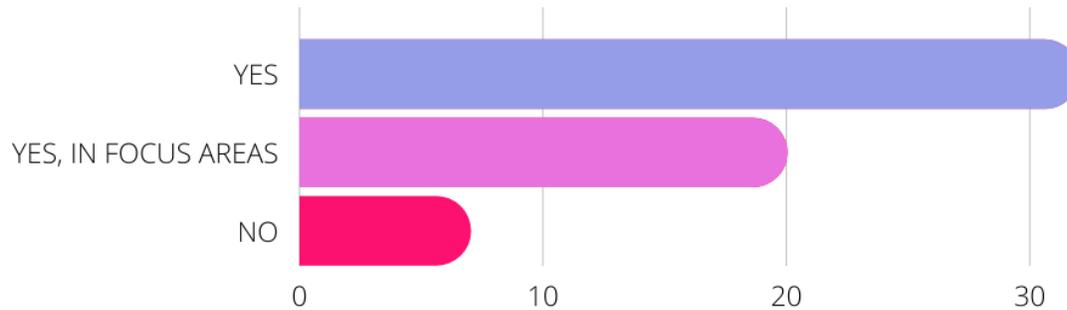
- Yes
- No
- Not applicable

**Responses:** Yes (5) / No (10) / Not applicable (40)

### 11. Does your collection continue to grow?

- Yes
- Yes, but only in particular focus areas
- No

**Responses:** Yes (32) / Yes, but only in particular focus areas (20) / No (7)



### 12. Have you deaccessioned any or all of your artists' files?

- Yes
- Yes, but only in particular focus areas
- No

**Responses:** Yes (7) / Yes, but only in particular focus areas (9) / No (43)

### 13. If yes, how did you treat the deaccessioned files (e.g., destroy or transfer to another institution)?

**Responses:**

Our files have been through a rough period. We're currently reassigning our collection policy and trying to focus the files more to artists in our collection only and Inuit artists in general.

Files are put in storage.

We only recycled artist files for non-Canadian artists that contained less than 10 things and where artists who do not have work in the national collection.

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Offer to local institutions, local donation, shredding.

We have been moving in the direction of only maintaining BC artist files. We offered our Canadian files (outside of BC) to other institutions but were not needed. We are not planning to destroy the collections; instead, we have it tucked away in a staff only archive section.

Destroyed/recycled materials that were generally replaced with better, updated versions.

The only files we have deaccessioned are international files where there was no connection to the museum collection. This was before my time and I believe the material was destroyed.

Destruction.

Recycled.

The deaccession of a certain collection of files occurred when a section of the Collection was deaccessioned in ca. 1989. The files were sent to Library and Archives for retention.

We haven't deaccessioned files from what I can tell, but I think that some of the files were weeded a bit for duplicates or irrelevant material (from what I can tell from my predecessors).

Withdraw from the Library Catalogue and discard/destroy.

[Redacted] is a mostly non-collecting institution, the artist files we have are either legacy donations/acquisitions, or directly associated with programming, exhibitions or events (created institutionally or specifically acquired). For deaccessioned material (records that we deem do not relate to our organization), records are either repatriated or transferred to a different repository. We are currently in the process of writing and reviewing our policies for public disclosure.

The contents were usually destroyed.

Destroy.

Files were never formally accessioned. They are informal collections of research materials about artists collected over the years. Occasionally, the files are re-sorted and cleaned of duplicate materials, or materials disposed of if they no longer have research relevance.

**14. How do you determine what documents are kept in the artists' file collection and what documents are kept in other collections in your organization?**

**Responses:**

This has been done at random to my knowledge. Any materials that come through from curators or to the library. I will be working on a policy to itemize the types of materials that we are looking for in the artist files to also help eliminate some of the overlap with the collection files.

Our artist files are kept in two areas: [redacted] - we have extensive archival ephemera files, which could be considered artist files - these are documented in our collections database Collections information files - related to specific artworks in the core collection, which then include documentation of the artist and their work - the artworks are catalogued, but only a portion of the artist documentation is recorded.

It's decided by the curatorial and collections team. It's a very informal process.

Materials and information associated with artists' careers.

The artist's files we have are basically a hangover from another time, they do not really have a uniform format and are rarely consulted. We keep them as a source of potential info - often when consulted they do not yield much useful info honestly!

We have a collection development policy that spells a lot of this out; if something has an ISBN or ISSN it gets catalogued for the Library Collection.

We do not have a formal policy on this, so the item is assessed on a case by case basis.

Our artist files are for biographical information about the artist and their work, generally, and specific information about their work in our collection. These are the guidelines we use to determine what material to keep.

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Format mostly, i.e., documents, clippings, copies, papers, ephemera, pamphlets, brochures, etc. but nothing that we could classify as “archival”. Materials that cannot be kept on the library shelf are put in the vertical files (sheets of slides, small exhibition catalogues, unpublished papers, etc.). Small exhibition catalogues/handsheets which are not catalogued. Although some of the material in the artist files are fully catalogued in our library system.

We have artist members’ records associated with our production studio. We keep these records on file even if that member has not accessed the studio or renewed their membership in several years.

These are primarily historical files that we currently add to with newspaper articles / exhibition invitations / artist statements / documentation sent from artists or descendants etc. They are not being actively updated or newly generated.

We’re currently not actively collecting, but I would say our main criteria is whether the artist has a tie to the institution, as that aligns with our archival collecting approach as well.

The artist files are the only collection of its type in the archive - the other collections are larger individual artist fonds, or the institutional archive. In the case of documentation of [redacted] events which may relate in both the [redacted] fonds and the artists’ files, we prioritize the [redacted] fonds and then deposit extra copies of materials, if they exist, in the artist files.

Fonds on [redacted] faculty, lectures, distinguished visitors, and Canadian Artists.

Any artists files remain within the artists files.

We keep documents that are related to the general art practice and career of artists whose works are in our Permanent Collection (CV, publications, images, exhibition history, etc.) We also keep documents that refer specifically to the works in the Permanent collection, including exhibition and acquisition history.

This has changed over the years. Generally we add ephemera, clippings, print publicity, etc, - items that cannot be catalogued and interfiled with the rest of the collection because of the nature of the format. We usually catalogue and interfile exhibition collections. In recent years, when the size permits, we do add catalogues and the occasional artist book and/or zine. We do have a separate zine collection though.

Groups of documents that meet the definition of a fonds (all of the records created or received by an individual in the course of their activities and preserved for future use) are managed as part of [redacted] according to archival principles. Published material such as exhibition posters and catalogues, monographs, and books created by artists are added to Special Collections and are catalogued according to our Libraries' bibliographic standards.

Generally size - larger works are added to the main library collection. Some materials related to works of art held by the museum may be kept in parallel accession files.

Pour les documents publiés (ex: carton d'exposition) : tout ce qui n'est pas soumis au [redacted] peut se retrouver dans le dossier d'artiste.

By type. Items themselves are in the library, supporting documentation is in the Archives.

All files compiled are collected and remain in file storage, in a digital database and in our archives.

Materials location is determined by function mostly.

Although we have a collections development policy for our [redacted], it is not publicly available but does specify what types of records we take and what we don't; we do circulate the policy to our prospective donors. Our theatre archives contains both individual theatre artists' and companies' records. We do not mix fonds. If an individual worked for a specific company but donated those materials to us, they would go with the donor's fonds not in the company's, and vice versa.

Unique/original material is kept in Special Collections (private archives). We also distinguish between pamphlets containing substantial writing, which are individually catalogued in our Pamphlets collection, and smaller pieces of ephemera which stay in the artist files.

Nous obtenons la documentation transmise par les artistes lorsqu'ils soumettent une oeuvre pour acquisition. Les informations sont utilisées de manière plus pérenne (inscription au catalogue, sur l'oeuvre concernée, etc.) si l'oeuvre est acquise. Sinon, les documents sont conservés seulement comme outil d'aide à la sélection et non pas comme source de données.

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The artist file collection hasn't grown in many years. I've been at my institution for three years, and in that time, we occasionally (maybe twice?) add items sent to us by our director, but otherwise nothing has been added to the collection.

We keep any documents/material that is related to an artist's career.

Tous les documents relatifs à l'exposition de l'artiste (CV, communiqué de presse, contrat, imprimés, articles, publicités) ainsi qu'à sa pratique et à des activités critiques sont conservés dans le dossier de l'artiste. Une documentation visuelle est également jointe au dossier.

The artist files are exclusively for ephemera, flyers, newspaper and magazine clippings. Anything in book or magazine form whenever possible is treated as a book and shelved in a stiff cardboard cover rather than put into files. We have a separate zine collection. We have a collection of microfilms as well as index cards of articles and mentions in other publications.

Our artist files are now a closed collection, so any artistic documentation will go to our archives, while artist books to our special collections.

Most documents relating to artists are kept either in their artist file, or in the specific accession file for a work of art. Typically all general information or catalogues is kept in the artist file, whereas the accession file holds information specific to that particular artwork or donation process.

Collection policies and guidelines.

All documents that are donated or researched are kept in our own collection. There is no other part of our organization.

Using the categories of information you have included in Q5. We are not adding to artist files aside from obituary notices or the odd online article that staff notice as we do not have resources to build upon our files. If a new artist is added to the collection, we will collect basic information the artist for their file (ie. CV).

We don't have any written guidelines. We certainly include purchase information, information pertaining to the care of the artworks, information about donations to other collections, etc. We also keep invitations but we aren't consistent in filing information.

Anything pertaining to the artist will be kept in an artist file (ie. CVs, pamphlets, media release) documents pertaining to a specific work of the artist is kept in the accession file.

We keep hard copy files of all artists whose artwork belongs in our collections.

Nous conservons principalement des documents éphémères et manuscrits dans les dossier d'artistes. Les publications commerciaux sont catalogués et font partie de la collections de la bibliothèque.

Not sure if this invalidates the survey lol but we don't actually arrange our files as artist files, they are done on a program by program basis in the chronology of our gallery's programming history and to answer this question include all related documentation gathered before, during, and since that program occurred. Therefore while most artists only have one file for a specific instance they worked with us, some artists we've worked with multiple times have multiple files.

Geographic focus, size/pagination, format, preservation factors (including Rare Books & Special Collections items).

Our classification system determines that all printed ephemera that was donated by the artist or on behalf of the artist be placed in their artist file, all publications pertaining to solo works be placed in the artist file as a priority. Collective works are held in the file of the publisher or organization (museum, gallery, artist-run centre).

Pour chaque donation, nous amassons l'information disponible sur l'artiste en lien avec l'oeuvre offerte. Ce critère nous permet d'éliminer une masse importante d'information sur les artistes, surtout ceux à la longue carrière.

Any printed matter, or images, dealing with artist or object in the collection that are obtained in any manner and deemed important enough to place in the artist or object file is kept, so no real criteria.

Add additional material to existing artist files; create new files based on new acquisitions to the collection.

Our acquisition scope are records created by the organization, donated by artists directly, and specifically only artists that have engaged in programs, exhibitions or events that have taken place at [redacted]. Since we have very little physical storage space, we must be quite selective over the materials we do acquire. Other criteria

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includes record completeness (no drafts of records that we already have), duplicates, age/rarity, monetary value, art historical and community significance.

We are currently developing our artist vertical files as they relate to our collection and have hired a new collections coordinator to assist us in the task. In assessing our collection we hope it will help us to better define our focus, strength/weaknesses and help us chart a path moving forward.

One of our goals is to match information about artists with documentation from the exhibitions/events they participated in, to give context to [redacted]'s programming (the focus of our archive).

When an artist's name is the first point of entry-the most efficient starting point-for information retrieval. Where storage under the artist's name will result in the least volume of repetition for cross reference between different categories of hard copy files. Information about an artist's history (practice, career, etc.) that is not directly related to the Gallery (e.g. images of work not in the Permanent Collection and never a part of the exhibition programming).

If the artist is in or from the [redacted] region, we include him/her. (However, it has been a few years since our art librarian retired and we have not been able to grow the collection since.)

The gallery has an archive and a collection of artwork, which houses the artist multiples, analogue documentation and works of art. The items that enter these collections go through a formal process of acceptance. The items that enter the library or the artist files are whatever items the staff deem relevant or helpful to research the artists in the collections.

Almost all artist-related documentation is stored in artist files. The only exception is information related to bulk donations, which are then kept in Donor Files. In some instances, documents may be duplicated for artist files (determined by the Director and/or Curator).

Periodically staff will attempt to filter organize our archives. Subjective judgements are made.

We do have artists' files from application or exhibition proposals that constitute the base of our files. Some artists send us information regularly. If we receive books or publications, we do put a note in the artist file that such a donation came and that the publication is kept in the library. We also have a few artists' archives.

Materials kept in artists files are mainly biographical or background information. No artworks are ever stored in artist files. The files are not as well maintained now that so much more information is available online.

**15. How do you organize your artists' files (e.g., alphabetical order, by geographic region, by nationality, by discipline, etc.)?**

**Responses:**

They are alphabetical (last name) except for the Inuit artist files which are completely separated as they are managed by the curator and organized by community and then alphabetical (last name).

See comment in Q14 - artist information is linked to the related artwork in the collection, except for [redacted].

Alphabetical order.

Alphabetical order by last name.

Alphabetical by artist last name and a separate section for Inuit artists, also arranged alphabetically by artist's last name.

Alphabetical by artist last name.

Alphabetically, divided between Canadian and non-Canadian.

We have two main areas of files, Indigenous Artists and Regional Artists. Both areas are organized alphabetically.

Alphabetical by artist surname.

Alphabetical by artist name: Last name, First name.

---

Physical files are organized by alpha; we recently digitized our members' files as well.

Alphabetical.

Alphabetical.

Alphabetical order.

I am not sure; I think alphabetical, and possibly by year.

By exhibition and year.

By alphabetical order for most of the files; by geographic region for "unknown artists"; by discipline for certain body of works (body of decorative art objects from the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries).

We organize our files alphabetically by artist's last name. Please see our digital index here: [redacted].

Archival material is arranged according to the principles of respect des fonds and original order. Any archivist caught organizing this material alphabetically or by region, nationality or discipline would be considered a heretic and would be suitably punished (unfortunately, the cat of nine tails has been replaced by severe tongue lashings due to modernist sensibilities). Published items are given sequential numbers in various pamphlet collections or the general series of monographs.

Alphabetical by last name of the artist. Prominent artists with more materials have their own files and there also are general files for most letters of the alphabet where things get filed for artists for which we don't have a lot.

Par type (artiste, organisation, etc.), puis par ordre alphabétique.

Alphabetical order.

On the webpage one can sort our artist profiles in a number of ways but on the back end mostly by geographic region as it pertains to Inuit art so strongly.

Geographically (working in Canada vs International), and then alphabetically by name.

Par année de soumission à l'acquisition.

Organized by type (architects; architectural firms; neighbourhoods in Montreal; specific buildings in Montreal; architectural competitions, etc.). After type, organized alphabetically.

We organize our artist files alphabetically. We still currently have them separated by First Nations/Métis artists and Inuit artists, which reflects the old structure of our Collection.

[Redacted] a regroupé en fonction d'activités (rubriques) les dossiers du fonds : Finances - Ressources humaines - Programmation (par année, par exposition) - Exposition et activités - [redacted] Pour le dépôt au fonds, nous organisons les dossiers d'artistes par année, par artiste et par exposition.

Artists, architects, illustrators and designers (including fashion designers) are arranged in alphabetical order with a "catch all" file for artists with very few items. A separate set of filing cabinets collects gallery and museum ephemera.

Our artist files are stored offsite, so they aren't physically browsable. We do have an index (in excel) that is organized alphabetically and used as a finding aid. We also distinguish between artist files and our public art and buildings files, and our galleries files.

Alphabetically by last name of the artist.

Alphabetical.

In two major sections: Artists and Architects. Then alphabetically.

Alphabetical order.

Alphabetical order.

Alphabetical.

Alphabetical order.

Les dossiers sont organisés en 3 catégories : artistes canadiens, collectivités canadiennes et designers internationaux. Au sein de ces trois catégories, ils sont classés en ordre alphabétique et nom de famille ou de nom de collectivités.

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Program files are organized in chronological order of occurrence.

Alphabetical order, some galleries are using geographic location.

They are grouped into geographic regions, then by alphabetical order according to last name.

Ordre alphabétique.

Alphabetical order.

1. Geographically by artists: Canadian and International 2. General Subject: Canadian and International 3. Technical.

Currently, most artist files are organized alphabetically by name. Since we've developed a new database and are now able to describe textual materials, we will likely integrate the existing records (much of which was institutionally created) by program/exhibition/event.

This is currently under review.

By alphabetical, and by the year that they were involved.

Alphabetically, by artist's last name.

Vertical file, by alphabetical order.

Alphabetical by last name or organization name.

We have two methods: (1) alphabetical by last name, (2) Inuit artist files are maintained in a separate storage area, and are also organized alphabetically.

A mix. With a lot of disorganization. Generally by year/program.

Alphabetical order.

Alphabetical.

## Usage

**16. How many artists' files are consulted (i.e., individual file requests) in any given year?**

Choose one.

- I don't know
- 0-25 files
- 26-50 files
- 51-75 files
- 76-100 files
- 100+ files

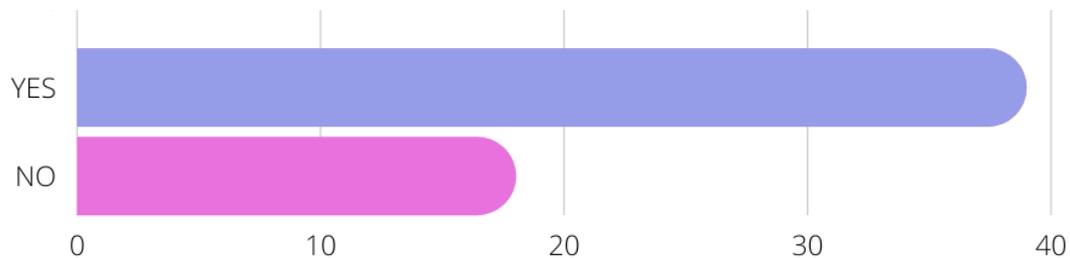
### **Responses:**

I don't know (11) / 0-25 files (24) / 26-50 files (9) / 51-75 files (4) / 76-100 files (3) / 100+ files (6)

**17. Are your artists' files accessible to the public?**

- Yes
- No

**Responses:** Yes (39) / No (18)



**18. Do users need to make an appointment to consult the artists' file collection?**

- Yes
- No

**Responses:** Yes (38) / No (17)

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## 19. Who uses your artists' files?

Choose as many options as are applicable to your situation.

- I don't know
- Artists (professional)
- Art collectors
- Authors
- Curators
- Designers (professional)
- General public
- Independent researchers
- Instructor/Professor/Teacher
- Library professionals
- Staff at my institution
- Students
- Journalists
- Other cultural workers
- Volunteers
- Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

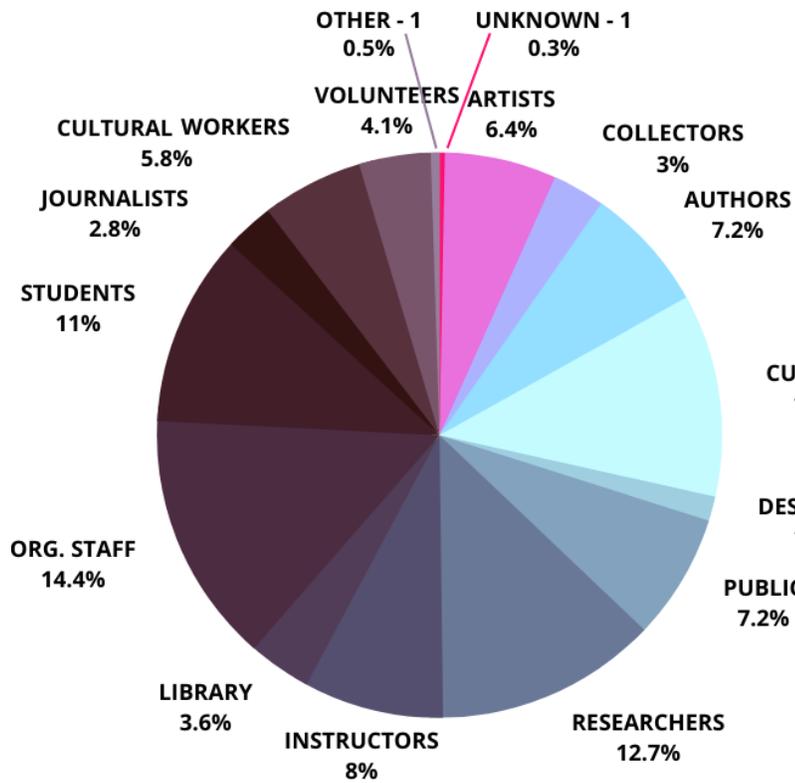
### Responses:

I don't know (1) / Artists (professional) (23) / Art collectors (11) / Authors (26) / Curators (42) / Designers (professional) (5) / General public (26) / Independent researchers (46) / Instructor/Professor/Teacher (29) / Library professionals (13) / Staff at my institution (52) / Students (40) / Journalists (10) / Other cultural workers (21) / Volunteers (15) / Other (please specify) (2)

### Other (please specify):

Les informations provenant de ces dossiers sont accessibles au public (catalogue, oeuvre d'art).

Once we have developed the resource we will begin promoting the asset to a wider audience.



20. Who would you say is the most frequent user of the artists' file collection?

Choose one.

- I don't know
- Artists (professional)
- Art collectors
- Authors

- 
- Curators
  - Designers (professional)
  - General public
  - Independent researchers
  - Instructor/Professor/Teacher
  - Library professionals
  - Staff at my institution
  - Students
  - Journalists
  - Other cultural workers
  - Volunteers
  - Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

**Responses:**

I don't know (3) / Artists (professional) (2) / Art collectors (0) / Authors (0) / Curators (10) / Designers (professional) (0) / General public (4) / Independent researchers (7) / Instructor/Professor/Teacher (0) / Library professionals (0) / Staff at my institution (24) / Students (6) / Journalists (0) / Other cultural workers (0) / Volunteers (0) / Other (please specify) (1)

**Other (please specify):**

Me.

**21. How do users know what artists' files they can consult?**

Choose as many options as are applicable to your situation.

- We provide this information upon request
- We provide a static list or inventory of the collection through our website
- We provide online access through a searchable catalogue
- Our collection is accessible through the Artists in Canada database
- Our collection is accessible through WorldCat
- Our collection is accessible through another online resource (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_
- Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

## **Responses:**

We provide this information upon request (36) / We provide a static list or inventory of the collection through our website (10) / We provide online access through a searchable catalogue (14) / Our collection is accessible through the Artists in Canada database (10) / Our collection is accessible through WorldCat (4) / Our collection is accessible through another online resource (please specify) (3) / Other (please specify) (10)

### **Our collection is accessible through another online resource (please specify):**

InMagic, through our website.

We have Excel files linked to a blog: [redacted].

[Redacted]

### **Other (please specify):**

They have full access to all documents in each file.

Artists represented on our online catalogue have artist files.

Users would probably ask me.

Not applicable.

Must be in library to consult physical items.

Internal Processes - all files are accessible to certain staff (files are physical documents).

Word of mouth in our community or artists accessing their own files.

This will become clearer in the coming year.

Our archive of exhibitions is listed on our website with the names of artists who participated. Often curators will search our website, and email us about a specific exhibition file as a means of accessing the information about the artist.

At this point in time we are not open for consultation.

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**22. Are users allowed to reproduce materials they find in the collection (i.e., using cameras, photocopiers, scanners, etc.)?**

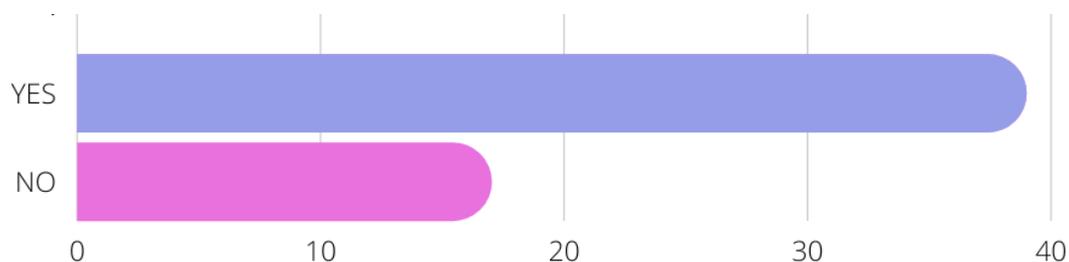
- Yes
- No

**Responses:** Yes (52) / No (5)

**23. Does your organization fulfill scan requests of artist's file materials?**

- Yes
- No

**Responses:** Yes (39) / No (17)



**24. What percentage of the artists' file collection is digitized and accessible to users online?**

- I don't know
- 0%
- 1 to 25%
- 26 to 50 %
- 51 to 75 %
- 76 to 100%

**Responses:** I don't know (4) / 0% (39) / 1 to 25% (10) / 26 to 50% (0) / 51 to 75% (1) / 76 to 100% (3)

**25. Do you or your colleagues use the artists' file collection in information and/or visual literacy instruction?**

- Yes (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_  
 No

**Responses:** Yes (please specify) (11) / No (45)

**Yes (please specify):**

Exhibitions on [redacted].

Used in education and in [redacted].

We use information from our theatre archives (set and costume designs) in classes.

We use them for internal education presentations for government employees.

I use them in instruction on Canadian Art, Indigenous Art, and artist-focused research assignments.

Artist bios available online or as hardcopy beside work on display in [redacted].

Highlight the collection by bringing sample files to instructional sessions.

Tours for student groups, and instruction on art history research methods.

**26. Do you or your colleagues use the artists' file collection for special projects, exhibitions, or other activities?**

- Yes (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_  
 No

**Responses:** Yes (please specify) (48) / No (9)

**Yes (please specify):**

[Redacted] exhibitions and publications.

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Research, Exhibitions, Cultural Property Applications. Gallery Special Projects.

All of the above.

Research, exhibitions.

Exhibition and acquisition research.

Not yet; we plan to.

Research for exhibitions.

For research, exhibitions, loans, public events, etc.

Special Collections displays.

Outreach through blog posts, tweets.

Responding to reference requests.

Ateliers et conférences.

Exhibition.

We have held curated exhibits highlighting aspects of our theatre collections.

Artist File Fair (public program).

For exhibitions, website, partnerships, etc.

Commissariat d'expositions, publications.

Displays.

Our curators at the gallery use them frequently. I've also recommended them for use at some of our Wikipedia editing events.

Displays.

Contributing to women artists' entries on Wikipedia.

Exhibitions, information for clients, curatorial initiatives, appraisal information.

Exhibitions, curatorial write ups, etc.

Artist bio information available online or as hardcopy when on display.

Préparation d'exposition et pour le dossier d'acquisitions d'oeuvres.

Exhibitions, publications, web/social media, class/conference presentations, other programming/activations.

Library displays.

Frequently used for exhibitions both internal and external, blog articles, special projects, unboxings on social media, research.

As archival material in some exhibitions.

Exhibitions, publications, and research.

On occasion, exhibitions, but mostly private research.

As needed.

Archive-specific programming, such as publications with material from the archive.

Exhibitions; the odd social media post.

Exhibitions.

Frequently for new acquisition proposals, and exhibition development.

Sometimes for exhibition research.

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**27. Do you plan to maintain your artists' file collection for the foreseeable future?**

- Yes  
 No

**Responses:** Yes (56) / No (1)

**28. Do you foresee any barriers to maintaining or preserving your artists' files collection (e.g., limits on space and/or staffing, physical deterioration, preservation costs, lower use in the digital era)?**

- Yes (please specify)  
 No

**Responses:** Yes (please specify) (56) / No (1)

**Yes (please specify):**

Lack of staffing and space has been an issue to properly maintain them.

Staff limits, occasional additions.

Space.

The artist files are not used very often and are not always helpful when consulted. We maintain them for now as they are not taking up much space.

Space, staff capacity.

Limits on space and staffing; we no longer accept digital media but there is still items of this nature in the files.

Limits on space, resources for adding material, deterioration, low use.

Storage space; staff time to filter and file the material that builds the files.

SPACE and staffing.

For all the reasons above, but also no designated staff member.

Limits on space, staffing, physical deterioration.

Limits on staffing. I'd like to digitize it though as a project.

Because of inconsistent staffing at the archive, the artists' files are not always maintained or added to. We add new artists' and materials when we can, but it can be slow to grow the collection.

Digital spaces.

It would be important to digitize the collection in the coming years for future preservation.

Staffing and workload issues. Philosophical Issues around necessity in a digital era.

Lack of storage space may inhibit collection development.

Space is an issue & current relevance is somewhat questionable.

Utilisation d'un grand espace pour une diffusion très limitée, accumulation de documents non triés.

Operational constraints, staffing.

Staff.

Limits on space, staffing. Also, ephemera is increasingly born-digital.

Supports numériques qui deviennent obsolètes rapidement et causent un problème d'accès et de conservation.

Presentation may be challenged by limited space and the age of the collection.

This is a closed collection, so we aren't collecting. They are definitely not used very much, but easy to store offsite.

Limits on space, and availability of digital material.

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Lower use in the digital era.

Space is always an issue, and our organization is run by volunteers who may or may not continue.

All of the examples you note.

We'd like to digitize our artist files but it's cost prohibitive. Physical deterioration or damage due to fire, water, environmental disasters possible.

Limited space, resources, and time to grow and flush out the files.

We no longer create hardcopy files but maintain our digital database with as much artist info as possible.

Manque d'espace et coût de traitement et maintien.

Space is getting pretty tight, and of course deterioration of our magnetic tape, but we have aggressively digitized tapes of the last 6 years to diversify holdings.

Less printed material to acquire in the digital era, but there will most likely be a will to preserve what we have.

Limits on human resources (staff), rising cost of postage, preservation costs of printed materials.

Limits on space, time and resources inadequate to maintain effectively.

Limits on space, physical deterioration, preservation costs, lower use in the digital era.

Limits on space, staffing.

Staffing has been our largest challenge.

Lack of funding, lack of permanent space, lack of staff/volunteer expertise and resources to manage long-term.

Limits on space.

Staffing.

Space limitations, staff time limitations.

Space(!), physical deterioration, improper handling, and obsolescence.  
All of the above.

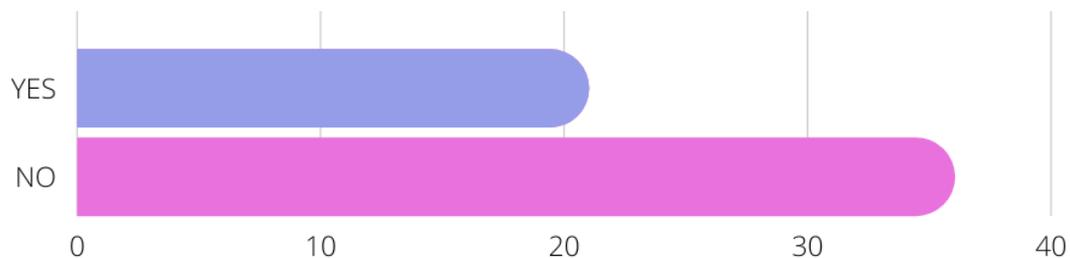
Financial.

Space, staff time, access to other and more complete information online.

**29. Do you have any plans to digitize your artists' file collection (either in part or as a whole) in the future?**

- Yes
- No

**Responses:** Yes (21) / No (36)



**30. Is there anything else you would like us to know about your artists' file collection?**

**Responses:**

The files have been neglected for a long time and one of our near-future projects will be to inventory the files and reassess their future with policies on what to collect and how to organize them. When we do deaccession items I would like to rehome them with other institutions first, if that is an option. These are one of our most asked for resources so having them organized and in a good state is a priority.

---

As stated above, we have unusual artist files. Mostly we have an emphasis on collecting ephemera and information about [redacted]. Depending on copyright we plan to make as much of this available through our online database as possible. We do collect information on [redacted] in our holdings, but this is done in a non-linear fashion as we find materials of interest. We do not have time or staff to do focused maintenance or additions to artist files.

No.

I would like to know how other institutions are dealing with their artists files - after you complete your survey!

They are the most heavily used part of our collection. We will scan up to 20 pages of a file and send to a requestor, but we don't hang on to the scans for any length of time.

We have stopped collecting material for the non-Canadian files, but still collect for the Canadian files and are adding new files on a weekly basis.

Much of the material in the files was collected in the 1980s and 1990s and is not being actively updated. We add material as we receive it, but we don't actively seek it out at this point.

AFs are one of the most used parts of our research collection. It's the only practical way to organize some types of information & resources in readily accessible hard copy. Old-school researchers appreciate that AFs can be a treasure trove. Since we strive to be comprehensive for Inuit & First Nation artists, I have to be able to keep a single clipping from a magazine or newspaper, etc., in a way that can be easily accessed & maintained. Overly full file drawers impede regular maintenance.

We have just applied for a grant to hire a contract librarian to assess and recommend next steps for our in-house library and how all of our library materials (including artist files) will be managed.

Most of it is prior to 2000.

It is very regional! I so appreciate this report being compiled. Thank you for all your work thus far!

The files are a fairly recent addition to the archive, and a very "artificial collection" - [redacted] is about to celebrate its [redacted] anniversary, and the files were created maybe 10 years ago as a way to deal with a surplus of uncatalogued material. They contain a lot of useful information, especially for curators and researchers, but their maintenance and growing the collection has been tricky.

The bulk of our collection is made up from CVs and exhibition check lists. We do maintain small catalogs and ephemera in the library collection. We are working to harmonize and digitize collections where possible.

Five years ago the files were moved from an open area in the library to the vault for preservation in our Special Collections department. The intention was to maintain it as an archive and cease adding materials to the files. Since these items now require staff to access, we have learned they are still in demand and the nature of their format (print only) is part of the appeal. The older files contain information not available online so they are especially useful for researchers.

[Redacted] include more than 40 metres of textual records, photographs, sketches, and other media created by 7 Canadian artists and 1 gallery owner ([redacted]). While our publicly accessible acquisition policy does not mention artists, we have collected records associated with Canadian arts since the archival program began [redacted] years ago. We are open to the public (Q18), but appointments are required due to the pandemic. Digitization is driven by research requests (Q23 and 29).

Nous avons vraiment une belle collection, mais il est difficile de la mettre en valeur et de se faire connaître des chercheurs. Sinon on exclut les années de pandémie, il y a eu 1 seule consultation de l'externe en 2019. Les dossiers restent utiles pour le personnel interne, mais la tendance institutionnelle est vraiment à la réduction des documents papiers et il n'est pas envisageable de tout numériser, il est donc difficile de prévoir ce qu'il adviendra de la collection dans le futur.

In filling out this survey, I focused exclusively on what we have to most of: works of art on paper in a variety of media (watercolour, gouache, pen and ink, pastel, etc.). These "artist files" to which I refer are the contextual archival material supporting the artworks themselves. We also do have 1 artist's archives which more clearly fits this survey: the papers of [redacted], which include photographic studies, some preliminary sketches, a few pieces of art, and other accompanying materials.

Our artist files are beloved by artists and curators. They have been in and out of fashion over the [redacted] years we have been documenting artists, but these days their value is well perceived. They are a unique kind of "archive" that invites participation and critique. Happy to talk about this more.

Nos dossiers d'artistes sont principalement des documents remis pour aider à la sélection d'œuvres à ajouter à notre collection. En dehors du comité de sélection, les informations fournies sont utilisées pour bonifier les notices des œuvres acquises, sans plus.

No.

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Comme complément d'information au sujet de la numérisation, nous n'envisageons pas effectuer ce travail à court terme ou à moyen terme. Ceci relèverait du [redacted] en fonction d'un financement obtenu et selon la collection ou le secteur de recherche à prioriser. Nous contribuons à la mise à jour de notre fonds grâce à des stagiaires qui colligent les informations des dossiers d'artiste, lesquels sont ensuite déposés.

We have written a blog outlining the features of our artists' file collection. [Redacted]. As the article mentions the collection includes ephemera and newspaper clippings as well as separate collections of microfilm and index cards.

As I mentioned, our collection is currently not adding any material, so right now it's a collection that is sort of in limbo. Most of the materials are from the 1980s and 1990s, and mostly newspaper clippings, so they are definitely more useful to independent researchers or collectors that reach out for information. But I am thinking they would be a great source for some Wikipedia edit-a-thons!

Most of our artist files are very small and only used internally, and are all for artist's in our permanent collection. We have a large collection of files and research for artist [redacted] that would typically be the only artist file that outside members of our institution would have an interest in accessing.

We explored digitizing our artist files but it was cost-prohibitive to include everything. We want to digitize the files and make them available to researchers, curators, etc. If we have to go through each file to determine what is worth scanning, it becomes a huge project with over 3000 files. Our files are rich with history and should be available for research purposes.

See my response before about artists vs programming files, not sure its an important distinction but in our new [redacted] database (currently under development) we hope to be able to reflect relationships between programming files in such a way that will make them more user friendly for folks researching specific artists and their practice more holistically.

We are collecting information primarily in digital format now and do not print for the paper files unless needed for sharing or inclusion in an exhibition. Also, because we have object files, when artist files are viewed we also look through the object files for additional information possibly relevant to the inquiry.

All the fields are Photography related.

Due to the small size of our current artist files, we do plan to integrate these into our larger archival structure to assist with our internal records management transfer process (from active creation to archives) and the reality of access points (most researchers are interested in specific events that have happened at the organization). However, this

process is going to take time to implement, and we will maintain our artist files as they are until then.

Is under development but we see the value of doing this and making it accessible to the public and we are committed to the project.

We began keeping our Artist Files fairly early on in the [redacted]. We used to have a Librarian and the Librarian managed the Artist Files. That position stopped in 1989 and with it the regular maintenance of and public access to the Files. Since then our curatorial activity has been the main driver of both content and use. We are currently working to update the Files with priority given to information relating to the 700+ Permanent Collection artists.

It was the pride of our art librarian, now retired. Since her retirement, it has been neglected. However, we hope that this is a temporary situation.

The artist files are understood to be a resource for staff. We have begun saving pdfs and scans in digital artist files and will continue to keep paper copies when able. There is no more room for the paper files so we weed as we need to.

Artist files were actively maintained in the 90s and early 2000s, however as we receive less physical documentation our files grow at a slower pace. There is an ongoing effort to expand and update artist records with the help of volunteers and student support.

It is very ad hoc. Though we keep archival material, they aren't organized particularly well. Our website now archives our program activity (since 2019) and is searchable.

Our plan is to eventually open our archives and artists files to all researchers but we are not there yet. At this point in time, the archives is maintained by a volunteer.

Many of the files are very out of date, and are not consulted much. As time passes, they are used less and less, replaced by online searches.

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## PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS

As stated in the introduction to this report, the only pan-Canadian program that identifies artists' file collections is the Government of Canada's Artists in Canada (AiC) bilingual online union list which lists twenty-five galleries, libraries, archives, and museums (GLAMs) and no artist-run centres (ARCs). Our hypothesis was that artists' file management is being carried out throughout Canada in much greater numbers than is currently known, albeit in a fragmentary way. Due to the paucity of published research in Library and Information Studies (LIS) literature on the subject of artists' file collections in North America more broadly, and within Canada specifically, we believed that the best way to test this supposition was to survey GLAMs and ARCS across the country that may contain artists' files in their holdings, using a series of questions that focused on how these collections are used and maintained.

As a research tool, a survey produces a kind of snapshot of the current state of affairs of its subject. From the data collected, we learned, for instance, that almost 30% of the respondents for Question 1 (Q1) (the largest category of respondents in that question) work in galleries. From Q3, we learned that sixty-four respondents (76%) to that question confirmed that they maintain artists' files. We believe this result supports our hypothesis that the number of artists' file collections in Canada is larger than is currently known, and is significantly larger than what is reported in the AiC union list. Q4 revealed that 25% of the sixty respondents (the largest category of respondents in that question) have a collection that ranges between 1,001 and 5,000 artists' files. However, the responses to Q5-Q8 demonstrate that across the organizations that participated in the survey, there is a wide range in the types of materials collected, the focal collection areas (which can be based on geography, chronology, institutional affiliation, or artistic medium, for example), the donation sources, and the user audience.

Jumping ahead to Q21, we learned that only fourteen of the eighty-seven respondents (16%) to that question make their collections accessible through a shared electronic platform such as the AiC database or WorldCat. And, judging by the results from the qualitative questions in the survey, we believe that the ways in which organizations collect, maintain, promote, and make accessible their collections varies greatly from one institution to the next. We argue then, that these results point to the fragmentary way in which artists' file management is being carried out today in Canada. Overall, organizations that maintain such collections in their holdings could benefit from more opportunities to share information about their holdings and best practices. This is further supported by the responses to Q9 and Q10, which confirm that most organizations do not have written policies or procedures in place for maintaining their artists' files collections. Instead, decisions are often made in-house on an ad hoc basis.

A survey such as this one also provides some surprises. For example, several of the organizations we reached out to do not identify with the catchall categories of GLAMs or ARCs, instead referring to their organization as a research or documentation centre,

for example. As well, our unit of measurement for determining the size of an organization's artists' file collection was based on the number of physical files; although one respondent reminded us by email that archives would instead calculate the size of their artists' file collections based on their linear measurement (i.e., in running metres). Perhaps less surprising was the fact that the majority of respondents to Q24, thirty-nine of fifty-seven (68%), confirmed that none of their artists' files have been digitized; although ten respondents (18%) reported having up to a quarter of their collection scanned - thus allowing for remote, online access.

From the answers to Q27 and Q28, we learned that fifty-six of the fifty-seven respondents (98%) to those two questions plan to maintain their artists' file collection for the foreseeable future, but 85% of them expect barriers to maintaining or preserving these collections. If this survey has a general takeaway for us, it is that despite the perceived value of artists' files as a rich and unique information resource, their future in Canadian GLAMs and ARCs is at risk due to both real and perceived space limitations, resource constraints (human and financial), and preservation issues. For these reasons, and based on the data collected in this project, we believe it is necessary to continue to research the state of artists' file collections in Canada for the future.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the respondents again for their participation in this survey - for their time and for their thoughtful comments. We hope that participants and other informational professionals will find this report to be a useful resource for understanding the current landscape of artists' file management in Canada.

**Sara Ellis**

Art & Visual Literacy Librarian  
University of British Columbia  
Music Art & Architecture Library  
sara.ellis@ubc.ca

**John Latour**

Teaching & Research Librarian - Fine Arts  
Concordia University  
john.latour@concordia.ca