

## DOCUMENTING INSTALLATION ART: A COLLABORATION BETWEEN TATE AND S.M.A.K

### The goals of the research

Conservation and research files for installation artworks are extensive and complex. It is important to the core work of the museum that information held in the artwork record is easily accessible to both members of the conservation department and other members of staff ( for example collection managers and curators) .

Recognising a shared need to improved current methods of managing the documentation associated with installation artworks, Tate and S.M.A.K. decided to cooperate. The core goal of their research was to establish a 'documentation structure' with which to organise the complex records associated with artists' installations.

The aim of this 'documentation structure' is to

- enable efficient storage of information
- make it possible to quickly find core information held within a file
- manage the range and diversity of documentation associated with artist's installations

### Methodology

A workshop lead by the information management consultant Mrs. Liz Orna<sup>1</sup> was organized. The workshop started by collecting several existing index pages, which had been made for case studies in the installation art project and some older research files and conservation records. All of these index pages were compared and "common patterns" were sought.

From the comparison of these records, a general 'documentation structure' was established. The structure was then tested by examining the documentation from the case studies and checking that each subject fitted within the framework.

This structure or 'index' is the result of the functional analysis of a range of conservation and research files for installation artworks. The resulting 'documentation structure' is being used by both Tate and SMAK as a method of organising their paper records for installation artworks. The researchers from Tate and SMAK also consider it a useful basis for developing methods of organising digital records for installation works in the future.

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**Information Handling in Museums** by Elizabeth Orna and Charles Pettitt. Published by Clive Bingley 1980

**Managing Information for Research** by Elizabeth Orna, Graham Stevens Published by Open University Press 1995

**Information Strategy in Practice** by Elizabeth Orna Published by Gower publishing 2004

**Making Knowledge Visible: Communicating Knowledge Through Information Products** by Elizabeth Orna Published by Gower Publishing 2005