

5) Identity, Iterations, and Documentation

Capturing Allographic

In 2006, then the Head of Time-Based Media Conservation at the Tate Modern, Pip Laurenson, borrowed an ontology described by two American philosophers to help identify a conceptual framework for conserving time-based media installations. In her seminal essay “Authenticity, Change and Loss in the Conservation of Time-Based Media Installations,” she utilizes philosopher Nelson Goodman’s 1968 categorization of performed art, such as music or theater, as allographic art. The word allograph describes signature on a document written by someone other than who wrote it, as opposed to an autograph.¹ Goodman utilized the term allographic to distinguish art he deemed as forgeable, such as painting or sculpture, as autographic. Art that he deemed unforgeable, such as a musical performance following a score, in order to distinguish art produced out of an artist’s notation from object produced by the hand of the artist themselves².

Laurenson argued that unlike traditional art objects, “time-based media installations exist on the ontological continuum somewhere between performance and sculpture.”³ She posited a new framework was needed to describe and conserve them and noted the allographic similarity to a western notated music and time-based media installations. Each needs to be expressed as an “installed event”⁴ with temporal and physical elements in order to be fully experienced as an artwork. Goodman classified this as a “two-stage” artwork, where “an

¹ “Allography.” Wikipedia, January 28, 2018. Accessed February 11, 2018.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Allography&oldid=822840844>.

² Goodman, Nelson. *Languages of Art: An Approach to a Theory of Symbols*. Hackett Publishing, 1968, p. 113.

³ Laurenson, Pip. “Authenticity, Change and Loss in the Conservation of Time-Based Media Installations.” *Tate Papers*, no. 6, October 15, 2006, p. 4.

⁴ *Ibid*

accurate copy” of a written text or score is “as much the original as work as any other.”⁵ For notated music, Laurenson wrote, the “parameters of acceptable change” becomes discussed as “‘identity’ rather than conservation’s material notion of the ‘state’ of an object.”⁶

To further refine her framework, Laurenson looked to philosopher Stephen Davies’ 2001 book *Musical Works and Performance: A Philosophical Exploration*. Davies writes of “thinly” and “thickly” specified musical notation in the western tradition. Questions about interpreting a composer’s work “requires knowledge both of conventions for the notation and of the performance practice shared by the composer with the musicians to whom the score is directed.”⁷ Throughout his book, Davies uses the term ‘thin’ to describe instructions left by the composer which give a lot of leeway to the performer, while ‘thick’ instructions as very specific in terms of performance and instrumentation from the composer. Laurenson observed in the tradition of western notated music, “in the performance of a musical work it is recognised that there is a gap between a work as represented as a score and its performance.”⁸ For her, the concept of ‘thinly’ or ‘thickly’ specified instructions given by the composer through their notation could be applied to time-based media installations with instructions coming from the artist. Authenticity for time-based media installations, Laurenson concluded the description of her framework, depends on the informed process of installing a work, based on the available documentation, thus creating “an obligation for the museum or custodian to faithfully realise those aspects of the work which are important to its meaning.”⁹

⁵ Goodman, Nelson. *Languages of Art: An Approach to a Theory of Symbols*, p. 114

⁶ Laurenson, Pip. “Authenticity, Change and Loss in the Conservation of Time-Based Media Installations,” p. 4

⁷ Davies, Stephen. *Musical Works and Performances: A Philosophical Exploration*. Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 4

⁸ Laurenson, Pip. Laurenson, Pip. “Authenticity, Change and Loss in the Conservation of Time-Based Media Installations,” p. 5.

⁹ *Ibid*, p. 6

A Documentation Model for Time-Based Media Art

In 2015, the Lisbon-based Instituto de História da Arte published updated and expanded papers presented at a 2013 conference held in Lisbon, Portugal entitled “Performing Documentation in the Conservation of Contemporary Art.”¹⁰ One of the papers included in the publication was entitled “Reporting Iterations: A Documentation Model For Time-based Media Art,” by Joanna Phillips, the Time-Based Media Conservator at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. In her paper, Phillips created a bridge from Laurensen’s framework of describing authenticity and change in a time-based media installation to propose a structure of documenting the iteration, media components within an installation, and identity of the artwork.

Phillips begins her discussion of the collaborative nature of interpreting allographic artwork, with a quote from Vivian Van Saaze, museum studies researcher, professor, and a member of the Scientific Committee at the 2013 Lisbon conference¹¹: “‘artist intention’ is not simply derived from the artist or the artwork, a view still commonly held in conservation practice, but is *produced* instead. Artist’s intent, in other words, is the result of what is done in knowledge and documentation practices. This implies that rather than being a facilitator or ‘passive custodian’, the curator or conservator of contemporary art can be considered an interpreter, mediator or even a co-producer of what is designated as ‘the artist’s intention’” (emphasis in original).¹² Time-based media artwork, Phillips then argued “cannot be fully

¹⁰ Instituto de História Da Arte website “Nº 4 RHA – Série W.” *Instituto de História Da Arte* (blog), November 2, 2015. Accessed February 20, 2018.

<https://institutodehistoriadaarte.wordpress.com/2015/11/02/no-4-rha-serie-w/>.

¹¹ Performing Documentation website. “Home.” Accessed February 20, 2018.

<http://performingdocumentation.fcsh.unl.pt/Site/home.html>.

¹² Saaze, Vivian van. *Installation Art and the Museum : Presentation and Conservation of Changing Artworks*. Amsterdam University Press, 2014, p. 115.

understood or managed unless the underlying institutional decision-making processes are also considered and documented.”¹³

Looking to Laurenson’s time-based media installation framework, Phillips wrote “in the paradigm of allographic, damage and loss to the artwork occur when the work is poorly installed.”¹⁴ In Laurenson’s words, “this could lead to erosion of the identity of the work through its presentation in the gallery.”¹⁵ For her documentation model, Phillips “integrates several aspects of allographic: the identified two-stage nature of allographic artworks; their exclusive existence as performed/installed systems; the notion that interpretation is necessary to realize the artwork; and the consideration that interpretation can lead to a successful or less successful representation of the work’s identity.”¹⁶ Key to the documentation structure Phillips proposed is the “Identity Report.” This report incorporates information from the artist installation instructions, artist interviews, exhibition history, and as Phillips explained “specifies the intended experience of the piece, outlines its variability parameters and provides guidance for future preservation”¹⁷ This report could be amended as new information about variations in installations and artist guidelines emerge an installation is exhibited.

Various installations of the artwork will have comprehensive details of installations captured in separate Iteration Reports. These reports inform the Identity Report, but each one specifies details from the collaboration of individuals involved in planning and producing a single installation. Each Iteration Report would also capture reactions from individuals ranging

¹³ Phillips, Joanna. “Reporting Iterations: A Documentation Model For Time-Based Media Art.” In *Performing Documentation*, *Revista de História Da Arte*, no. 04, p. 171

¹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 173.

¹⁵ Laurenson, Pip. “Authenticity, Change and Loss in the Conservation of Time-Based Media Installations,” p. 5

¹⁶ Phillips, Joanna, p. 174.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 175.

from the artist, to visitors who experienced the work, to press reviews and coverage of the iteration. For this, Phillips explained how “contemporary statements and opinions on the success of an iteration, and records of noteworthy visitor reactions, allow future interpreters and scholars to evaluate previous interpretations critically.”¹⁸ An Iteration Report “specifies all team members involved in the interpretation and realization process and tracks their partaking in determining specific media and hardware components, design and space parameters, iteration-specific problem-solving, and modifications of the work,” with the goal of each report creating “a history of change, which is related to the history of decision-making that determines the ‘career’ of unstable, changing artworks such as time-based media works of art.”¹⁹ Connected to both the Identity and Iteration report would be a report at the level of the components of the installation, each depending on the time-based media or dedicated equipment within that component. These could take the form of “Condition and Treatment Reports, Equipment Reports, Digitization Reports, and Metadata Reports for video files.”²⁰

For the purposes and processes of this paper, I have filled out Identity, Media, and Iteration reports for *Double Negative*. The exhibitions in the Museum Villa Stuck, Simon Preston Gallery, the MUMA Monash, and the Frye Art Museum each have Iteration Reports prepared. The specific templates I used were from MoMA, each one being adapted from the report model Phillips laid out in her paper. The previous chapters of “About the Work” and “Exhibition History” represent a summary of the details captured through the creation of these reports.

¹⁸Phillips, Joanna. “Reporting Iterations: A Documentation Model For Time-Based Media Art,” p. 177.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Ibid, p. 176.

Prior Models for Time-Based Media Documentation

Before going through her proposed model for documentation, Phillips provided a brief overview of three prior models for capturing documentation and structure information time-based media installation. Each of these models sought to document variable media installations and exhibition history to fill in gaps in databases employed by museums to catalog complex artworks, such as The Museum System (TMS). She examined three models developed by research consortiums and museum collaborations: Matters in Media Art (2005), Inside Installations 2iDM (2007), and the Documentation and Conservation of the Media Arts Heritage (DOCAM) documentation model (2010) and discussed how they fall short in capturing the “decision-making” methodology behind time-based media installations.²¹

Phillips pointed out that The Media in Matters Art (MMA) website was “probably the most frequently consulted online resource for collection caretakers wanting to introduce best practices to acquiring and loaning time-based media art.”²² It was created in 2005 through a collaboration between MoMA, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the Tate museums in London, along with the New Art Trust.²³ The website lists four main topics: Acquisition, Documentation, Loan, and Digital Preservation with procedures, guidelines, and templates under each category. Phillips wrote that the available MMA guidelines and template for documentation are very good for “capturing all conceptual and technical aspects of an artwork as a multi-component system. However, the MMA model is not designed to capture change or decision-making processes, mainly because it does not offer an informational hierarchy to

²¹ Phillips, Joanna. “Reporting Iterations: A Documentation Model For Time-Based Media Art,” p. 173

²² Ibid, p. 172.

²³ Matters in Media Art website, “About Media Matters in Art.” <http://mattersinmediaart.org>. Accessed February 24, 2018.

distinguish permanent from temporary, iterative, and decision-based artwork components and parameters.”²⁴

The Inside Installations 2iDM model was part of a larger European research project funded by the European Commission focused on conserving installation art, led by the Tate Conservation department beginning in 2004.²⁵ The DOCAM Research Alliance was created by the Daniel Langlois Foundation for Art, Science and Technology in 2005 and funded by a Canadian research council with multiple university research partners around the world.²⁶ Each of these projects mainly looked at how to describe and structure artwork with multiple components in a database or content management system. Of all the prior models, Phillips concludes the Inside Installations model as providing “the most versatile and inclusive documentation structure,” as it “supports the entry of detailed data on a component level, and all constituents relevant to collection environments.”²⁷ Phillips points out the DOCAM and 2iDM are built to capture records of iterations of the artwork which the MMA model does not, however, she writes “just like MMA and the DOCAM model, the 2iDM lacks support for component-based reporting of decision-making processes.”²⁸

The 2iDM model offers extremely detailed visualizations of models for mapping data about artwork into a database structure, to loan request procedures, as well as checklists for

²⁴Phillips, Joanna. “Reporting Iterations: A Documentation Model For Time-Based Media Art,” p.172.

²⁵ Inside Installations Archived website “Introduction to the Project.” Accessed February 24, 2018.
http://collections.europarchive.org/rce/20120208162002/http://www.inside-installations.org/project/detail.php?r_id=643&ct=introduction

²⁶ Documentation and Conservation of the Media Arts Heritage (DOCAM) website, “Background.”
<http://www.docam.ca/en/docam/background.html>. Accessed February 24, 2018

²⁷ Ibid

²⁸ Phillips, Joanna, p. 172.

various types of contemporary art categories.²⁹ It is a thorough approach to documenting complex and variable work into a database environment and providing guidelines for museum staff. The 2009 website has been archived in a Europeana Collection and numerous publications have been produced from it including a book by Tatja Scholte and Glenn Wharton in 2011.³⁰

For the purpose of documenting of *Double Negative*, I'm interested in combining Phillips' documentation model with a conceptual model shown on the DOCAM website. I think it can add the support for the decision making process that Phillips found in her model with a hierarchical framework and provide a helpful way of understanding the connections the documentation reports with the components and stages of time-based installation artwork.

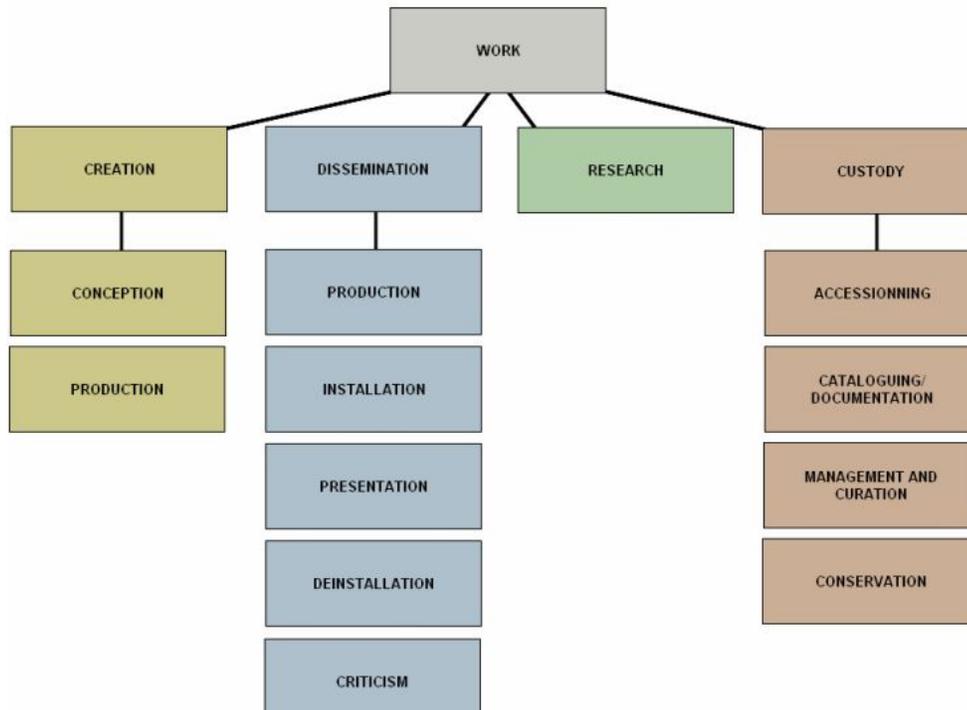
FRBR and the DOCAM Documentation Model

The model created by the DOCAM Research Alliance developed a framework for the digital representation of a media artwork through considering four parameters: "completeness of sources, range of document types, and agents (producers and users); distinctive nature of media artworks; lifecycle of the artwork; and hierarchical description of the work."³¹ The model breaks down the lifecycle of an artwork into four categories: Creation, Dissemination, Research, and Custody. Under Creation, Dissemination, and Custody, there are subcategories, while Research has none. Below is an illustration of the lifecycle of a work in the DOCAM model:

²⁹ Inside Installations Archived website "Inside Installations Documentation Model." Accessed February 24, 2018. http://collections.europarchive.org/rce/20120208162002/http://www.inside-installations.org/research/detail.php?r_id=482&ct=model.

³⁰ Tatja Scholte and Glenn Wharton, *Inside Installations: Theory and Practice in the Care of Complex Artworks* (Amsterdam University Press, 2011), <http://www.oapen.org/download?type=document&docid=467012>.

³¹ Documentation and Conservation of the Media Arts Heritage (DOCAM) website, "Presentation of the Model." <http://www.docam.ca/en/documentation-model.html>. Accessed February 24, 2018.



Lifecycle of a Work flowchart. From "Presentation of the Model" page of DOCAM website.

The DOCAM website provides a Visualization Interface illustrating three media works used as a case study with the model. The Flash based interface highlights images, documents, and URLs related to the categories and subcategories above.³² When it comes to describing iterations of works, the DOCAM model looks at a hierarchical description model developed by the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA). The model is called Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records, but known by its acronym FRBR. Developed after a multi-year IFLA working group process in 1999, FRBR provided a framework of relationships between entities and as described in a pamphlet about FRBR from the Library of Congress, "a more precise vocabulary to help future cataloging rule makers and system designers in meeting user needs."³³

³² Documentation and Conservation of the Media Arts Heritage (DOCAM) website, "Visualization Interface." <http://www.docam.ca/en/visualisation-interface.html>. Accessed February 24, 2018

³³ Tillett, Barbara. *A Conceptual Model for the Bibliographic Universe*. Vol. 25. 5. Library of Congress, 2003. <https://www.loc.gov/cds/downloads/FRBR.PDF>.

NYU Professor Howard Besser, a participant in the DOCAM Research Alliance, wrote about the use of FRBR in distinguishing between iterations of contemporary artwork. Besser has argued since 2000 that the FRBR model “would provide a conceptual structure for handling the variant forms that one might find in each re-installation of a contemporary art piece.”³⁴ In 2012, he described the basic use of FRBR to describe the relationships between lower entities in the hierarchy inheriting metadata from higher entities in a paper for an ILFA conference. He used the following example for an entity relationship that could appear in a library:

“We could place the written fable of ‘La Belle et la Bête’ (Beauty and the Beast) by Gabrielle-Suzanne Barbot (1740) at the top of the hierarchy, and describe the basic plot and characters. We’d place the 1756 abridgement and the 1757 English translation below Barbot’s, and they would inherit metadata about the plot and characters, though the English translation would have different names for the characters. Cocteau’s 1946 film would inherit the metadata from one of the French versions, and Disney’s 1991 film would inherit most metadata from the earlier English translation. The Disney film would add metadata concerning the songs to that particular version (it was a musical), and that metadata, in turn, would be inherited by the Disney theatrical production that played on Broadway from 1994-2007.”³⁵

The framework of FRBR, Besser explains, should allow for metadata or additional description about an artwork to be “passed” from the “parent” or “grandparent” level of the

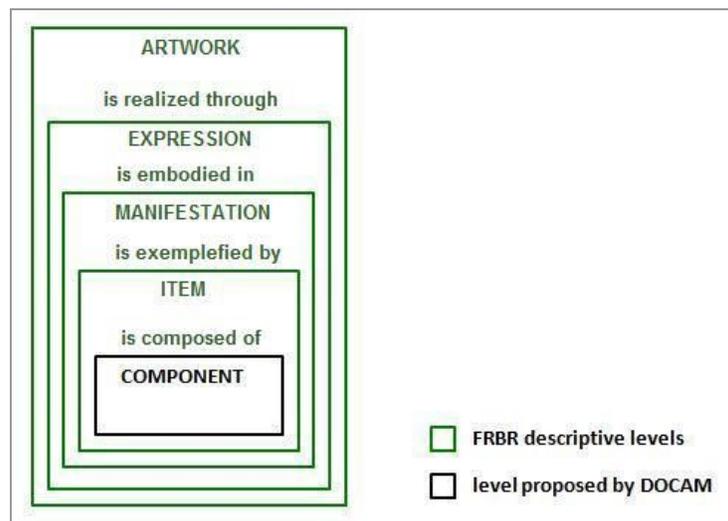
³⁴ Besser, Howard. “Contemporary Art That Does Not Last Without Being Changed: Issues for Librarians.” 2012, p. 8 <http://www.arlisnorden.org/uploads/6/0/9/2/6092407/art-now-paper-besser.doc>.

³⁵ Ibid

hierarchy to the “child” level of the hierarchy and “each child only needs the metadata that describes the ways in which it differs from its parent.”³⁶

The DOCAM model website explains the levels of FRBR for artwork simply: the first level, the Artwork, is “a distinct intellectual or artistic creation;” the second level, Expression, is “the intellectual or artistic realization of the work;” the third level of Manifestation is “the physical embodiment of an expression of a work;” and the fourth level, the Item is “a single exemplar of a manifestation.” The model proposes the addition of a Component level to the FRBR framework to describe media installations, which is deemed as “necessary because components are at the very heart of the changes affecting most media artworks. The addition of this level promotes the identification and collection of documents that make reference to a specific component in the item, which in turn facilitates the tracking of changes made to the work throughout its lifecycle.”³⁷

Below is a visualization of the hierarchical model from the DOCAM website:



³⁶ Besser, Howard. “Contemporary Art That Does Not Last Without Being Changed: Issues for Librarians.” 2012, p. 8 <http://www.arlisnorden.org/uploads/6/0/9/2/6092407/art-now-paper-besser.doc>. Accessed February 24, 2018.

³⁷ Documentation and Conservation of the Media Arts Heritage (DOCAM) website, “Presentation of the Model.” <http://www.docam.ca/en/documentation-model.html>. Accessed February 24, 2018.

For time-based media installations with multiple components, information documented about the creation of artworks (Artwork) can carry over to the (Expression) realization of that artwork to component parts with artist provided installation specifications, which are then produced (Manifestation) in each installation of the piece. An edition or a specific successful installation could be seen as an exemplar of the work (Item). Then the Component level could be component, integration, and component reports in an acquired work.

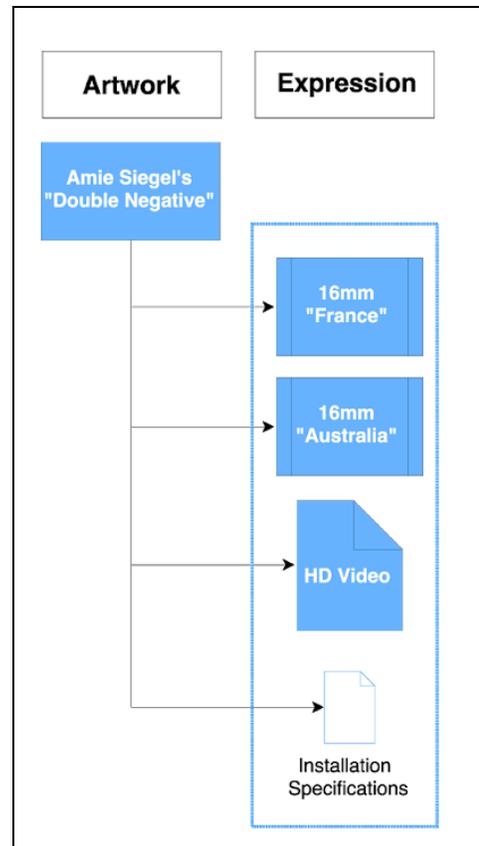
Combined with Phillips' documentation model, Iteration Reports would be generated from each of the work's Manifestations. All reports, including Component Media Reports and Identity Report would reside at the Component Level of the DOCAM model. The Identity Report would be informed by all the documentation about the iterations and media.

Visualizing Documentation Models through Double Negative

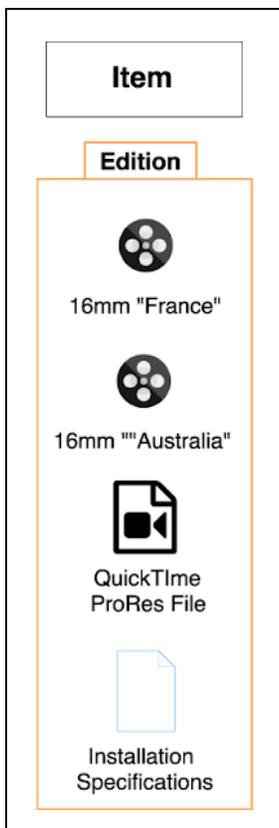
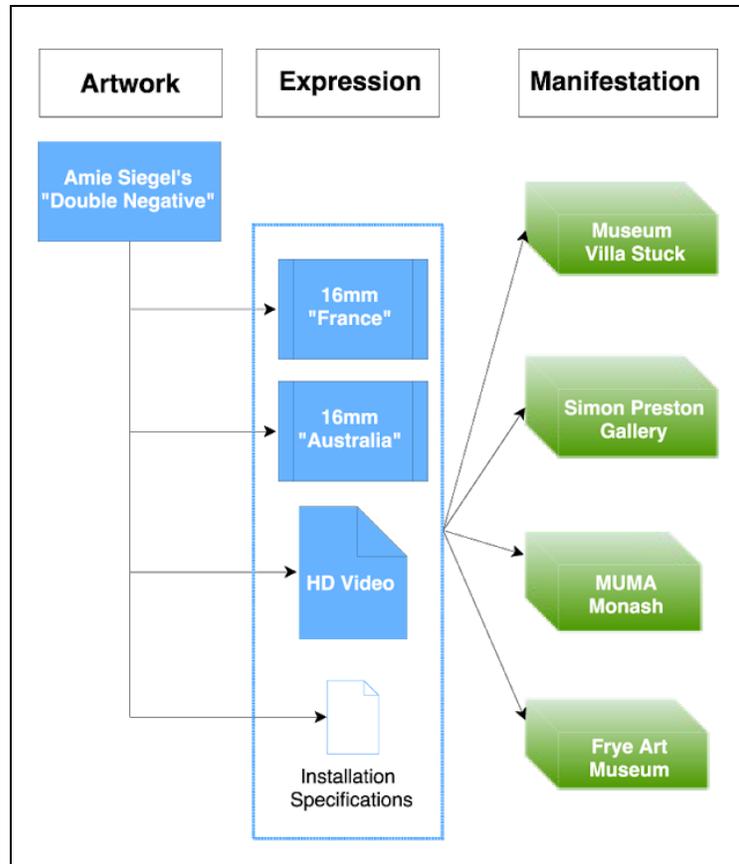


The Artwork *Double Negative* would be the first level of the DOCAM model.

It is realized through the Expression levels of the two 16mm parts as one component, the HD video as the other component, and the installation specifications document.

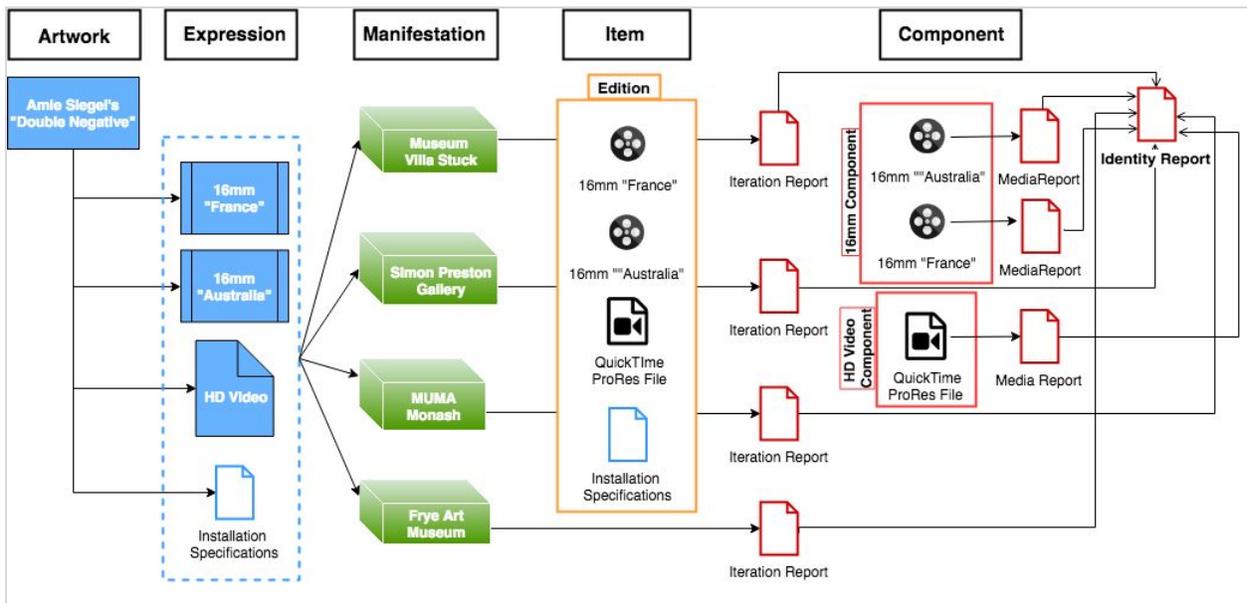


Each produced iteration at the Museum Villa Stuck, Simon Preston Gallery, Monash MUMA, and the Frye Art Museum are the Manifestations to date.



The edition of *Double Negative* that an acquisition is based on would be the exemplar example of Item level.

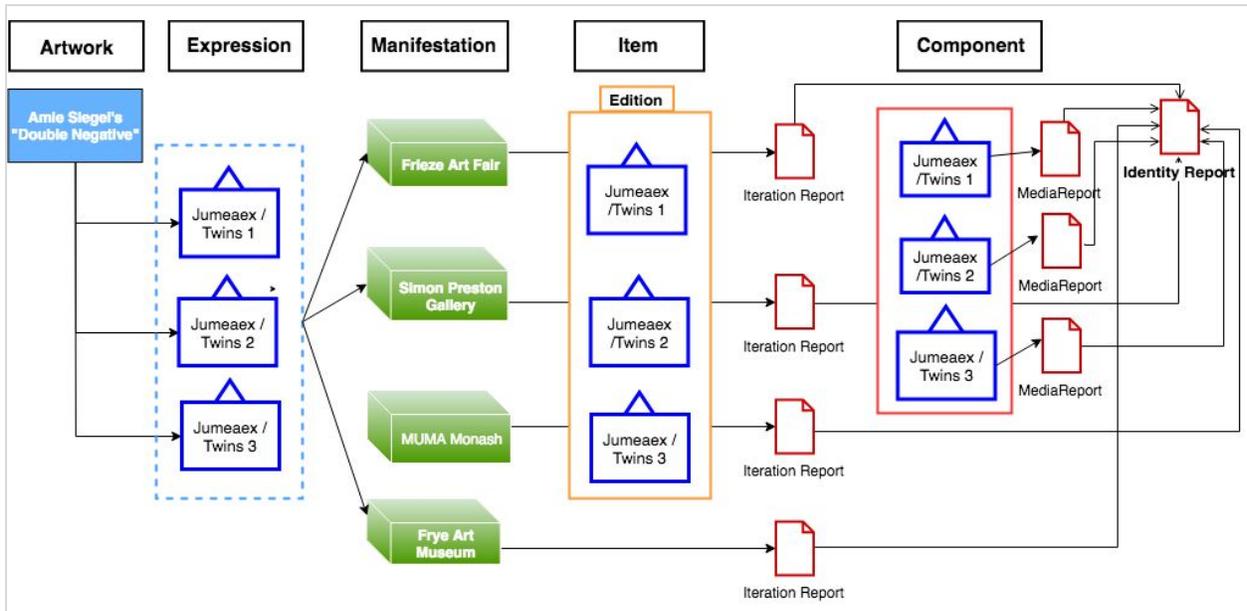
The Component level of the DOCAM model would be each 16mm object, and related elements, the HD video file, and Component reports describing those objects. Iteration reports from each exhibition would also be included in this level. Finally, the Identity report, which relates to the Component and Iteration reports, would be at this level as well. The Component level of DOCAM maps out objects that would be identified and stored in a content management system. The digital objects would be stored in a digital repository. No dedicated equipment is part of an acquired edition of *Double Negative*, as shown in the Item level of this model. If dedicated exhibition equipment is acquired, it would be mapped at the Component Level.



The DOCAM / FRBR model could be used to think about artwork related to ideas from *Double Negative* such as the *Jumeaux Twins* and *Polarity Prints* series of photographs derived from the 16mm component's production footage. They are different Expressions of the same concept of the Artwork, even though they are separate works of their own and available as separate editions. Collectors and institutions have acquired prints from the *Jumeaux Twins* and

Polarity Prints series. While these works have not always shown with *Double Negative*, such as for the MUMA Monash show, it would be unlikely they would be shown without the 16mm and HD video components of *Double Negative*.

A visualization of the *Jumeaux Twins* and *Polarity Prints* series could appear like this:



Each work would show up at the Expression level. When they appeared with an iteration of *Double Negative's* 16mm and HD Video Component, it would be recorded on those iteration reports. Each series would have its own edition at the Item level (only *Jumeaux Twins* is showing in this visualization for simplicity sake). Each print in the series would get their own Component / Media Report, which informs the Identity Report of *Double Negative*. Each object would then get identified in the museum's content management system.