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## ARTICLE

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# Documenting and materialising art: conceptual approaches of documentation for the materialisation of art information

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## Abstract

A focus on documentation is essential to help better understand art and its information, particularly in terms of art's materiality and art information's materialisation. Documentation — that is, documents and practices with them, or so-called documentary practices — provides the material basis for art and, in turn, materialises the information presented, displayed or intended by the artwork, or piece of art.

Indeed, most kinds of art exist as some kind of document, such as a film, painting or sculpture. Art's information, moreover, is materialised, and thereby transformed, into an artwork, or piece of art, by and through documentation. Documentation is therefore a crucial component of the field and practice of art because of its important roles in materialising artistic concepts into particular kinds of documents that are considered, treated, practiced and interacted with as art.

This article presents a conceptual exploration of documentation so as to help illuminate its importance for art's materiality and art information's materialisation. Drawing upon the work of Ann-Sophie Lehmann, Michael Buckland, Bernd Frohmann, Marc Kosciejew, Niels Lund, Tim Gorichanaz, and Kiersten Latham, Diana Coole and Samantha Frost, this article aims to introduce and begin to bring together the disciplines and practices of documentation and art by providing useful conceptual approaches in which to better understand their material realities. This article also responds to Ann-Sophie Lehmann's call for more and greater material literacy of and for the (art) world, by contributing to the start of a conversation about documentation and materialisation generally and about art and its information specifically.

## Keywords

document, documentation, information, materiality, materialism, art

## *Documentación y materialización del arte: métodos conceptuales de documentación para la materialización de la información artística*

### **Resumen**

*El tratamiento de la documentación es esencial para contribuir a mejorar la comprensión del arte y su información, especialmente en lo referido a la materialidad del arte y la materialización de la información artística. La documentación, es decir, los documentos y las prácticas que los utilizan, también conocidas como prácticas documentales, constituye la base material del arte y, a su vez, materializa la información presentada, expuesta o pretendida por la obra de arte.*

*De hecho, casi todo el arte existe bajo la forma de alguna clase de documento, como una película, una pintura o una escultura. La información artística, además, se materializa, y por tanto se transforma, en una obra de arte, por mor y a través de la documentación. La documentación es, por consiguiente, un componente crucial de la teoría y la práctica del arte, debido a la importante función que desempeña en la materialización de conceptos artísticos en clases concretas de documentos a los que se considera y se trata, y con los que se practica e interactúa, como arte.*

*Este artículo presenta una exploración del concepto de documentación con el propósito de contribuir a esclarecer su importancia para la materialidad del arte y la materialización de la información artística. Basándose en la obra de Ann-Sophie Lehmann, Michael Buckland, Bernd Frohmann, Marc Koscieljew, Niels Lund, Tim Gorichanaz y de Kiersten Latham, Diana Coole y Samantha Frost, este artículo pretende comenzar a describir y reunir las disciplinas y prácticas de documentación y arte, exponiendo planteamientos conceptuales útiles con los que conocer mejor sus realidades materiales. Este artículo responde, asimismo, a la llamada de Ann-Sophie Lehmann, que reclama una alfabetización artística sobre y para el mundo (del arte) mayor y más amplia, que sea el punto de partida de una conversación sobre documentación y materialización en general y sobre el arte y su información en particular.*

### **Palabras clave**

*documento, documentación, información, materialidad, materialismo, arte*

A critical question for artists, art scholars, art practitioners and other art lovers is about how art is materialised. How are abstract and artistic concepts materialised and turned into so-called art or artwork? Further, how is the information of art — its particular ideas, inspirations, and meanings — materialised into something with which one engages in interactions or transactions? In what ways is art experienced? How is one able to experience art as art and not only as an artist's ephemeral, mental construct emanating from some state of knowing? Documentation is one of the foundational ways in which art is materialised.

Most kinds of art exist as some kind of document, such as a film, painting or sculpture. Art's information, moreover, is materialised, and thereby transformed, into an artwork, or piece of art, by and through documentation. Documentation is central to the field and practice of art, particularly for materialising art's information. Documentation — that is, documents and practices with them, or so-called documentary practices — provides the material basis for

art and, in turn, materialises the information presented, displayed or intended by the art. Or as Marc Koscieljew states, “a document allows for the materialization of information, helping transform it from something that is intangible into something that is tangible that, in turn, can be used by many different actors for various purposes in diverse settings” (Koscieljew, 2017, p. 98-99).

The art field and practice, indeed like much of the world, is directly concerned with, and immersed in, many different kinds of documentation. As Diana Coole and Samantha Frost note, “we inhabit an ineluctably material world. We live our everyday lives surrounded by, immersed in, matter... At every turn we encounter physical objects fashioned by human design and endure natural forces whose imperatives structure our daily routines for survival” (Coole and Frost, 2010, p. 1). Much of the world is immersed in documents and documentary practices. Documentation, encountered seemingly at every turn, helps determine, discipline and structure many activities, expectations, needs, routines and realities.

This article presents a conceptual exploration of documentation so as to help illuminate its importance for art's materiality and art information's materialisation. This conceptual exploration is intended to help introduce a documentary perspective and approach to the field and practice of art. It is not necessarily concerned with a critical analysis, review or history of art or artwork *per se*; instead, its approach is situated within documentation studies and its aim is to demonstrate and analyse some of the roles played by documentation in art. This conceptual exploration begins with a discussion of some components and dimensions of documents and their centrality in and to art. It builds upon this discussion to show how documentation is or can be experienced and, in turn, how it aids in the co-creation and co-experience between an individual and an artwork or art object.

Drawing upon the work of Ann-Sophie Lehmann, Michael Buckland, Bernd Frohmann, Marc Koscieljew, Niels Lund, Tim Gorichanaz, and Kiersten Latham, as well as of Diana Coole and Samantha Frost, this article aims to introduce and begin to bring together the disciplines and practices of documentation and art by providing useful conceptual tools in which to better understand their material realities. Further, this article responds to Lehmann's call for more and greater material literacy (Lehmann, 2016a, 2016b), by contributing to the start of a conversation about documentation and materialisation generally and about art and its information specifically. Let us begin with an overview of the dualist separation of materiality and art and its parallel separation of documentation and information.

## The Dualist Separation of Information and Materiality in Art

Although art depends upon some kind of documentation for the materialisation of its information, it is often regarded as somehow independent of materiality. It is as though art's materiality is basically unimportant and that its information is somehow immaterial and indifferent to its documentation. Its documentation, in other words, is only some incidental, passive, disposable conveyor or vehicle. Indeed, much more tends to be said about art and its information whilst much less is said about its materiality and materialisation. In other words, the documentation of the art field and practice is often relegated to less privileged, even disposable, positions.

Ann-Sophie Lehmann provides some background to this apparent dualist separation of art's information from its materiality. By separating ideas and matter, "art theoreticians of the Renaissance argued that materials had but little influence on the quality and meaning of works of art. The real 'work' of art, it was commonly assumed, took place in the mind of the artist, where ideas and concepts were formed, which then merely had to be imposed on to passive matter" (Lehmann, 2013, p. 10). This separation, and its concomitant enforced duality, intended to privilege art's information from craftsmanship and technicalities.

Lehmann states that this separation was "devised to emancipate the visual arts from the realm of craftsmanship, the installment of the superiority of idea and disegno came at the cost of hiding material procedures and technical skills from view and, consequently, from theoretical reflection" (Lehmann, 2013, p. 10).

This dualist separation consequently constrains the art field and practice by placing art's information and its materiality in opposition to each other whilst simultaneously elevating the former over the latter. Art's materiality, and indeed how artistic ideas are materialised into artwork, has been relegated to a lesser status seemingly unworthy of analysis, reflection or appreciation. It ignores and, at worst, rejects their more symbiotic and enmeshed relationship.

This dualist separation therefore often obstructs a fuller understanding of artwork and its information. Kiersten Latham argues that the "physicality of documents is meaningful beyond signification — the tactile, solid, dimensional (material) aspects of documents are as meaningful as the signified [information]. Material things elicit imagined things, trigger the profound, help people make connections" (Latham, 2014, p. 558). Thus, a materialist (re)turn can help reveal, clarify and open wider approaches and fuller understandings in the art field and practice. A focus on documents and practices with them can further help in this materialist (re)turn — and contribute to Lehmann's call for more material literacy — by showing the significant ways in which art and its information are materialised into artwork by, with and through documentation.

## A Documentary-Material Literacy for Art

In the art field and practice — along with other disciplines and practices, including library and information science — materiality tends to be either ignored or taken for granted. As Coole and Frost argue "for the most part we take...materiality for granted, or we assume that there is little of interest to say about it" (Coole and Frost, 2010, p. 1). In library and information science, for instance, the materiality of information is often neglected. It is usually assumed that there is little of interest to say about it; consequently, there is little examination of its materiality. In the art field, until recently, the materiality of the art's information has also often been neglected. It seems to be assumed that there is little of interest to say about it, and instead there has tended to be a privileging of analysis of the ideas, inspirations, meanings, and so on, of the artwork.

But how can such analysis be conducted without more recognition and better understanding of the materiality that helps make these ideas, inspirations and meanings possible by actually materialising them? Documentation is one of the major components of art's materiality and art information's materialisation. As Koscieljew states, "documentation science cuts across the dual oppositions of document and information, giving special attention to matter by examining the

materiality of documentation and the practices, processes, and assemblages involved in the materialization of information” (Kosciejew, 2017, p. 98). Foregrounding the materiality of documentation helps to emphasise and show that art and its information are not immaterial and intangible abstractions but instead material and tangible objects.

There are in fact growing calls for better and more nuanced understandings of art’s materiality. Lehmann, for example, calls for greater material literacy to help strengthen our awareness of and appreciation for our material surroundings (Lehmann, 2016a, 2016b). Material literacy involves learning with and through materials, or so-called material learning, in order to help us better understand our surroundings. Lehmann states that “to have material literacy means to be able to express oneself clearly about materials’ qualities, histories, and affordances” (Lehmann, 2016b, p. 14). She presents a case study of the art history discipline to discuss how to apply and study material literacy. She states that applying material literacy to art history helps illuminate how art is related to, enmeshed in and a reflection of the material world, and *vice versa*.

Lehmann presents a framework of material literacy comprising four main components (Lehmann, 2016b) using the art history discipline as a backdrop. First, material literacy situates materials at the centre of observation, study and analysis of art. Second, material literacy develops material dialogues about art materials and their effects. Third, material literacy uses materiality to more fully illuminate the context in which art features or functions. And, fourth, material literacy integrates materials into art pedagogy and research.

Lehmann’s framework for material literacy could usefully be extended to include a component concerning documentation in order to help illuminate how information is materialised and transformed into objects or ‘things’ — documents — that are considered to be art or artwork. As Kosciejew argues “documentation science complements and supports Lehmann’s call for material literacy by drawing attention to documents and our practices with them. It explores how documents relate to the material world and vice versa” (Kosciejew, 2017, p. 97-98). Material literacy, in other words, should also involve an examination of documentation and its effects on and for the world and, in this case, the art field and practice, and vice versa.

As Kosciejew explains this examination can be done by placing a document, or documents, at the centre of observation, study and analysis in order to help: develop documentary dialogues about and for it; use it to better illuminate its particular context and other contingencies; and integrate it into the pedagogy and research of art information (Kosciejew, 2017, p. 98). Thus, a focus on documentation in the art field and practice draws attention to documents and our practices with them and how they help to enable a fuller exploration of our surroundings generally and our information, and its materialisation, specifically.

## Art’s Documents, Document Parts, and Systems

But what makes an object like a piece of art a document? Tim Gorichanaz and Kiersten Latham ask, “do documents exist? Or, perhaps more to the point: how do documents exist?” (Gorichanaz and Latham 2016, p. 1114). An object is a document when it furnishes some kind of information or, as Suzanne Briet describes it, evidence. Michael Buckland presents Briet’s classic definition of a document as being some kind of “evidence in support of a fact” (Buckland, 1997). A document, according to Briet, is “any physical or symbolic sign, preserved or recorded, intended to represent, to reconstruct, or to demonstrate a physical or conceptual phenomenon” (Buckland, 1997). The implication is that documentation should not be viewed as being concerned only with texts but instead with access to evidence. Evidence is not only textual but can also be aural/audio, visual, imagery, pictorial, statuary, and so on. Thus, an object is a document if it somehow instructs and/or proves or serves as evidence of something. A piece of art is indeed a document because it not only materialises and represents (artistic) ideas, messages or meanings — that is, information — but also simultaneously informs and serves as evidence of that (artistic) information.

Gorichanaz and Latham provide an illuminating documentary framework that helps provide direction for taking and expanding documentary approaches to artwork. This documentary framework comprises three main components, or what they term as frames: the document, the parts of a document (docemes and docs) and the documents as part of systems. Applying this documentary framework could, for example, mean analysing a particular piece of art as an individual whole document, or examining the individual docemes within it or docs that make it, or looking at it as part of a broader class, category, genre or wider world of artwork.

This documentary framework’s analytical starting point is the document in its individual entirety. This frame “allows the appreciation of the life history of an object — the object’s lifeworld” (Gorichanaz and Latham, 2016, p. 1123). Presenting an example of the art history field to illustrate this analytical frame, they show that “while art pieces are connected over time and space, they are often singled out for analysis, especially when known artists are involved. In a survey course, for instance, single pieces are drawn out and analysed as singular wholes. ‘Today’, the syllabus might seem to say, ‘we will discuss *Descent from the Cross* by van der Weyden, tomorrow *The Birth of Venus* by Botticelli, and later *Nightwatch* by Rembrandt and *Guernica* by Picasso’” (Gorichanaz and Latham, 2016, p. 1123).

The second frame is a document’s parts, specifically the doceme and the doc. The doceme is a part of an individual document. Gorichanaz and Latham argue that “it may be critical for a researcher in some cases to analyse how the individual components of a document contribute to the overall document, accounting for each

of those components as well as the whole” (Gorichanaz and Latham, 2016, p. 1124). It is important to note, however, that the concept of the doceme was first introduced by Niels Lund. Lund describes a doceme as “any part of a document, which can be identified and analytically isolated, thus being a partial result of the documentation process” (Lund, 2004, p. 99), or in other words, “as a part of a certain document” (Lund, 2007, p. 23).

The doceme offers more granular and specific analyses of a document. Lund presents the example of a photograph, as a doceme, within a textual newspaper article, the ‘main’ document; however, it is the photograph and the text, taken together, that form the whole document. He explains that “a certain doceme, like a photograph in a newspaper, may be a document in itself if it is made outside the newspaper. At the same time, the newspaper is not the same document if it does not have any photographs as illustrations” (Lund, 2007, p. 23). Gorichanaz and Latham nevertheless note that Lund acknowledges that many “docemes cannot exist in the same capacity outside documents as they do within them, just as phonemes can never exist outside languages” (Gorichanaz and Latham, 2016, p. 1125).

The doceme, moreover, need not be restrictive; indeed, it can be flexible. As Gorichanaz and Latham argue, “specific docemes can be delineated according to an analyst’s needs and the nature of the document in question” (Gorichanaz and Latham, 2016, p. 1125). The particular docemes will depend upon the document being analysed, the practices involved with that document, and the various contextual contingencies of and surrounding it. Docemes can be a photograph in a newspaper article, a chapter in a book, a figure in a report, and so on. Additionally, “other examples of such docemes include the arm of a Greek sculpture or a scene from a film” (Gorichanaz and Latham, 2016, p. 1125).

Docs, meanwhile, “are the physical components that make up any document, irrespective of information or meaning” (Gorichanaz and Latham, 2016, p. 1126). For example, “considering a painting, a few of the docs that might be analysed include: the support, the paint and the size” (Gorichanaz and Latham, 2016, p. 1126). Docs are the material components of a document (or even a doceme). Gorichanaz and Latham explain that “when something is considered as a doc, it is understood as a physical manifestation, disregarding context” (Gorichanaz and Latham, 2016, p. 1127). It is purely the material. Unlike a doceme, which is “an aspect of a document that contributes some meaning to that document” (Gorichanaz and Latham, 2016, p. 1127), a doc is a material component of a document.

The third frame is documents as parts of a system. All “documents function within shared systems (e.g. families, organizations, cultures). Indeed, a document can be said to exist by virtue of its arrangement with other things” (Gorichanaz and Latham, 2016, p. 1127). This frame therefore helps show that all documents are parts of diverse and larger systems. When analysing or viewing a piece of art, such

as a painting, a person could be aware that there are other paintings (or even other kinds of artwork) by this particular artist, or more generally that other paintings exist and that this is just one of them, or that this painting belongs to a particular genre or period or place.

When analysing any document, then, it is important to consider their relationality to and within particular kinds of systems. Arrangement, curation, exhibition, organisation, structure, indexing and other kinds of relationships influence and shape shared social, cultural practices and, thus, intersubjective understandings of a document’s status as a document. Buckland, for instance, notes that “Ron Day... has suggested, very plausibly, that Briet’s use of the word ‘indice’ is important, that it is indexicality — the quality of having been placed in an organized, meaningful relationship with other evidence — that gives an object its documentary status” (Buckland, 1997). It is the indexing, arranging, organising, relating, and so on, with other documents that helps to configure and facilitate the shared social, cultural practices involved in the intersubjective understandings of documents (to be discussed below). Frohmann similarly argues that “things are documents when located in places where they are readily available to provide evidentiary support for particular propositions” (Frohmann, 2009, p. 297). Information emerges and materialises through a document’s particular arrangement with, or relationship to, other things or objects that are considered documents.

But documents, like different kinds of artwork, are not simply unimportant or disposable conveyors or transmitters of information; on the contrary, documents, and practices with them, have central roles in materialising information. Yet, according to Bernd Frohmann, information “is so often conceived as an abstract, immaterial, and mentalistic substance — Geoffrey Nunberg’s ‘noble substance... indifferent to the transformation of its vehicles’, or Katherine Hayles’s ‘disembodied information’ — a conception that privileges research often transcending, if not simply by-passing, the social, political, scientific, [artistic] and cultural worlds” (Frohmann, 2007, p. 27). Information is not indifferent to its materiality; instead, according to Frohmann, information is an effect of documentation. Shifting the focus from information to documentation helps to more fully illuminate the important ways in which documents and practices with them materialise information and turn it into something that is material, tangible, interacted with and used.

As Buckland observes “one can discuss a text or a work in an abstract sense but texts and works can exist as documents only in some physical manifestation” (Buckland, 2016, p. 1). Documents typically exist in some kind of material form; moreover, their particular kind of materiality — paper, film, digital, clay, etc. — determines what kind of practices they afford. As Frohmann observes “since documents exist in some material form, their materiality configures practices with them” (Frohmann, 2004, p. 396). Materiality can constrain or expand practices, and thus possibilities, with documents. Frohmann states that “a familiar example of constraints imposed by the materiality of

documents is the difficulty of coordinating meetings when committee members rely upon their ‘hard copy’ of the same Web document, each with unique pagination, thus exposing a minor advantage of typographical fixity” (Frohmann, 2004, p. 396). A digital art exhibition, as another example, is created, used, viewed and interacted with — and therefore experienced — in very different ways than a physical art exhibition.

Buckland notes materiality’s importance for documentation, presenting it as a kind of rule for determining when an object becomes or is a document (Buckland, 1997). Additionally, along with materiality, he states that other rules for such a determination include: intentionality, that is, “it is intended that the object be treated as evidence”; the object must “be processed”, that is, made into a document; and “a phenomenological position”, that is, the object is perceived to be a document (Buckland, 1997). These rules are admittedly only some of the “richness of the factors that must be taken into account to understand how documents become informing” (Frohmann, 2004, p. 387). The consideration of such factors should similarly be taken into account in understanding art’s materiality and how its information is materialised.

## The Physical, Mental, and Social Aspects of Art’s Documentation

In order for an object to be considered a document, it must be or furnish evidence — or information — of something and thereby inform one about something. Recalling discussions of how something can be made art by framing it as art, Buckland asks “did Briet mean that just as ‘art’ is made art by ‘framing’ (i.e. treating) it as art, so an object becomes a ‘document’ when it is treated as a document, i.e. as a physical or symbolic sign, preserved or recorded, intended to represent, to reconstruct, or to demonstrate a physical or conceptual phenomenon?” (Buckland, 1997). A piece of art is a document that is “regarded by someone as signifying something [some kind of information]. It has to be a physical, material entity” (Buckland, 2016, p. 1). A piece of art is usually intended to signify some kind of information. Materiality is necessary in this signification, but it is not entirely sufficient for the artwork to be a document. Mental and social aspects must also be taken into account.

Regarding the mental aspects of documents, Buckland explains that “someone must view [the document] as signifying (or potentially signifying) something, even if unsure of what the significance might be” and, further, its “status as a document [...] is an individual, personal mental judgment and, therefore, subjective. Such a perception occurs only in a living mind and, with any living, learning mind, the perception can change as what the individual knows changes” (Buckland, 2016, p. 2). The document is perceived to be a document; the piece of art is perceived to be art with some kind of artistic information or evidence.

Regarding the social aspects of documents, Buckland notes the importance of intersubjectivity for documents. Intersubjectivity occurs when mental, subjective understandings “develop among two or more individuals in a related, dialectic way. These more or less shared subjective understandings — intersubjective understandings — form the basis of the shared culture of any social group” (Buckland, 2016, p. 2). Although interacted and experienced in subjective ways, a document can be objectively perceived as a document through shared social, cultural practices. Recall how documents are part of systems and that their particular role, status or importance often derives from their arrangement within a larger system, their placement in a certain cultural context and their relationship to other documents. As Gorichanaz and Latham note, “documents can be understood as parts of systems, the complex networks of relationships that exist between documents and people and the societies in which they live [and function]” (Gorichanaz and Latham, 2016, p. 1130).

Frohmann further states that “attention to practices with documents reveals how it is that particular documents, at particular times and places and in particular areas of the social and cultural [and artistic] terrain, become informative” (Frohmann, 2004, p. 405). Practices with documents — such as creating, inscribing, writing, drawing, painting, reading, viewing, handling, deploying, disseminating, organising, exhibiting, implementing and otherwise using in diverse ways — are especially necessary in materialising information which, in turn, helps make a document informing in some way. Or, put differently, documentary practices help make a piece of art informing as artistic, or as evidence of art, in some way.

Practices with documents could therefore be seen as a kind of a process of co-creating information. Gorichanaz similarly argues that without practices, or more specifically without any (human) actor, “an object cannot be observed, consulted or studied, and there is nobody to judge proof, be presented to, reconstitute, handle, transport or preserve” (Gorichanaz, 2015, p. 3). An object, in other words, becomes a document, and is made informing, with and through practices with it. A document’s information does not emerge, let alone fully materialise, without engaging in practices with it. A document that does not have anyone engaging in practices with it is, according to Gorichanaz, not a document, or at least not a full document; instead, it is only a kind of “information object”, which is itself only a “potential document” (Gorichanaz, 2015, p. 3).

Or, put differently, it is a fusion or, as Latham (2014) describes it, a transaction, between an object and person, between the material and the mental, between the material and the cultural, that determines an object’s documentary status, thereby materialising its information. For example, without engaging in practices with it, “a book is nothing more than a weighty collection of inked leaves — it is not a document... [but] once a person uses it, a document is created” (Gorichanaz, 2015, p. 3).

It is important to also note that documentary practices are determined and disciplined by particular, and usually shared, social

and cultural aspects; or, as Buckland would state, the intersubjective social aspects of documents. Documentary practices, and documents themselves, are context-bound. As Gorichanaz explains, “this co-created understanding of document has an important ramification: documents do not exist in the physical world, but rather in a psycho-physical or socio-physical realm” (Gorichanaz, 2015, p. 4). Documents are material objects with psycho-social properties and affordances, especially insofar as practices with them are concerned. The information of a document, then, is materialised both through its actual materiality and shared social, cultural practices — which are shaped by and, in turn, shape mental interactions — in particular contexts.

The enmeshed aspects of the physical (material), mental and social, cultural dimensions of a piece of art as a document therefore must be accounted for in understanding art’s materiality and art information’s materialisation. A piece of art, when approached and understood as a document, “must have both physical and mental properties, but since the mental processes are culturally entangled with the social, the status of being a document also entails a social dimension indirectly through the mental” (Buckland, 2016, p. 3). Furthermore, a document like a piece of art must be placed “in evidence, to offer it as evidence by the way it is arranged, indexed or presented” (Buckland, 1997). These shared intersubjective social, cultural practices — which involve a co-creating process, or fusion, between the document and information/the piece of art and artist and user/the object and actor/the material and the social and cultural — with the document in context-bound systems are crucial in materialising art’s information.

## Documenting and Materialising Art

This article has helped to respond to Lehmann’s call for greater material literacy by introducing a focus on documentation to the art field and practice through its conceptual exploration of documentation and its importance for art’s materiality and art information’s materialisation. As Koscijew argues “documentation helps show information’s materiality and contextual contingencies that make it informing; without documents and documentary practices, information is dematerialized and thus decontextualized and in some cases rendered meaningless” (Koscijew 2017, p. 110). Indeed, “documentation is of central importance to information” (Koscijew 2017, p. 110). This article thus explained the dualist separation of information and materiality in art and showed the important roles played by documentation in reuniting them by presenting a documentary-material literacy for art and discussing art’s documents, document parts and systems, and their physical, mental and social aspects. By applying some of the conceptual perspectives and approaches offered by Lehmann, Koscijew, Buckland, Frohmann, Lund, Gorichanaz and

Latham, as well as Coole and Frost, this article aimed to bring together documentation and art in order to show their many enmeshed, shared and, in some respects, symbiotic commonalities and relationships.

A focus on documentation is essential to help better understand both art and its information, at least in terms of materiality and materialisation. Documentation is indeed a crucial component of the field and practice of art because of its important roles in materialising artistic concepts into particular kinds of documents that are considered, treated, practiced and interacted with as art.

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