

# **To Choose or Not to Choose: Appraisal and Selection in the Guggenheim Museum Archives Video and Sound Recordings Project**

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**Abstract:** The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum Archives are undertaking a two-year project to provide unprecedented access to our unique collections of film, video, and sound recordings. These collections document the Guggenheim Museum's influential and vibrant history of exhibitions, artist interactions, performances and public programs from the 1960s to present.

This poster will explain how we developed a new appraisal and selection process. Our grant funding enables us to digitize 300 out of 7,500 recordings, or 4% of the total. To make these selection decisions, the project archivists have created digitization criteria which assign a value to each record, according to media type, copyright status and content of the recordings. Using the criteria, the project team was able to rank 7,500 on an objective basis. This allowed us to designate items for disposal, including widely released films and duplicate recordings (beyond a three copies per format limit). Derivatives of video artworks, e.g. viewing copies, were identified as out of scope and transferred to the curatorial department. Non-audiovisual materials such as discs of images and PDFs were also separated and designated for future accessioning into appropriate collections within the Archives.

Alongside creating the ranking scale, the project team has led inter-departmental discussions and collaborations with other institutions, including the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. Our goal is that these partnerships will minimize duplication in digitization efforts and improve the Guggenheim's in-house digitization workflows thereby providing access to more recordings.

## **About the Authors:**

*Joey Cabrera* is the Project Archivist whose responsibility is to arrange, describe, and selectively digitize the four collections. Joey has a MLIS with a concentration in archives and specializes in audiovisual materials. Joey previously worked in the archives at New York Public Radio and the Public Art Fund and is an active member of the Archivists Round Table of Metropolitan New York.

***Tali Han*** is the Assistant Archivist and Project Manager and manages the project timeline, processing documentation, and collaborations. Her responsibilities at the Guggenheim also include reference services, staff training, database management, born-digital archives, records management, accessions, and archival processing.

***Rossy Mendez*** was the Project Archivist and now works at the NYC Municipal Archives. Prior to the Guggenheim, Rossy worked as a Public Services Project Archivist at the Seeley G. Mudd Manuscript Library of Princeton University where her work included processing collections related to the university's history. Rossy has also processed collections at the NYC Department of Environmental Protection, the Esteban Vicente Archives, and the Burke Library of the Union Theological Seminary.