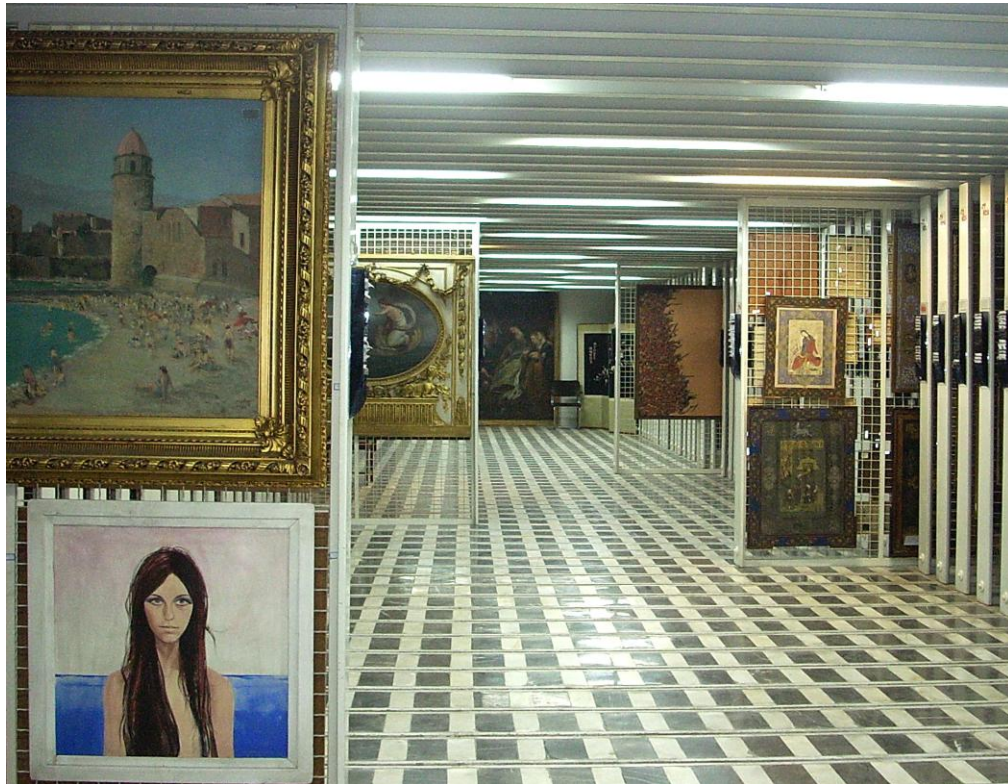


A Brief Acquaintance with collection of paintings of Cultural Institute of Bonyad Museums (CIBM):

Activities and methods of documentation in digital era



By Golnaz T. Golsabahi

Responsible of painting collection

Cultural Institute of Bonyad Museums (CIBM)

IRAN-TEHRAN

CIDOC-2014

golnaz.golsabahi@gmail.com

1. An introduction to painting collection of cultural institute of Bonyad museums:

Collection of painting in cultural institute of Bonyad museums is one of fourteen collections of historical and artistic works. In this Institute various historical and artistic works have been preserved since 28 years ago. Although most of works of this collection are Iranian and non-Iranian (mainly European) paintings, but, maps, historical photos, exquisite (rare) books benefiting of features and designs of Islamic art in past centuries and painted doors have been presented in it.

3595 objects in this collection belong to cultural institute of Bonyad museums and are supposed to be delivered to museums which would be established by this institute in future.

- **Major (Primary) Scope of Objects in this collection:**

Paintings

- **Minor (Secondary) Scope:**

- Calligraphies
- Map
- Photographs
- Painted wooden doors
- Partitions
- Printed art works
- Gilded books.

- **Historical Scope:**

Iranian Art works from Safavid age to present and foreign art works from 17th Century to present.

- **Geographical Scope:**

Iran and different countries

- **Mission:**

Providing an adequate field, in order to preserve, Conserve, Collect, Document and Identify, generating the best atmosphere to collect related art works, research and prepare exhibition, and finally raising public awareness about collection objects and its artistic heritages.

- **Vision:**

Developing and raising visual perception of public, raising public knowledge and ability to understand works of arts, providing suitable environment to flourish creativities, providing adequate conditions to enjoy of contemporary and classic art, through preservation, conservation, collection and exhibition of paintings.

2- Activities and methods of documentation in Collection of painting in digital era:

Documentation process in this collection now is based on practical guide of documentation which published by UNESCO, ICCROM and EPA, 2010:

“DOCUMENTATION OF MUSEUM COLLECTIONS WHY? HOW? “

Practical guide ⁱ



ICCROM-UNESCO PARTNERSHIP FOR THE
PREVENTIVE CONSERVATION OF ENDANGERED
MUSEUM COLLECTIONS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES



I. DOCUMENTATION OF MUSEUM COLLECTIONS

A GUIDE FOR DOCUMENTATION WORK FOR MUSEUMS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES



- **In Painting Collection**

In general in this collection, works are classified on the base of two main categories:

- Iranian objects
- Non- Iranian objects

Base of this classification, two panels, in eastern and western side, have been located in this collection and most of objects are preserving on these panels such as some other ones which preserving in corridors and drawers.

This brief introduction about painting collection of Cultural Institute of Bonyad Museums (CIBM) has been prepared by Golnaz.T Golsabahi as responsible for painting collection .It will explain the collecting system and information about documentation activities.

3- General Procedure and documentation areas in CIBM Painting Collection:

- **Object entry**

All objects entering to the Cultural Institute of Bonyad museums (CIBM) are recorded in a special sheets data bank, both manual and digital form. All objects in order to enter to the collection are identified with a number and a prefix: “M”.

Two general processes in this part are as following:

- **Accession to the main institute (CIBM)**

In this level some general documentation actions, both manual and digital will be done.

They are:

- Recording objects’ general information.
- Recording Objects’ ownership process.
- Recording the last owner information.
- Recording objects’ previous location.
- Objects numbering with prefix: M (for example M- 20343 or in Persian: ۲۰۳۴۳ -م)

- Accession to the painting collection

In this step besides all activities which have been done in main institute(CIBM) by its general office of trusty section, the following list will be done in painting collection as well:

- Procedure of official transferring responsibility of object to treasurer. (Manual)
- Recording objects' condition and physical situation. (Manual)
- Recording objects' codes with prefix "M" in objects data bank. (Excel sheet)
- Recording objects' general information in object data bank of collection. (Excel sheets)
- Recording the last owner information in object data bank of collection. (Excel sheets)
- Classifying objects. (Manual)
- Photographing objects.
- locating objects. (Manual and computerized as recorded in an excel sheet)
- Preparing objects IDs. (Manual- computerized)
- Researching basic knowledge about objects in order to make library of data.

• Official transferring responsibility

By this activity, keeper or collection responsible, will receive objects responsibility as collection responsible.

Paper based documents must be signed to deliver this responsibility. Keeper will receive objects responsibility one by one in an almost long process.

• Coding system

Coding system on object entry in cultural institute of Bonyad museums, contains some different ways and mostly, based on the way of receiving objects, but coding system in Painting collection is based on a number with prefix "M" in Persian, which has to show the object place (from counting point of view) among other objects of institute and collection.

By the way, collection responsible, will receive another and different codes of each object but documentation and addressing process will be based on number with prefix M.

The process can be listed as following:

- Appropriation of identification code based on museum coding system: a number with prefix "M".
- Appropriation of identification code based on object location in painting collection.
- Recording all codes in main Storage department and painting collection special files, both

manual and digital sheets.

- **Objects Identification**

Since 3 years ago Cultural institute of Bonyad Museums, under the guidance of its experts and researchers, prepared a practical guideline for each collection in order to explain the framework and process of objects' identification.

This guideline explains objects Category, Material, Style, Historical and Artistic background, and clarifies a frame which shows how an object can be collected (or belong to) in a specific collection.

By this guideline which named "A guideline for identification museum's object" every object, in the very first level of entering to the collection, can be identified and categorized. If it doesn't fit to this guideline, will not belong to that specific collection and can be transferred and collected in another collection or place.

Based on "A guideline for identification museum's object" the process of object Identification will be:

- Providing general and manual object ID forms.
- Providing specialized and manual object ID forms.
- Providing digital object ID in excel Data Bank.

- **Locating**

Addressing objects is one of the most necessary and important activities in this collection. Over than 3500 objects such as paintings with different style and techniques, maps, printed art works, books and painted doors are preserved in this collection. Locating or addressing objects is only activity which since two years ago has been digitalized from the beginning.

Every location of each objects record in a special data bank on excels sheets with its picture. The Photographs aren't taken professionally, but they show objects and their location on panels or in the corners or boxes of collection. This activity is very helpful in periodical, regular stock taking or in joint project with other museums or collections such as exhibition, loan in and out. So in this level with a very simple format, and using existing possibility, collection will be monitored and will be digitalized.

The processes are:

- Locating object based on objects classification.
- Providing object's code in object location in a visible way.

- Photographing object in its location.
- Computerizing object location with its code number.
- Linking object location to its photograph.

- **Cataloguing**

Painting collection keeps background and history of object to hold information about the acquisition process and object entry. This includes all correspondence, researching materials, catalogues or pictures, relating to the object. But this Process not only in Painting collection but also in all museums and other collections of CIBM is very new and still different with main concept of cataloguing. We are trying to collect data, historical background, documents about object identification and classification, documents and references about loan in and out and exhibition, mostly, based on **spectrum: “The UK museum documentation standard”ⁱⁱⁱ** in a manual file.

But still lack of tools and skilled personnel is the cause of not being able to use this model in the best way and practically.

In painting collection, over than 2000 manual files have been prepared for each object under its own code and the goal is to finish this pre- cataloguing for all objects during year 2015. The activity is not computerized /digitized yet.

- **Manual Library of Data**

All research paper works or articles in magazines, books or newsletters, relating to items in the collection, have been filed in object coding order.

In Manual Library of data, every data and information related to historical or artistic knowledge of object will be gathered and collected.

This information and knowledge will be in the service of curator researches and studies about objects. It can be available for public or students as well.

- **Periodical stocktaking**

In Periodical stocktaking, each object in collection, is checked and reviewed by curator and representative from main treasurer department and the results record officially in institute documents, administrative department and storage department. Each object’s absence or damages should have been recorded officially and curator will be in charge for explanations. The process will be recorded and signed by director general, head of treasurer department, head of collections department and responsible/curator of collection.

Each year, every collection will follow this process but in one year, it will be about whole objects and collection in general and in next year it will be checked and reviewed by random.

- **Loan in / out**

Cultural institute of Bonyad museums (CIBM) and its painting collection are interested and cooperate with organizations and institutes which are interested in planning joint project or exhibition through objects of this institute. But this activity rarely happened inside of Iran because of different methods of documentation which are not match together and lack of supportive rules in order to loan objects in or out.

- **Conclusion:**

Since two years ago based on knowledge management strategy and research, through communication with professional organizations and programs for training personnel, a planned program has been started in order to improve documentation process. By this program, paper-based records in each collection such as Painting will be converted to a digitalized format. In this process, data, records in to the computerized databanks and finally a unified data bank will be designed. By this unified data bank of CIBM, every collection's object information of this institute will be linked together, visualized, searchable and researchable.

The result of this strategy can also be:

- Trained personnel
- Provided equipments and software
- Digitized objects photographs
- Digitized objects documents
- Digitized collection database
- Digital catalogues
- Website for study and research

- **The SWOT Analyze of existing process of documentation in painting collection can be:**

- Strength:

- Recording all information(even paper based or manual)
- Classifying and categorizing all objects
- Adequate storage condition
- Regular periodical stocktaking

- Weakness:

- Lack of new hard and soft wares for digital documentation
- Lack of enough skilled personnel
- Paper- based and manual documentation
- Not- identified objects(some)
- Not - photographed objects (some)

- Opportunity:

- Existing professional collaborators around the world
- Existing organized Guidelines or document to learn
- Motivated personnel

- Threats

- Unavailable objects documents
- Uncertain collection activities and projects
- Imprecise collection management
- Unsecure collection condition in order to collaborate in joint projects and exhibition.

- **Key words:**

CIBM, Painting collection, Documentation, Digitized collection

- **References**

ⁱ - “*DOCUMENTATION OF MUSEUM COLLECTIONS WHY ? HOW?* “*Practical guide: UNESCO, ICCROM and EPA, 2010*

< http://epa-prema.net/documents/ressources/Practical-Guide-Documentation_eng.pdf >

ⁱⁱ - “ *SPECTRUM: The UK Museum Documentation Standard* “

< wiki.collectionspace.org/download/.../Spectrum+3.1+Cataloging.pdf >