



[About us](#) → [Projects](#) → [Documentation and Conservation of Performance](#) → Documentation Tool:
Activation Report

The activation report has been developed for documenting the material conditions of the activation of a performance artwork within the institution, both at Tate and beyond. This written document reflects the specific conditions of each activation of any given artwork.

[Download the Activation Report template](#) 

The activation report, the format of which is similar to the performance specification, captures new information in each instance that the artwork is brought from its dormant state through to its activated state, and seeks to capture institutional and artistic justification for consequent changes that arise from this activation. As explained in the [glossary section of this strategy](#), the term 'activation' is used to highlight the liveness of the work when it is performed within the space of the museum, referring to a limited temporal period of display of the artwork at any given context. In this sense, we would write an activation report for each display of any given performance artwork and not for each specific instantiation of the artwork within that period of display. It is not intended to capture either the full duration of the installation, or each individual live performance of the work, but rather to consider any artwork-altering changes made from the previous instance of installation and activation. There needs to be a balance in the level of detail captured around change in the work: reporting minute details may risk losing sight of more significant changes while an overly complex process might put users off and equally risks losing vital information. Indeed, the activation report aims to reflect on the constant and flux aspects of the performance being documented, considering any additions or omissions with each activation. This is a simple narrative to aid the capture of the 'ongoing historicity' of the artwork within Tate.

Data gathered in each activation report is going to contribute to the document on the [Material Histories](#) of the artwork, which allows for an overview of the material changes an artwork undertook throughout its life. Significant changes – such as changes that seem to suggest a turning point in the artwork's biography, or that respond to changes in the context of display – will then result in changes being made to the [Performance Specification](#).

Ultimately, the value is to build a body of knowledge about the performance, to create a rich ongoing history. The report is also supported at Tate by the creation of documentation in other media forms, including photography, video, and audio, interviews with the artist and participants, and production documents such as contracts.

Contributors

Acatia Finbow developed an early version of the Activation Report. Hélia Marçal contributed from 2018, developing this tool this further in collaboration with Louise Lawson and Acatia Finbow, and drawing on the Installation Report, which was developed by Ana Ribeiro.

How to cite

Louise Lawson, Acatia Finbow and Hélia Marçal, 'Documentation Tool: Activation Report', in *Documentation and Conservation of Performance (March 2016 – March 2021)*, a Time-based Media Conservation project at Tate, <https://www.tate.org.uk/about-us/projects/documentation-conservation-per...>