This “how to” tip sheet outlines typical categories (also called series) for arranging photographs within collections. A sample container list for a fictional collection illustrates the presentation of the physical arrangement.

**Typical series for photographs**

Physical format is a frequent primary criterion for establishing photographic series. Original order is often based on format distinctions, because material such as prints and slides have different storage needs and uses even before they reach an archives. The archives might further separate material by format, especially negatives, to ensure preservation of fragile material. When only a few items are in a special format, references to separate storage locations can suffice rather than establishing an entire series.

Photographic series listed in finding aids often appear to be subject based, because topical words begin the series name. The primary criterion for such series, the physical format “prints,” is implicit. Series for other formats such as negatives, albums, or cased photographs tend to have the format term stated explicitly in the series name.

Within each format-based series, the subseries can rely on such “unifying elements” as function or genre, subject, or chronology. Series may also be divided into file units or items based on format such as a single album.

**Examples:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Format-based series</th>
<th>Prints</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Negatives</td>
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<td>Slides</td>
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<td>Oversize</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function or Genre series</th>
<th>Advertising photos</th>
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<td>Book illustrations</td>
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<td>Campaign photos</td>
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<td>Exhibit prints</td>
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<td>Portraits</td>
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<td>Public affairs photos</td>
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<td>Staff identification photos</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject-based series</th>
<th>People</th>
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<td>Culture groups</td>
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<td>Employee photos</td>
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<td>Family members</td>
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<td>Friends and acquaintances</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organizations</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Things
  Buildings and structures
    Architect
    Client
    Construction site location
    Type of structure

Products
  Type or date

Events
  Anniversaries
  Conferences
  Manufacturing activities
  Parades
  Training programs
  Places

Chronology
  Year

Creator-based series
  Names of photographers or sponsors of images

Sample Container List (Fictional Collection)

The following container contents list for a finding aid illustrates a typical arrangement scheme using a fictional photograph collection. The broadest categories are based on type of material, such as prints, albums, and negatives. The subcategories rely on genre and subject matter. Most material fits into document boxes, but special storage locations are noted for daguerreotypes, panoramas, and supplement archives.

Milagro Family Photographs, 1855-1981, bulk 1890-1966

Container
  Box 1   Portraits
    Family
      Milagro, Concepcion, 1863-1888, n.d.
      Milagro, Hermione, 1887-1966
      Milagro, Marco Polo, 1909-1966
      Milagro, Maria Guadalupe, 1862-1942, n.d.
      Milagro, Minnie Corazon, 1916-1980
      Milagro, Simon Bolivar, 1876-1936
      Milagro, Yabasta, 1895-1966
      O’Neal, Carmen Milagro, 1937-1966
    Friends and associates
      Bayard, Thomas Francis, 1894-1942
      Farragut, David G., 1862
      Harte, Bret, 1876
      Paul, Alice, 1914-1953
      Scott, Randolph, 1936-1942
      Unidentified, n.d.
DAG CABINET 1  Daguerreotypes
Concepcion Milagro, 1855
Maria Guadalupe Milagro, 1857

Box 2  Yabasta Milagro lantern slide lecture on women’s suffrage, 1922

Box 3  Hermione Milagro as actress and playwright, 1924-1936
       Rush to Madness, 1924
       Guadalajara Rebel, 1924
       Four on the Run, 1925
       Tender Embrace, 1926
       On the Rocks, 1936

Container

Box 4  Simon Bolivar Milagro ambassadorship to Xanadu, 1932
       Official activities and travel
       Presenting papers, Feb. 2, 1932
       Ribbon Cutting, Styx Bridge, March 15, 1932
       State dinner, March 21, 1932
       Conference on Xanadu oxygen production, April 1-4
       Good will tour, May 2-22
       Audience with Grand Vizier, May 24
       Departure ceremonies, May 28

Box 5  Presentation album from the Grand Vizier

PANORAMA 176  Panorama of Xanadu Royal Palace

Albums
Box 6  1875 – 1921
Box 7  1922 - 1948
Box 8  1948 - 1953
Box 9  1954 – 1962
Box 10 1959 Disneyland vacation
Box 11 1963 - 1966

Box 12  Milagro family art collection
       Painting
       Photography
       Sculpture

SUPP ARCH 33  Campaign button of Senator Marco Polo Milagro, 1956

Drawer 14  Negatives