

TEXTILES

Museum School for Adults

Meet the DPM Staff



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Today's Agenda

- Textiles 101
- Preparation and handling for delicate or deteriorating items
- Problems
- Preservation
- The future of your treasures

Preserve Conserve Restore

* Restoration is often not possible with textiles depending on the damage.



PRESERVE

act of preventing or neutralizing the deterioration of objects through proper storage and handling techniques. CONSERVE

the practice of mitigating further deterioration. Reversible stabilization is any treatments that can be performed that can be undone with no ill effect to the artifact.



RESTORE

attempts to return an artifact back to its original condition.

• Restoration equals permanent change.

"Once changed an object's provenance has also been altered and it is no longer a true document of its place in history."

Not altering the object. Controlling elements around the object.

Stabilizing the object with minimal intervention.

Altering the original permanently.



Wool Linen Cotton Silk Leather Furs Feathers Lace

Textiles (natural & manufactured)

Denim *durable cotton twill
 Viscose, e.g. rayon (ca. 1894)
 Vinyl (ca. 1926)
 Nylon (ca. 1938, first synthetic)
 Polyester (ca. 1941)
 Spandex (ca. 1942)
 Microfibre (ca. 1970)



Notions & Accessories

Wood Metal lvory Feathers Fur Rubber Velcro (ca. 1955) Plastics ... so many

- glitter, fasteners, Fabric/textile (such as tassels)

Categories

- Quilts
- Yarn products
 - Afghans, baby blankets, crochet/knitted pieces
- Apparel
 - Wedding dresses, baby clothes, hats and shoes, outerwear, favorite pieces
- Table wares
- Lace
 - Doilies, collars, etc.
- Upholstery and rugs



Important or Special, why?

The first step in your preservation project is to document what you know about the item's history.

Document Connections and attach it to the storage: Who made or bought it, when and why? What was it used for? Where was it worn?





Preparing to handle....

- Wash hands (cotton gloves 🖒)
 - Remove jewelry, etc. that could snag
- Clean workspace
 - No ink pens/markers
 - Avoid food/beverage or anything that could transfer onto the textile
- "Look and plan, then to hand"
 - Asses the condition of the item before adding stress
 - Use both hands. Does it need a plank support?

Assessing the Item-Intrinsic

- Fiber
- Manufacture process will out
- Attachments
 - Buttons, fasteners, pins, rivets, buckles, etc.
 - "Incompatible materials"
- Fabrics and thread deteriorate
 - Look for splits, stains, soil, etc.
 - What has and can happen to this item?



Assessing the Item-External factors

1. LIGHT

2. TEMPERATURE

3. HUMIDITY

4. PESTS

5. HUMAN BEINGS

6. CHEMICAL REACTION & AIR POLLUTANTS

7. PHYSICAL FORCE

"Most older textiles will not tolerate washing or dry cleaning, so you have to learn to live with flaws." Vintage Fashion Guild





Moisture

aka "Tide lines"



Mold development around fastenings

Incorrect relative humidity + incompatible materials



Bug snack

aka "Grazing"



Sweat stains oxidized

Stains from use



Light exposure

- fading
- yellowing
- darkening
- bleaching
- embrittlement
- color change

2 factors: Illumination

Duration





Metal salts and/or Stress from use

Chemical *and/or* mechanical stress





Hanger damage, partly due to bead applique

Mechanical stress (and likely metal salts)



Stain from wood frame

Chemical reaction due to lignin build-up

Fugitive dyes • "They run"

- To test --
- Deionized or distilled water
- Choose an unobtrusive area (an edge, or inside a seam allowance)
- pipette, eye dropper, brush, swabs
- Barrier blotter paper and mylar
- Tests do not simulate the effects of immersion
 - You can't assume the entire thing is color fast from a small test. Proceed with caution.



Basic Test Method

- Test first with the weakest solution. This is usually water at room temperature. A strong indication of unstable dyes at this stage may make further testing unnecessary. If the results are negative, testing with progressively stronger or warmer solutions may be continued.
- Wet out a small thread sample taken from the textile or wet a discrete area on the textile with one of the liquids to be used in the treatment.
- Place the area between two pieces of blotter or filter paper (or cotton fabric). Cover with polyester or polyethylene film and place under weights. [N.B.: if paper or fabric is allowed to extend beyond the edges of the weights, the drying period is shortened due to capillary action.]
- Allow moisture to evaporate completely, and then examine blotters or filter paper for evidence of dye transfer.

1960s/70s – early plastics in clothing

- Degradation and off-gassing
 - Happens fast once it starts (a couple days fast)

"Devil Dust"

- Please! don't breathe it in or let it sit on your skin
 - Unstable plastics breaking down not safe for human absorption or ingestion
- The item is not salvageable
 - Take a picture. Thank it for it's service. And safely dispose of it.

Signs

- Gritty, sandy, or sticky texture where lining was or throughout
- Visible crumbling along where the plastic lining material or seams were
- Can develop a sticky feeling as well

HERE'S THE BUMMER... SORRY, FOLKS

Many of these changes are permanent. Restoration is often not possible.

Conservation is delicate work, and expensive.

Going forward, consider preservation your secret weapon.

There is hope.



Damaged piece treated at a Conservation center. Those people are magic.

"Clean, Cool, Dry, & Dark"

- Climate-controlled
 - Cool temperatures
 - Low relative humidity
- Clean
 - Dust effects
- Dark
- Storage air circulation
 - Acid-free tissue paper in the item to fluff
 - White cotton sheets, washed unbleached muslin to wrap
 - No bare wood, cardboard, plastic (micro-climate)
 - No wire hangers. Ever.
 - Gravity + age = stress
 - Flat or Rolled preferred
 - Layers between!

Unsized Unbleached Undyed Cotton or Muslin



Quilts

• More than 50 years old = washing machine



- Lightweight = fold or roll
- Heavy= fold and hang
- Occasionally (1)Turn (2)Shimmy (3)New fold
- Best way to store and display? On an unused bed!
 - protected from direct sunlight, heat sources and windows
 - Keeping pets and sun off the quilt will extend the lifetime of the fabric. You may also cover it with a clean, white sheet for further protection.

Refresh storage materials

Check condition and environment

Alter the folds



Check in once in awhile



Cleaning your textiles

Vacuuming technique <u>https://vimeo.com/423217422</u>

*Textiles, such as samplers, painted and embroidered pictures, and beaded work should not be vacuumed, as embroidery yarns and beads can be drawn through the screening.



- Lay the quilt out on a flat surface, and put a nylon stocking over the end of the nozzle or use a soft brush attachment before vacuuming. (a fine mesh screen over the item is also a good solution (see video linked above).
- You also can air the quilt outside on an over
- If you're certain it won't bleed, run, tear, fray or fall apart, you can wash it passively cast day to remove dirt and odors. in a tub and lay it flat to dry. But beware: You may do irreversible damage to old or fragile items.
- To kill insects and larvae, vacuum carefully and wrap the quilt tightly in heavy-duty plastic zipper bags or plastic sealed with duct tape. Freeze it at -10 degrees for 10 days. Thaw at room temperature to avoid condensation, then open and re-vacuum.

Conservation Experts

Shattered silk doll apron



Post-conservation



Rise of Plastics & Fast Fashionbad news for the future

New materials. Big questions. Fabrics may not age well.

As less durable materials become more and more widely used in the textile industry, we will have fewer pieces to cherish and save, and pass on. And a lot more garbage.

Consider events in your life and what you hope to share with the future. It may be worth finding a good quality, sustainable fabric or source to connect to an important life event.

*Keystone objects for descendants





If you treasure it, preserve it with care.

If it has damage, seek professional advice before acting.

Document the story. Others may not know why it is significant.

Clean, Cool, Dark, Dry

Amber Butchart- "A Stitch in Time"

Mini-series, 6 episodes

- Acorn TV or YouTube
- <u>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WuiNiWVvrK4&list=PL72jhKwankOitGyCaryJ</u> <u>dWVTeeKpbxnMe</u>



