The California Preservation Program
Presents

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PRESERVATION BEST PRACTICES

SESSION 3:
COLLECTIONS CARE: HANDLING, ACCESS, STORAGE, AND EXHIBITION

Thursday, December 12, 2013
Today

- Handling
- Access
- Storage
- Exhibition
Handling and Access
Handling and Access: Getting Started

There are written handling guidelines for both staff and researchers.
Handling Procedures

- **Staff**
  - Handling
  - Moving
  - Carts
  - Transportation

- **Researchers**
  - pencils
  - limit # items
  - gloves with photographs
  - lockers
  - monitor

sherwords.blogspot.com
Mishandling
Handling and Access: Getting Started

Preparation for Handling Objects

- Wash hands and dry thoroughly
- Remove jewelry (bracelets, rings, large belt buckles, etc.) and name badges.
- Remove items from top pockets
Handling and Access: Getting Started

Gloves are available for use as necessary

http://www.sharifphotographic.co.uk
Handling and Access: Getting Started

Carts are available to move collections throughout the building

Courtesy Athenaeum of Philadelphia
Handling and Access: Getting Started

Landing spaces are available in collections storage spaces to aid in retrieval and return to storage.
Handling and Access: Getting Started

Staff members are trained in appropriate handling techniques.
Handling and Access: Good

Mounts and supports are available to staff and researchers using the collections
Handling and Access: Good

- A system is in place for reporting and recording damage to collections materials
- Enclosures are marked for collections that are fragile and/or require special handling instructions
- Only specially trained staff move collections materials
- Access to fragile materials is limited until rehousing or conservation treatment can be completed

Image via the Brooklyn Museum
Handling and Access: Better

- Collections materials are in protective enclosures for transportation, handling, and research

- Conservators and art handlers are consulted and retained for moving large, awkward, or particularly fragile materials

Collections Storage
Poll
Collections Storage: Getting Started

There is sufficient space to store all collections materials according to established standards.

Image by keightdee, www.flickr.com
Collections Storage: Getting Started

- Shelving is in place and all collections are stored at least 3 inches off the floor

- Non-collections materials are not stored with collections materials
Collections Storage: Getting Started

Collections are housed using conservation-grade materials

What does “archival” really mean?

- Buzz words to look for:
  - Acid-free
  - Lignin-free
  - Buffered

Photograph courtesy of Joan Irving, Winterthur
Collections Storage: Getting Started

Avoid inappropriate fasteners and adhesives
Collections Storage: Getting Started

- Aisles are of sufficient width and are clear of collections materials.

- Materials can easily be retrieved from shelving and necessary step stools and ladders are available.

http://www.archives.gov/preservation/storage/underground-facilities.html
Collections Storage: Good

- Storage furniture is made from powder coated steel and accommodates collections of various sizes and shapes (rolled, oversized)

- There is room for collections growth

- Subject specialists and conservators are consulted regarding optimal storage for collections materials
Collections Storage: Good

Collections materials are stored by format

Images from the National Film and Sound Archive, Australia
Collections Storage: Good

Collections housing is refined and all materials are secure within boxes/enclosures

University Museum of Archeology and Anthropology

Collections Storage: Better

- Collections pieces are stored on or with specialized mounts that can be used for access and/or exhibition

- A space plan has been conducted to ensure that the space is being used at its maximum capacity
Collections Storage: Better

- Specialized storage environments are in place for collections materials with specialized needs

- Storage enclosures are regularly inspected to ensure they are still meeting the needs of the collections

Image via the National Park Service
Exhibition
Poll
Exhibition: Getting Started

- Materials that are fragile or in poor condition are not placed on exhibition.
- Only conservation-grade materials are used for exhibit mounts and mounts fully support the object on exhibit.
Exhibition: Getting Started

- Food and drink are not permitted in exhibition areas and galleries are not used as special events spaces

- Exhibit cases are secure and are not harmful to collections materials

- Sensitive materials on exhibition are regularly rotated
Exhibition: Good

- Materials on exhibit are regularly checked for condition during the exhibition period.
- Advice regarding mounts and appropriate exhibition methods is sought from qualified specialists.
- Lighting levels can be, and are, adjusted to meet the needs of specific materials.

Gleeson Library at USF, www.flickr.com
Exhibition: Good

- Cases are designed to maintain specific environments for the collections

- Condition reports are completed for materials before and after exhibition

L Style Standard Case with Rolling Deck
www.smallcorp.com
Exhibition: Better

An exhibition policy is in place that outlines guidelines for length of exhibition, lighting, and mounts.
Exhibition Policy

- Selection
- Length of time on display
- Light
- Support
- Security
- Housekeeping

Seattle University Law Library
Exhibition: Better

- Records are kept for length of time and light levels for each collections piece placed on exhibition.

- All collections materials to be exhibited are examined, treated (if needed) and mounted by a conservator who is part of the exhibition team.

- Plans for what materials will be exhibited are made at least one year in advance so mounts and conservation treatment can be planned.
Thank you and Questions

Questions about collections care?

Contact the California Preservation Program info@calpreservation.org
Next Session

Session 4: Planning and Prioritizing
December 19, 2013

California Preservation Program

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