California Preservation Program – Part 3 Collections Care: Handling, Access, Storage, and Exhibition

Today

- Handling
- Access
- Storage
- Exhibition

Handling and Access

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Poll

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

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Mishandling

Handling and Access: Getting Started

Gloves are available for use as necessary

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Handling and Access: Getting Started

Carts are available to move collections throughout the building

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

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Handling and Access: Good

Mounts and supports are available to staff and researchers using the collections

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

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

Image via the Brooklyn Museum


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Collections Storage

Poll

Collections Storage: Getting Started

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

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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 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

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

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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

Photographs courtesy of Joan Irving, Winterthur

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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

Exhibition

Image via the National Park Service

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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

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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

Exhibition: Good

- Cases are designed to maintain specific environments for the collections
- Condition reports are completed for materials before and after exhibition

Exhibition: Better

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

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

Image via Artifact Advocate

Thank you and Questions

Questions about collections care?

Contact the California Preservation Program
info@calpreservation.org

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