



CARING FOR YOUR PERSONAL COLLECTIONS AT HOME: AN INTRODUCTION TO COLLECTIONS CARE : CLASS 2

Laura Elliff Cruz, Collections Manager

School for Advanced Research (SAR), Indian Arts Research Center (IARC)

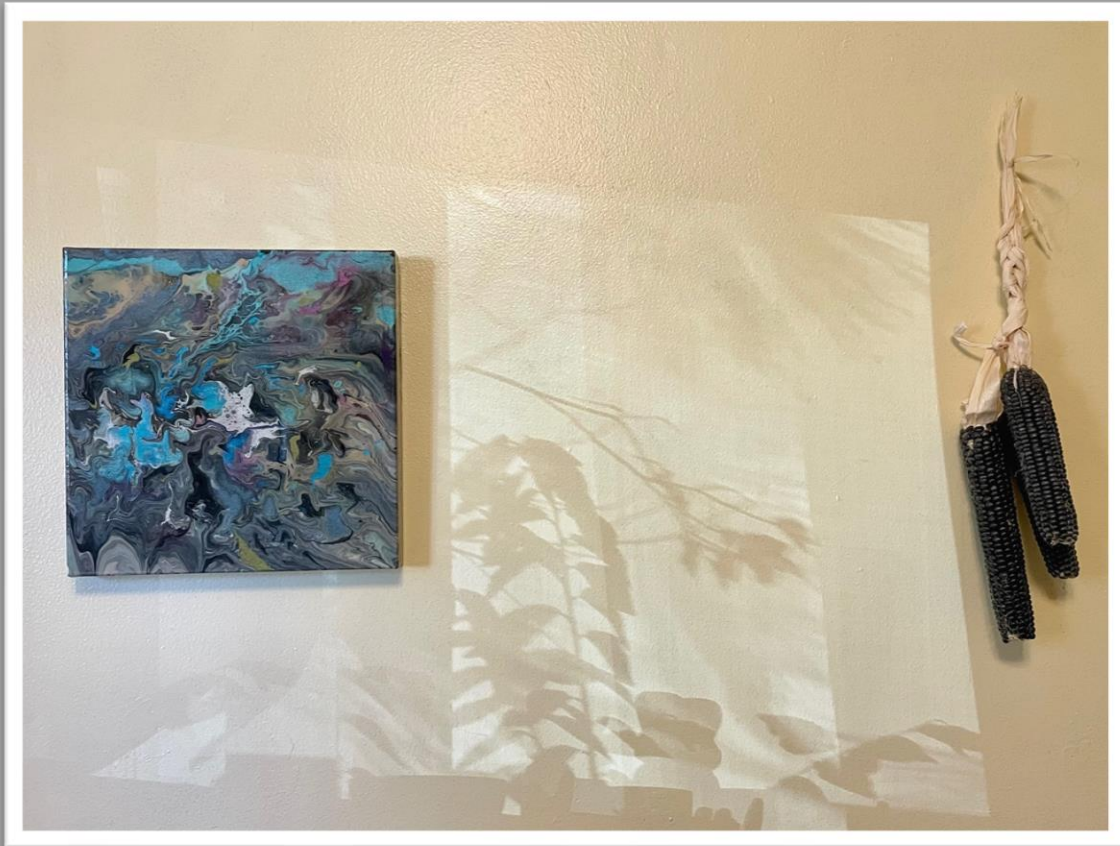
LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The School for Advanced Research (SAR) is located on traditional lands of the Tewa people, **O'gah'poh geh Owingeh** (White Shell Water Place), or Santa Fe, New Mexico. Surrounding our campus are the landscapes of the Pueblo, Apache, and Navajo communities, who people continue to maintain vital connections to this place.

As an institution privileged to the stewardship of Indigenous cultural material and committed to uplifting Indigenous voices, we strive to maintain respectful and mutually beneficial relationships with these communities. We not only honor the ancestral stewards of this land but celebrate their past, present, and future.



CLASS STRUCTURE RECAP



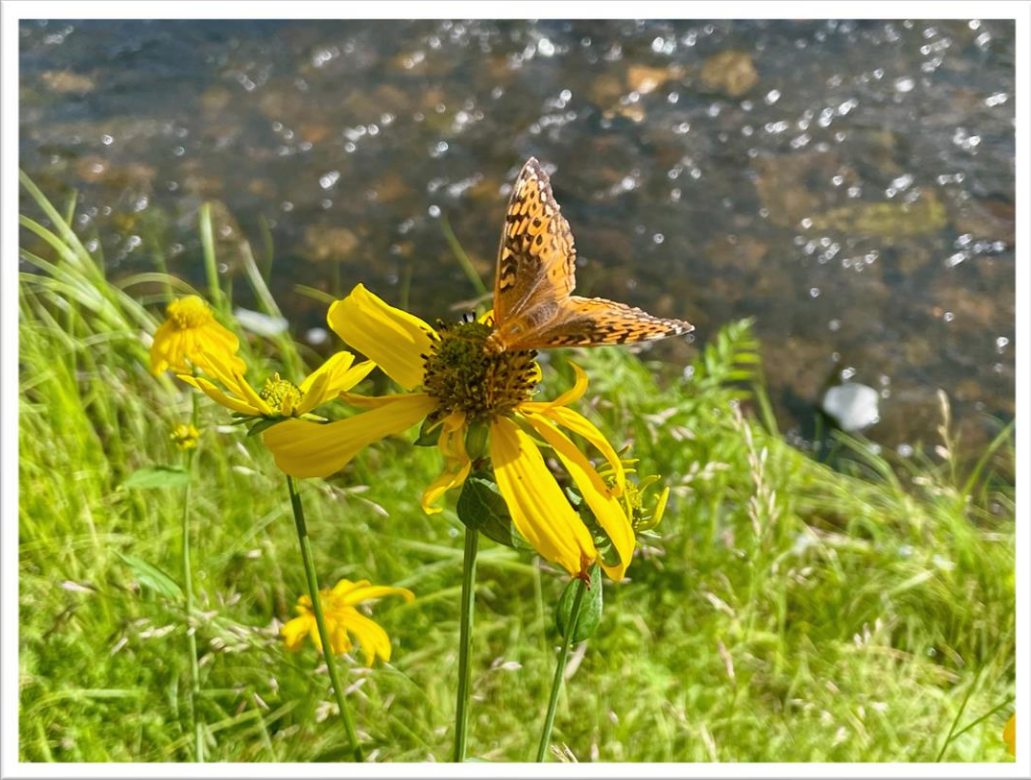
December 6, 2022 (Class 1): Overall collections care introduction and ways to minimize and monitor deterioration. **TIPS**

December 8, 2022 (Class 2): Details on specific types of materials: a lightning round with general tips of care for pottery, baskets, paintings, textiles, and much more.

- Housing enclosures and materials
- Terminology

December 13, 2022 (Class 3): In-person at IARC vaults (limited to 10). Hands-on demonstration of objects and materials to highlight collections care mitigation and tips.

CLASS 2 DISCUSSION



- Housing Materials & Enclosure Options
- Housing Material Key Terminology
- Organic, Inorganic, and Inherent Vice
- Ceramics & Stone
- Silver
- Basketry
- Textiles
- Works of Art on Paper
- Paintings
- Photographic Materials
- Books
- Mixed Media Items
- Documentation Fields
- Database Recommendations

HOUSING MATERIALS



Preventive Conservation: Activities taken to minimize and slow down the degradation process of items.

HOUSING MATERIALS KEY TERMINOLOGY

Heritage Preservation definitions:

- **pH**: a measure of acidity and alkalinity on a scale of 1-14. 7.0 indicate neutrality. Lower numbers indicate acidity.
- **Acid-Free**: Term for pH value of 7.0 or higher
- **Archival-quality**: Materials that resist deterioration themselves, provide physical protection and support, and don't damage their contents chemically.

There are no formal criteria for archival-quality and the term often gets misrepresented. Buy from conservation/museum supply vendors only. Use a pH pen for testing.

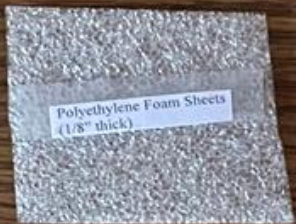
- **Alkaline reserve**: A chemical reserve that helps maintain a pH range by counteracting acids. It can be added in during the manufacture or deacidification.
- **Buffered**: a preservation material that has an alkaline reserve added to it to neutralize any acids that form.
- **Unbuffered**: does not contain an alkaline reserve. **Recommended**



Polyester Fiberfill



1" Ethalfoam Plank (Polyethylene)



Polyethylene Foam Sheets (1/8" thick)



Evolon (Polyester)



Muslin



Coroplast (Polypropylene)



Tyvek (soft)



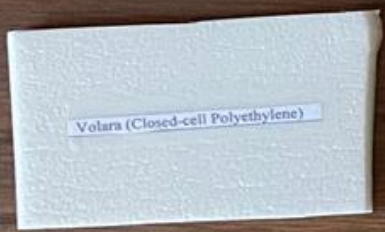
Abaca



Teflon



Stockinette



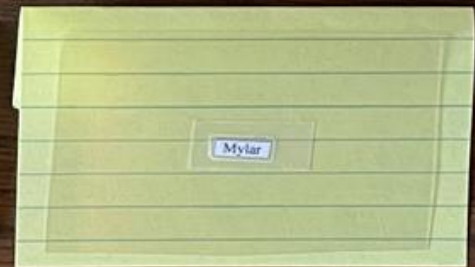
Volara (Closed-cell Polyethylene)



Tyvek (hard)



Buffered Tissue



Mylar



Polyethylene Backer Rod



Corrugated (blue) board



1" Trapezoidal Backer Rod



Unbuffered Tissue

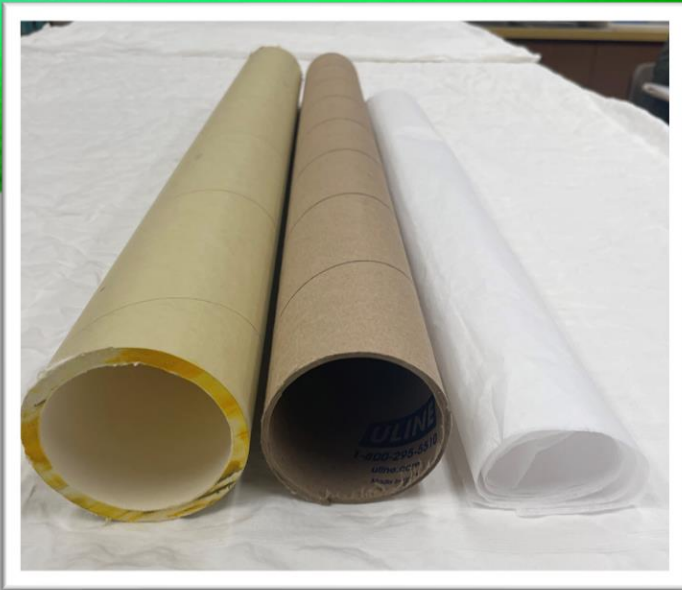


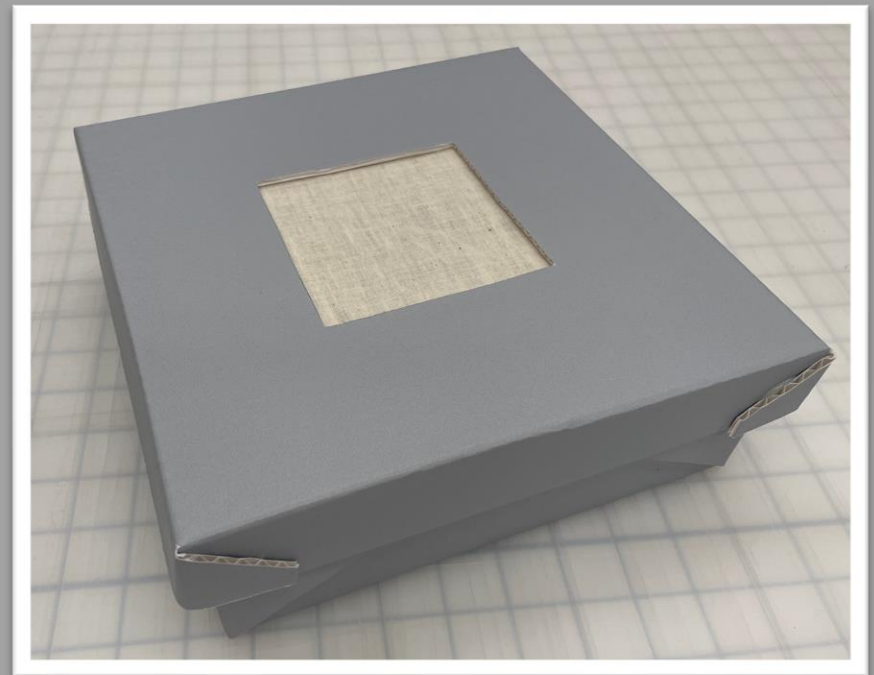
Twill Tape (3/8")



Cotton Piping Cord (1/2" diameter)

HOUSING MATERIALS





WHAT MATERIALS MAKE UP ITEMS IN YOUR HOME?

Knowing the materials will help determine best preventive care.

- **Inherent Vice**: An item that can deteriorate and become unstable due to the material composition to which it was constructed as opposed to outside influences.
- **Organic**: items derived from plants (cellulose); animals (protein)
 - Fur, fibers, wool, leather or skin, paper, wood, grasses, shell, bark, feathers, animal bone
 - Overall, organic materials are more vulnerable to light, pests, temperature and humidity fluctuations, pollutants
- **Inorganic**: Not consisting of living material
 - Stone, metal, glass, clay
 - Less sensitive to light, pests, etc.



CERAMIC PRINCIPLES

General:

Ceramics are primarily made of mineral deposits, or clay, from the ground below. They are formed in different ways (in the Southwest, coil method is most common). But they are fired generally at a high temperature such as outside pit firing or in a kiln. Generally, they are less sensitive to agents of degradation such as light and pests—but can be prone to efflorescence with high humidity and general direct physical forces like object handling.

Wear nitrile gloves. Plain cotton gloves are not recommended as they can be slippery.

CERAMICS CARE & HANDLING



CERAMICS CARE & HANDLING

Examine the piece carefully prior to any handling. Look for cracks or breaks. Look for flaking, spalling, or crumbling. Look for use-related residues on the inside, do not remove or dislodge.

Always use two hands when lifting or moving—lift by the base area. Do not pick up by the rim or any handles or protrusions. Some pieces have cloth or hide handles or straps, do not lift by these either.

If the pot is on a mount, move the item and the mount separately. Other mounts, such as trays, cradles, or boxes, are designed to support the piece while being carried.

Do not walk up or down ladders while holding ceramics, get a second person to pass the piece to.

Use padded surfaces during movement and for final placement. Make sure surface is stable.

CERAMICS CARE & HANDLING



Please do not grip at handle



Please do not grip at handle

CERAMICS CARE & HANDLING



Please do not handle with lids, as they can easily fall off



Please do not grip at top rim area

STONE



Alabaster



STONE CARE & HANDLING



SILVER PRINCIPLES



SILVER PRINCIPLES

Landis Smith, SAR Advisor and Conservator Notes: (please do not distribute)

Silver is a metal too soft to use alone so it is combined with other metals, usually copper, to form an alloy.

What is tarnish?

Tarnish is the product of a reaction between airborne pollutants and silver alloy. Air pollutants include sulfur-containing gasses present in the air due to fossil fuel. In addition, drawers or cabinets made of materials like wood and composite board emit natural gasses that cause tarnishing. Tarnishing is exacerbated by humidity so objects may be slower to tarnish here in Santa Fe. Tarnish is not damaging but can be aesthetically undesirable.

Cleaning/Tarnish Reduction:

Each time you polish you are removing a layer of silver – so any measures you can take to prevent or slow tarnishing helps to preserve your silver. It is important to use a silver scavenger, a material that grabs the pollutants from the air and reacts with them before they can reach the silver. Pacific cloth is one such scavenger.

Pacific Silvercloth can be purchased at:

[Pacific Silvercloth®](#) | [Cleaning Supplies](#) | [Conservation Supplies](#) | [Preservation](#) | [Gaylord Archival](#)

SILVER CARE & HANDLING



Your hands are usually somewhat acidic as seen in the fingerprints etched on silver items. Wash your hands before handling silver or wear Nitrile gloves.



Pacific Silvercloth®

SILVER PRINCIPLES

Landis Smith, SAR Advisor and Conservator Notes: (please do not distribute)

If a piece of jewelry is tarnished, polishing cloths are recommended over other kinds of polishes. This is because:

- 1) The polishing agent is in the cloth and won't run into recessed areas where it can become very difficult to remove.
- 2) Using polishing cloth helps you to avoid recessed areas that have been intentionally blackened by the artist to create contrast.
- 3) You have more control over tarnish reduction with a cloth, removing tarnish to the desired level of polish. Polishing cloths will not etch surfaces or remove more silver than necessary, unlike some commercial polishes.

Sunshine cloth is one recommended brand of polishing cloth.

BASKETRY PRINCIPLES



BASKETRY PRINCIPLES

The core makeup of plants is the cellulose materials—which composes of the plant walls. Plants come in many different shapes and forms depending on how it is processed and the environment it came from, but examples are organic fibers such as grasses, bark, wood, leaves, or roots. Because of the organic nature, many baskets are vulnerable to agents of degradation such as light and temperature fluctuations. I have seen numerous baskets fade and become embrittle along with other condition issues.

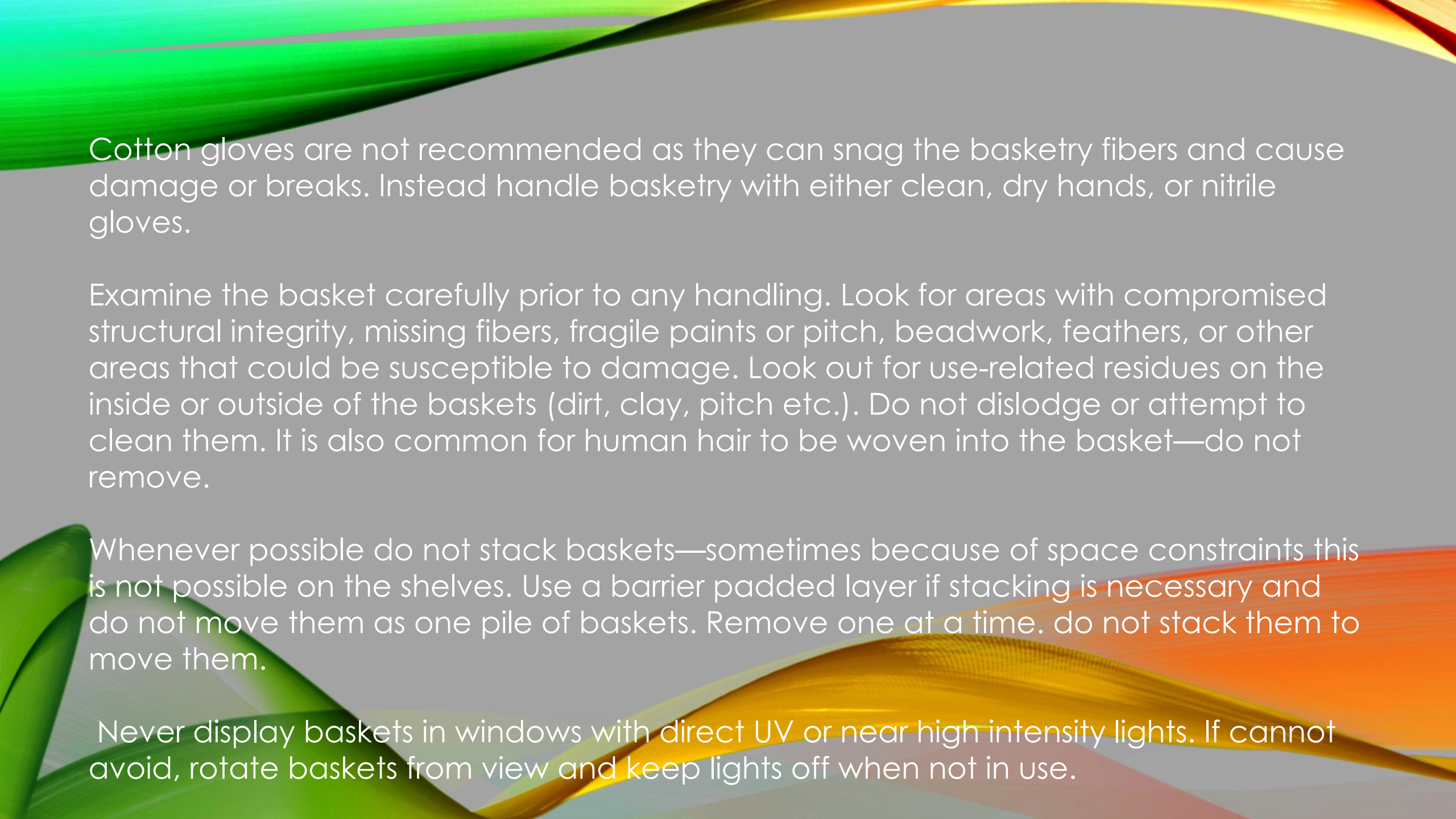
In the Southwest, some baskets were used for watertight containers, and therefore, had pitch applied to the exterior to seal it (this is a vulnerable material and can flake off easily just with handling). A good example of inherent vice deterioration.

Please never handle baskets by the rim handle or other protruding areas

A close-up photograph of a person's hand holding a shallow, round, woven basket. The basket is made of natural fibers and features a complex pattern of concentric rings in shades of beige, grey, and reddish-brown. The hand holding the basket is wearing a silver ring on the ring finger. The background is a solid, muted blue-grey color.

BASKETRY CARE AND HANDLING

Instead, grasp the basket on two sides and then use one hand to support the bottom of the basket and one to support the side.

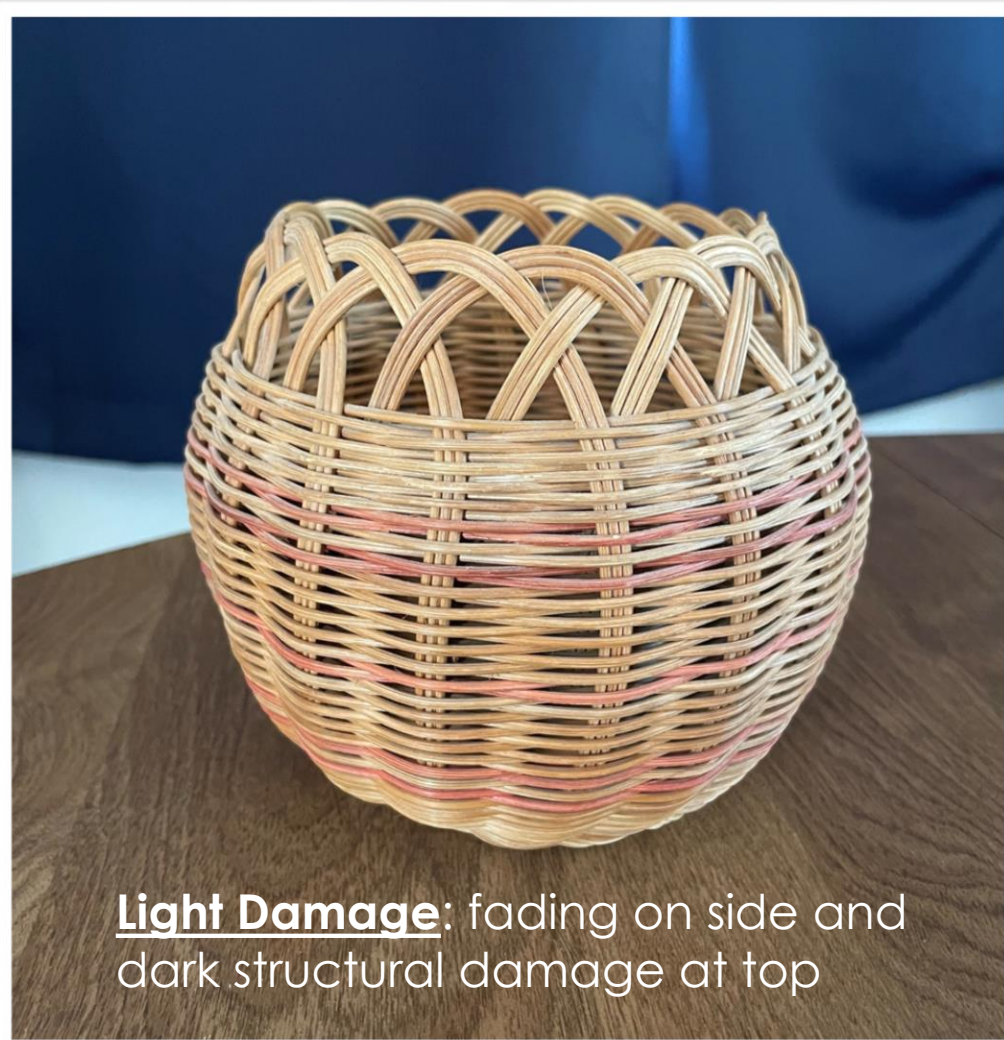


Cotton gloves are not recommended as they can snag the basketry fibers and cause damage or breaks. Instead handle basketry with either clean, dry hands, or nitrile gloves.

Examine the basket carefully prior to any handling. Look for areas with compromised structural integrity, missing fibers, fragile paints or pitch, beadwork, feathers, or other areas that could be susceptible to damage. Look out for use-related residues on the inside or outside of the baskets (dirt, clay, pitch etc.). Do not dislodge or attempt to clean them. It is also common for human hair to be woven into the basket—do not remove.

Whenever possible do not stack baskets—sometimes because of space constraints this is not possible on the shelves. Use a barrier padded layer if stacking is necessary and do not move them as one pile of baskets. Remove one at a time. do not stack them to move them.

Never display baskets in windows with direct UV or near high intensity lights. If cannot avoid, rotate baskets from view and keep lights off when not in use.



Light Damage: fading on side and dark structural damage at top



TEXTILES



TEXTILE PRINCIPLES

Textiles because they comprise of many different materials, use, and shapes could be its own presentation. They can range from large, hand spun, hand woven rugs and blankets to commercially made clothing made from synthetic fibers. We all use textiles in our homes for different purposes. That could be vintage lace passed down from generation to generation to quilts to Southwest blankets used as coverings on couches and coffee tables. As we know direct UV light is very damaging and can cause fibers to fade or to become unstable. Avoid hanging textiles on walls near windows.

Simple storage techniques to keep in mind. Padding folds can go a long way. House in a box or on a tube. Garments can have padded hangers made with stockinette tubing. Avoid housing in basements and attics. If they are deep in closets, monitor for pest infestations by carpet beetle or webbing clothes moth.

TEXTILE CARE AND HANDLING

Historically, many textiles containing proteinaceous materials have been treated with pesticides in the past. Special handling protocols should be followed when working with chemically treated collections. Nitrile gloves and Tyvek lab coats should be worn when working with textiles, these will protect you from any possible contaminants. When working with treated and non-treated items simultaneously be sure not to cross contaminate surfaces or objects you handle. Be sure to use separate plastic sheeting and to change gloves between pieces.

Look for areas of damage, unravelling, fraying edges, weakened fibers. Always support as much of the textile as possible when moving. Do not pick it up by one corner or small area, this can weaken and stress the fibers. Whenever possible, slide the textile onto a stiff board to move them, this reduces stress on the fibers.

Most of the large textiles are stored rolled, hung, boxed or bagged to protect them from pests, dust, and light among other agents of degradation. Gently unroll onto a surface large enough to hold the entire textile, cover the surface with appropriate plastic sheeting if chemically treated materials are suspected.

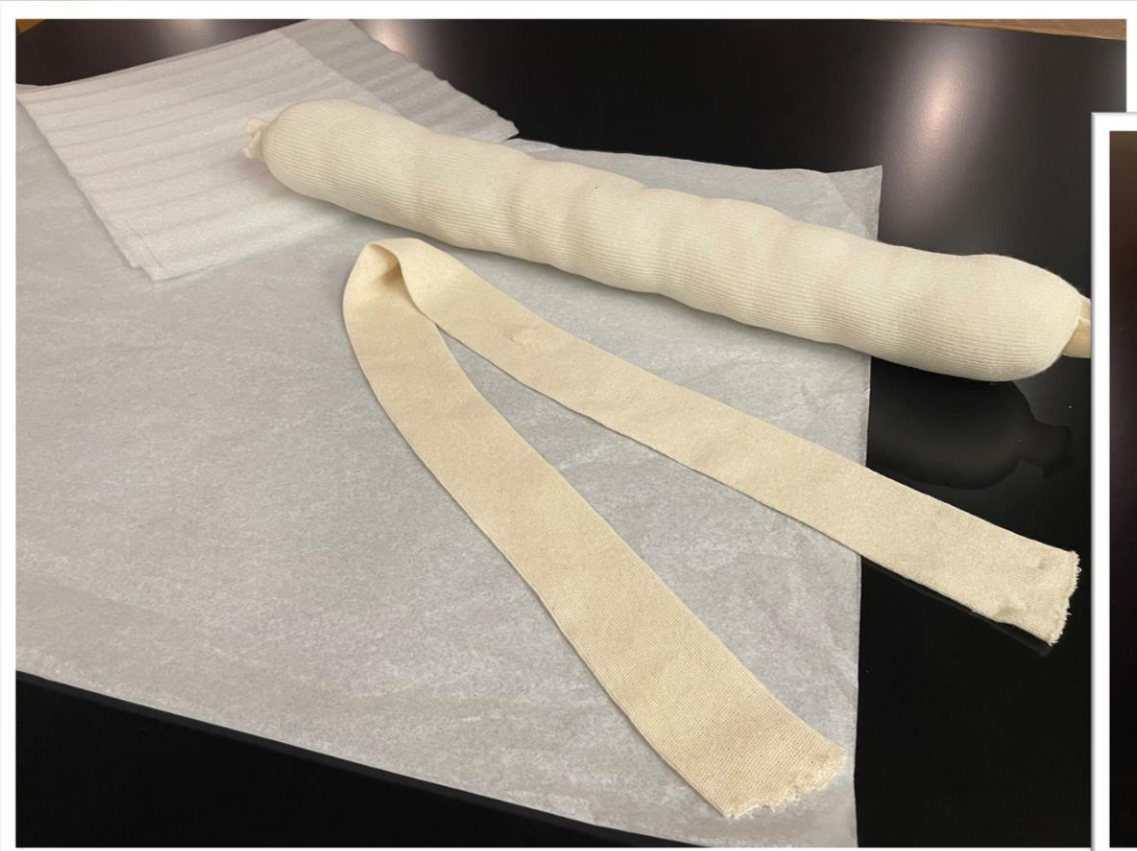
TEXTILE CARE & HANDLING



TEXTILE CARE & HANDLING



TEXTILE CARE & HANDLING



TEXTILE FREEZING



TEXTILE FREEZING

If you have an infestation, bagging the textile and freezing it in just a chest freezer is very effective at killing live insects and their eggs. Keeping it at a minimal temperature of -5 or -4F or 20 degrees C is essential. Use 4 mil thick bags and label. Keep in at least 48 hours to kill any live insects or eggs; 5 days is best. Let the textile acclimatize once out and monitor and clean frass, casings or consult a conservator or collections care professional for advice.

Nilfisk vacuums or HEPA vacuums are best for cleaning. Options include holding a vacuum nozzle a few inches away if fragile with controlled suction or use a framed mesh screen.

Conserve O Gram Freezing Protocols:

<https://www.nps.gov/museum/publications/conservoogram/03-06.pdf>

CCI Freezing with Low Temperature:

<https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/cci-icc/documents/services/conservation-preservation-publications/canadian-conservation-institute-notes/3-3-eng.pdf>

Freezing: This is not intended to be an exhaustive list.

Please contact a conservator in your area with any questions.

DO NOT FREEZE

- Objects that are under tension (ex. Drums, archery bows, stretched fabric on a strainer/stretcher)
- Objects that have lots of layers (ex. Multiple layers of quillwork [including braiding] or embroidery)
- Anything with shells, teeth, bone (or bone inlay), lacquer, plastic, or glass with crizzling (glass disease)
- Digital media
- Artworks on paper
- Paintings
- Frames

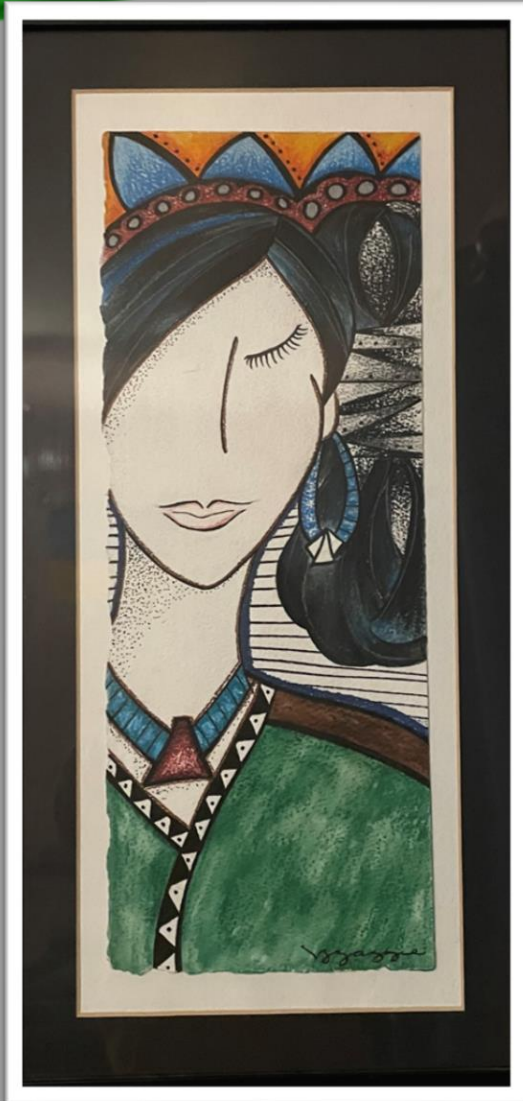
Use caution when freezing

- Furniture (DO NOT FREEZE if anything is veneered or if there is any type of inlay)
- Anything with metal
 - o Condensation will accumulate on metal, which can damage and stain surrounding materials. Please wrap any metal in tissue to capture any condensate that may form.
- Painted surfaces (please contact a Conservator)

Acceptable to freeze

- Textiles (wool, cotton, silk, etc)
- Leather
- Feathers
- Fur
- Basketry
- Gut (ex. Parkas)
- Bark cloth (use toweling in folds)
- Print on paper (ex. Magazines)
- Papyrus
- Books

WORKS OF ART ON PAPER



Paintings by: **Venaya J. Yazzie**
<https://yazzgirlsart.weebly.com/>

PAPER PRINCIPLES

Paper was initially made by hand from rag (cotton or linen) which produced a strong, long-fibered paper. Since the 19th century, paper-making processes have produced inexpensive paper made from wood fiber. Most paper made from wood fibers contains lignin, which holds cellulose fibers together in the tree. Over time lignin deteriorates and produces acid that breaks down and weakens the paper. That is why paper products from hundreds of years ago made from rag are in much better condition.

WORKS OF ART ON PAPER CARE & HANDLING



WORKS OF ART ON PAPER CARE AND HANDLING

Clean hands is recommended when handling works of art on paper on nitrile gloves. Dirty gloves can leave fingerprints on the paper. Never touch the surface of prints, drawings, paintings, or pastels.

Avoid unnecessary handling. Works on paper are at a high risk of damage from handling which can result in tears, creases, and stains from oils on your hands.

For matted works, check that the hinges and corners are secure prior to moving. When removing a piece from the mat (should only be done if necessary) use a small spatula to lift the corners out. This should only be done by trained collections or conservation staff. The corners are the weakest and most brittle area.

PAINTING PRINCIPLES



Paintings come in all shapes, formats, and materials. We typically may think of an oil painting on canvas (usually woven linen or cotton), but other supports can be fabrics, masonite board, plaster, etc. Oil and acrylic paints and numerous types of medium are used.

PAINTINGS CARE AND HANDLING

Add a backing for paintings that are unglazed and likely on a wooden stretcher frame to protect from dust (or puncture like direct physical forces or handling). Simple backing materials could be coroplast or foam core. If a painting is too large for a backing, use a dust protection cover like cotton muslin, sheeting, soft Tyvek if it is safe to do so.

Pay attention to unstable keys/joints in a frame, which can be vulnerable. If not framed, some paintings can be rolled (just consult with a conservator or collections staff because mediums vary, and they may not be able to be rolled)

PAINTINGS CARE AND HANDLING

Different layers of the paintings and its support structure can contract, swell, or weaken at different levels and rates due to environmental fluctuations.

Hang away from heat sources like fireplaces, no direct UV, avoid areas of airflow including windows or vents.

Assure painting is secured to the frame. Call a conservator to fix tears or flaking you are concerned about. Dusting the top of a frame with a soft brush is fine if the frame is not flaking.

PAINTING CARE & HANDLING



Example of painting that has no backing

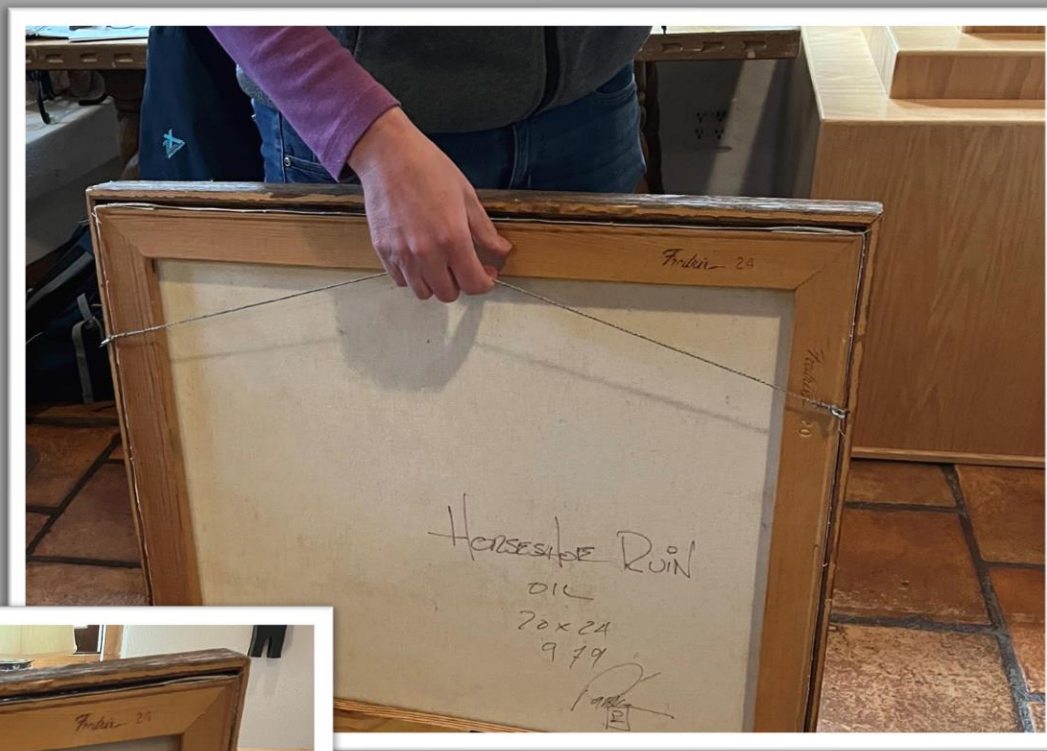
PAINTING CARE & HANDLING



Use white cotton,
nothing dyed

Pad creases—see
damage on left photos





Never handle framed works by the hanging wire or by the frame at top.

Always use two hands.

PHOTOGRAPHIC MATERIALS



Know your digital backups for phone images and cloud storage.

Scan family photos if not digital. They have apps for this too!



PHOTOGRAPHIC CARE

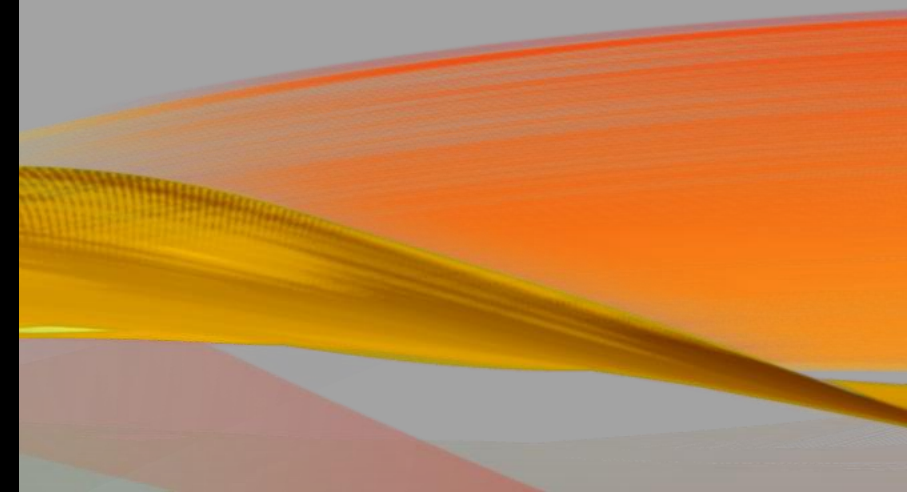


Avoid plastics made of polyvinyl chloride (PVC), Instead use polyester, polyethylene, or polypropylene.



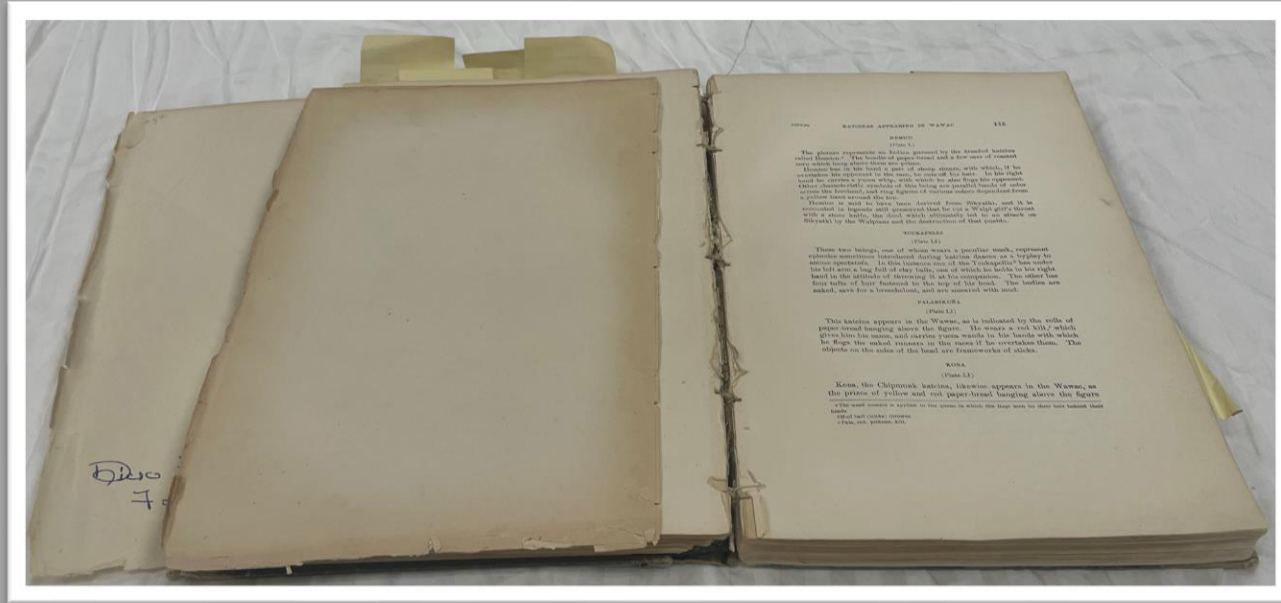


BOOK PRINCIPLES



BOOK CARE & HANDLING

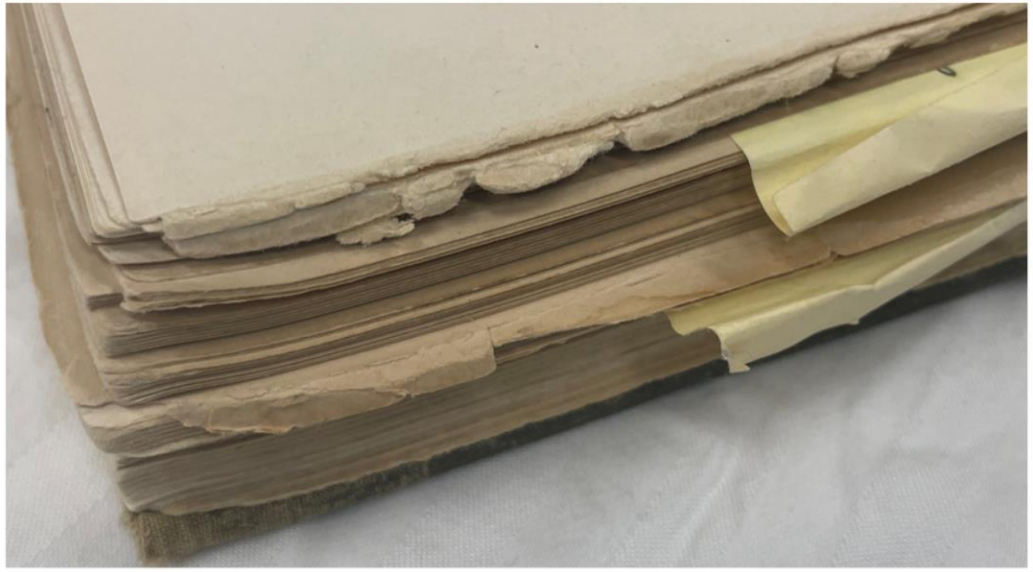
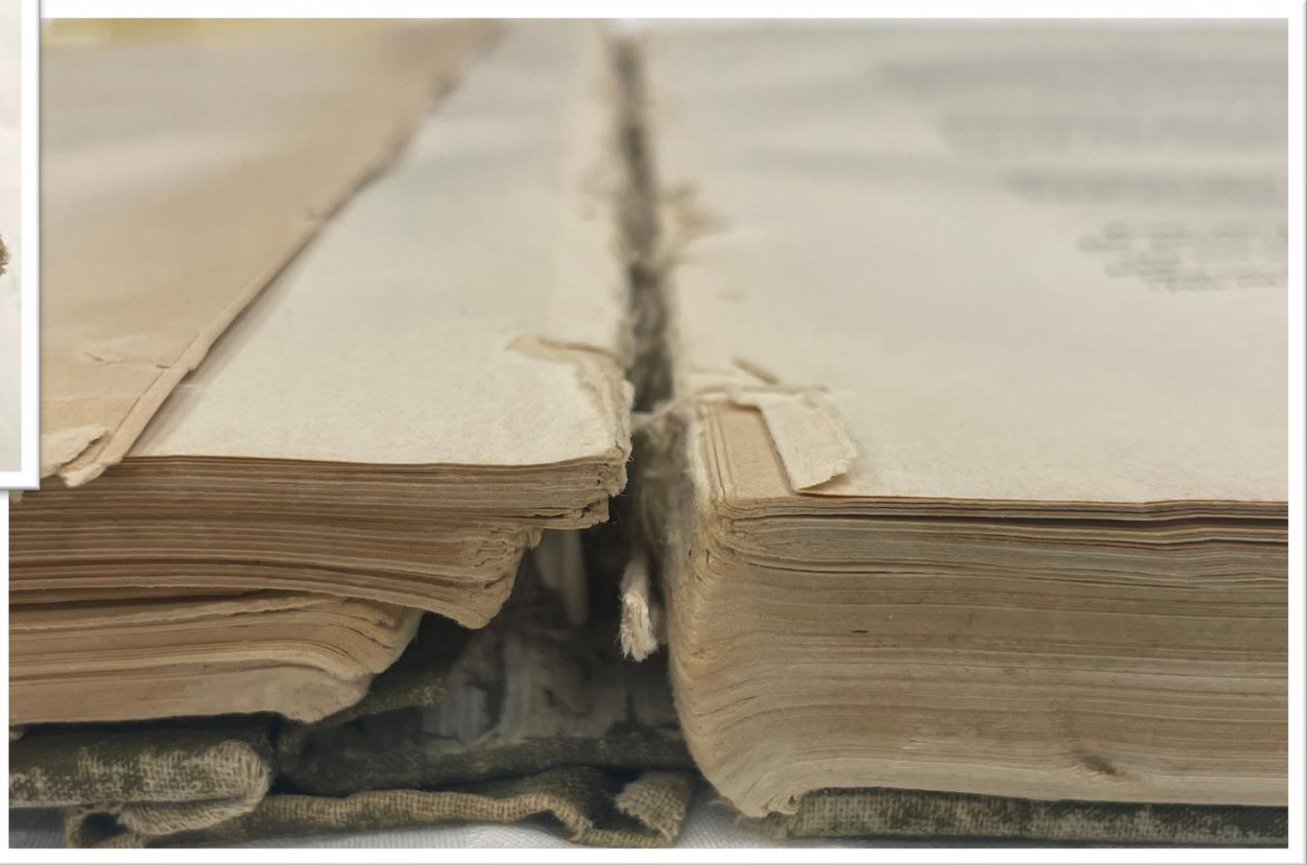
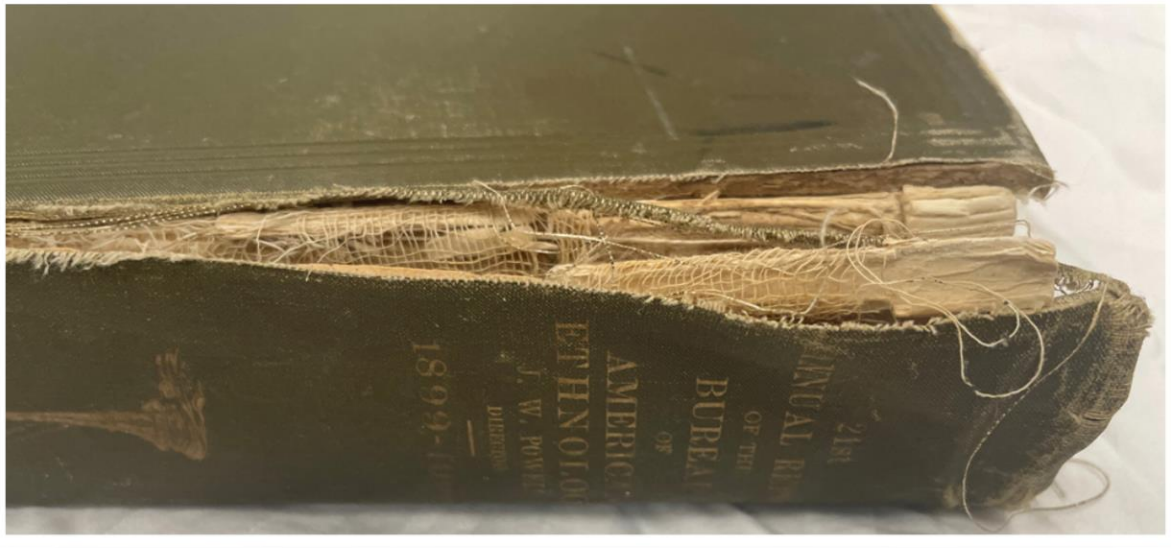
Images of damaged spine; acidic and loose pages



Use scanning apps to get the images you need and never place on photo copier, which will stress the condition of book spine.

Use a cradle book mount for viewing. Consider purchasing book boxes to protect from dust, light, pest measures.

BOOK CARE & HANDLING



MIXED MEDIA



DOCUMENTATION FIELD RECOMMENDATIONS

- Item Name/Classification
- Brief Description
- Materials
- Measurements
- Artist
- Culture
- Date
- Provenance (where did you buy it from or who gave it to you)
- Value (through appraisal or record of purchase receipt)
- Photo (detail of signature, if applicable)
- Condition photos if damage occurred



DOCUMENTATION



Artist name at base unreadable due to scratches and abrasion. Make sure you have this information ahead of time!



No sticker labels please

DATABASE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ART COLLECTORS

- These databases focus on private collectors, galleries, etc.
- **Artwork Archive:** [Art Inventory Software - Easy Art Management | Artwork Archive](#)
- **Art Collection:** [Effortless Art Collection Organization | ArtCollection.io](#)
- **Artlogic:** [Art Gallery Software | Artlogic](#)
- There is also a long list of databases museums use, not listed here.



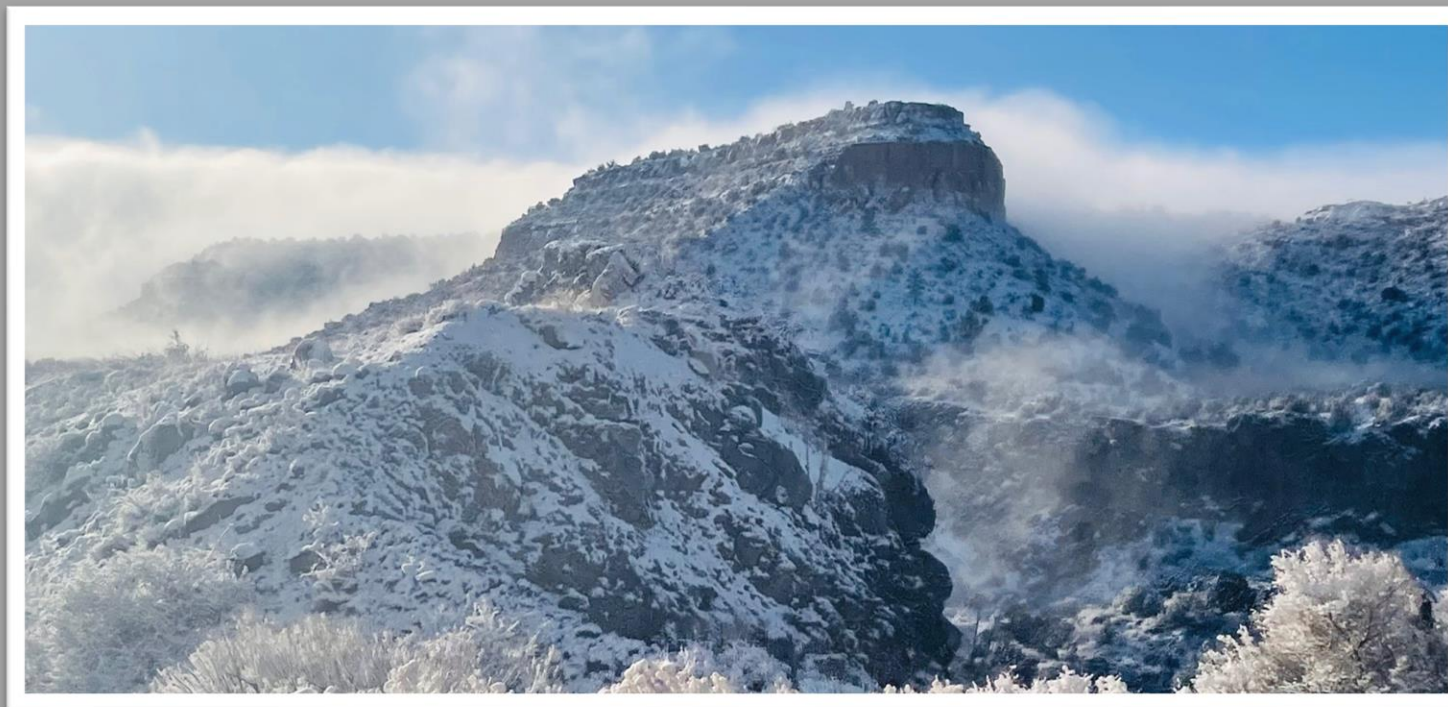
SUPPLY RESOURCES

- **Gaylord Archival:** <https://www.gaylord.com/>
- **Talas:** <https://www.talasonline.com/>
- **University Products:** <https://www.universityproducts.com/>
- **Light Impressions:** <http://www.lightimpressionsdirect.com/>
- **Conservation Resources:** <https://www.conservationresources.com/>
- **Masterpak:** [Masterpak USA – MASTERPAK \(masterpak-usa.com\)](http://www.masterpak-usa.com)

ONLINE CLASS OR WEBINAR ORGANIZATIONS

- Northern States Conservation Center: <https://collectioncare.org>
- **FREE Webinars!** Connecting to Collections Care: <https://connectingtocollections.org>
- Museum Study: <https://www.museumstudy.com>
- Most of these organizations are geared toward museum professionals but can still be beneficial for collectors. I have more organizations, so just email me if you do not find what you are looking for.

To learn more about SAR or IARC: <https://sarweb.org/>
Emuseum: <https://emuseum.sarsf.org>



Thank you!

Laura Elliff Cruz, Collections Manager
elliffcruz@sarsf.org
505-954-7270