

TEXTILE TERRORS

There are many factors which have an adverse effect on textiles, both in museums and at home. This information sheet will tell you how we care for textile collections in museums and the best way to look after your own fabric items at home.

Conservation in museums

Museums have a duty to ensure that collections are preserved for future visitors to enjoy. There are many steps that must be taken to ensure that this is the case for quilts and textiles:

Changing environment.

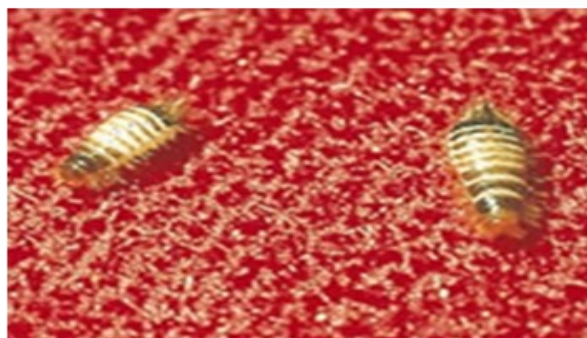
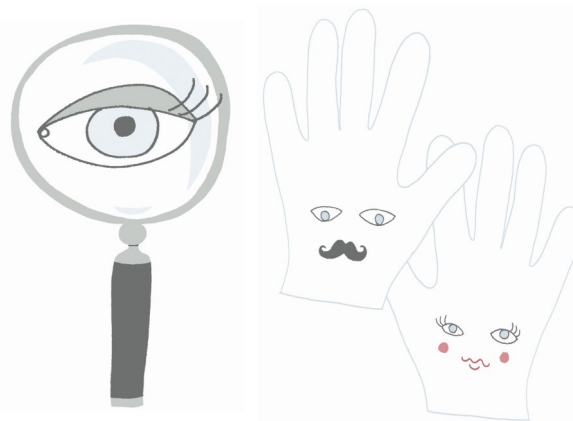
Light and changing humidity pose a huge threat to textiles as they cause fabrics to deteriorate. Conditions in exhibition spaces are monitored and adapted for each exhibition. Light levels and humidity change depending on the conditions required for the items on display and are then kept constant. Constant conditions are used in storage.

Animal attack.

Insects and other pests are a huge problem for textile conservators as some insects will eat fabrics, and other pests such as rodents find textiles perfect for their nesting materials. Both storage areas and exhibition spaces are constantly monitored to ensure that creatures are not moving in!

Handling textiles.

In museums textiles are always handled wearing clean gloves and as infrequently as possible.



From top: White cotton gloves are used to handle textiles and magnifying glasses help us to see damage

Moth damage on quilt

Woolly bear larvae eat textiles

TEXTILE TERRORS CONTINUED

Storing quilts.

Quilts and other textile items are folded as few times as possible. Each fold is lined with acid free tissue and the item is also wrapped in a pillowcase or cotton sheet before being stored in a suitable box or rolled depending on how much space is available.

Items are checked and re-folded regularly to ensure that creases don't become permanent.



Quilts are stored in boxes on labelled shelves so that we can find things easily

Storing your quilt at home

Follow these simple steps to protect your textiles at home:

- ◆ Keep items out of direct light
- ◆ Keep an even temperature in the storage area—a cool, dark spare room is ideal
- ◆ Never store fabrics in plastic bags as this increases the growth of mould
- ◆ Store flat where possible—on a bed between two clean sheets is ideal
- ◆ NEVER allow pets near and keep the area free of pests