

Conservation, Preservation, Care & Handling Basics

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ICA – Art Conservation



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What is the ICA?

Founded in Oberlin, Ohio over 60 years ago and now located in Cleveland, we are the oldest non-profit regional conservation center in the United States.



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What is conservation?

Includes:

- examination
- assessment
- documentation
- treatment
- preventative care



...all supported by research and education.

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Basic conservation ethics include:

- minimal intervention
- appropriate materials/methods that aim to be reversible to reduce possible problems with future treatment, investigation, and use
- full documentation of all work undertaken



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“Conservation denotes a manner of care or treatment where the goal is to repair damage if present, while taking action to prevent or retard further deterioration of an object.”



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What is preservation?

Preventative, pro-active activities, which improve a collection's environmental conditions, thereby lengthening the lifespan of objects.



Handling procedures



Collection surveys



Protective enclosures

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How do I preserve my collections?

- Identify what you have
- Identify potential risks (inherent vice, environmental conditions, external dangers, etc.)
- Create short- and long-term plans for reducing risk



The majority of damage treated by conservators is caused by poor handling and/or storage conditions!



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Environmental Hazards

- Light
- Temperature & Humidity
- Airborne Particulates/Pollutants
- Physical Access/Handling
- Pest Infestation



Light



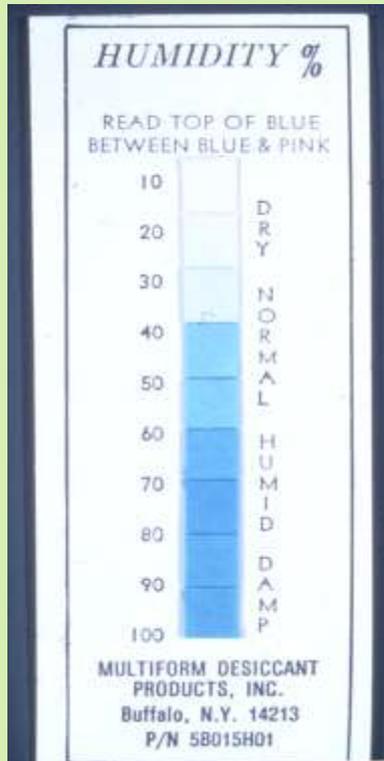
Too much light leads to fading and darkening, weakening an object's chemical structure.

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Temperature & Humidity

Too much of this...



Indicator card,
with salt solution
changes color at
different humidity
levels

Cockling
caused by
fluctuations in
relative
humidity



...leads to this.

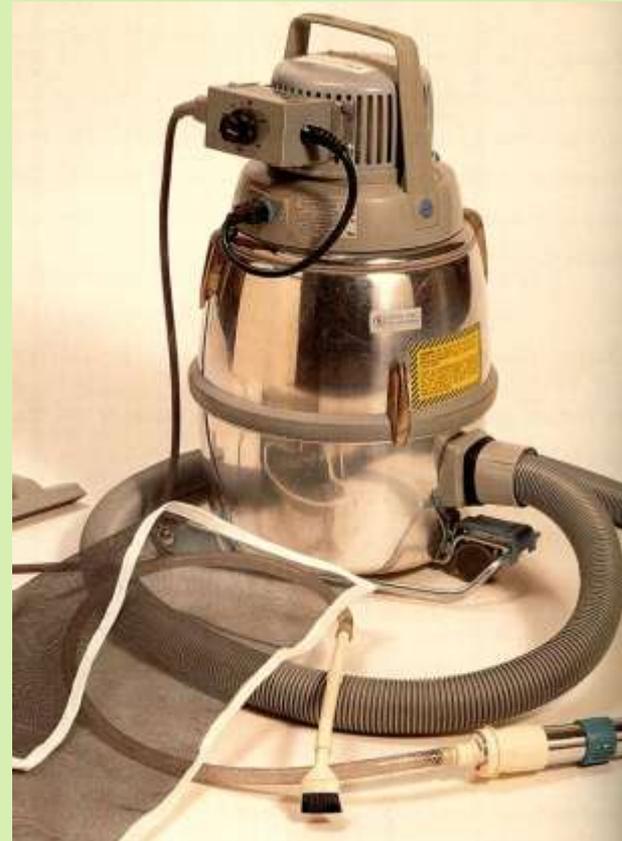
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Airborne Particulates/Pollutants

Are any of these things in your facility?

- food
- ozone from photocopiers
- cleaning supplies
- wooden cabinets
- dust and soot
- new carpets
- paint fumes
- car fumes
- insects/vermin



Nilfisk
vacuum

Handling of Objects

Touching metal



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Pest Infestation



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Ongoing Preventative Care

- Visual monitoring on a regular schedule
- Condition reporting, photo documentation
- Temperature and humidity monitoring Continuous improvement in storage conditions using inert, stable materials
- Careful housekeeping – trained staff
- Regularly rotate artifacts and artwork on display
- IPPM



Limit light exposure



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Watch for water damage and mold



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Identify improper storage



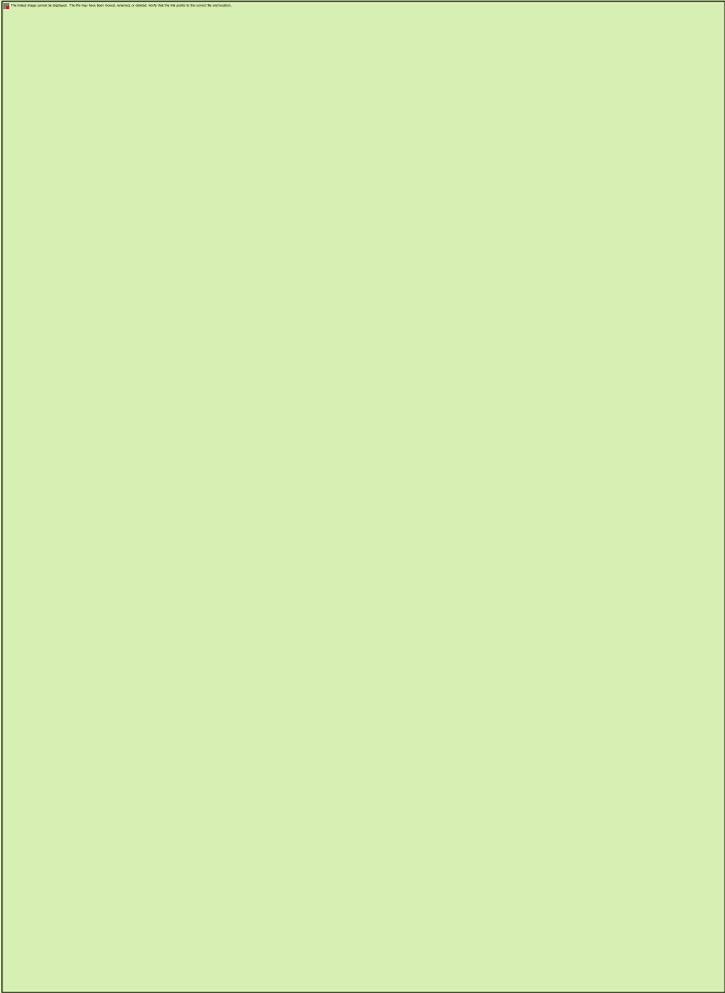
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Can I clean our documents, artwork and objects myself?



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When to call a professional conservator...



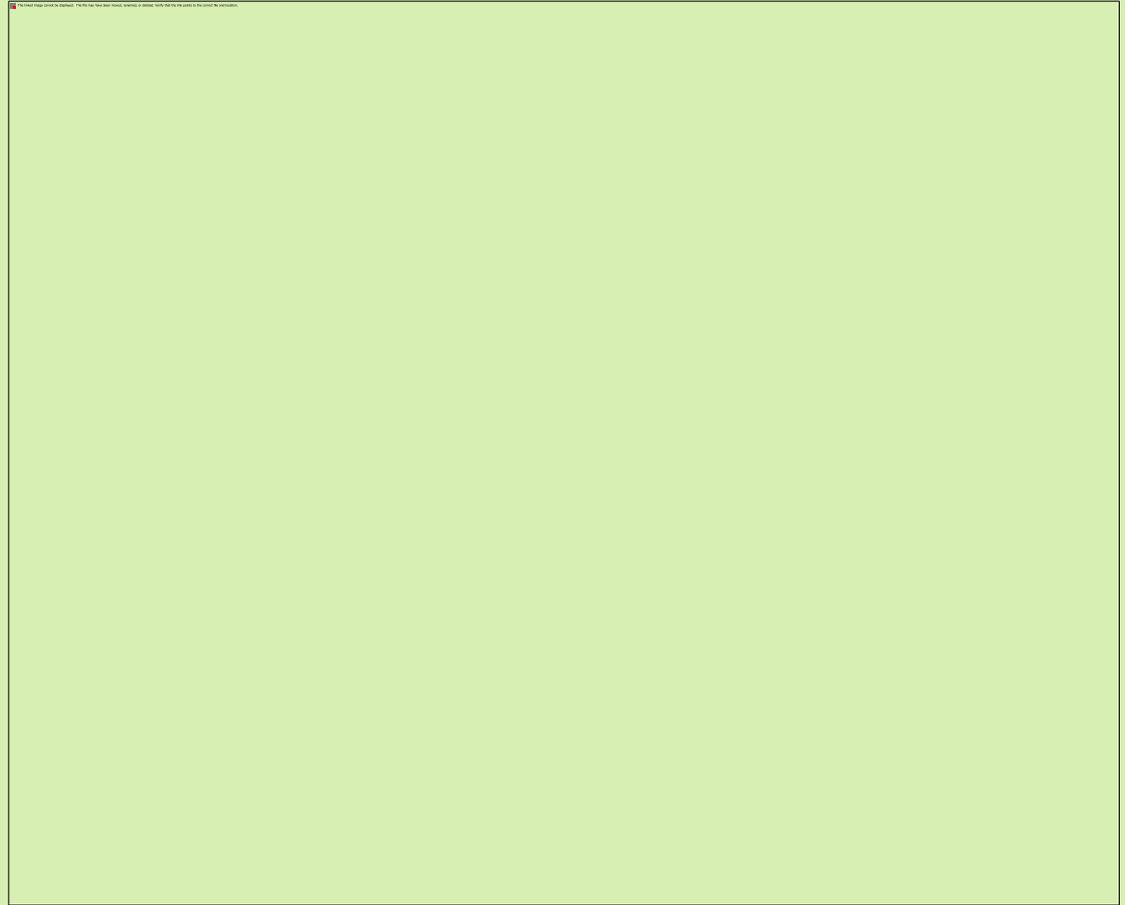
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Resources available from your regional Conservation Center

- Highest level of professionalism
- Free initial consultation/evaluation at ICA
- Annual Subsidized Survey program
- Grant review and preparation assistance
- Nonprofit partners for collaborative grants



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