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CARE OF TEXTILE EXHIBITIONS

The party's over—all that hard work and last minute scrambling has paid off in a great looking exhibit! You even had the foresight to make sure that there were enough staff members on hand to protect any exposed artifacts from drink and snack toting preview party attendees.

Congratulations! *Now what?*

Artifacts That Are Exposed:

There are three things to guard against: excess light on the objects, visitors touching the objects, and dust particles settling on the surface of your artifacts. Dust is especially troublesome after any remodeling or construction has occurred. It can take 3 months or longer for the particulate matter to settle back into place.

- Be sure to shut off the lights when the exhibit is closed to visitors and motion lights that come on only when visitors are in the exhibition gallery are ideal.
- Install a “Please Do Not Touch” sign near any free standing forms.
- Create some sort of barrier for any standing forms. A theatre stanchion with a ribbon or rope stretched across the front of the standing form is the simplest solution and usually is enough to keep inquisitive fingers off the clothing.
- You can install plexi-glass barriers, but they are expensive and cumbersome to install and maintain. If that is something you would like to do though, contact us for more information and guidance.
- Wipe down your artifacts every week for the first three months using an *unscented* magnetic dust cloth. These are sold by many different suppliers and are available at the grocery store.
- Artifacts such as shoes, purses, etc, can be stroked with the cloth to remove any dust that has settled on the exposed parts.
- Standing costumes should be gently patted with the magnetized dust cloth across the head, shoulders, and arms – anyplace where dust is likely to settle.
- If it is feasible, drape a lightweight painters drop cloth over the forms when the building is closed up for any length of time.
- The textiles should be gently vacuumed in place once every 3 months (quarterly) – see Vacuuming Handout for more information.

Artifacts in Closed Cases:

- Textiles which have to be folded in order to fit in the exhibit case should have the folds padded with archival tissue paper.
- If the surface of the exhibit case is not archival, the artifact should have a layer of Mylar cut to its foot print so that the object does not actually touch the surface of the case.
- Any object which is protected by glass doors needs no regular maintenance. Textiles exhibited for more than one year should be removed and refolded into a different configuration to avoid any fiber breakage along the fold lines.
- Closed cases can become very warm from the lighting—which is not good for the long term health of the objects. Be sure to have the case lighting on separate switches so they can be shut off when no visitors are in the gallery.