



Preserving Family Treasures – Textiles and Fabrics

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Objectives

- Causes of damage and deterioration
- Storage best practices
- Safe display methods





What harms a textile?



Culprit #1: Light

- Visible and Ultraviolet
 - Sunlight
 - Florescent bulbs
 - Incandescent bulbs
- Recommended:
 - Avoid direct sunlight
 - LED lightbulbs
 - Low lighting in display space
 - Dark storage space
 - UV filtering materials
 - Rotate display



Culprit #2: Temperature and Humidity

- Work hand-in-hand
 - Low levels: embrittlement
 - High levels: mold, embrittlement, discoloration
 - Drastic fluctuations cause the most damage
- Recommended:
 - Temp: 65-72 degrees
 - Humidity: 45%-55%



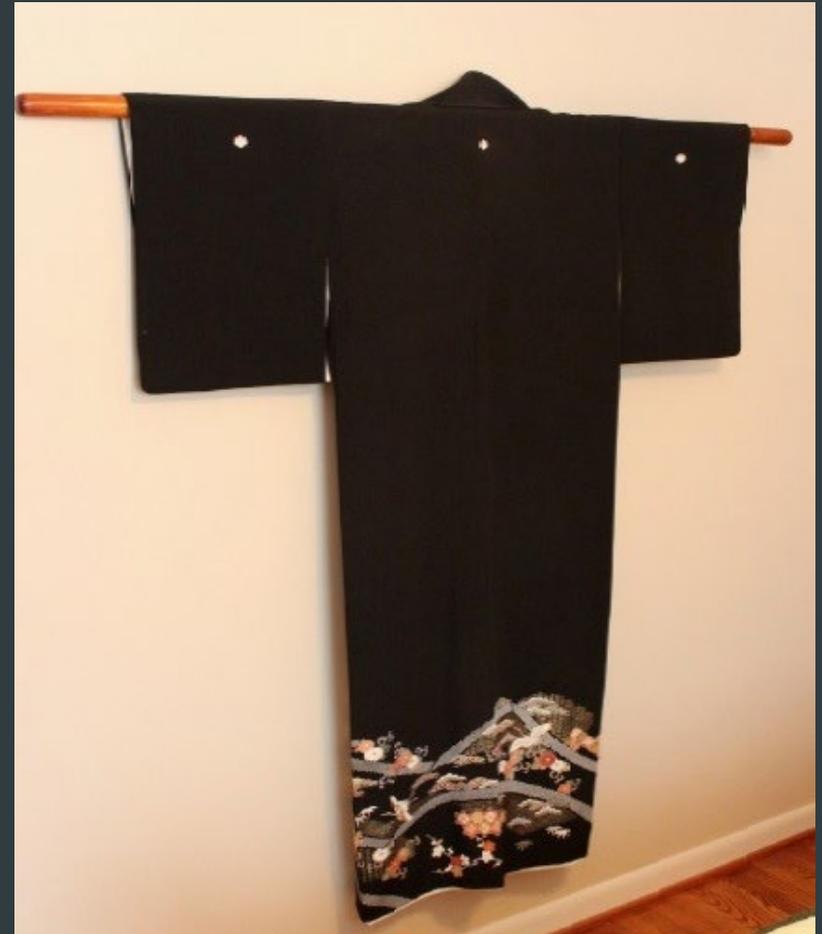
Culprit #3: Pests

- The Big 5:
 - Clothes Moths
 - Carpet Beetles
 - Silverfish
 - Firebrats
 - Mice
- Recommended:
 - Sticky traps
 - Regular cleaning
 - Bag and isolate suspected textiles



Display Option 1: Padded Rod

- Good for:
 - Kimonos
 - Ponchos
 - Tunics
 - Sleeveless garments
 - Quilts & Rugs
- Materials Needed:
 - Acrylic or wooden dowel
 - Polyurethane
 - Pad with polyester quilt batting
 - Unbleached, washed muslin
 - Sewing kit



Display Option 2: Velcro Method

- Good for:
 - Quilts
 - Blankets
 - Rugs
- Materials Needed:
 - Sewing machine
 - Velcro
 - Unbleached, washed muslin
 - Wooden wall strips
 - Polyurethane



Credit: George Washington University Museum



Display Option 3: Shadow Box

- Best for:
 - Smaller, lighter, more delicate textiles
 - Nothing larger than 4ft x 8ft
- Materials Needed:
 - Archival foam core backing
 - Unbleached, washed muslin or cotton/polyester blend fabrics
 - Sewing kit
 - Archival matboard window
 - UV coated plex and frame



Storage Option 1: Padded Hanger

- Great for:
 - Sturdy garments
- Materials Needed:
 - Strong hangers
 - Polyester quilt batting or fleece
 - Unbleached, washed muslin
 - Sewing kit
- Pattern



Storage Option 2: Rolled Storage

- Great for:
 - Quilts
 - Rugs
 - Blankets
 - Flags
 - Other flat, rectangular textiles
- Materials Needed:
 - PVC pipe
 - Unbuffered acid-free tissue
 - Twill tape
 - Storage rack or archival box
- [Tutorial](#)



Safe Storage Option 3: Flat Storage

- Best for:
 - Garments that cannot hang
 - Flat textiles
- Materials Needed:
 - Acid-free archival box
 - Unbuffered acid-free tissue
 - Scissors (optional)



Step 1: Cover Metal Accessories



Step 2: Tissue Padding Folds



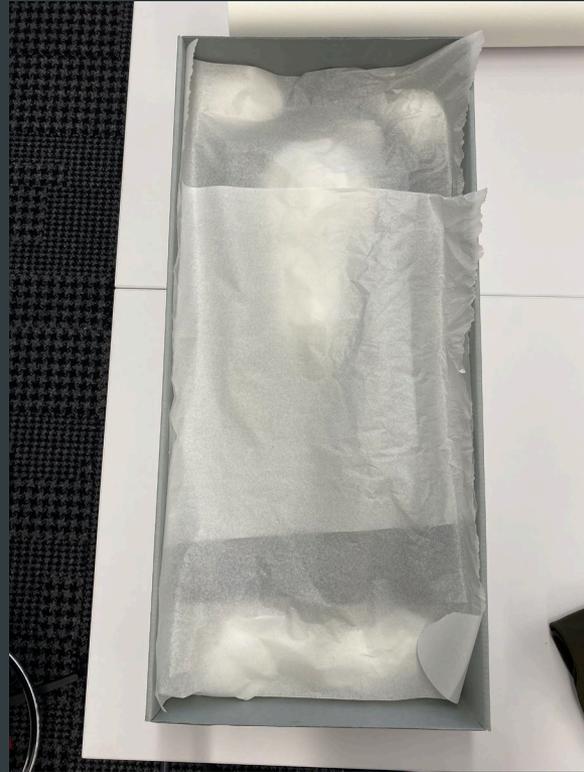
Step 3: Cover Overlays



Step 4: Pad Folds in Box



Step 5: Additional Tissue Padding





Resources

- National Park Service [Conserve O Gram series](#)
- George Washington University Museum resources for [textile care & display](#)
- The Henry Ford Museum fact sheet on [antique textiles & costumes](#)
- Canadian Conservation Institute [Care of Objects and Collections](#)





Conservation Support

- Ford Conservation Center
 - 402-595-1180
 - Email: hn.fordcenter@nebraska.gov
- International Quilt Museum
- Find a conservator in your area via the American Conservation Institute





Questions

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