

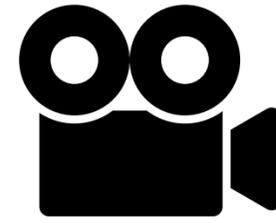
CONSERVATION CENTER

for Art & Historic Artifacts

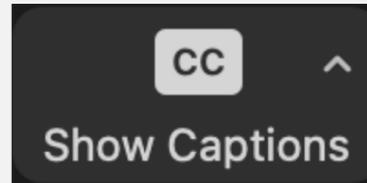
More than Just Dusting:
Collections
Housekeeping, Mold
Prevention, and
Integrated Pest
Management



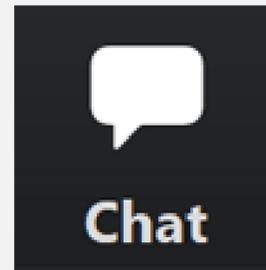
A few things...



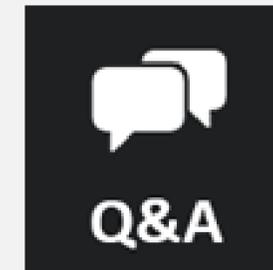
Yes! We are recording & will share it after the webinar!



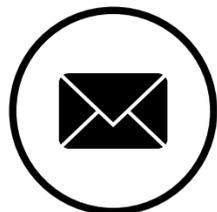
**TO ACCESS
CAPTIONS**



**FOR INTRODUCTIONS &
TECHNICAL SUPPORT**



**WHERE TO SUBMIT
QUESTIONS TO BE
ANSWERED LIVE**



Contact us via email:
team@artworkarchive.com

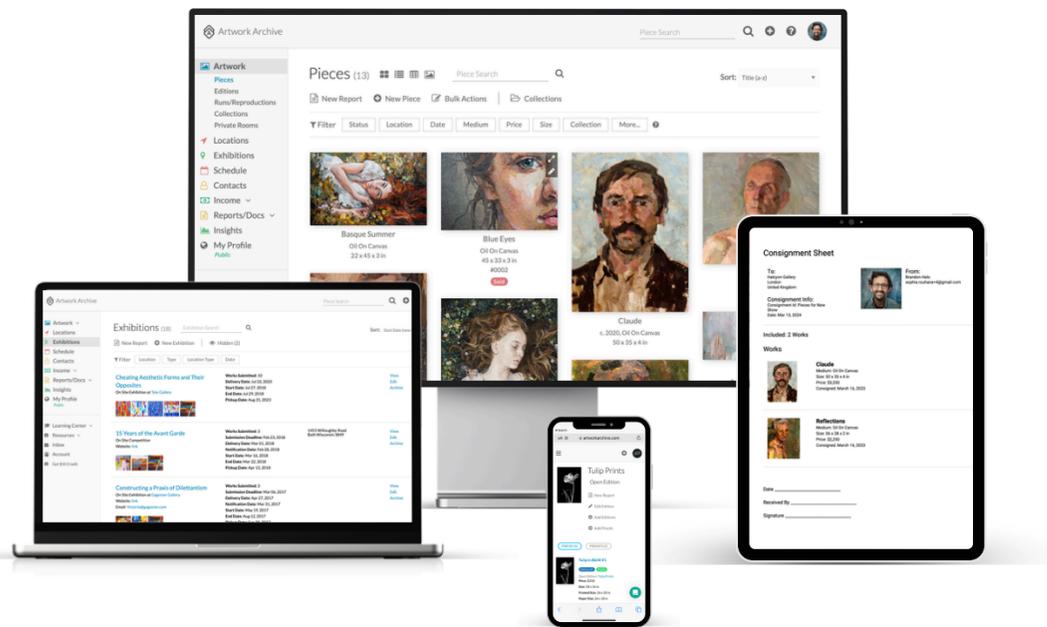


Contact us via chat
on [ArtworkArchive.com](https://www.artworkarchive.com)



About Artwork Archive

- Began in 2010 as one of the first cloud-based art inventory systems
- Provides tools for collectors and collecting institutions to digitize, manage, share and preserve their collections.
- Accessible for small personal collections and powerful for enterprise corporations
- More powerful than a spreadsheet, more accessible than a one-time download
- Can import information from spreadsheets or other platforms
- Serving users in over 130 countries
- Produces free educational resources on collection management



Hello!



Justin Anthony

ARTWORK ARCHIVE

Co-Founder

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Dyani Feige

CONSERVATION CENTER FOR ART & HISTORIC ARTIFACTS

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Conservation Center for Art & Historic Artifacts



In a typical year:

- Preservation Services specialists complete over 50 survey projects.
- Approximately 60 CCAHA-sponsored workshops, conferences, webinars, and training sessions are presented.
- The Digital Imaging Services staff digitizes thousands of pages of fragile archival documents, books, and photographs.
- Conservators assess and treat more than 6,000 individual artifacts, from over 400 clients.
- Housing & Framing Services house approx. 75% of the artifacts treated (folder, sleeve, box, mat and frame, or sealed package).



An introduction to housekeeping in collection spaces



Why is housekeeping important?



What is a housekeeping plan?



Purchasing equipment and supplies



Tips to reduce dirt and dust



Resources

Why is
housekeeping
important?



Artist unknown (Egypt), *Relief with Man Sweeping*, c. 1353-1336 B.C. Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1991.237.49.

Housekeeping on every level

- **Building**
 - keep building envelope well sealed
 - use good filtration in the HVAC system
 - practice good housekeeping!
- **Enclosure**
 - use stable materials to wrap and support objects
 - each level of enclosure (e.g., outer box, interior box, primary contact layer) provides more protection
 - practice good housekeeping!
- **Object**
 - wear gloves when appropriate; clean & dry hands if not
 - follow safe handling guidelines
 - practice good housekeeping!



Housekeeping vs. the Ten Agents of Deterioration

- Physical Forces
- Theft and Vandalism
- Fire
- Water
- Pests
- Pollutants
- Light
- Incorrect Temperature
- Incorrect Relative Humidity
- Custodial Neglect and Dissociation

Dust: a small big problem



- Dust can:
 - Accelerate corrosion
 - Scratch and physically damage items
 - Visually disfigure or obscure items
 - Attract water and increase the relative humidity around an object
 - Become embedded and difficult to remove without causing damage
 - Be a food source for pests (including mold!)

Housekeeping vs. custodial activities

- Housekeeping:
 - Done near collections
 - Often includes dusting, wiping down, and vacuuming of collections themselves
 - May be performed by collections staff or exhibit techs
- Custodial activities:
 - Public spaces, restrooms, staff offices, etc.
 - Usually do not interact with collections
 - May be performed by custodial staff or contract cleaners

What is a housekeeping plan?

Outlines the actions, frequency, methods, and materials used in housekeeping activities.

- Makes policies and procedures clear
- Delineates staff roles and responsibilities
- Ensures a written record of actions
- Includes guidelines for type/format of materials (e.g., collections vs. non-historic furnishings)
- Should include collections, structure, and landscape
- Should be reviewed regularly and have protocol for changes and updates



A conservation technician dusting *Fountain* by Marcel Duchamp. @eskenazimuseum

What to include in a housekeeping plan

- Frequency of cleaning activities
- Products acceptable for use
- Techniques/methods acceptable for use
- Procedures for exhibitions and storage
 - Includes cases, shelving, storage/display furniture, and boxes/enclosures
- Procedures to report observed damage/condition issues
- The plan is based on the actual needs of your site
 - Reflect timeline of visitation
 - May include larger seasonal projects

Sample housekeeping schedule

Frequency	Task
Daily	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Empty trashcans• Vacuum non-historic carpets and dust-mop floors in high-traffic areas, esp. near entrances• Perform a quick site walkthrough and note signs of damage or pests
Weekly	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vacuum floors in public (non-collection) areas• Sweep leaves and debris from exterior entrances• Clean non-historic glass doors
Bi-weekly	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dust exhibition cases and furniture• Vacuum floors in collection areas• Clean and dust floors at building entrances, steps, landings, and other areas of high traffic

Sample housekeeping schedule

Frequency	Task
Monthly	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dust or vacuum walls and ceilings• Dust tops of doors and windowsills, interior wood fixtures and lighting fixtures• Dust picture frames, glazing on framed works, mirrors, and glass panels in furniture
Quarterly	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dust or vacuum books on display• Dust objects in storage• Wash windowpanes or dust windows where UV-filtering film is in place• Damp mop all non-wax coated floors• Clean windowsills, window frames, and blinds/shades
Semi-annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vacuum upholstered furniture and historic textiles• Dust items in exhibition cases

Sample housekeeping schedule

Frequency	Task
Annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Professionally clean non-historic carpets as needed• Unbox collection textiles in storage to inspect for mold and pests, refold as necessary• Thoroughly dust underneath and behind exhibition and storage furniture• Inspect all collection spaces in an extended walkthrough, noting new and ongoing issues

Housekeeping log

SITES EXHIBIT CLEANING RECORD

This form is to be updated each time the gallery and objects are inspected and cleaned, and kept as a permanent record. Copies are to be sent to the Museum Collections and Conservation Departments after each cleaning cycle.

Gallery	Object/Section/Case	Date	Action	Cleaner	Comts

Minnesota Historical Society, *Historic Housekeeping Handbook*, 2000.

Purchasing supplies and equipment

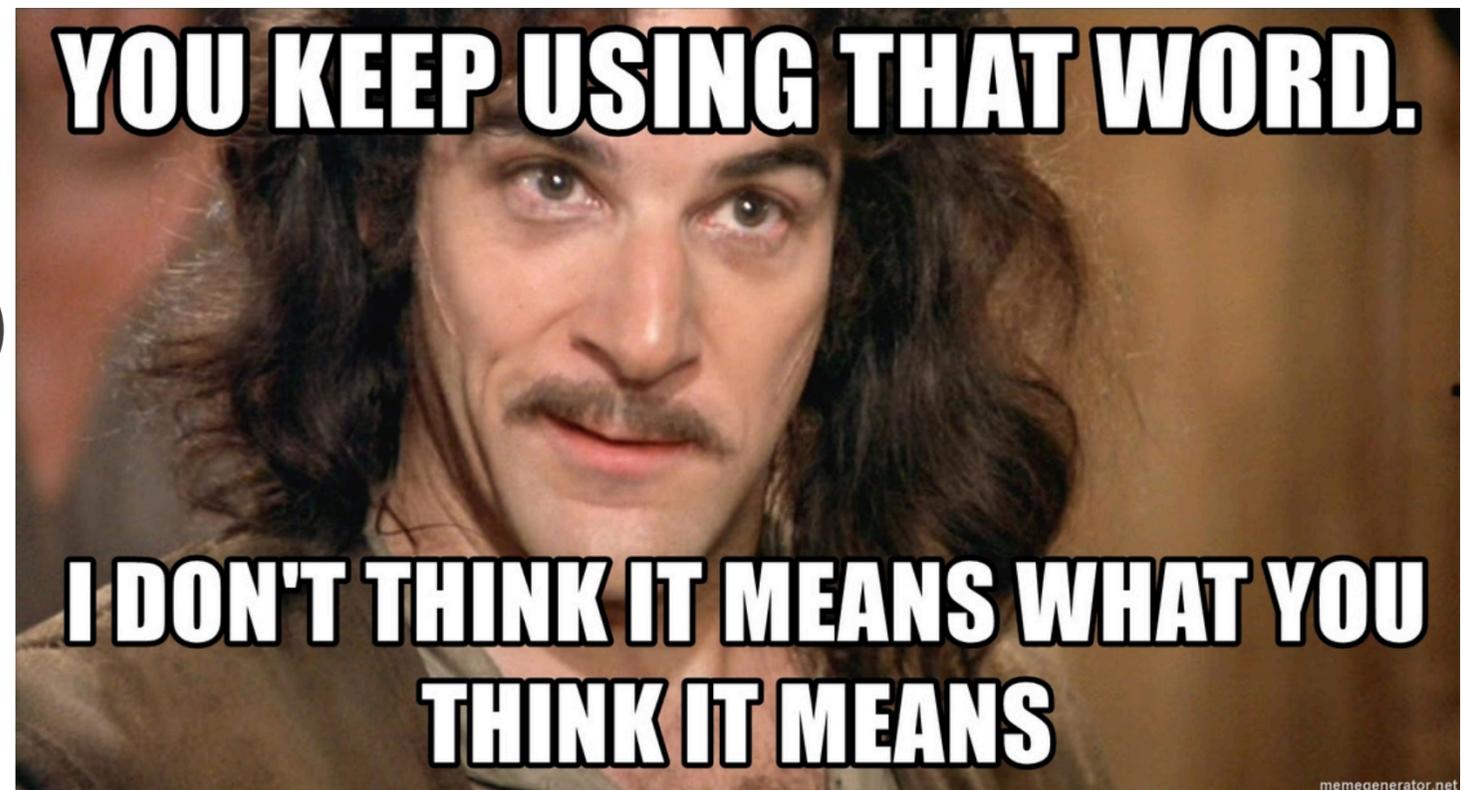


Sarah M. Rennie, *Dust Pan Patent Model*, c. 1877. Smithsonian Institution, 249602.

Understanding “archival”

words to look for:

- Lignin-Free
- Acid-Free
- Buffered or unbuffered
- P.A.T. (Photographic Activity Test)
- Polyester
- Polyethylene
- Polypropylene



Where to find supplies

- Hardware stores
- Craft/fabric stores
- Art supply stores
- Beauty supply stores
- Scientific/laboratory vendors
- General suppliers
- Specialty vendors for archives, libraries, and museums
 - Archival Methods
 - Hollinger Metal Edge
 - Gaylord
 - Talas
 - University Products
- CCAHA's Inclusive Vendor List:
<https://ccaha.org/resources/conscientious-consumption-inclusive-vendor-list>

Cleaning products

- **Do not use:**

- Lemon oil
- Turpentine or beeswax
- Spray dusting products (like Endust)
- Aerosol products
- Saddle soap
- Bleach and abrasive cleaners
- Acid-based cleaners
- Feather dusters and lambswool dusters

- **Acceptable to use:**

- Natural-hair dusting brushes
- Gloves (nitrile, cotton)
- Muslin
- Orvus paste
- Murphy's Oil Soap and Renaissance wax
- Microfiber and other dust cloths
- List adapted from the Minnesota Historical Society, *Historic Housekeeping Handbook*, 2000.



Choosing a vacuum

- Think about...
 - What is the vac being used for?
 - Accessories
 - Filtration
 - Variable speed control/ suction
 - Weight and size
 - Cost and availability of maintenance, replacement parts, filters, etc.



Screen time



@utahmuseumoffinearts



@gwmuseum



@keweenawnps



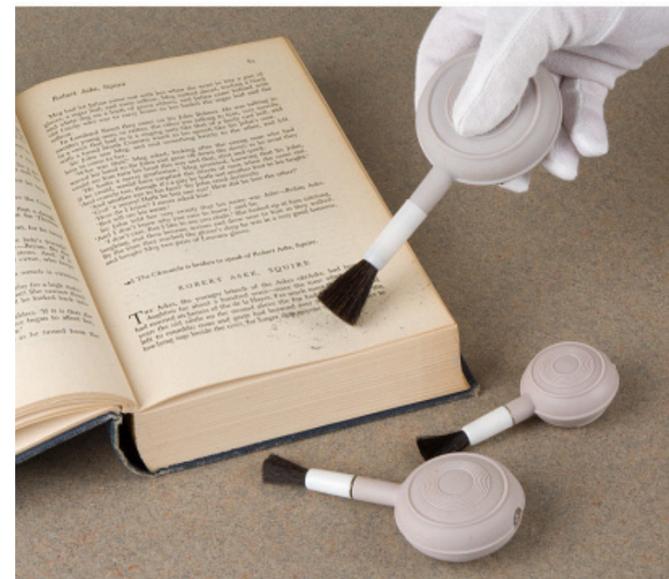
@stlartmuseum





Dusting it off

- Vacuuming can be accompanied by or separate from other mechanical cleaning methods like using a soft brush for dusting
- Hake brushes (top)
- Windsor & Newton dusting brush (bottom left)
- Blower brushes (bottom right)



Top: @talasonline

Bottom: @gaylordarchival

Tips to reduce dirt and dust in collection spaces



Richard Saunders, *Hill District Boarding House...*, 1951. Historic Pittsburgh, 86.16.144.

Tips!

- Maintain a well-sealed building envelope
- Keep windows and doors closed, locked, and covered when not in use
- Use good quality filters in HVAC system
 - change filters regularly
- Use dust covers on shelves/objects in storage
- Keep collections:
 - off the floor (at least four to six inches)
 - off the tops of shelving units
 - away from exposed sprinklers or pipes



Tyvek dust covers @nyplcollectionmanagement.

More tips!



@westmorelandmuseum

- Keep items protected in enclosures
- Utilize vestibules at entry points
- Use floor mats / sticky mats at entry spaces
- Encourage coat checks
- Consider moving objects farther back in exhibit spaces
- Display objects in cases whenever possible
- Avoid displaying/storing artifacts near exterior walls, windows, and doors
- Monitor, monitor, monitor!

Resources

- American Institute for Conservation (AIC) Wiki. <https://www.conservation-wiki.com/>
- Conservation & Art Materials Encyclopedia Online (CAMEO). http://cameo.mfa.org/wiki/Main_Page
- Connecting to Collections Care. <https://connectingtocollections.org/>
- Conservation Center for Art & Historic Artifacts (CCAHA). <https://cacha.org/resources>
- Minnesota Historical Society, *Historic Housekeeping Handbook*, 2000. https://mnhs.gitlab.io/archive/conservation/www.mnhs.org/preserve/conservation/docs_pdfs/HOUSEKEEPINGMANUAL.pdf
- National Park Service.
 - *Conserve O Grams*. <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/museums/conserve-o-grams.htm>
 - *Museum Handbook*, Ch. 13: Museum Housekeeping
- National Trust for Historic Preservation, *Housekeeping for Historic Homes and House Museums*, 2000. <https://prespartners.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Housekeeping-for-Historic-Homes-and-House-Museums-NTHP.pdf>
Storage Techniques for Art, Science, and History (STASHc). <https://stashc.com/>

Questions and Discussion

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Artifacts

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Harvard Business School Advertising Ephemera Collection

How Artwork Archive Supports Collections Housekeeping and Preservation

Create and Maintain a Housekeeping Log

Track cleaning, inspection, and conservation activities directly in Artwork Archive's Artwork or Maintenance Records.

Monitor Condition Over Time

Upload condition reports and photographs to each artwork record to detect early signs of deterioration, mold, or pest damage.

Track Environmental and Storage Data

Record temperature, humidity, and light exposure per storage location to identify problem areas before they escalate.

Coordinate Conservation Tasks

Assign maintenance or cleaning responsibilities to staff or contractors, with Maintenance reminders.

Centralize Documentation for Audits and Grants

Generate reports showing preservation activities, condition history, and storage improvements—essential for accountability and funding.

Integrate Physical and Digital Oversight

Use Artwork Archive as the bridge between preventive care routines and long-term collection management.





Common Housekeeping Questions

How often should I perform a housekeeping inspection?

Frequency depends on your environment and materials—typically every 3–6 months for storage areas and annually for on-display works. Tracking inspections in Artwork Archive ensures consistency and follow-up.

How can I tell if a cleaning issue could become a conservation problem?

Compare new photos and condition notes to past records in your database. Early signs—discoloration, odors, frass (insect residue), or surface film—can indicate emerging mold or pest issues.

How do I document housekeeping and IPM efforts effectively?

Record actions taken (date, materials used, observations) in Artwork Archive under *Maintenance Records*. Consistent digital documentation builds a defensible preservation history.

How does digital record keeping support mold prevention and pest management?

A centralized system like Artwork Archive helps identify patterns—repeated incidents in the same area, or correlations between humidity levels and damage—enabling faster, data-driven interventions.



Artwork Archive Articles & Webinar Recordings

- 01 | [\[WEBINAR\] Maintenance Best Practices to Protect and Preserve Your Art Collection](#)
- 02 | [Cost-Effective Maintenance Strategies for Small Museums](#)
- 03 | [11 Preventative Measures for Protecting Collections from Pest Infestations](#)
- 04 | [Protect Your Antiquities and Art Collection from Mold & Pests](#)
- 05 | [9 Things to Know for Storing Your Artwork the Right Way](#)
- 06 | [Is Your Collection Safe from These 10 Hazards?](#)
- 07 | [Top Conservation Tips Every Conservator Should Know](#)
- 08 | [How to Catalog Your Fine Art Collection](#)
- 09 | [Tips for Finding the Best Collection Management System](#)



Artwork Archive Resources

RESOURCE CENTER:

help.artworkarchive.com

SIGN UP FOR OUR NEWSLETTER:

www.artworkarchive.com/newsletter

GET TIPS AND READ MORE:

www.artworkarchive.com/blog

WATCH ADDITIONAL WEBINARS:

www.artworkarchive.com/webinars

FREE DOWNLOADABLE GUIDES:

www.artworkarchive.com/guides

CONTACT ME:

justin@artworkarchive.com

ARE YOU AN ORGANIZATION? SIGN UP FOR A FREE DEMO

<https://www.artworkarchive.com/organizations>



@artworkarchive