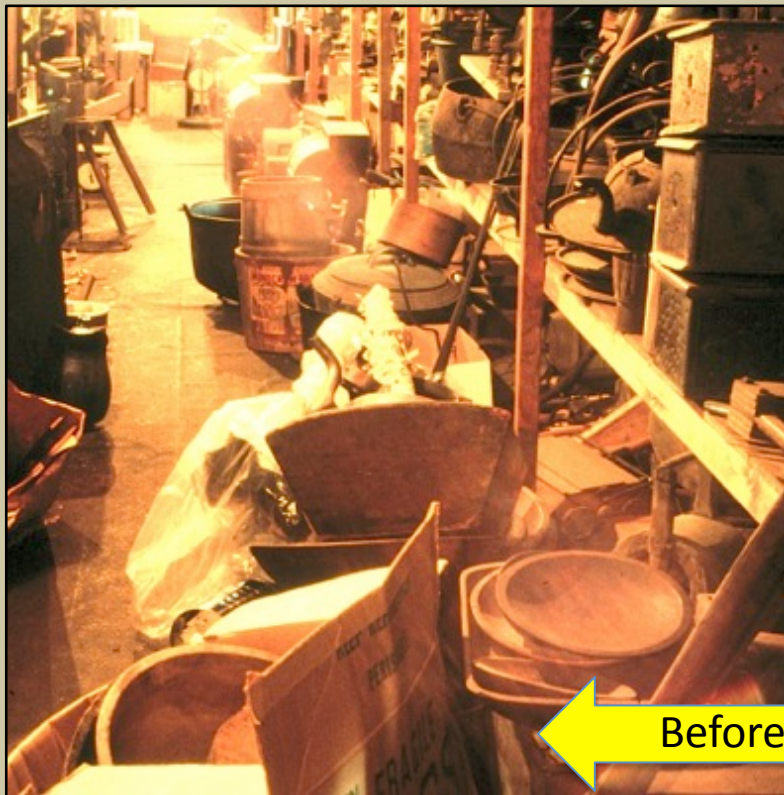


Creative Solutions to Collections Care

Susan Duhl
Art Conservator & Collections Consultant



Creative Solutions for Collections Care



Before & After

Understand the priority order of museum management & preservation goals: funding is often awarded with the same priorities.



- 1st - Mission Statements, Policies, Procedures, Planning
- 2nd - Building & Climate Control
- 3rd - Storage & Exhibition Facilities
- 4th - Collections Maintenance
- 5th - Single-Item Conservation Treatment

Fundraising



Seek local, state and federal donations & funds:

- Private individuals for collections and cash donations
- Fire & Police for assessments and disaster training
- Businesses for money, services, supplies, & publicity
- Local and state political representatives

www.heritagepreservation.org

www.imls.gov/

<http://www.neh.gov/grants>

Planning



Strategic planning includes:

- Short-term goals (projects that can be done within resources)
- Long-term goals (large-scale projects)
- Fundraising milestones

Assessments are a great way to get started



“CAP provides a general conservation assessment of your museum's collection, environmental conditions, and site. Conservation priorities are identified by professionals who spend 2 days on-site and 3 days writing a report. The report can help your museum develop strategies for improved collections care and provide a tool for long-range planning and fundraising.” <http://www.heritagepreservation.org/cap/>

Mission Statement
Policies
Procedures
Strategic Planning



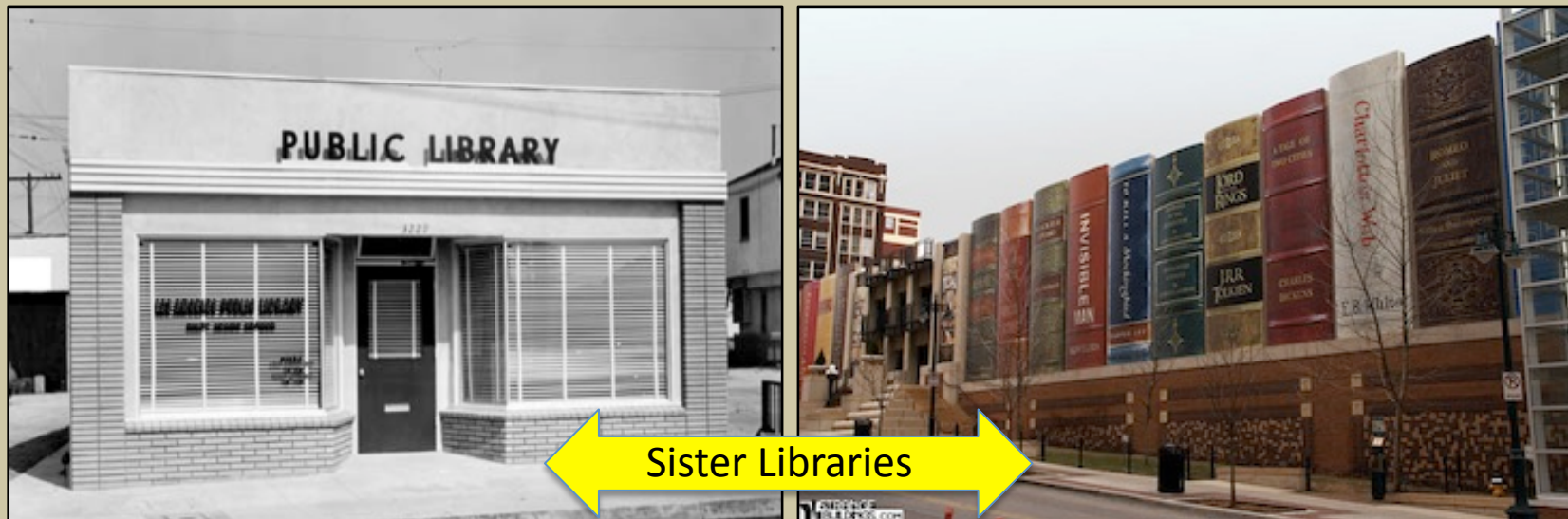
Use templates from professional organizations & associations of similar museums, and sister institutions.

<http://www.aam-us.org/resources/professional-resources>

<http://www.archives.gov/preservation/>

<http://www.ala.org/tools/guidelines>

Establish
cooperative relationships & shared resources
with similar institutions or by geographic proximity



- Buy supplies in purchasing co-ops
- Create training opportunities & community outreach with other local institutions

The Building



- Understand & move towards ideal museum standards
- Make progressive improvements
- Balance environmental conditions as much as possible
- Secure funds for equipment upgrades & replacement

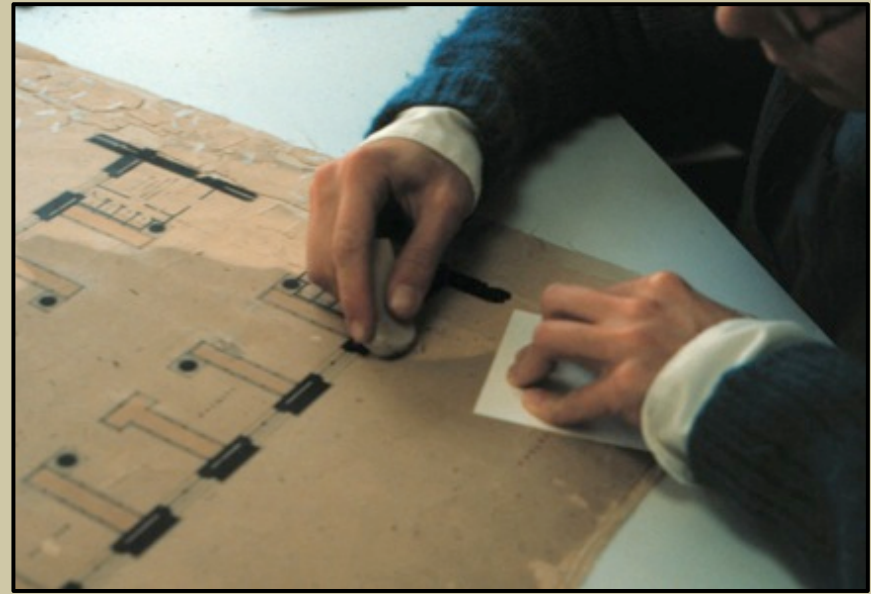
Building Assessments



Professional assessments are preferred;
Self-Assessments are very useful:

- Efficient Space Use
- Building Envelop
- Mechanical Systems
- Safety & Security

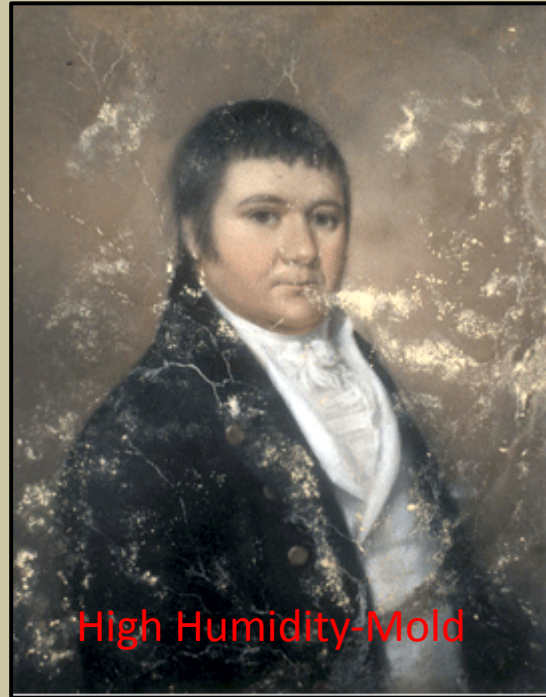
Environmental Control



Canadian Conservation Institute/10 Agents of Deterioration

- Relative Humidity & Temperature
- Light
- Housekeeping
- Pests

Relative Humidity



High Humidity-Mold

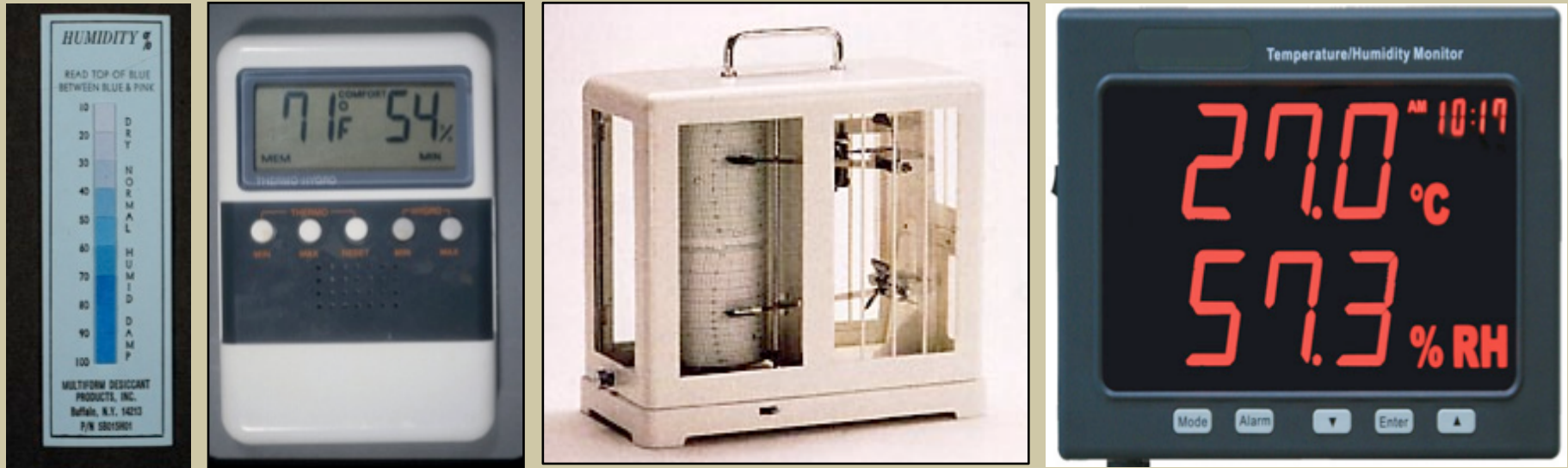


Low Humidity-cracked finishes

Ideal Relative Humidity: 55% +/-5%

- Seasonal changes are less stressful to collections than daily changes
- Paper, textiles, & ethnographic collections are the most sensitive

Environmental Monitoring



Use the equipment within the institution's budget:

- Humidistrips - \$20 each
- Electronic Thermo-Hygrometers - \$90 each
- Hygrothermographs - \$4,000 each
- Dataloggers – prices vary but system can easily be expanded as needed & funds allow

Environmental Control Equipment



- Undertake regular inspections, maintenance, & repairs
- Run all equipment 24/7
- Only use free-standing equipment when absolutely necessary
- Hardwire electrical cords and locate drainpipes into plumbing
- Use window coverings modify temperatures
- Seal air leaks around windows, doors, chimneys, etc.

Light Exposure



Light damage is cumulative:

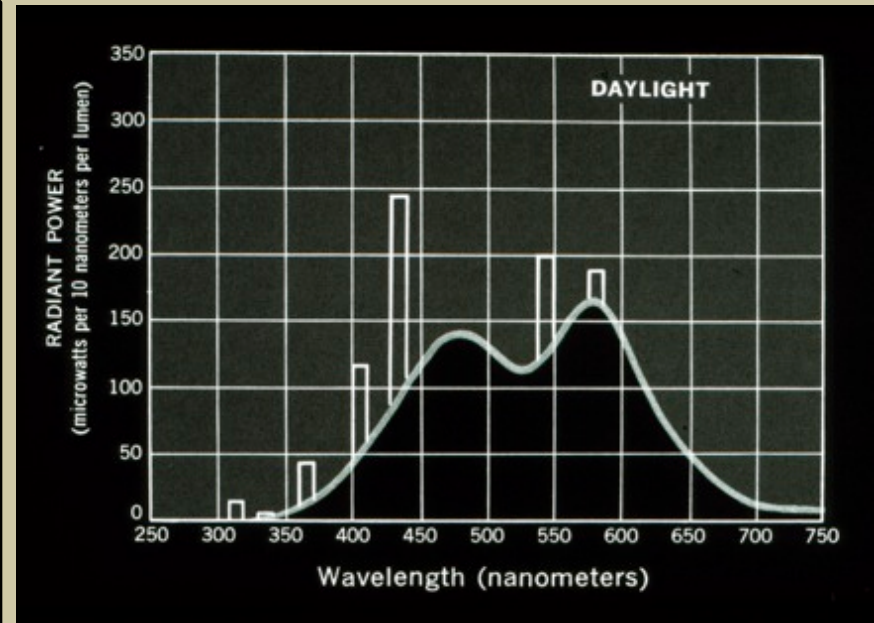
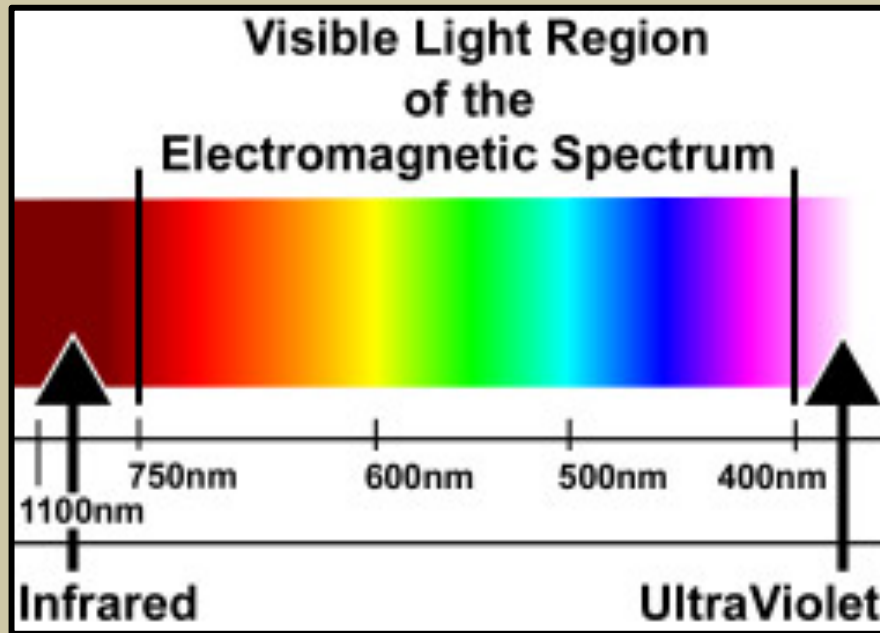
- The results of low light levels for long durations is the same as intense light levels for short durations

Light Control



- Choose your lamps for the least damaging light emission
- Install filters &/or coverings on lights & windows
- Position lights at the appropriate distance and angle
- Do not use lighting inside of display cases
- Use motion detectors & timers to turn on lights

The Science of Light



Choose lamps that emit light in the middle of the spectrum
Which emit low heat and low ultraviolet radiation

See:

Canadian Conservation Institute/10 Agents of Deterioration

Disaster Planning and Preparation



- Undertake self-assessments of risks
- Establish a Disaster Plan (templates are available)
- Train staff in disaster response & safety
- Keep computer back-ups kept offsite
- Purchase adequate insurance coverage
- Have contractors available & supplies on-hand

See: www.heritagepreservation.org/programs/TASKFER.HTM

Preservation & Access



- Collections control & organization stabilizes collections & makes them easier to find & replace.
- Quality housing and storage provides chemical & physical support for collections.

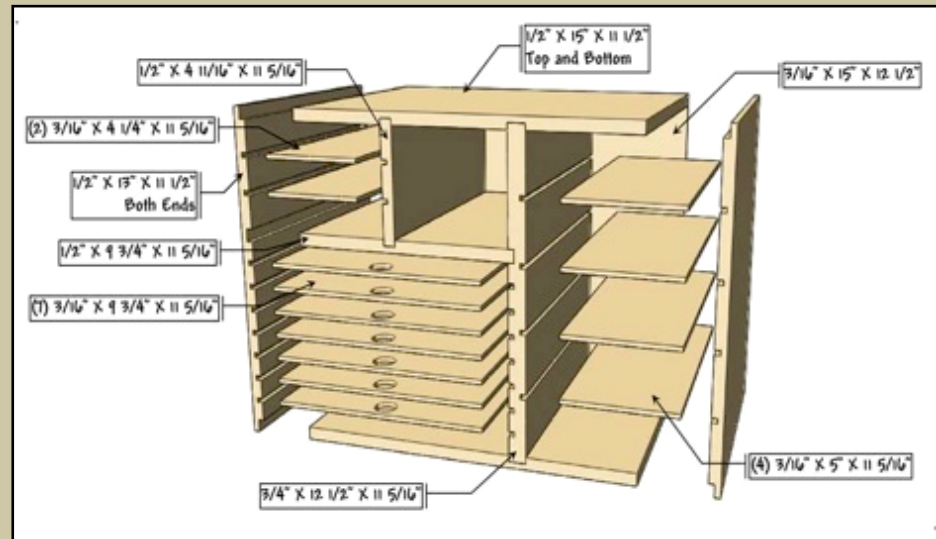
“If you make things look precious, people will treat them as precious.”

Shelving Options



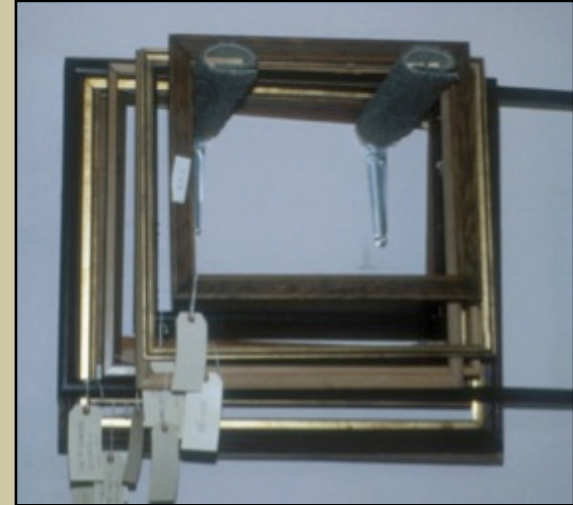
- Powder-coated steel is ideal
- Modular wire shelves are a good alternative
- Adapt existing shelves by lining with Marvelseal[™] or other barriers (mat board, Mylar, etc.)

Large Format Storage Files



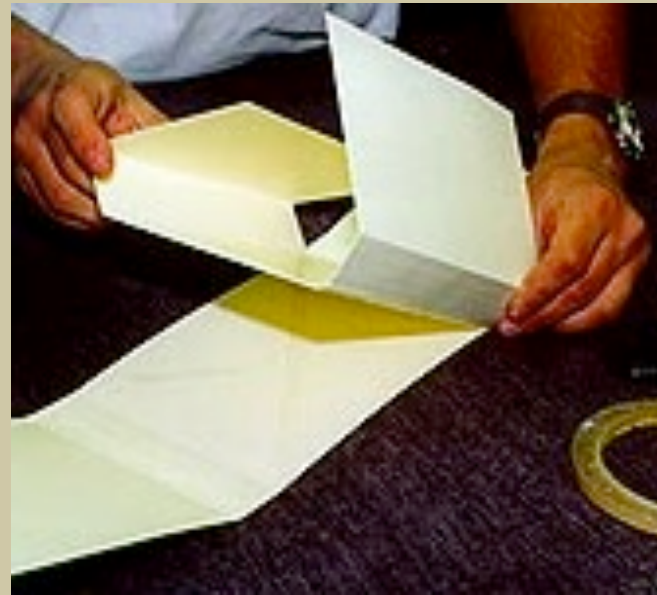
- Purchase used furniture stores & auctions
- Build your own

Frame Racks



- Hang paintings on wire fencing bolted to the wall
- Make paintings bins out of high-grade plywood
- Cover L-brackets with short pile carpet for frame storage
- Cover 2" x 4" lumber with short pile carpet for supports

Collection Storage Housings & Enclosures



Supplies are:

- Less expensive to buy in bulk
- Less expensive to buy in rolls rather than pre-cut
- Less expensive to construct but takes more staff time
- Consider using volunteers

Volunteers



Match volunteer skills & abilities

- Senior Citizens
- High School & College Students/Interns
- Graduate Students

Staff & Volunteer Training



If funds are limited for workshops, use web resources:

www.connectingtocollections.org

www.nps.gov/hps/tps/briefs/presbhom.htm

<http://www.cci-icc.gc.ca/publications/notes/index-eng.aspx>

www.archives.gov/preservation/

Build on Your Successes



- Think creatively
- Undertaking projects in order increases eligibility for grants
- Use photos for press releases, newsletters, & fundraising
- Make progressive improvements
- Know that making any small step is a step forward

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