

Troublesome Trophies and Fragile Feathered Friends: Introduction to the Care of Historic Taxidermy



George Dante, Wildlife Preservations
&
Eugenie Milroy, A.M. Art Conservation

September 24, 2015



Who has Taxidermy?



- ❧ Natural Science collections
- ❧ Science & Nature Centers
- ❧ Zoos
- ❧ Children's Museums



Who has Taxidermy?



❧ Historic Houses

❧ Art Museums



What is Taxidermy?

Taxidermy specimens:
mounted (stuffed) animals



Study skins: skins of
animals, not mounted



Dioramas & Groupings

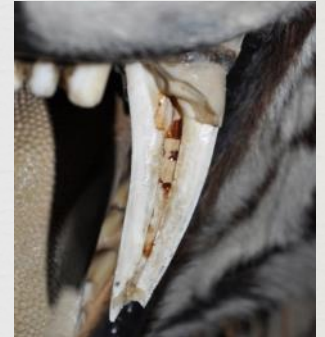


☞ Three-dimensional model or scene



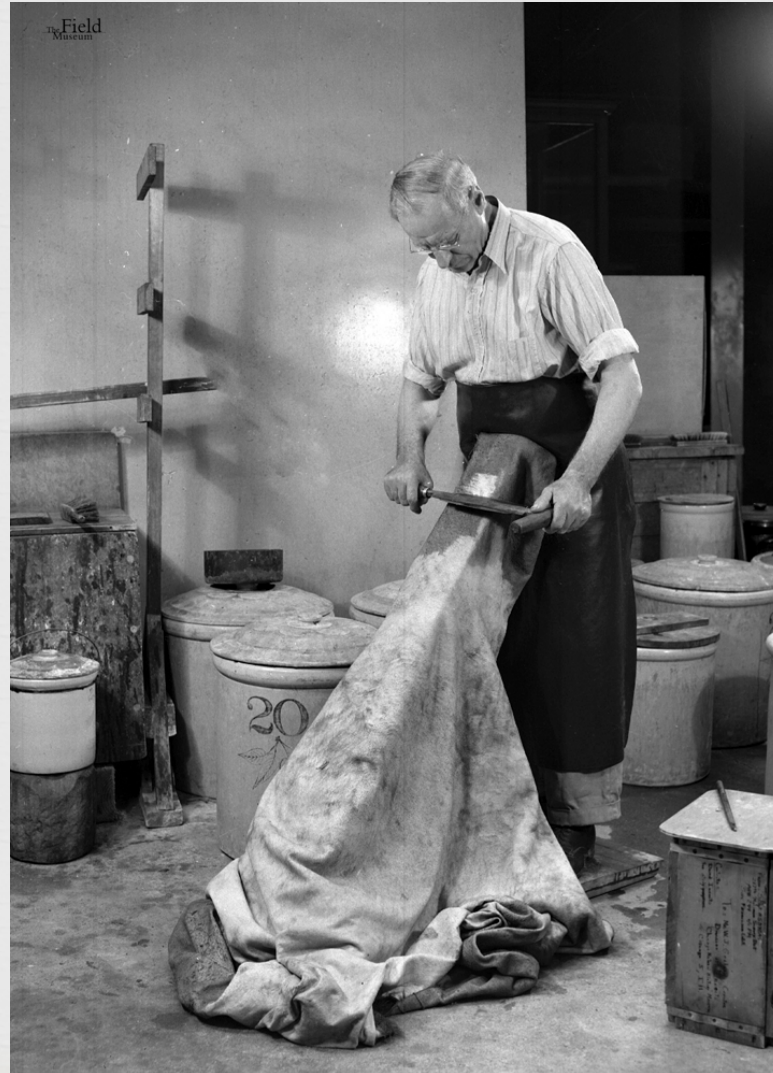
Mounts as composite objects

- ❧ Skin
- ❧ Feather
- ❧ Hair
- ❧ Bone/Tooth
- ❧ Metal
- ❧ Wood
- ❧ Paper
- ❧ Foam (polyurethane, polystyrene)
- ❧ Plaster
- ❧ Fiberglass
- ❧ Glass/ceramic
- ❧ Resin/adhesive
- ❧ Paint

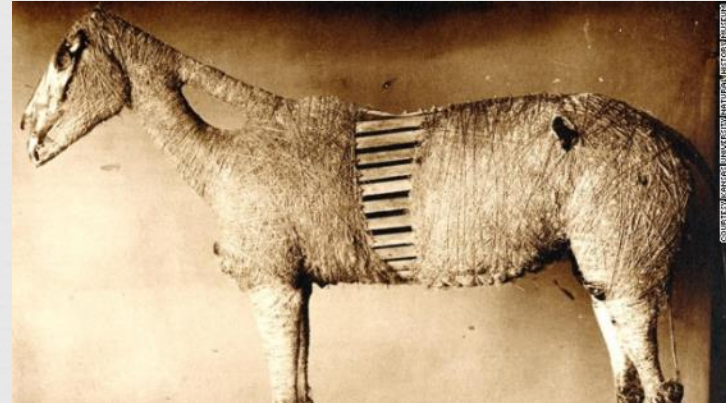
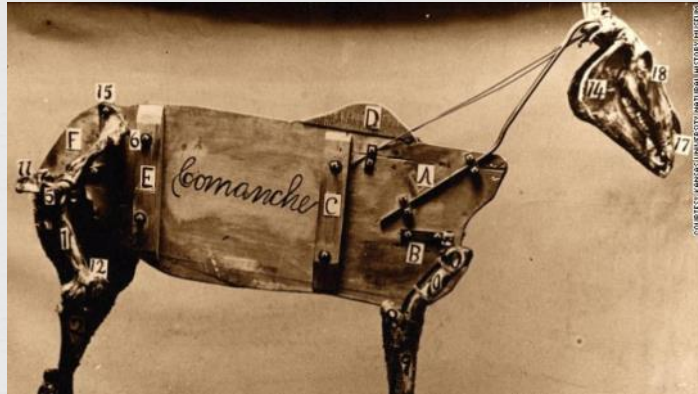




Preparation Techniques



Wrapped forms



Sculpted Form/ Akeley Method





Plaster and burlap



Wood



Paper coated in shellac



Fiberglass

All three are from the same time period, varying in quality



Cheap

mid

high end

Mold made, view from reverse



Eyes

Higher end eyes with whites

Older eyes

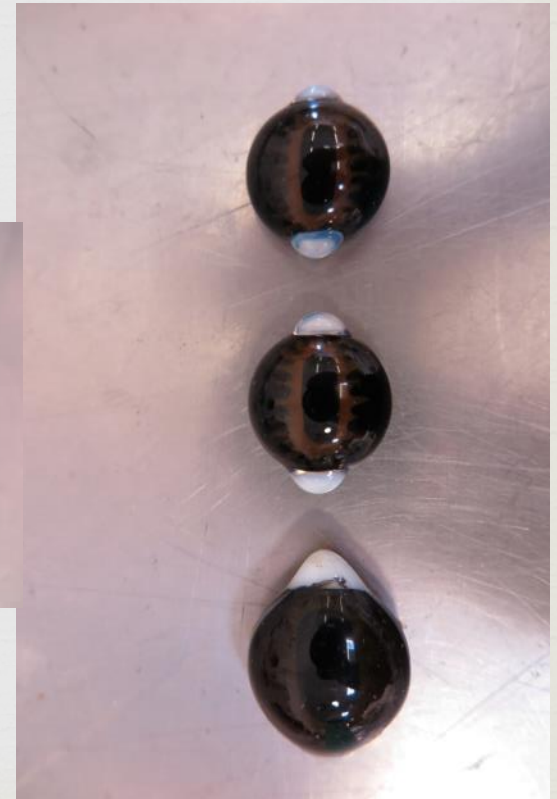


Crude but an attempt at detail

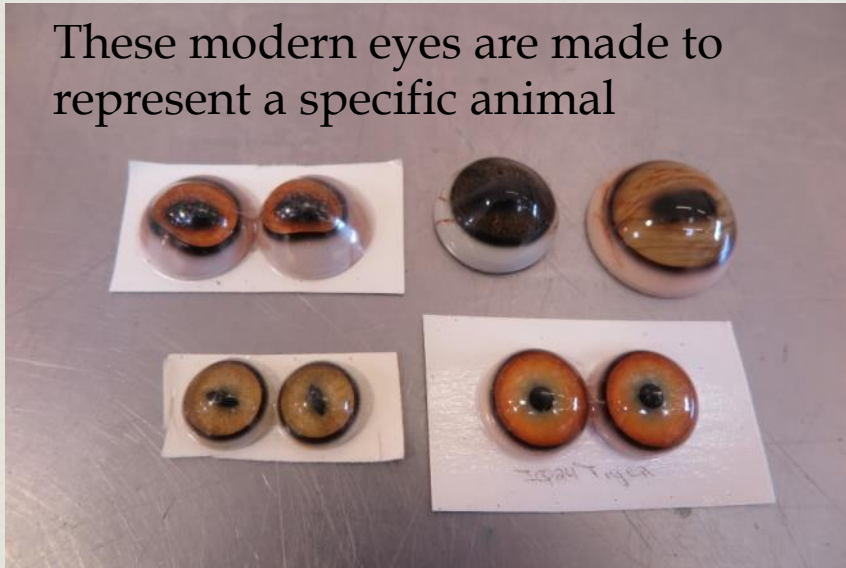
Back



Set mark on the back side



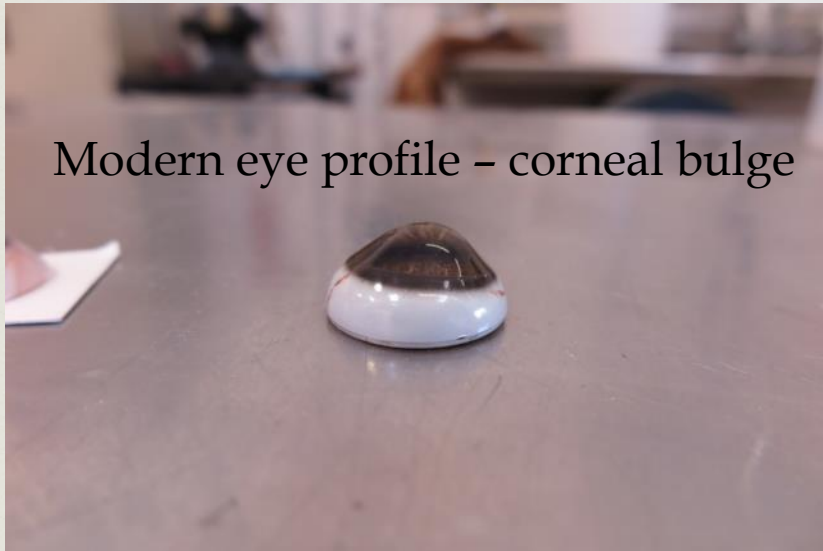
These modern eyes are made to represent a specific animal



Eyes



Modern eye profile - corneal bulge



Is this modern or old?

Ears



Quality lead liner at left, lower end liner at right

Inherent Vice



Inherent Vice

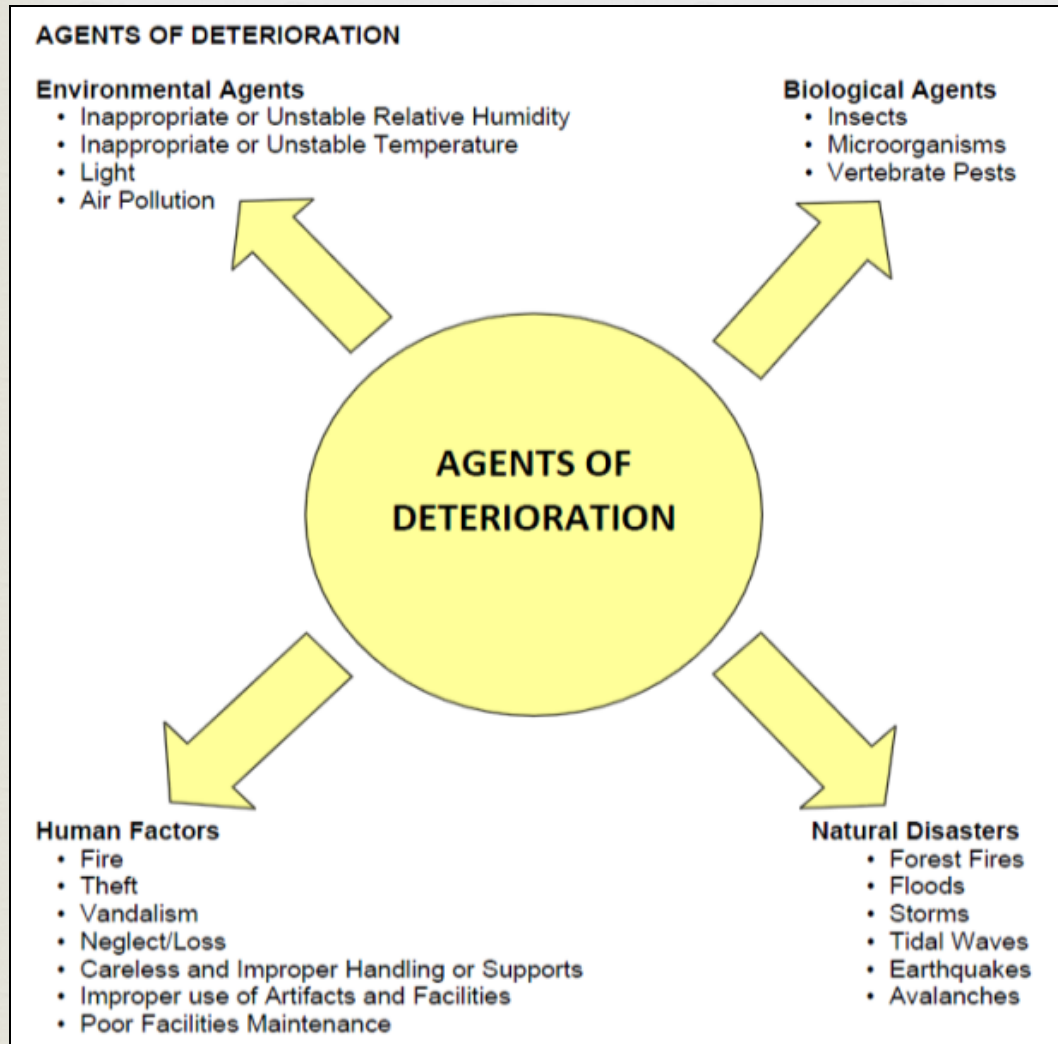


Plaster and burlap mannequin



Caribou head mount

10 AGENTS OF DETERIORATION



1. Disassociation/
Custodial Neglect
2. Physical Forces
3. Incorrect Temperature
4. Incorrect Relative
Humidity
5. Pollutants
6. Light
7. Pests
8. Fire
9. Water
10. Security

Custodial Neglect/Disassociation



Custodial Neglect/Disassociation



*Mr. J. Phipps Esq.
Beautiful Baskin
Beaults. & Co.*

LONDON *Sept '05*

ROWLAND WARD
NATURALISTS.
"THE JUNGLE"
166, PICCADILLY.

*Sept 11 '03
to
Oct 21 '04*

To be rendered £ 43.2.0

*By draft from
New York* £ 60-0-0

Balance due. £ 13.2.0

NOTICE—ROWLAND WARD IS THE ONLY HOUSE LEFT IN THE PRODUCTIONS OF THE WARD FAMILY, LONG ESTABLISHED FOR THEIR ACCUMULATED
EXPERIENCE, AND THEIR SALE IS PARTIAL TRADING, EXCLUSIVELY IN THE ARTISTIC DEPARTMENT.



IN THE COLONIAL AND INDIAN EXHIBITION, LONDON,
THE REPRODUCTION OF THE JUNGLE AND INDIAN ANIMAL LIFE
Was Designed and Arranged, and the Animals Modelled by ROWLAND WARD & CO.

SPECIALISTS IN ARTISTIC TAXIDERM.

**MEDALS & DIPLOMAS OF HONOUR
INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITIONS.**

London, 1862.	Cebu, 1881-4.
Paris, 1867.	London, 1884.
Vienna, 1873.	London, 1885.
London, 1883.	London, 1885-92.
Antwerp, 1907.	

**NOTICE—ROWLAND WARD, Ltd., is
the only firm left in the production of the
Ward Family, long established for their
accumulated experience and their skill in
Practical Taxidermy, especially in the
ARTISTIC department.**

Telegraphic Address:
"JUNGLE, PICCY, LONDON."

**Telephone—71 MAYFAIR,
3646 GERRARD.**

**ROWLAND WARD'S
RECORDS OF BIG GAME**
Sixth Edition
With their Distribution, Characteristics,
Dimensions, Weights and
HORN AND TUSK MEASUREMENTS
Price 20s. net.

**THE
SPORTSMAN'S HANDBOOK**
12th Edition
To Practical Collecting,
Preserving, and
Arranging skins and
TROPHIES AND SPECIMENS
together with a Guide
TO THE HUNTING GROUNDS OF
THE WORLD.
Price 35s. net.

**ROWLAND WARD, LIMITED,
NATURALISTS,
By Special Appointment to
H.M. the King.
"The Jungle,"
167, Piccadilly, London.**

28th, December, 1914.

Mr. John S. Phipps,
787 Fifth Avenue,
NEW YORK, U.S.A.

Dear Sir,

In reply to your letter, we have the pleasure
to enclose instructions as to the treatment of trophies, and note
you have a supply of powder.

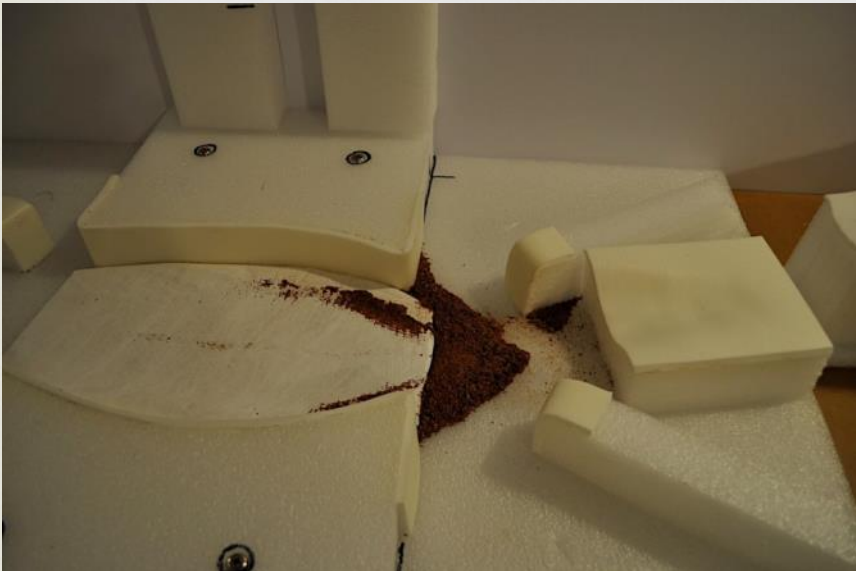
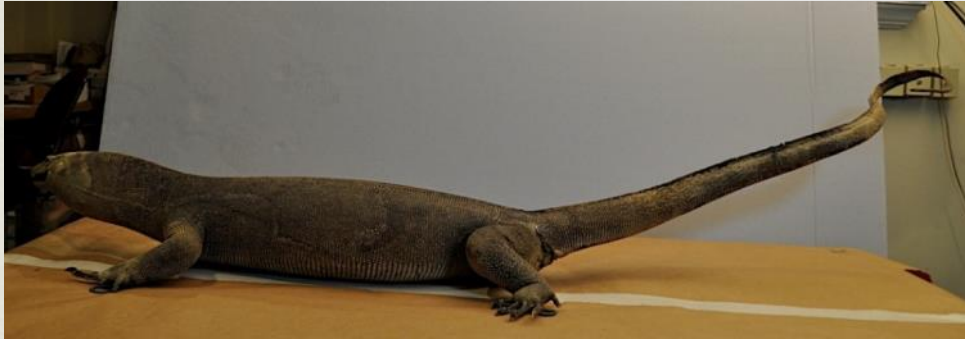
Trusting the work will be carried out to your
satisfaction.

Yours faithfully,

Rowland Ward Ltd

ENC.

Physical Forces



Physical Forces



Penguin with detached head



The head is often the first to go!

Handling

For smaller lightweight mounts lift from base

Large head mounts should be lifted from stable base of antlers

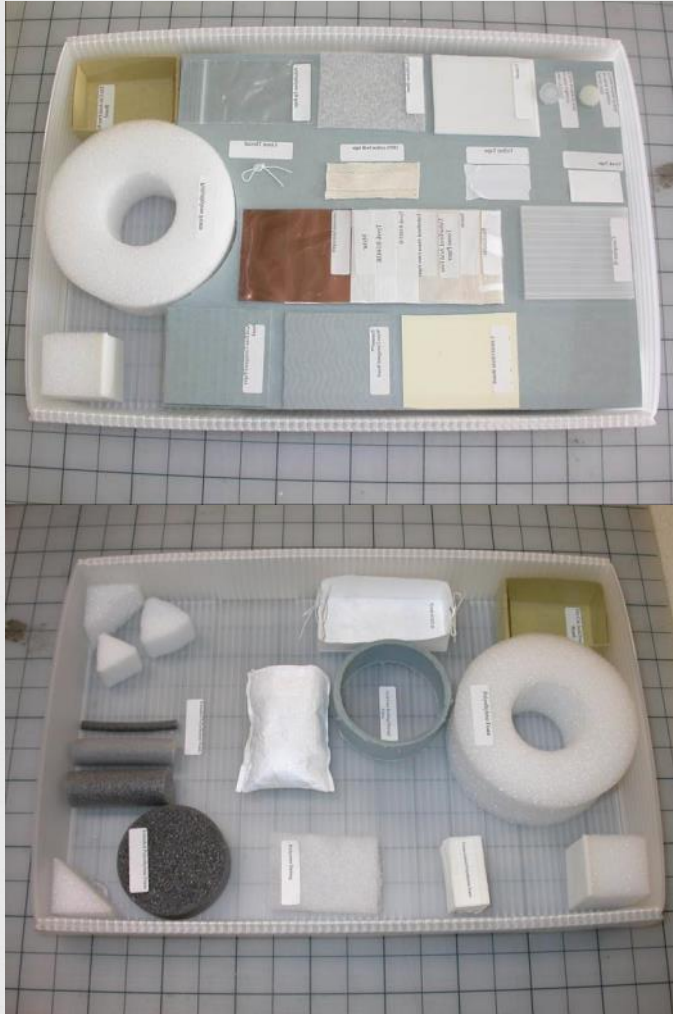
Avoid handling feathers and fur



Health & Safety



Materials for Safe Storage



Incorrect Temperature & RH



Incorrect Temp and RH: Ear Damage, skin cracks



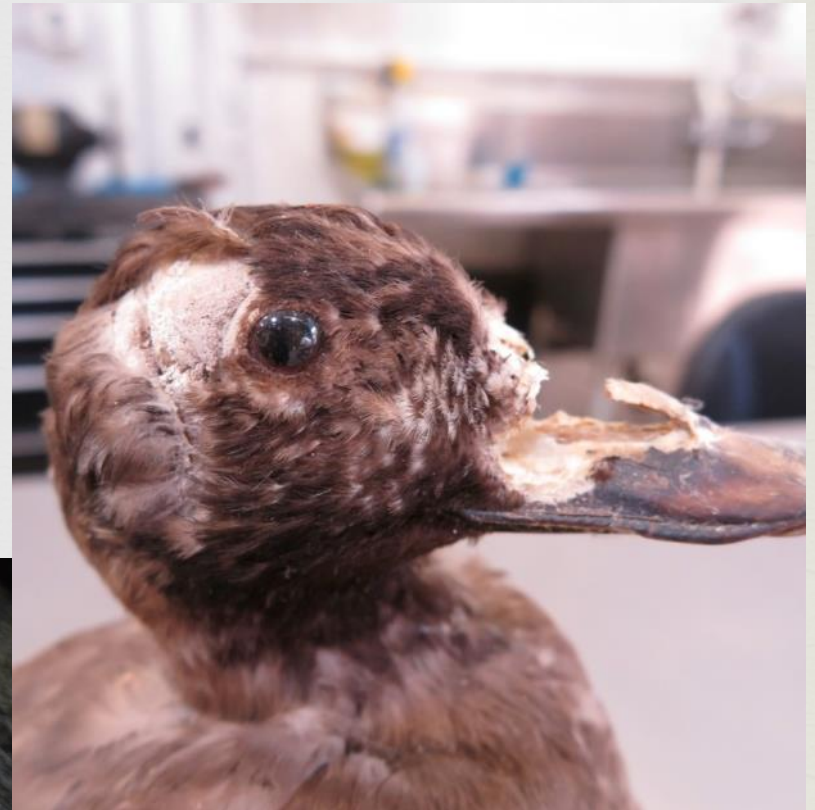
Pollutants



Light



Pests



Pests



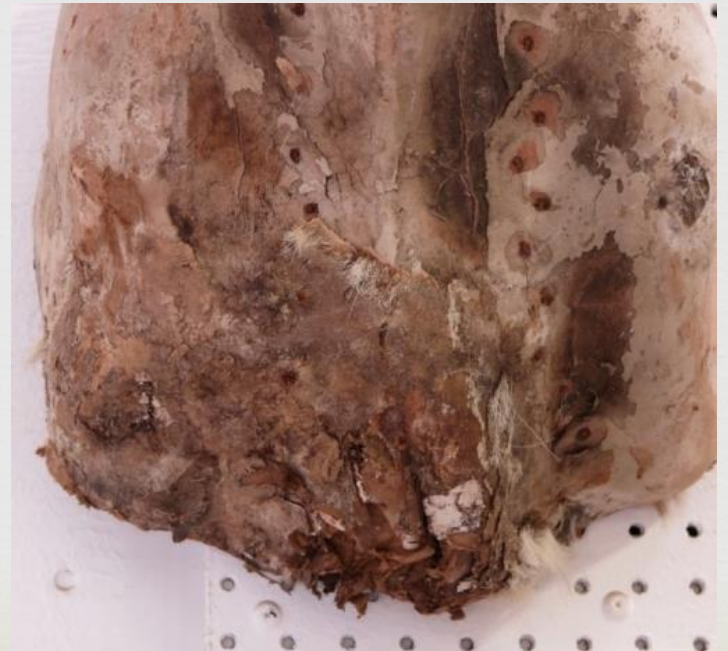
Fire



Fire



Water



Proper Emergency Planning



Security



Treatment

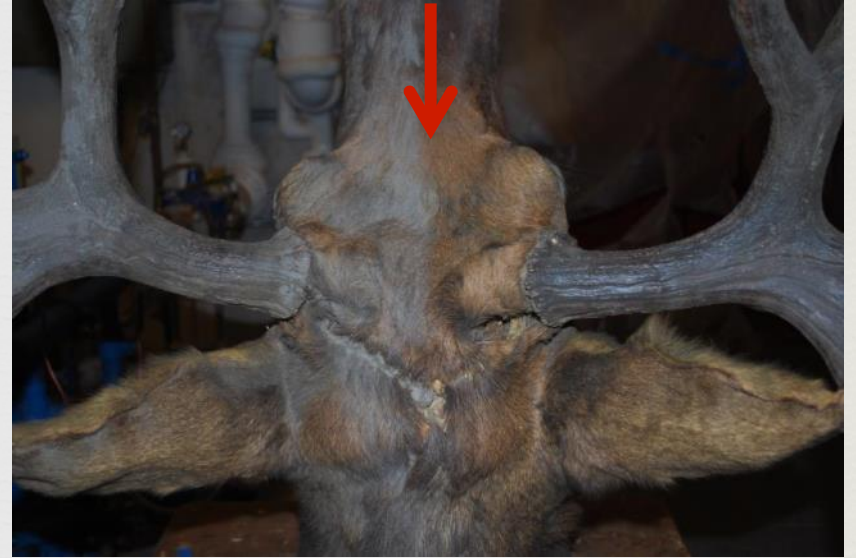


Treatment: Cleaning

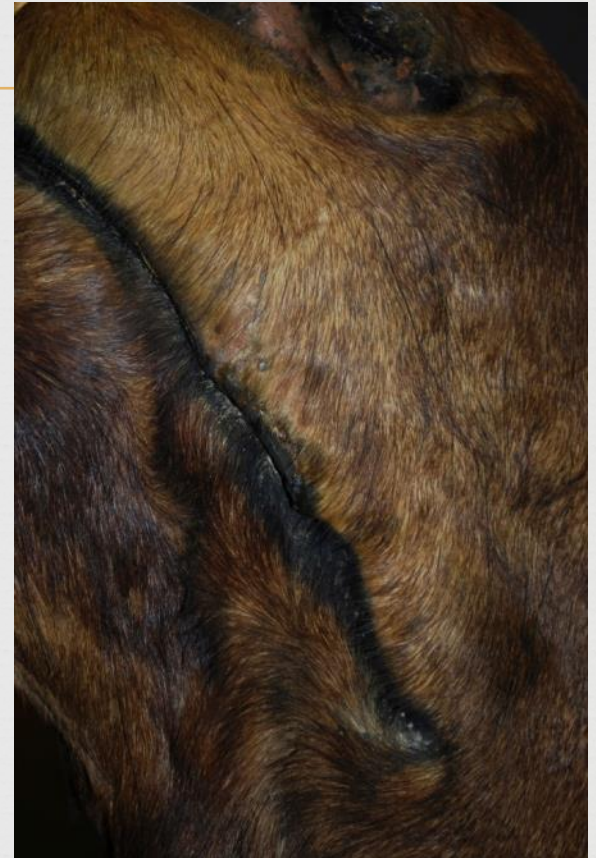


- ❧ Brushes
- ❧ Groom/stik
- ❧ Erasers
- ❧ Cotton swabs
- ❧ Webril wipes
- ❧ Soot sponges
- ❧ Micro vacuum tools
- ❧ HEPA vacuum
- ❧ Screens

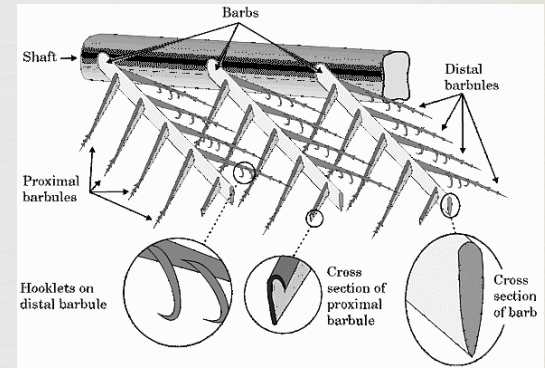
Treatment – Basic Cleaning



Treatment: Stabilization



Treatment - Preening



Treatment – Pest Control



Treatment – Skin Repair



Treatment - Fills

Before Treatment



During Treatment



After
treatment

Prior Restoration











Treatment



Treatment - Recoloring



Pronghorn – before recoloring



after

Treatment - Recoloring





American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) & Yale Institute for the Preservation of Cultural Heritage

IMLS-funded project

Re-Coloring Faded Taxidermy:

Research into the Properties and Applicability of Dye Materials
for Conservation Treatment

If you are interested in possible future workshops on the care of historic taxidermy,
please contact Fran Ritchie, Project Conservator at the AMNH fritchier@amnh.org

If you have experience in preserving or treating historic taxidermy and would be able to participate in a working group
forming best practices, please contact Fran Ritchie, Project Conservator at the AMNH
fritchier@amnh.org



INSTITUTE of
Museum and Library
SERVICES



AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

Yale Institute for the Preservation of Cultural Heritage



Acknowledgements



- ❧ American Museum of Natural History
- ❧ Boston Children's Museum
- ❧ Brooklyn Children's Museum
- ❧ Des Moines Art Center
- ❧ Old Westbury Gardens
- ❧ Park Avenue Armory
- ❧ Trailside Nature Museum
- ❧ Give Me a Break Art Conservation
- ❧ Museum Victoria
- ❧ Carolina Conservation

George Dante



www.wildlifepreservations.com
wpstudio@optonline.net

Eugenie Milroy



www.AMArtConservation.com
eugenie@amartconservation.com