Subject: Artwork preservation FAQ Posted by infopage on Fri, 10 Jan 2014 10:37:04 GMT View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

Archive-name: art-preservation Posting-Frequency: Posted on 10th of Jan, Mar, May, Jul, Sep, and Nov. Please-Note: Comments on the contents should go to Terry Whittier. Comments on the header should go to <infopage@furry.fan.org>, which provides automatic posting services for the maintainer.

WHY GOOD ART GOES BAD - ARTWORK PRESERVATION SECRETS by Terry Whittier 5/12/01

PREVENTING DAMAGE TO ORIGINAL ARTWORK ON PAPER FROM AGING AND CONTAMINATION

There are two main enemies of original art on paper during long-term storage or display: Chemicals that are CONTAINED IN the paper, and chemicals from OUTSIDE objects that come in contact with the paper.

THE ENEMY FROM WITHIN is the remaining acidity or alkalinity from the manufacture of the paper, or the build-up of acidity due to the aging of materials in the paper. Nasty chemicals are often used in the making of paper products from wood and a few other fibers. Some of these chemicals, as well as parts of the plant material, can remain in the paper, causing it to chemically change with age and turn yellow or brown, due to a buildup of acidity.

Ideally, you want paper as close to a pH neutral condition as possible. That means that it's not acidic or alkaline. A paper that is pH neutral or has some alkalinity will tend not to discolor with age. Some papers are buffered, meaning that they have alkaline chemicals added during production that tend to offset any acidity that might build up with age.

Some papers are known as 100% rag. They are made from fibers other than wood, such as cotton, wool, flax, synthetic fibers, and more. Not all 100 percent rag papers are completely archival, but most are. On the other hand, some common copier papers made from wood are fairly pH neutral when new, but assume paper made from wood will become more acidic with time.

If you want archivability in paper, be sure to find out about it before buying it. And double-check for balanced pH with a testing device, such as a pH testing pen.

EXTERNAL CONTAMINATION can come from self-adhesive tape, glue, acidic paper, humidity, skin oils, temperature, aerosols and ultraviolet or

strong light.

Use only stable, acid-free or pH neutral materials that might come in contact with or be stored near paper.

The sticky coatings on adhesive tape contain volatile chemicals that can work their way into the paper and stain it. Plus, the adhesive will eventually dry with age and come loose, crack or crumble. Never allow masking tape, cellophane tape, duct tape, drafting tape or any self-stick tapes on or near the front or back of the art. Also avoid spray adhesives.

You can use pH neutral cloth or paper tape that has a dry, water-soluble adhesive. This kind of adhesive will not ooze chemicals into the paper of the artwork and can be removed cleanly with a moist cloth. Use as little as possible, and use only on the far edges of the paper.

The best way to secure originals on a backing board is with archival corners. That way, no adhesive touches the art. Using corners made of pH neutral paper and secured with archival tape is the best possible mounting technique. (For added safety, place a sheet of pH neutral paper between the artwork and the mounting board and/or the matte overlay.) (In my experience, matte board is usually pH neutral on the white back surface, but it should be checked for acidity after a few years.) Archival paper tape can be easily folded for use as archival corners.

DISPLAY COVERINGS: to prevent UV light from aging the paper or fading colors, use UV light blocking glass (or other high-rated UV protective hard plastics), as long as any coatings are on the outside, away from the art. Be sure to clean the clear cover with mild soap and water before placing it against the art. Avoid direct sunlight and fluorescent lights. Avoid reflected sunlight, unless using a very good UV protective covering.

FOR INFREQUENT DISPLAY/STORAGE, Mylar (polyester) is recommended because of its stability. Polypropylene, polyvinyl acetate, or acrylics (such as Perspex, Lucite and PlexiGlas) are almost as good as mylar, but should be replaced every few years and must be kept away from heat. Vinyl, PVC or other soft plastics must be avoided. The softer and more flexible the plastic, the easier it is for solvents to leak out. Chemicals evaporate out of the plastic or accumulate on the surface of the plastic and cause damage or discoloration to artwork as they soak into or chemically combine with the artwork. Avoid lamination or photo albums with "magnetic pages."

IDEAL ARCHIVAL STORAGE for art on paper would be in acid-free boxes, in Mylar sleeves, with buffered pH neutral paper sheets on both sides of the art, in a cool and moderately dry environment. Including some moth crystals and silica gel will help keep out pests and stabalize humidity. Most art materials and papers are made to be stable at room temperature and between 30% to 40% relative humidity, although a little cooler temperature range is better. Wide fluctuations in temperature and humidity are damaging. Eliminating oxygen by encapsulation and replacing the air with nitrogen gas will help. Many historic documents are stored this way. Any contaminants such as smoke or aerosol chemicals that could condense on or infiltrate the art must be avoided.

REFERENCES

It is hard to find information about art conservation techniques, but the catalog of the archival storage supply company, Light Impressions, contains many tips about the topic. You can write and request a catalog from them at PO Box 787, BREA CA 92822-0787, USA. <http://www.lightimpressionsdirect.com>

Permission is granted to reproduce this article for free distribution. Copyright 1994 by Terry Whittier, 7059 Via Blanca, San Jose, CA 95139 Assistance from Gerald Perkins.

The Furry InfoPage: http://www.tigerden.com/infopage/furry/ Just The FAQs: http://www.tigerden.com/infopage/furry/faqs.html This FAQ: http://www.tigerden.com/infopage/furry/art-pres.txt

Subject: Artwork preservation FAQ Posted by infopage on Mon, 10 Mar 2014 09:37:05 GMT View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

Archive-name: art-preservation

Posting-Frequency: Posted on 10th of Jan, Mar, May, Jul, Sep, and Nov. Please-Note: Comments on the contents should go to Terry Whittier. Comments on the header should go to <infopage@furry.fan.org>, which provides automatic posting services for the maintainer.

WHY GOOD ART GOES BAD - ARTWORK PRESERVATION SECRETS by Terry Whittier 5/12/01

PREVENTING DAMAGE TO ORIGINAL ARTWORK ON PAPER FROM AGING AND CONTAMINATION

There are two main enemies of original art on paper during long-term storage or display: Chemicals that are CONTAINED IN the paper, and chemicals from OUTSIDE objects that come in contact with the paper.

THE ENEMY FROM WITHIN is the remaining acidity or alkalinity from the manufacture of the paper, or the build-up of acidity due to the aging of

materials in the paper. Nasty chemicals are often used in the making of paper products from wood and a few other fibers. Some of these chemicals, as well as parts of the plant material, can remain in the paper, causing it to chemically change with age and turn yellow or brown, due to a buildup of acidity.

Ideally, you want paper as close to a pH neutral condition as possible. That means that it's not acidic or alkaline. A paper that is pH neutral or has some alkalinity will tend not to discolor with age. Some papers are buffered, meaning that they have alkaline chemicals added during production that tend to offset any acidity that might build up with age.

Some papers are known as 100% rag. They are made from fibers other than wood, such as cotton, wool, flax, synthetic fibers, and more. Not all 100 percent rag papers are completely archival, but most are. On the other hand, some common copier papers made from wood are fairly pH neutral when new, but assume paper made from wood will become more acidic with time.

If you want archivability in paper, be sure to find out about it before buying it. And double-check for balanced pH with a testing device, such as a pH testing pen.

EXTERNAL CONTAMINATION can come from self-adhesive tape, glue, acidic paper, humidity, skin oils, temperature, aerosols and ultraviolet or strong light.

Use only stable, acid-free or pH neutral materials that might come in contact with or be stored near paper.

The sticky coatings on adhesive tape contain volatile chemicals that can work their way into the paper and stain it. Plus, the adhesive will eventually dry with age and come loose, crack or crumble. Never allow masking tape, cellophane tape, duct tape, drafting tape or any self-stick tapes on or near the front or back of the art. Also avoid spray adhesives.

You can use pH neutral cloth or paper tape that has a dry, water-soluble adhesive. This kind of adhesive will not ooze chemicals into the paper of the artwork and can be removed cleanly with a moist cloth. Use as little as possible, and use only on the far edges of the paper.

The best way to secure originals on a backing board is with archival corners. That way, no adhesive touches the art. Using corners made of pH neutral paper and secured with archival tape is the best possible mounting technique. (For added safety, place a sheet of pH neutral paper between the artwork and the mounting board and/or the matte overlay.) (In my experience, matte board is usually pH neutral on the white back

surface, but it should be checked for acidity after a few years.) Archival paper tape can be easily folded for use as archival corners.

DISPLAY COVERINGS: to prevent UV light from aging the paper or fading colors, use UV light blocking glass (or other high-rated UV protective hard plastics), as long as any coatings are on the outside, away from the art. Be sure to clean the clear cover with mild soap and water before placing it against the art. Avoid direct sunlight and fluorescent lights. Avoid reflected sunlight, unless using a very good UV protective covering.

FOR INFREQUENT DISPLAY/STORAGE, Mylar (polyester) is recommended because of its stability. Polypropylene, polyvinyl acetate, or acrylics (such as Perspex, Lucite and PlexiGlas) are almost as good as mylar, but should be replaced every few years and must be kept away from heat. Vinyl, PVC or other soft plastics must be avoided. The softer and more flexible the plastic, the easier it is for solvents to leak out. Chemicals evaporate out of the plastic or accumulate on the surface of the plastic and cause damage or discoloration to artwork as they soak into or chemically combine with the artwork. Avoid lamination or photo albums with "magnetic pages."

IDEAL ARCHIVAL STORAGE for art on paper would be in acid-free boxes, in Mylar sleeves, with buffered pH neutral paper sheets on both sides of the art, in a cool and moderately dry environment. Including some moth crystals and silica gel will help keep out pests and stabalize humidity. Most art materials and papers are made to be stable at room temperature and between 30% to 40% relative humidity, although a little cooler temperature range is better. Wide fluctuations in temperature and humidity are damaging. Eliminating oxygen by encapsulation and replacing the air with nitrogen gas will help. Many historic documents are stored this way. Any contaminants such as smoke or aerosol chemicals that could condense on or infiltrate the art must be avoided.

REFERENCES

It is hard to find information about art conservation techniques, but the catalog of the archival storage supply company, Light Impressions, contains many tips about the topic. You can write and request a catalog from them at PO Box 787, BREA CA 92822-0787, USA. <http://www.lightimpressionsdirect.com>

Permission is granted to reproduce this article for free distribution. Copyright 1994 by Terry Whittier, 7059 Via Blanca, San Jose, CA 95139 Assistance from Gerald Perkins.

The Furry InfoPage: http://www.tigerden.com/infopage/furry/ Just The FAQs: http://www.tigerden.com/infopage/furry/faqs.html This FAQ: http://www.tigerden.com/infopage/furry/art-pres.txt