Speaking Textile Conservation
Camille Myers Breeze

NEMA Conference
November 6, 2015

www.museumtextiles.com
Textile Condition Terms

Abrasion: Wearing away of the surface from scraping, rubbing, grinding or friction
Accretion: Deposit of extraneous material on the surface, such as mud or fly speck
Crease: Tightly pressed fold often causing threads to weaken and break
Crocking: Rubbing off of color resulting in loss of dyestuff but not loss of fiber
Cut/Tear: Clean break in the fabric
Deterioration: A general term for a weakened state caused by age, use, or environmental conditions
Discoloration: General change in the color of an area from the prevailing tone
Embrittlement: Decline in pliability and suppleness to the degree that damage may be imminent
Fading: Discoloration seen as change of color, often caused by light exposure
Fold: Pleat resulting from one part doubled or laid over another
Fraying: Raveled or worn spot indicated by the separation of threads, often found on edges
Hole: Area of missing fibers from both the warp and the weft
Insect damage: Holes, surface loss (grazing), or deposits (frass, silky fiber) caused by insects
Loss: General term for an area missing fibers
Mold/Mildew: Microbial activity, often seen as stains or surface growth, exacerbated by humidity
Oxidation: Chemical alteration caused by the presence of corroded iron in or adjacent to fiber
Particulates: Dust and other soil particles that accumulate on and within fibers
Shattered: Description for chemically treated silk that exhibits losses
Soot: General term for a dark and oily deposit caused by air pollution or fire
Stain: Spilled or discolored spot
Stiffness: Loss of flexibility and suppleness of fibers causing a resistance to bending
Undirectional: Failure and loss of warp or weft, leaving behind more of one element than the other
Weak seam: Looseness in the attachment of two adjoining pieces of fabric
PARTICULATES

Dust and other soil particles that accumulate on and within fibers
SOOT

General term for dark and oily deposit caused by air pollution or fire
MOLD/MILDEW

Microbial activity, often seen as stains or surface growth, exacerbated by humidity
ACCRETION

Deposit of extraneous material on the surface, such as mud or fly speck
STAIN
Soiled or dirty spot

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DISCOLORATION

General change in the color of an area from the prevailing tone
FADING

Discoloration seen as change in color, often caused by light exposure
CROCKING

Rubbing off of color resulting in loss of dyestuff but not loss of fiber
OXIDATION

Chemical alteration caused by the presence of corroded iron in or adjacent to fiber. 

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DETERIORATION

A general term for a weakened state caused by age, use, or environmental conditions
STIFFNESS

Loss of flexibility and suppleness of fibers causing a resistance to bending

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EMBRITTLEMENT

Decline in the pliability and suppleness to the degree that damage may be imminent
SHATTERED

Description for chemically treated silk that exhibits losses

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FOLD

Pleat resulting from on part doubled or laid over another
CREASE

Tightly pressed fold often causing threads to weaken and break
LOSS

General term for an area missing fibers
ABRASION

Wearing away of the surface from scraping, rubbing, grinding, or friction
CUT/TEAR

Clean break in the fabric

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HOLE

Area of missing fibers from both the warp and the weft
FRAYING

Reveled or worn spot indicated by the separation of threads, often found on edges.
UNIDIRECTIONAL LOSS

Failure and loss of warp or left, leaving behind more of one element than the other
WEAK SEAM

Looseness in the attachment of two adjoining pieces of fabric
INSECT DAMAGE

Holes, surface loss (grazing), or deposits (frass, silky fiber) caused by insects
Museum Textile Services: New Beginnings

Your family christening gown. The signature quilt of your Civil War. A flag carried into battle. Each of these textiles tells a story about our personal and collective past. And each story brings meaning to our present.

Founded in 1999, Museum Textile Services is one of just a handful of independent conservation studios that specialize in preserving textiles that are under the care of private individuals, cultural heritage institutions, and government agencies.

Museum Textile Services is a trusted resource for education and information on the conservation, storage, exhibition, and care of textiles of personal and cultural significance.

Project Updates

Issue 4 of the MTS e-Magazine is out! Read about our favorite projects and upcoming endeavors.

Would you like to have our next e-Magazine delivered right to your inbox? Subscribe today and we'll keep you in the loop!
Resources for Museums

**Building T-Bar Supports.** Because it provides only a narrow line of support across the shoulders, a T-bar must be modified to prevent stress to the costume. Make sure that the T-bar is tall enough to keep the costume from touching the floor.

**Choosing Storage Materials.** A wide array of textile storage materials is available online and in catalogs from your favorite archival supply companies. Knowing which wrapping or box is best can be daunting given the plethora of choices available today. This handout will help steer you toward the proper materials, which in turn will help you find the best value for your money.

**Clothing and Textile Storage Guidelines.** Museum Textile Services helps museums large and small assess and upgrade their historic clothing and textile storage areas. These guidelines are equally helpful for individuals concerned with the best way to protect their collections within the home. Regardless of budget or size, all storage areas must be clean, cool, dry, dark, and as free as possible from drastic changes in temperature and humidity, thus ruling out the basement or attic.

**Conservation Netting.** Conservation netting is done to temporarily stabilize areas of weakness, to secure damage with a minimum of intervention, and to prolong the display and/or study life of a textile.

**Conservation Stitching Guide.** An in-depth explanation of the four most common stitches used for textile stabilization, including ideal length, use, and variations.

**Customizing Mannequins.** Historic garments require proper support to ensure safe display. They are often small, have a complex profile that was created with the aid of foundation garments, and are fragile even when they appear to be in excellent condition. Here are some tips on how to customize a commercial mannequin or dress form for museum display.

**Displaying Textiles.** These guidelines are designed to help you choose the best locations and methods for displaying your textiles. These recommendations are meant only for textiles in stable condition with proper mounting, framing, or support. Continuing to display a textile under poor display conditions will accelerate deterioration and shorten the textile's useful and/or decorative lifetime. In the event you suspect pest damage, please consult a pest control professional.
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Condition Report

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accession #</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Date range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MTSE# 1043</td>
<td>Feather pillow with crazy quilt cover</td>
<td>1880-1900</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Collection
Donor
MTS Study Collection
Jean Myers, grandmother of Camille Myers Breeze

Location
Quilt Box 2

Materials:
Silk, silk velvet, silk embroidery floss, cotton, cotton-silk blend, feather pillow with cotton fabric over cotton ticking

Dimensions in inches:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Height</th>
<th>Width</th>
<th>Length</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>11 1/4</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Condition (1-4, 1 being Poor and 4 being Very Good):

Overall | Soil | Stains | Losses | Fading |
---------|------|--------|--------|--------|
1        | 2    | 3 Pillow: 1 | 1      | 3      |

Check all that apply:
- Evidence of Insect Infestation
- Mold/ Mildew
- Previous Repairs
- Unstable Dyes
- Label

Condition details:
Shattered silk is present on one of the patches, and unidirectional loss can be found in several places. There are failing seams on the cover and as well as on the inner pillow. Creasing is present on one of the patches, and there are several areas of loss due to abrasion. Other damage includes frayed patch edges, and holes of various sizes throughout. Staining is visible on the inner pillowcase. There is evidence of past insect activity, including accretion and holes. There is also another accretion of unknown origin on the lower layer of the cover.

Photographs:

Overall recto

Overall verso
Textile Condition Terms

- Insect damage
- Fraying
- Unidirectional loss
- Crease
- Weak (open) seam
- Abrasion
- Loss of chain stitching