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Universität für angewandte Kunst Wien
University of Applied Arts Vienna

SUPPORTING AND MOUNTING OF TEXTILES FOR DISPLAY

2-DIMENSIONAL OBJECTS

MA Tanja Kimmel

Textile-Workshop, Bogd Khan Palace Museum, Feb. 24-28, 2014

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- Introduction
- Display issues
- Display techniques (flat/slanted mounts, pressure-mounted, vertical free hanging, draping)
- Installation/Deinstallation methods
- Examples of displayed textiles

DAMAGE FACTORS:

- Light (visible and ultraviolet)
- Temperature and Humidity
- Pollution
- Pests
- Mold
- Abrasion

Textile objects are among the most sensitive in museum collections.

They are affected by light, require controlled relative humidity and temperature, and are susceptible to damage from dirt, mold, insects, pollutants and abrasion.

A textile's rate of deterioration slows significantly with proper preventive care.

The role of preventive conservation is to avoid, block or minimize the agents of deterioration.

This practice will decrease the need for costly and time-consuming conservation treatments.

Mounting objects so that they can be displayed safely is an important part of preventative conservation.

Textiles do not support themselves; they are constantly flexing and folding. Flexing and folding of any fiber, whether wool, cotton or linen, will result in breakage at some point.

Breaks of this type are most evident along sharp knife-edge creases where the textiles separates with a clean fracture.

Abrasions, a type of wear commonly found in the knees of pants, will also result in an area of loss.

Repetitive handling will further weaken fragile abraded areas.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DISPLAY:

- Avoid, block or minimize agents of deterioration
- Standardize size and color of mounts
- Place textiles in cases
- Maintain regular surface-cleaning of textiles on open display
- Avoid placing textiles close to heating or cooling vents

When displaying textiles, standardize the size and color of the mounts. In this way, mounts can be reused within cases, saving dollars and time on future mount preparation.

If possible, always place textiles in cases.

If cases are not available, and items need to be in the open, maintain a weekly surface-cleaning schedule.

Try not to place items directly under or near heating or cooling vents, which may generate dust.

COMMONLY USED MOUNTS/SUPPORTS:

- Flat mounts
- Slanted mounts
- Pressure-mounted
- Vertical free hanging
- Draping

There are a variety of appropriate ways to display textiles.

DEPENDING ON:

- Condition (well preserved/fragile)
- Fabrication (material, techniques)
- Size (small/large)

The manner in which textiles are displayed is determined by the condition of a textile as well as the materials and techniques used in its fabrication.

Carefully assess the condition of an object before deciding upon a display technique!

Use the least interventive method of installing textiles in exhibition wherever possible.

Use minimal stitching, or avoid stitching if possible.

Pinning is sometimes an option. Use only rustproof entomological pins to secure textiles to support.

flat mounts



One example is a flat, rigid support cut larger than the textile and covered with a padding layer and a pre-washed display fabric.

The textile is hand stitched to the support at regular intervals to spread the weight of the textile evenly over the entire surface area.

slanted mounts



Slanted boards or mounts are frequently used for the display of many different types of textiles.

For example, beaded garments or fragile blankets too heavy to hang can be placed on slanted mounts.

This method of presentation allows you to place an item out for viewing without securing it to the board with tacks or staples or by sewing.

The slanted mount is a board that rests on an incline at no more than 35 degrees.

Slanted mounts can easily be made with acid-free double-walled corrugated board.

Place thermal-bonded polyester padding on top of the board and wrap a show cover of the de-sized washed cotton fabric over it.

This creates a soft supportive platform for an item to rest on.

The show cover fabric can be neatly secured to the back of the board with 3M# double-coated transparent tape or white glue. Another option is to fold the material in half and sew up the side with stitching.

Large slanted mount boards will need to be sturdy and may require the extra support of a wooden stretcher frame.

Using a wooden stretcher frame will also enable you to secure the fabric show cover to the reverse of the board with staples.

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slanted mounts

pressure mounts

Fragile textiles are often pressure mounted, which involves positioning a textile on a solid cushioned support without any stitches and holding it in place with light pressure from a Plexiglas sheet or box.

This type of sealed mounting, allows for complete reversibility and environmental control.

In addition, pressure-mounted textiles can be hung vertically.

partially displayed

Large textiles and those in varying states of preservation can be partially displayed.

For example, one end is displayed in the exhibition on a slanted mount after consolidation to a support fabric, while the rest remains rolled on a suspended tube.

hanging display



Vertical free hanging is a method that can be used to display large flat textiles, like rugs and quilts, that are sound enough to support their own weight.

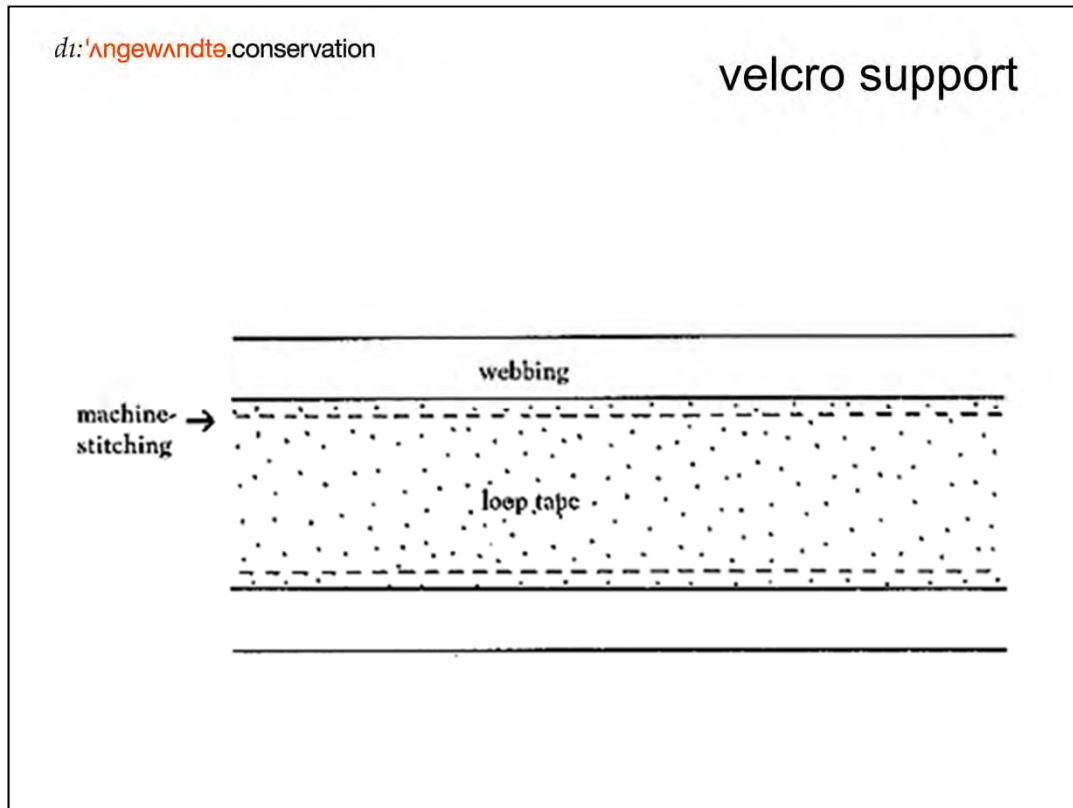
The ideal hanging system for textiles is a Velcro support.

Because the weight is distributed evenly across the width of the textile, it can bear the weight of heavy textiles.

Distortions can be reduced and it is simple to install.

Note that only items with strong weave structures that will not pull or stretch out of shape during hanging may be displayed in this manner.

If the item is woven loosely, has supported areas of loss, or heavy embellishments like beading, then a slanted mount may be more appropriate.



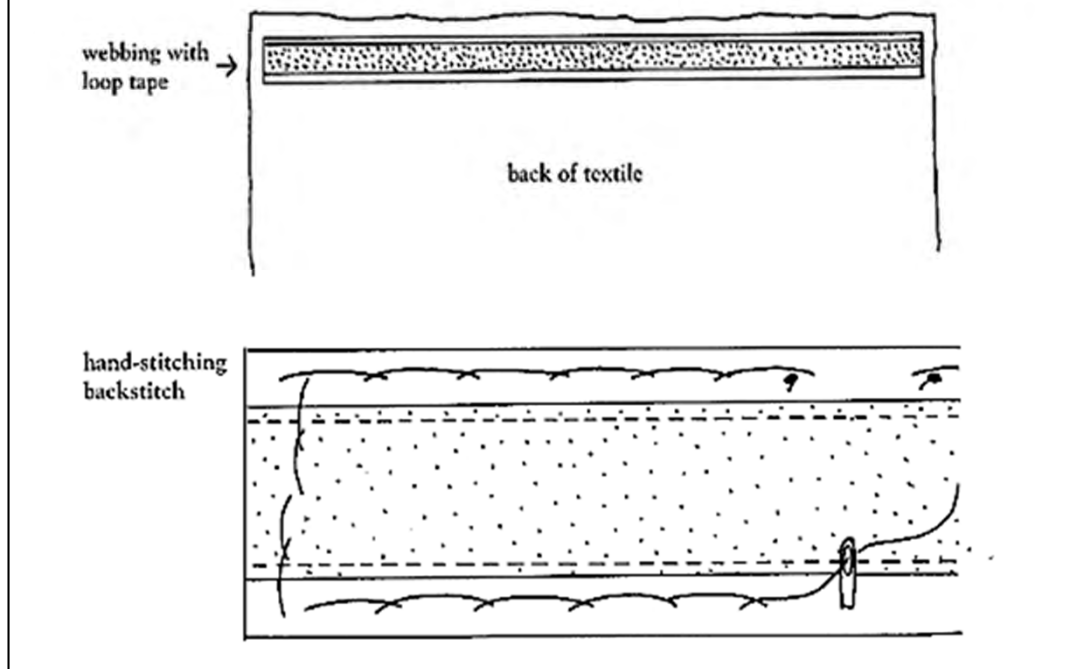
To make a velcro strip heading band, machine stitch a 2-inch wide strip of loop Velcro to a strip of cotton canvas 3 inches wide.

The strip should extend the entire length of the piece to which it will be sewn, without any breaks.

Position the Velcro approximately $\frac{3}{8}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch from the top of the cotton canvas.

Machine stitch the Velcro to the canvas on the top, and herringbone stitch the bottom as well as down the middle.

velcro support



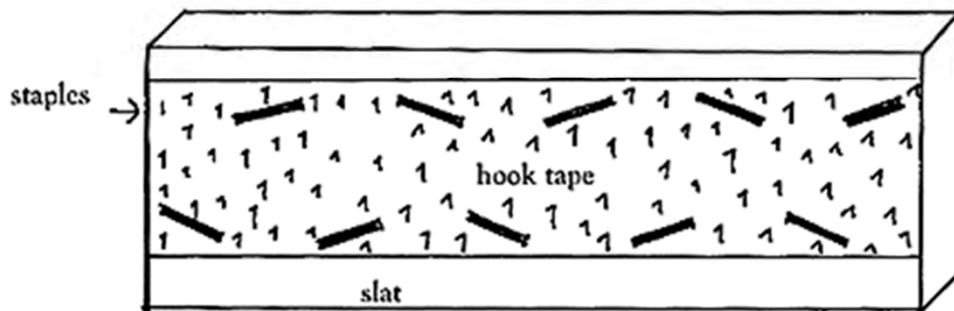
Next, position the prepared Velcro along the top edge of the textile and pin it in place.

Hand-stitch the canvas to the textile with herringbone stitching.

Take care to match the thread with the item so that the stitching will not show on the front of the textile.

Place half of the herringbone stitching within the edge of the Velcro. This will help to support the item by joining it and the Velcro closely to one and another.

velcro support



Finally, staple the matching strip of hook Velcro to a sealed wooden slat.

The wooden slat can be sealed with a waterborne polyurethane that has been allowed to dry for four weeks.

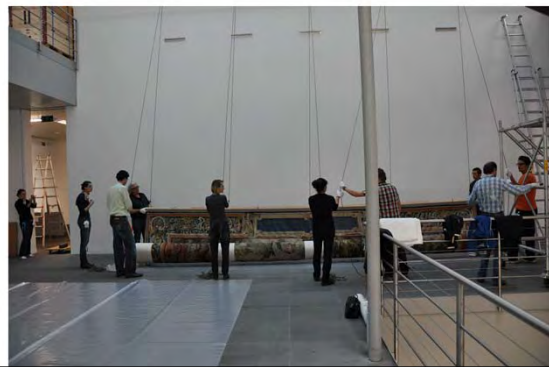
Once you secure the slat to the wall, roll up the prepared item with the loop Velcro edge exposed.

Position the textile, and gently push the Velcro loop strip against the slat-mounted Velcro hook strip to create a secure bond.

You can adjust the Velcro strip up and down to improve the flat hanging of the textile.



installation methods for tapestries



In order to hang an oversized tapestry you have to roll the object onto an acid-free paper roll and then pull up one end using the velcro support.

The hook velcro is pulled up using stable hooks and block and tackle, taking off the object from the roll.

Always taking care of pulling evenly.



installation methods for tapestries



Another method of mounting an oversize tapestry is to roll it onto a paper roll from left to right.

In this case there has to be a pre-mounted backside, having a pre-attached hook velcro. This method means less tension on the fabric.

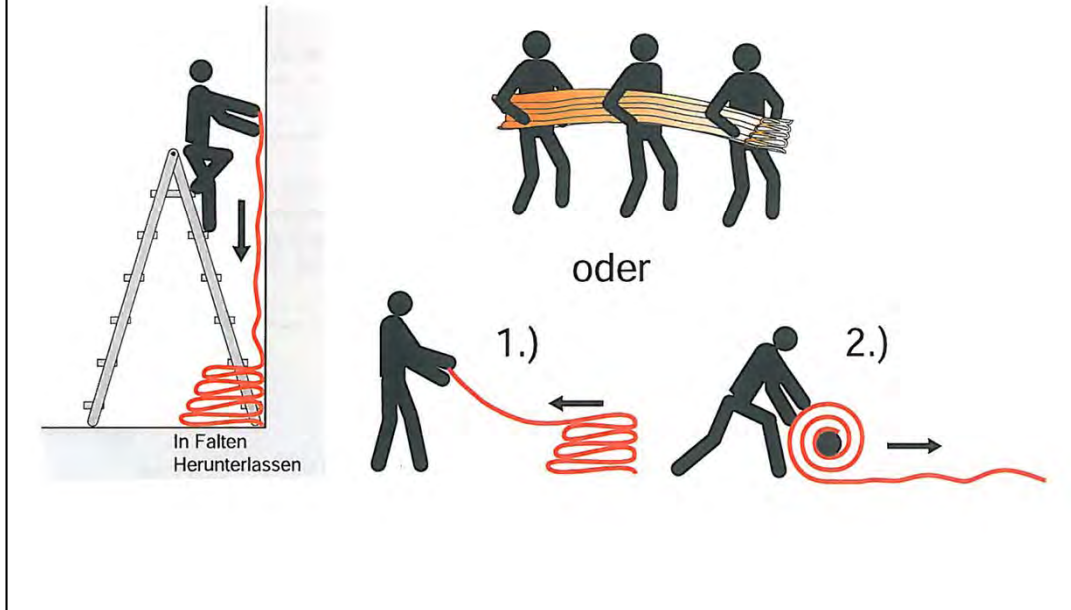
The tapestry is rolled onto the roll again, the roll has to be equipped with wheels on one end.

Then the roll is lifted from the right end, being kept next to the displaying wall.

Suitable scaffolding has to be at hand for at least one person to guarantee stable mounting.

The person up on the scaffolding attaches the loop velcro to the fixed hook velcro.

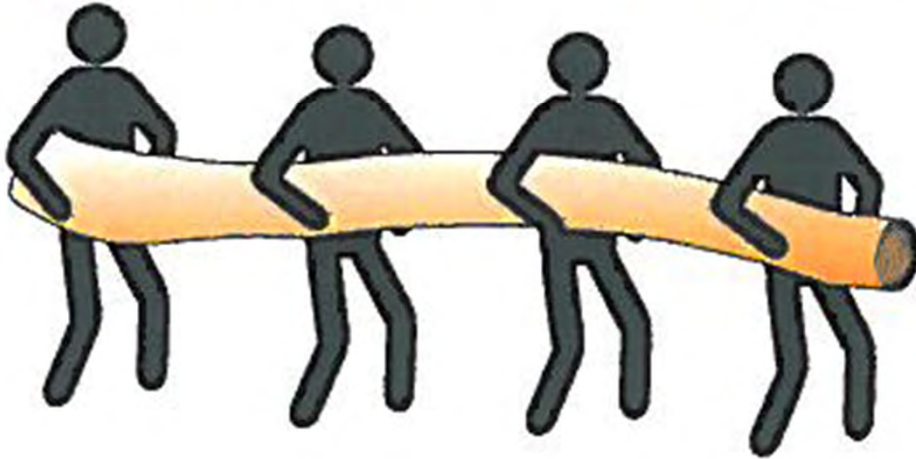
deinstallation methods



A tapestry can be taken off the wall either by using the same methods as shown above or by gently folding it on the floor.

It can either be carried away immediately or spread on the floor and rolled onto a paper roll for further use depending on the object's size.

pro 2m² eine Person!

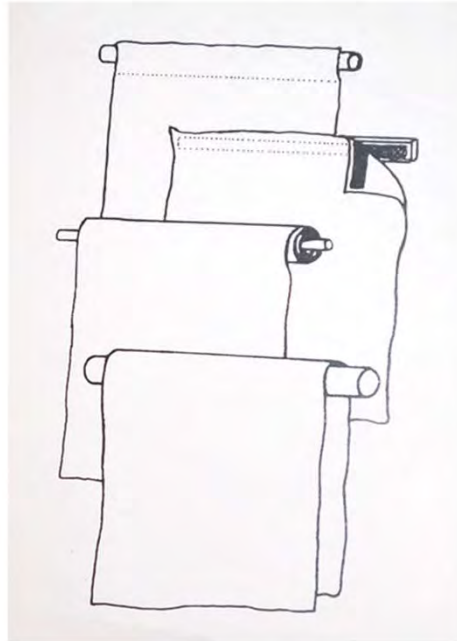
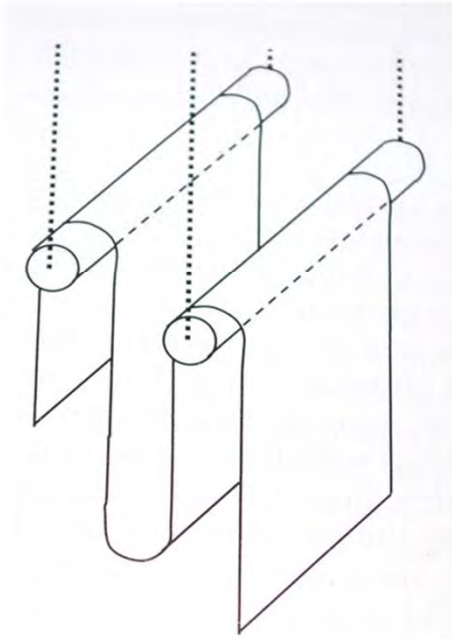


Be careful to always employ enough people!





draping textiles

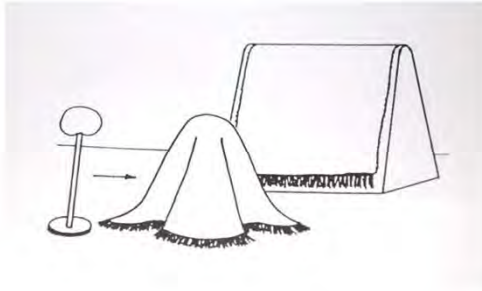


Textiles can also be displayed by draping them over one or more dowels if they are strong enough to support their own weight.

If wood is chosen for the dowels, seal the dowels before use with several coats of acrylic latex paint to prevent direct contact with the object.

Dowels made of stainless or galvanised steel should be wrapped with acid-free tissue, cotton or Mylar.

draping textiles



Visible mounts



Invisible mounts

There are hundreds of individually crafted mounts for the installation of textiles that by design are intended to be visible or as invisible as possible.

To ensure that their individually crafted mounts would hold artwork securely at the desired viewing angles, conservators, curators and exhibition designers have to work together.

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- Introduction
- Storage issues
- Storage techniques (flat, boxed, rolled, hanging)
- Materials used
- Storage systems

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STORAGE:

- Only store clean and dry objects
- Store in a cool, dark and dry location
- With good air circulation
- Provide stable heat and humidity
- No basements or attics!

Be sure your textiles are clean and dry before you store them in a cool and dry location with good ventilation.

Store in a dark place where there is stable heat and humidity.

No basements or attics, please!

COMMONLY USED MOUNTS/SUPPORTS:

- Flat
- Boxed
- Rolled
- Hanging



Storing textiles with mounts and supports is necessary for their preservation because textiles do not support themselves.

The goal of all mounts and supports is to prevent any further distortion or physical damage.

Flat, boxed, hanging and rolled mounts and supports are commonly used to store textiles.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FLAT STORAGE:

- Line box or shelf with unbleached cotton
- Avoid folding
- Pad creases with acid-free tissue paper
- Avoid stacking
- Put heaviest items at bottom
- Use layers of acid-free paper in between

Flat storage is recommended for most textiles because it provides support for the entire textile.

An acid-free or polyethylene box with a lid, a sealed shelf or drawer can be used for flat storage.

Line the box or shelf with unbleached muslin.

Ideally, the textile should not be folded.

But if that is unavoidable, pad the creases with acid-free tissue paper.

It is best not to stack several textiles on top of each other.

If textiles must be layered, use acid-free paper in between, with the heaviest items at the bottom.

A flat mount acts like a supportive inflexible tray for an item on display or in storage.

Flat mounts serve two purposes: to support a textile when it is in storage,

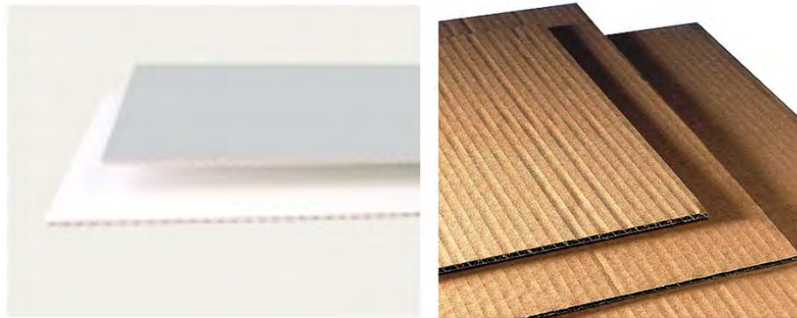
and to provide support to facilitate moving an item without undue flexing and handling.

Textiles can be stored on this type of mount if when lying flat, they are not distorted.

Flat mounts are commonly stored within a box or drawer or on a shelf covered with unbuffered acid-free tissue or a muslin fabric.

MATERIALS USED FOR FLAT STORAGE:

- Acid-free corrugated board
- Coroplast (PP/PE corrugated board)
- Regular corrugated cardboard with barrier



Use acid-free corrugated board for flat mounts.

If an item is heavy, it may be necessary to use a thicker board that will not flex.

Another material for support is Coroplast, a polypropylene and polyethylene corrugated board.

Coroplast is used by sign makers and be available locally.

However, if acid free board or Coroplast is not available, then corrugated cardboard with a barrier of Marvelseal or polyester film is another option.

mounting textiles



Suitable fabrics for this are washed and undyed cotton muslin or washed white cotton flanel.

Do not use fabric softeners or bleach when washing fabric for use next to an item, and try to use as little soap as possible so that no residue will be left on the fabric.

You can secure this fabric on the board with small tabs of 3M#415 double-sided tape laid near the perimeter of the board.

Finally, when planing the size of a flat mount, be sure to leave room for a handling edge around all four sides of the board.

You need to allow easy access without touching the textile.

storage systems



Static shelves



Mobile shelves

When placing smaller textiles on a flat mount, keep in mind the following:

The opening and closing of drawers will cause smaller textiles to slide and shift.

This is especially problematic if you have several small items on one board.

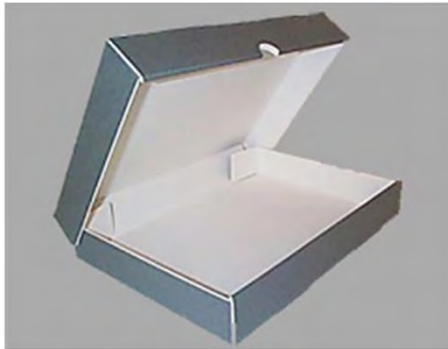
To prevent movement, secure smaller items with white cotton twill tape ties anchored through slits in the board.

Another option is to line the board with fabric that has enough surface texture to hold an item in place.

boxed storage

MATERIALS USED FOR BOXED STORAGE:

- Acid-free corrugated board boxes
- Corrugated board boxes lined with a barrier



A box with a lid is a good way to protect textiles on open shelves.

Stacking one or two boxes on top on one another will give you more shelf space.

Using acid-free materials for boxes is best.

However, if acid-free boxes are not available, line corrugated board boxes with a barrier material such as Marvelseal or polyester film.

Wrap items in unbuffered acid-free tissue before placing them in the lined acidic boxes.

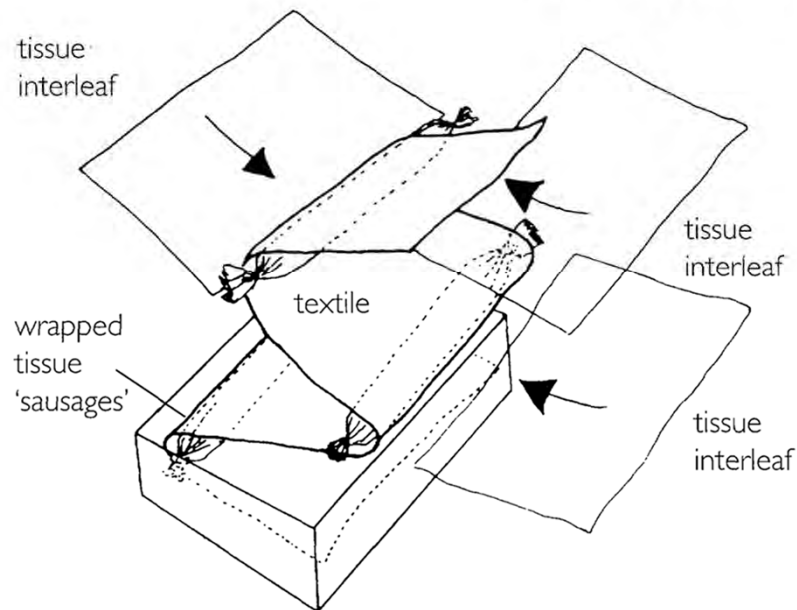


Custom-made trays

Smaller items can be safely stowed in custom-made trays of acid-free board to fit within the box, preventing shifting and crushing.

You can make these trays yourself or purchase them from conservation suppliers.

folding textiles



Larger textiles and garments can be folded to fit within a box, freeing valuable shelf space.

When folding items, keep the following procedures in mind:

Lay the textile out on a flat surface, and examine it for former fold lines.

If a flat textile, like a rug or blanket, has folded in quarters, fold it in thirds to prevent damage.

Line all folds with rolls of crumpled unbuffered acid-free tissue. Then fold the items over the rolls. Insert your hand into the folded textile to reposition the tissue rolls if necessary. Make these rolls of crumpled unbuffered acid-free tissue as described yesterday.

storage systems



Adjustable shelves

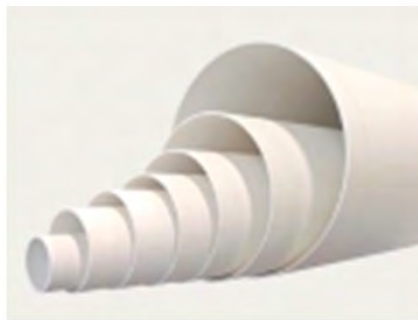


Electrical racks

rolled storage

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ROLLED STORAGE:

- Use strong tubes
- With adequate diameter
- Ensure tube is longer than textile



Rolling a flat textile around a strong tube is a good way to store a large item without creating fold lines.

Rolled storage is good for large flat textiles like shawls, rugs and blankets.

Do not roll items that are heavily decorated with embellishments such as beads or shells.

Rolling these items will create creases and distortion of the textile as well as place stress on the threading used to secure these embellishments to the textile.

Instead, fold heavily decorated items with supported rolls of crumpled acid-free tissue.

When rolling a large textile, try to use a tube with at least a 6-inch diameter.

Also, make sure that the tube is longer than the textile.

Allowing the textile to hang over the edge of the tube once it is rolled will promote distortion, ripping, and areas of loss.

MATERIALS USED FOR ROLLED STORAGE:

- Acid-free cardboard tubes
- Sono tubes or
- Regular cardboard tubes



Acid-free cardboard tubes are available at archival supply shops.

If you do not have access to acid-free tubes, you can also substitute a regular Sono tube, the kind of tube used on cement footings.

Smaller items can be stored on thinner cardboard tubes like those used in fabric stores.

Sometimes these tubes are available free from fabric and carpet stores.

COVERED BY A BARRIER WITH:

- Marvelseal (aluminised PE and Nylon film)
- Plastic sheeting (polyester, polyethylene)
- Tyvek (soft PE fleece material)
- Heavy acid-free tissue

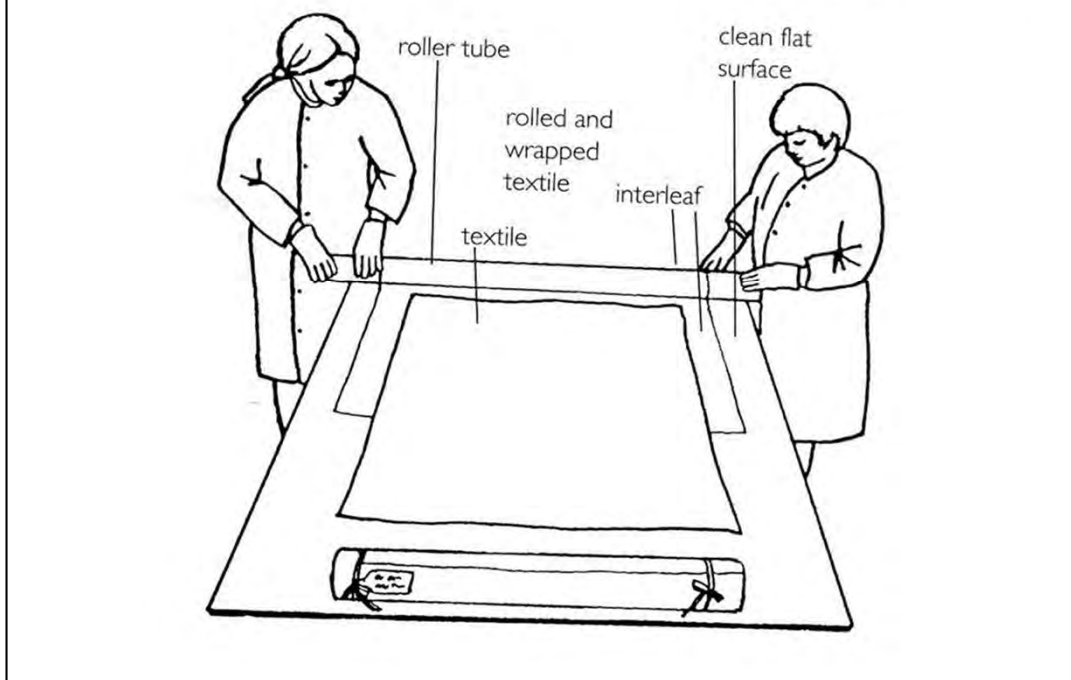


But keep in mind that Sono tubes or regular cardboard tubes only can be used if covered by a barrier with

- Marvelseal
- plastic sheeting
- Tyvek or
- heavy acid-free tissue.

This is especially important with Sono tubes because of their oily surface.

rolling textiles



Once the tube is prepared, leave a small length of the cover paper or muslin unrolled.

Next, place the textile face up on a flat, clean support.

Align the edge so that the textile is centered and square with the tube, smooth out bulges or creases.

Place the tube parallel to either the warp or the weft threads.

Slowly roll the tube evenly so that neither side telescopes out.

If telescoping occurs, take the time to adjust the tube and start over.

Interleave rolled textiles with acid-free tissue paper or pre-washed cotton sheetings.

After rolling, cover the textile with washed muslin or acid-free paper and loosely secure with twill tapes.

rolling textiles



Right side inwards



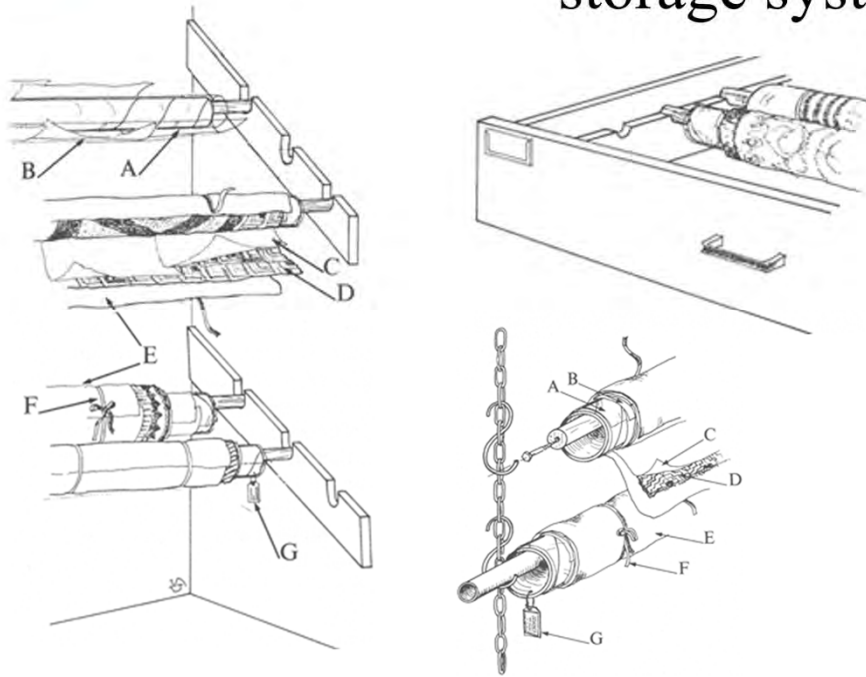
Right side outwards

Roll pieces with a raised texture such as pile carpets, velvets or embroideries with the right side outwards.

For velvet and other fabrics with a pile, roll in the direction of the pile.

If there are fringes, cut acid-free tissue the width of the fringe and fold in half over the fringe.

storage systems



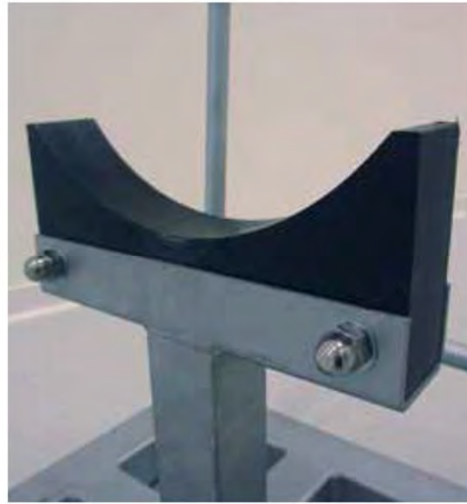
The roll should not support its own weight.

Rather, provide support for the ends of the roll by using a hanging system or polyethylene foam blocks with corresponding carved recesses.

hanging systems



carved recesses



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THANK YOU FOR LISTENING!

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