



BALBOA ART CONSERVATION CENTER

Water Emergency Salvage Tips: Textiles




The Basics of Salvage

- Bring in fans to circulate air in the space (don't point them directly at collections). This can help reduce the chances of mold growth even if no collections are wet.
- Take photos of any collections that got wet or were otherwise impacted. This can help with insurance.
- Assess which collections are wet or damp and separate them from unaffected collections. Note that damp collections may appear dry but will be cool to the touch!
- Remove collections from wet storage materials. Do not pull wet collections out of boxes, frames, or sleeves but rather disassemble the housing to remove it from the object.
- Support any wet collections that you need to move - they will be especially fragile if wet.
- If a large number of items are very wet, consider freeze drying them. This is often a cost-effective option considering the staff time and space needed for air drying and reduces the need for conservation treatment in the future. It can also buy time, as mold growth can begin 48 hours after the water incident.

CONTACT US

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Textiles

- Lift textiles using screens or other rigid supports to prevent distortions or tears.
- Pat textiles dry using sponges or towels. Do not wring them out. This could permanently distort the fabric.
- Place textiles between towels or cotton sheets to dry. This will speed drying and prevent dye bleed from one textile to another.
- Heavily soiled textiles can be rinsed in cool water before drying.
- Avoid drying textiles in direct sunlight, which can cause fading.

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