



HANDLING GUIDELINES FOR PHOTOGRAPHIC MATERIALS

› 1 OF 2

Basic handling techniques should be taught to all institutional personnel, including housekeeping staff and photographers, but only trained personnel should be entrusted with handling and moving art objects.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

- When possible, use facsimiles instead of originals.
- Remove hand, arm, and neck jewellery before handling or moving artwork.
- Use nitrile gloves when handling photographs to protect emulsion.
Wear the correct glove size; do not wear gloves that are too large, because slippage can occur. Clean or discard gloves frequently to avoid transferring oils and dirt.
- Handle objects only when necessary and as little as possible.
Avoid touching the image surface directly.
- Prior to handling an object, examine it for damage or insecurities. Look for loose or detachable parts, tears, and old repairs such as case hinges.
- Conduct examinations and handling in a clean and well-lit area.
- Beware and anticipate problems for vulnerable areas of the photo, such as hand-colouring, that are inherently fragile and susceptible to damage.
- Carry all objects in or on an auxiliary support such as Coroplast™, mat board or other rigid secondary support such as a solander box.
- Attempt to handle objects without bending or folding. It is best not to remove photographs from their housing enclosures or mats.
- To turn a large format photo around, place it between two larger stiff sheets, then turn all sheets as an entire package.
- Plan relocation of the object in advance. Measure doorways and the radius of door swing space. Prepare the final destination beforehand with clean paper or blotter.
- Move slowly. Allow sufficient time for each task when handling, measuring, and moving photographs.
- Carry framed artwork face toward you. Protect frames when leaning vertically or when placing face down by supporting them with soft padded bumpers.
- Carry only one photograph at a time. Small prints may be carried as a group if they are of the same size and not too heavy.
- Consider designating a 'spotter' (someone to watch large or heavy objects being moved in tight or problematic areas).
- Use only pencils for note taking.

UNFRAMED PRINTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS

- Protect objects from light and dust. Use opaque cover sheets when objects are not being viewed.
- Always carry objects in boxes or on a rigid support such as museum board. Never pick up or carry artwork with one hand as this may cause handling creases. Anticipate weakened structure of an object.
- Keep material flat on the table. Provide adequate work space for viewing objects, allowing extra space to open mats and folders, and allowing space to properly stack material after viewing.

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HANDLING GUIDELINES FOR PHOTOGRAPHIC MATERIALS

› 2 OF 2

- Protect image surface
 - Use gloves when handling photographs and negatives that are not protected by sleeves, mats, or mounts with borders.
 - Do not touch the image surface.
 - Do not write on the image side. If necessary, write only with a soft lead pencil on the verso.
 - Keep objects away that could harm the photo.
 - Do not rest objects that may cause damage on top of materials.
 - Do not use rubber bands, staples, paper clips, Post-It notes or tapes on the photo.
 - Keep stacks of original material low.
 - Do not stack material of different sizes and weights.
- Use carts or carrying portfolios to transport material through a series of closed doors. Using a cart keeps material in a stable position while you use hands to open doors.
- Never stack unframed photographs within or on top of each other without a clean, flat separating layer, such as clean mat board.
 - Stack all artwork face up.
- Avoid placing lightweight and heavy weight photographs in the same folder or box without stiff interleaving or mat board separators.
- Never stack works with easily smudged media such as pastel or chalk as in the case of hand-coloured photographs. Store these separately in boxes or in deep mats in the top drawer or box.

NEGATIVES AND SLIDES

- Handle the slides at edges or mounts. Fingerprints can introduce oils that may stain the image or promote fungal growth.
- Work over a table when viewing negatives to prevent dropping on the floor.
- File negatives in sleeves or four-flaps with emulsion sides facing away from seamed sides of the sleeves.
- Remove negatives from their sleeves before writing or stamping on the sleeves.
- Store glass negatives upright, resting on the longest side to evenly disperse their weight.
- For damaged glass negatives, damage indication should be written on the outside of the sleeve and a stiff mat board should be used to support the negative.

IN CASE OF AN ACCIDENT

- Notify appropriate personnel.
- Do not package the damaged object, leave it where the accident happened.
- Wrap broken or detached parts of an object individually between clean, stiff paper as quickly as possible to avoid further abrasion of edges and in order to keep fragments as clean as possible. Do NOT touch torn or broken edges. Keep detached pieces with the artwork in an envelope.
- Consult with a conservator to determine safe practices.

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