Why condition report?

- Record the state of an object prior to or after exhibition or loan
- Help staff determine the stability of an object
- Show condition of an object over time to determine the rate of deterioration
- Set priorities for conservation and treatment
- Inform object handlers of seen and unseen problems
Tools

- soft lead pencils
- condition report examination forms
- camera
- cloth tape measure/calipers/ruler
- gloves (cotton/nitrile/latex)
- raking light source
- miscellaneous items (handling and stabilization tools, magnifier, etc.)
Condition report should include:

- Identifying numbers
- Brief object name and description
- Object composition and materials (brief)
- Types, extent, and locations of damage
- Previous repairs
- Examiner’s name and date of examination
Types of Damage

• What is the nature of the damage?
• Describe damage in terms of texture, color, shape, odor, and other physical properties
• Use a glossary to assign descriptive terms specific to the type of object
• Indicate speculative assessments with a question mark and terms like “possibly” and “probably”
Locations of Damage

- 3D objects: distinguish between object vs. viewer perspective
- Object zones (i.e. jacket of a costume, a single figure within a painting, rim of a bowl, decorative area of a vase)
- Direction (horizontal, vertical, diagonal, etc.)
- Object side (obverse/reverse, interior/exterior, proper left/proper right, verso/recto, etc.)
- Range (scattered, overall, etc.)
- Indicate position of damage in standardized inches or cm

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2D works and works on paper
Extent of Damage

• Document from general to specific
  • Example: “Object yellowed overall, especially in BR corner”

• Degrees of severity (negligible, slight, moderate, marked, extreme, etc.)

• Include both written description of damage and indicate area(s) of damage on photograph or drawing
Resources


Rebecca Buck and Jean Gilmore, editors, Museum Registration Methods, 5th Edition, 2014. (Chapter 5D)

Southeastern Registrars Association, Basic Condition Reporting: A Handbook, 2015. (Chapter 1)