


Chapter 58

MAVRS and MHR: preventive conservation of the collection

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ABSTRACT

This work proposes to highlight the process of cleaning the collections carried out at the Ruth Schneider Museum of Visual Arts and at the Regional Historical Museum. The activity of cleaning the collection, consequently, preventive conservation, included in the project and considered as one of the fundamental principles of museum institutions, is practiced based on special care with institutional collections, seeking to extend the useful life of the objects present in the collection.

Keywords: museum, collection, sanitation, preventive conservation.

1 INTRODUCTION

The work team of the Ruth Schneider Visual Arts Museum (MAVRS-UPF) and the Regional Historical Museum (MHR-PF), during 2021 and the first half of 2022/1, cleaned the collections belonging to the museums, together they total more than 15,000 pieces (antique objects, photographs, engravings, sculptures, paintings, etc...).

During the period of preparation for cleaning the collection, a course on preventive conservation of collections was previously held, provided by the Brazilian Institute of Museums (IBRAM).

During the process of sanitizing the collections belonging to the museums - which took more than 20 days to complete, a team of one employee and five interns was needed, divided into two shifts, for greater agility in the process.

It is important to point out that, in order to clean the collection, it is necessary to have prior knowledge about the materials that make up the objects in the collection, organic and inorganic materials, such as stones, metals, wood, ceramics, etc., as each material needs specific care.

In this sense, preventive conservation of museum collections becomes a set of techniques aimed at neutralizing the biological agents that cause deterioration and the loss of artistic, historical and cultural value of museum assets. According to Moreira:

“ensure the preservation of a collection or a particular object, increasing its life expectancy. This is possible through a non-direct intervention on the asset or set of cultural assets, managing to reduce or eliminate the factors responsible for its degradation and that put its physical, chemical, formal and aesthetic stability at risk”. (MOREIRA, 2011).

With the museums team divided into shifts, each participant used the individual use equipment, PPE, necessary to carry out the activity ¹. The process started from the first “Estante Deslizante²” handling item by item and cleaning the objects, respecting the order already arranged on the modular stands, using the appropriate tools available for the process: brush, brush and swab, vacuum cleaner, antistatic flannel and blowing brush.

Several agents of degradation were detected in the objects, such as dust, mold, termites, moths, along with interference from the environment itself, such as relative humidity, which favored the development of these agents mentioned above. Although there is daily monitoring, together with appropriate storage, the proliferation of biological agents may still occur due to the material used to make the object. Dirt is the deterioration agent that most affects collections. Dirt is not innocuous and, when combined with inadequate environmental conditions, causes reactions of destruction of all supports in a collection. Therefore, cleaning collections should be a routine habit. (CASSARES, 2000.)

Regarding the maps ³ equipment whose purpose is to store the engravings present in the collection. As this is a paper collection, the storage area must be very clean and with temperature and humidity controls, preventing the accumulation of dirt and moisture that favor the development of microorganisms that cause the degradation of collections. Therefore, greater attention is required and the making of a PH Neutral paper package, for its packaging, as well as handling, needs to be more careful not to cause damage to the fiber.

Preserving collections contributes significantly to increasing the longevity of pieces, preventing their deterioration, which ensures access to information on objects present in the institutional collection.

In this sense, conservation is an action that aims to slow down the process of degradation of documents or objects, through environmental control and specific treatments, cleaning, repairs and proper packaging.

With the end of the cleaning process, the lessons from the course could be put into practice, as well as observing the interferences of the object itself before and after cleaning and really realizing the importance of this process in the day-to-day work in the museum space.

All these actions encompass the preventive conservation of the collections, which aims to prolong the useful life of the objects present in the collection, as well as, widely disseminated and adopted in various

¹ It is every individual use device used by the professional, intended to protect against risks that may threaten safety and health at work. Such as: gloves, lab coats, protective glasses, cap, etc.

² These are modular shelves that allow for greater use of useful space in relation to the use of fixed shelves, since they are mounted on rails, allowing them to move.

³Equipment suitable for storing medium to large format collections on paper, textile objects, feather art or other types of objects that, due to the fragility of the support, need to be stored on flat structures.

cultural segments, aware that, only through this preventive work, will the consolidation safeguarding the institutional acquis.

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