

## **EMERGENCY PLAN: NEW HALL ART COLLECTION**

**To be read in conjunction with Murray Edwards College's Business Continuity Plan, which provides full instructions in the case of an emergency.**

This plan is held in the College Administrator's Office, the shared Art Drive on the Murray Edwards College server and on the New Hall Art Collection website ([art.newhall.cam.ac.uk](http://art.newhall.cam.ac.uk)). The Curator, Chair of the Art Committee and the College Administrator are aware of the contents of this emergency plan.

The College Porters are the main points of contact in an emergency (01223 762100). There is a Porter on duty at all times. The Porters are also trained in First Aid and a first aid kit, including a defibrillator, is available at the Porters' Lodge.

### Contact Details

College Administrator: Sarah Greaves - 07702 558029

Chair, Art Committee: Martin Roland 07879 116901

Full emergency procedures are clearly displayed throughout College. The fire alarm is tested every Tuesday at 2pm.

No attempts will be made rescue any objects whilst leaving the building, either from display or storage areas. Salvage will only commence once instructed by a member of the emergency services.

### Conservation Contacts:

Hamilton Kerr Institute - 01223 832040

For artworks on loan to the Collection, the lender must be informed immediately of any damage to the work. No conservation work can be undertaken without the lender's consent.

Regular risk assessments are carried out.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY DURING SALVAGE**

### *Electricity*

- If there is water present, the electricity supply must be turned off by a qualified person only.
- Do not touch sources of electricity when standing in water.
- Backup lighting may need to be in place before salvage starts.
- The person in charge must assess the situation before salvage work starts.

### *Flood water*

- Flood water can contain sewage, chemicals and animal waste.
- Wear waterproof outerwear, including gloves and wellington boots.
- A face mask and goggles are advised. If mould is present then the face mask must be of a grade that filters mould spores.
- Do not let flood water come into contact with open wounds or grazes: if it does, obtain an anti-tetanus injection as soon as possible if you don't have an up to date one, or are unsure.
- Always scrub and disinfect hands before eating.
- Do not work in deep or fast flowing water.
- Be aware of concealed hazards such as broken glass or slippery silt underfoot.
- Be aware of the effects of cold water over time e.g. reduced dexterity and mobility; regular breaks may be needed.

## RISKS TO OBJECTS

### *Documentation during salvage:*

- Keeping track of objects as they move is very important.
- Labelling objects will help identify them.
- Digital photos can be taken to aid identification.
- Keep any detached labels with the objects (if possible). Paper labels can be tied to objects whilst they are in the treatment areas.

### *Tools for moving objects (all in Art Store unless specified)*

- Security screwdrivers
- Springlock security key
- Ryman security key for Gillian Ayres in Fellows' Drawing Room
- Latex/nitrile gloves should be worn at all times when handling objects
- Face masks for dealing with mould
- Scalpel/small scissors to remove objects that are tied onto mounts
- Trolleys for moving boxes/crates (at Porters' Lodge)
- Storage boxes/ crates for moving smaller objects - if there are not enough, objects will have to be unpacked at the treatment area and the boxes re-used.

### *Smoke damage*

- Ensure that a Conservator removes any soot as soon as possible as it is acidic.
- If objects are dry: send to the dry object treatment area.
- If damp / wet, send to the relevant treatment area.

### *Mould*

- Mould can grow in less than 48 hours, which is why objects should be air-dried or frozen (if suitable) within this time.
- It is not possible to identify a mould and whether it is harmful without laboratory testing, so it is safer to treat all mould as if it were harmful. The effects of breathing in mould spores over time are cumulative, and can lead to health problems in later life.
- Always take precautions when mould is present - wear nitrile / latex gloves when handling objects and wear a face-mask that is suitable for use with mould spores and particulates.
- Use cold air fans to increase ventilation
- Do not turn up the heat:
- Dry or freeze wet collections: this will not kill the mould but it will stop it growing until it can undergo conservation (not all objects can be frozen; ask the advice of the conservator).
- Do not use bleach or domestic products: these will cause additional damage and will not keep the mould from recurring.

### *Flood or Water Damage (including water damage arising from fire-fighting)*

- On discovering a flood/water leak, speak to the Porter on duty immediately.
- If water is dripping onto artworks: Assess the severity of the leak and protect the work with a large sheet of polythene or remove the artwork - you must have all the equipment and assistance needed before attempting this.
- Prepare treatment areas before objects are moved.
- Objects to be moved onto floor or table, both to be padded with blankets or foam, then covered in tissue if objects are dry OR blankets or foam and polythene if objects are damp/wet.

- Dry objects must be kept away from damp/wet objects. This needs to be assessed as objects are taken to treatment areas. Ideally there should be two areas: dry treatment area and damp/wet treatment area.
- Display cases should remain closed until you are ready to remove the objects.
- Wet/ damp organic materials (e.g. wood, leather, paper, textile) are at risk from mould growth. Objects should be air-dried within 48 hours to prevent mould growth. If there is a large volume of materials that cannot be dried within this time, undertake freezing (not suitable for all materials).
- Air drying can be undertaken with objects laid out over an area.
- Bread crates (stackable) can be used to lay objects in, as they allow air to circulate.
- Monitor the rate of drying, as drying too quickly can cause damage.
- Do not add heat due to increased risk of mould growth
- If objects are damp/ wet: contact the Conservator

#### *Insect infestation Actual or Suspected*

- Isolate the affected object(s) from the rest of the collection. This will prevent any potential infestation from spreading.
- Monitor the object to see if an infestation is present
- Smaller objects should be placed inside a polyethylene bag, with as much of the air squeezed out as possible and sealed with parcel tape. Label the bag with the object details (name and object number), the date of when it was placed in the bag and a sign saying 'Do not open- monitoring for insect infestation'.
- Larger objects (too large to be placed in a bag) should be placed on a large sheet of polyethylene and wrapped so that it is completely enclosed and sealed with parcel tape. Ensure that the edges of the polyethylene are folded over several times before they are securely taped. Try to remove as much air as possible from the package. Label the package with the object details (name and object number), the date of when it was placed in the package and a sign saying 'Do not open- monitoring for insect infestation'.
- Monitor the object. If there are signs of an active infestation, contact the conservator, who will be able to advise on treatment.

#### *Theft or Vandalism*

- Report the theft or vandalism to the Porter on duty, who will then inform the Curator or the College Administrator.
- In the case of a suspected theft, confirm with the Curator or the College Administrator that the work has not been moved or taken off display.
- If the object is on loan or does not belong to the museum, contact the lenders IMMEDIATELY to tell them of the situation.
- If appropriate, the Porter on Duty will inform the police. Provide any photographs of the object to aid identification; also provide dimensions and any other relevant information. Provide the Police with CCTV footage, if possible.
- The College Administrator will inform the insurers of the loss.
- If there is damage, e.g. through forced entry, make the building secure temporarily, until proper repairs can be undertaken.