

Basic Condition Reporting

Preparing condition reports for loans

All objects should be assessed for their suitability for loan in advance of any loan agreement. In some instances objects will require some remedial treatment or stabilisation before the loan is approved.

Once objects have been assessed and the relevant treatment has been completed staff should prepare detailed condition reports that record the current condition of the objects and that also note any existing damage, missing elements, previous repair or infestation. Ideally, these reports should consist of both a written report and checklist supported by a series of condition photographs marked up to show areas of particular concern.

These will form the primary document or 'health certificate' for the object throughout the loan period. It is especially important to provide full reports when the objects are part of a touring or extended loan when they might be away from their home museum for several months or even years. The condition reports will be checked at installation and de-installation at each venue to ensure the continued good health of the object.

Forms and photography

The layout of any condition report form should be simple and clear, containing basic information to identify the object (including object number, object description and materials), the lender and the loan exhibition. As well as a narrative condition report or checklist, the report should also include space for the lender and the borrower to sign the reports at each venue at installation and again at de-installation. There should also be a process for amending or adding to the condition report.

Condition reports should ideally be completed at point of origin by at least some of the staff who will act as couriers during the loan. This will enable them to become familiar with the objects and to be able to detect any changes in condition while on loan.

Ideally, these reports should consist of both written report supported by a series of condition photographs marked up to show areas of particular concern.

The photographs should show the object from all angles including the top and base.

Condition Reporting

Assessing the object

Examination of an object for condition reporting requires assessing an object in five different, but closely associated categories. They are:

Physical Integrity: The physical condition of the object good or bad. Including physical damage, alteration or deformation, sometimes resulting in loss of material, a broken area or changes in shape or form.

Surface Condition: The condition of the surface of the object good or bad. Including a visual or cosmetic alteration on the surface; while some disfigurement can safely be removed (dirt), some is irreversible and can cause permanent damage.

Evidence of biodeteriation: Undesirable change in the properties of materials caused by vital activities of organisms. Types of biological damage – pests, mould

Existing Repairs and Alterations: Repairs made during the active life of object.

Evidence of Manufacture: marks or characteristics that have been left behind on the surface or within the material of an object as the result of certain manufacturing processes. These would include saw marks on a wood, seams on a moulded ceramic object or bubbles in glass.

Below is a glossary for overall condition terminology and a glossary for each of the following material types:

- **Organics** (wood, basketry and ivory/bone)
- **Textiles**
- **Ceramics**
- **Glass**
- **Metals**
- **Stone, Wall Paintings and Mosaics**

Overall terminology

Condition:

Excellent: object shows little or no modification due to age or wear

Good: object shows minor modification due to age or wear

Fair: object shows substantial modification due to age or wear

Poor: object shows major modification due to age or wear

Stable Condition: Object may be fragmentary and in poor condition but if not actively deteriorating and condition unlikely to change in the short term it is stable.

Sound condition: No structural damage noted, often preferred to 'good condition', as there may be disfigurement in the aesthetic qualities such as soiling and minor surface damage.

Unstable: Object has sustained significant amounts of damage making its structure unstable, or with extensive losses, breaks or cracks.

Major structural damage: The object has sustained significant amounts of damage making its structure unstable, or with extensive losses, broken or missing elements. Likelihood of further damage/loss being sustained.

Minor structural damage: E.g. chips or splits that are damaging to the utility of the object but not damage that is likely to result in loss to the object.

Location

Right hand facing (RHF): The right hand side of the object as you are looking at it.

Left hand facing (LHF): The left hand side of the object as you are looking at it.

Physical Integrity

Breaks: A separation between areas of a hard material such as glass, ceramic, wood, stone and other materials, usually caused by a sudden shock and often occurring at weak points. May also be used to describe damage to brittle paper or cardboard, where pieces have been snapped off.

Brittle: Loss of strength and flexibility, causing the material to break when bent. Paper is said to be brittle when a corner will not withstand two complete folds without breaking. Plastics also become brittle, through the loss of plasticizing agents.

Broken/Detached/Separated: The object, or element of object, is in more than one piece.

Chips: Loss of small flattish fragments of an object surface often to rims and bases. Often result of impact. Chipped areas tend to be ingrained with dirt.

Crack/Fracture: A narrow opening between two parts that have split or become broken but are not separated from each other. Cracks may become unstable if subjected to stress/impact damage. The area gives a dull ringing tone when lightly tapped.

Crumbling: Object material exhibiting loss of cohesion leading to loss of particulate matter when force is applied.

Delaminating/Lifting: Separation between layers of the original material in which pieces are partially detached or raised.

Ceramics glossary

Deteriorated: Object in poor condition which may include; weathered glaze, deteriorating adhesives, flaking or lifting glaze, unstable gilding, unfired decoration, loose surface material, cracks.

Distorted: Shape is changed from its original, natural or intended form.

Flaking: An unstable condition in which areas of the original material become detached from the main part.

Fragile: Physically delicate, easily broken, damaged or harmed.

Fragmentary: Where part of an object is in many small pieces that are completely separated.

Loose: Parts that are moving or mobile, but not detached or separated.

Loss/Gap/Incomplete/Missing parts: Area where original material is missing because of damage or deterioration; does not have all parts or details, it is partial.

Split: An opening or expansion in the material.

Unstable: Object has sustained significant amounts of damage making its structure unstable or with extensive losses or breaks and is at risk of further damage.

Weakness: Loss of strength in the object that leaves it frail, fragile and liable to yield, break, or collapse under pressure or strain.

Worn: shows signs of wear/continuous use.

Surface Condition

Abrasion: Damage to the surface caused by rubbing or friction.

Accretion / residues: deposit of foreign matter on the surface, e.g. mud, usually stuck to the surface. Residues often accretions arising from use – food residues.

Bloom: Areas of a white cloudiness to the surface caused by a refraction of light from presence of small cracks/ surface damage/ or powdery deposit.

Burns: Surface damage caused by fire or heat. Burned surfaces are usually black or brown in colour, friable and brittle. There may also be soot and smoke damage, water damage and melting or softening. This term may also be used to describe damage caused by sunlight or chemical pollutants such as light or mat burn.

Concretion/Accretion: A hard surface deposit of a foreign material often from burial.

Crazing: Occurs as a result of stresses between glaze and underlying body resulting in a fine network of cracks in the glaze. Old crazing tends to be stained and the lines are more obvious while fresh crazing appears as clean cracks through the glaze.

Dents: Hollows or depressions in the surface of the object, often caused by pressure or an impact.

Dirty: A deposit of dirt, dust, grime or other contaminant absorbed into the surface and not easily brushed off.

Discolouration: An overall change in the colour of a material, usually to a darker, more yellow or brown appearance. This may be caused by light damage or by exposure to acidic substances.

Ceramics glossary

Dust: Particulate material which has settled on the surface of the object and contributes to corrosion, staining and abrasion.

Dusty: Loose dust and dirt lying on the surface, can be brushed off relatively easily.

Efflorescence: Migration of a salt to the surface.

Fingerprints: The impression of fingerprints left on an object, sometimes contributing to staining of the surface.

Flakes: Small, thin pieces of varnish, paint or other layers that have become completely detached from the main support material, due to extreme cracking.

Grime: A disfiguring deposit on or engrained in the surface of the material. Other word – surface dirt.

Ingrained dirt: dirt absorbed into the surface and not easily brushed off.

Porous: Absorbent, will let moisture/dirt in. Easily crossed or penetrated.

Powdery: Corrosion in the form of tiny loose particles.

Residue/Deposit: Deposit of foreign matter on the surface. Maybe from original use.

Salts: White crystal deposit visible on surface. Can cause catastrophic damage to surface and object itself. Salts occur on porous ceramics and appear as white powdery deposits on unglazed surfaces or along cracks and craze lines in the glaze.

Surface Condition

Scratches: Linear marks on the surface caused by sharp or hard implement, often damaging outer surface or surface decoration/coating revealing fresher material underneath.

Comment if look clean and bright, as may suggest damage has occurred recently.

Soil: a black or dark brown material typically consisting of a mixture of organic remains, clay, and rock particles, usually from excavation.

Stains: localised patches of soiling penetrated into the surface and cannot be brushed off. On unglazed surfaces this may be apparent a dark areas. Glazed surfaces and glass may acquire smears from handling.

Surface coating: Transparent layer applied to the surface of an object. These may be waxes, natural or synthetic resins intended as protective surface.

Surface dust and dirt / Particulate dirt: Loose dirt, dust, grime, soot or other contaminant, lying on the surface, can be brushed off relatively easily.

Wear: Gradual deterioration of the object's surface by use or any continued process.

Ceramics glossary

Evidence of biodeteriation

Mould: Another word for fungi; may appear as colourful powdery or downy growth on an object's surface, or as black spots.

Existing Repairs and Alterations/ Evidence of manufacture

Additions: Any pieces or parts that were added to the original artifact over the course of its history.

Alterations: Changes made to the object over the course of its history that affect or change its appearance or function.

Coating: A layer or film spread over a surface usually for protection. These may be waxes, natural or synthetic resins.

Conservation treatment: Visible evidence of recent conservation work, e.g. fills, support backing. Worth noting position of conservation repairs as this may indicate vulnerable or weakened area. May not be immediately obvious.

Decoration: Gilding, glaze, enamel, paint, slip or unfired decoration.

Enamel: Glassy substance, coloured by metallic oxides, applied and fired onto glaze, as decoration

Fill: Material replacing where the original is missing or a loss. Fills may be coloured and textured to blend in with the original surface. Old fills may become unstable as old repair materials deteriorate and weaken. Fills/painted areas may start to shrink with cracks appearing along their edges. New fills should be regarded as potential areas of weakness during handling and vulnerable to impact damage.

Firing crack: Caused during the manufacture of an object. They are usually stable but are possible areas of weakness especially if wide or extensive.

Ceramics glossary

Gilding: Gold decoration applied onto the glaze by various techniques. Can be fired and unfired.

Glaze: Vitreous or glassy coating or surface on ceramics, impervious to liquids.

Indigenous or historic repairs: repairs made during active life of object.

Inpainting: Application to the surface of a fill or area of loss. Other word – retouching.

Lustre: Decoration consisting of an extremely thin layer of metal applied, and fired, onto the glaze.

Manufacturing defects/faults: although not a type of damage, they can be points of weakness. Usually caused by the object having a poorly formulated body or glaze, poor construction or firing inconsistencies, for example, minor faults such as pinholes or glaze blemishes.

Overpaint: Term used when the paint is not the original. Over paint often hides areas of damage.

Repair: The act, task, or process of repairing an object. The repair may be an adhesive or consolidant, solder or rivet, patch, material support. If repair/adhesive weakens along a break-line, the join may widen and start to move.

Transfer print: Decoration applied onto ceramics, by transferring an engraved design from paper.

Physical Integrity

Breaks: A separation between areas of a hard material such as glass, ceramic, wood, stone and other materials, usually caused by a sudden shock and often occurring at weak points. May also be used to describe damage to brittle paper or cardboard, where pieces have been snapped off.

Brittle: Loss of strength and flexibility, causing the material to break when bent. Paper is said to be brittle when a corner will not withstand two complete folds without breaking. Plastics also become brittle, through the loss of plasticizing agents.

Broken/Detached/Separated: The object, or element of object, is in more than one piece.

Chips: Loss of small flattish fragments of an object surface often to rims and bases. Often result of impact. Chipped areas tend to be ingrained with dirt.

Crack/Fracture: A narrow opening between two parts that have split or become broken but are not separated from each other.

Crizzled: Network of fine, internal cracks in the surface of the glass caused by chemical instability.

Delaminating/Lifting: Separation between layers of the original material in which pieces are partially detached or raised.

Deteriorated: General term to denote poor condition of the object material.

Distorted: Shape is changed from its original, natural or intended form.

Flaking: An unstable condition in which areas of the original material become detached from the main part.

Fragile: Physically delicate, easily broken, damaged or harmed

Fragmentary: Where part of an object is in many small pieces that are completely separated.

Loose: Parts that are moving or mobile, but not detached or separated.

Loss/Gap/Incomplete/Missing parts: Area where original material is missing because of damage or deterioration; does not have all parts or details, it is partial.

Split: An opening or expansion in the material.

Weakness: Loss of strength in the object that leaves it frail, fragile and liable to yield, break, or collapse under pressure or strain.

Weeping: weeping or glass disease primarily caused by a chemical imbalance resulting in a crizzled surface which is unstable. May see a cloudy bloom, fine crystals, fine cracks, cracks, droplets, spalling and ultimate fragmentation.

Worn: shows signs of wear/continuous use.

Surface Condition

Abrasion: Damage to the surface caused by rubbing or friction.

Accretion / residues: deposit of foreign matter on the surface, e.g. mud, usually stuck to the surface. Residues often accretions arising from use – food residues.

Bloom: Areas of a white cloudiness to the surface

Concretion/Accretion: A hard surface deposit of a foreign material.

Dirty: A deposit of dirt, dust, grime or other contaminant absorbed into the surface and not easily brushed off.

Dulling: Surface of glass is no longer shiny, transparent or reflective. Becomes opaque.

Dust: Particulate material which has settled on the surface of the object and contributes to corrosion, staining and abrasion.

Dusty: Loose dust and dirt lying on the surface, can be brushed off relatively easily.

Efflorescence: Migration of a salt to the surface.

Fingerprints: The impression of fingerprints left on an object, sometimes contributing to staining of the surface.

Flakes: Small, thin pieces of varnish, paint or other layers that have become completely detached from the main support material, due to extreme cracking.

Grime: A disfiguring deposit on or engrained in the surface of the material. Other word – surface dirt.

Ingrained dirt: dirt absorbed into the surface and not easily brushed off.

Iridescence: Glass which has a lustrous, rainbow-like surface appearance resulting from extreme conditions during burial in soil.

Residue/Deposit: deposit of foreign matter on the surface. Maybe from original use.

Scratches: Linear marks on the surface caused by sharp or hard implement, often damaging outer surface or surface decoration/coating revealing fresher material underneath. Comment if look clean and bright, as may suggest damage has occurred recently.

Soil: a black or dark brown material typically consisting of a mixture of organic remains, clay, and rock particles, usually from excavation.

Stains: A localised discolouration, often caused by splashes of liquid or by contact with an acidic material, such as an adhesive or ink.

Stains: localised patches of soiling, penetrated into the surface and cannot be brushed off.

Surface dust and dirt / Particulate dirt: Loose dirt, dust, grime, soot or other contaminant, lying on the surface, can be brushed off relatively easily.

Wear: Gradual deterioration of the object's surface by use or any continued process.

Weathered: The alteration of glass surface by extreme environmental conditions such as burial.

Existing Repairs and Alterations/ Evidence of manufacture

Additions: Any pieces or parts that were added to the original artifact over the course of its history.

Air bubble: created during the manufacturing of the glass. These can sometimes be large and close to the surface. The side of a large bubble near to the glass surface is very vulnerable to breakage.

Alterations: Changes made to the object over the course of its history that affect or change its appearance or function.

Ancient repair: patches, rivets, solder, adhesives

Coating/Lacquer: A layer or film spread over a surface usually for protection. These maybe waxes, natural or synthetic resins.

Conservation treatment: Visible evidence of recent conservation work, eg fills, support backing. Worth noting position of conservation repairs as this may indicate vulnerable or weakened area. May not be immediately obvious.

Decoration: Gilding, glaze, enamel, paint, slip or unfired decoration

Enamel: Decoration using finely ground coloured glass applied in a medium and fused by firing.

Enamels: Opaque or translucent glassy pigments used for ceramic decoration, the colours of which are derived from metallic oxides. Enamels are usually painted or printed onto ceramics that have been glazed and fired, but they can also be applied to biscuit-fired wares (q.v.).

In either case they require a further firing (at lower temperature than the earlier glaze or biscuit firing) to fuse them to the ware. Enameled decoration is often used in combination with gilding, which is painted on and fired in much the same way.

Engraving: Process of cutting a design into glassware with a sharp instrument or rotation wheel

Etching: Design produced by application of acid onto a acid-resistant material then scratching the design into the surface and exposing it to acid

Fill: Material replacing where the original is missing or a loss. Fills may be coloured and textured to blend in with the original surface.

Indigenous or historic repairs: repairs made during active life of object.

Inpainting: Application to the surface of a fill or area of loss. Other word – retouching.

Inscriptions:

Overpaint: Term used when the paint is not the original. Over paint often hides areas of damage.

Pontil mark: Mark that remains in the centre of the bottom of a glass vessel, when the pontil, or iron rod, was broken off (sometimes called punty mark).

Prunts: Decorative blobs added to glass form that have been manipulated when molten with various tools.

Repair: The act, task, or process of repairing an object. The repair may be an adhesive or consolidant, solder or rivet, patch, material support. If repair/adhesive weakens along a break-line, the join may widen and start to move.

Metals glossary

Physical Integrity

Active corrosion: Evidence of on-going deterioration, e.g. with loose powdery, friable, pitted or flaking corrosion/surfaces or colour change.

Brittle: Loss of strength and flexibility, causing the material to break when bent. Paper is said to be brittle when a corner will not withstand two complete folds without breaking. Plastics also become brittle, through the loss of plasticizing agents.

Broken/Detached/Separated: The object, or element of object, is in more than one piece.

Chips: Marks or flaws made by breaking off or gouging out of a small piece of the object.

Corroded: Corrosion is the damage caused when metal gradually deteriorates.

Corrosion: Gradual deterioration of a metal due to chemical processes such as oxidation or the action of a chemical agent. Some corrosion products, like metal patinas, can be protective; others, like rust, can be harmful.

Crack/Fracture: A narrow opening between two parts of a metal that have split or become broken but are not separated from each other.

Crumbling: Object material exhibiting loss of cohesion leading to loss of particulate matter when force is applied.

Delaminating/Lifting: Separation between layers of the original material in which pieces are partially detached or raised.

Deteriorated: General term to denote poor condition of the object material.

Distorted: Shape is changed from its original, natural or intended form

Flaking: An unstable condition in which areas of the original material become detached from the main part.

Fragile: Physically delicate, easily broken, damaged or harmed.

Fragmentary: Where part of an object is in many small pieces that are completely separated.

Holes: Punctures or cavities in the object caused by a variety of means but were not part of the original object.

Loose: Parts that are moving or mobile, but not detached or separated.

Loss/Gap/Incomplete/Missing parts: Area where original material is missing because of damage or deterioration; does not have all parts or details, it is partial.

Mineralised: Metal is converted wholly or partly into a mineral or inorganic structure/ entirely corroded.

Patina: Protective, stable, lightly corroded, often smooth surface. Can either have formed naturally or through intentional intervention.

Split: An opening or expansion in the metal.

Stripped: Surface corrosion products have been removed revealing the core or metal surface below.

Metals glossary

Physical Integrity

Unstable: Object has sustained significant amounts of damage making its structure unstable or with extensive losses, breaks or active corrosion and is at risk of further damage.

Weakness: Loss of strength in the object that leaves it frail, fragile and liable to yield, break, or collapse under pressure or strain.

Worn: shows signs of wear/continuous use.

Surface Condition

Abrasion: Damage to the surface caused by rubbing or friction.

Accretion / residues: deposit of foreign matter on the surface, e.g. mud, usually stuck to the surface. Residues often accretions arising from use – food residues.

Blister: A convex deformation of the surface, hollow underneath.

Bloom: Areas of a white cloudiness to the surface caused by a refraction of light from presence of small cracks/ surface damage/ or powdery deposit.

Burns: Surface damage caused by fire or heat. Burned surfaces are usually black or brown in colour, friable and brittle. There may also be soot and smoke damage, water damage and melting or softening. This term may also be used to describe damage caused by sunlight or chemical pollutants such as light or mat burn.

Concretion/Accretion: A hard solid, surface deposit formed by the local accumulation of matter.

Dents: Hollows or depressions in the surface of the object, often caused by pressure or an impact.

Dirty: A deposit of dirt, dust, grime or other contaminant absorbed into the surface and not easily brushed off.

Discolouration: An overall change in the colour of a material, usually to a darker, more yellow or brown appearance. This may be caused by light damage or by exposure to acidic substances.

Dusty: Loose dust and dirt lying on the surface, can be brushed off relatively easily.

Fingerprints: The impression of fingerprints left on an object, sometimes contributing to staining of the surface.

Flakes: Small, thin pieces of varnish, paint or other layers that have become completely detached from the main support material, due to extreme cracking.

Grime: A disfiguring deposit on or engrained in the surface of the material. Other word – surface dirt.

Ingrained dirt: dirt absorbed into the surface and not easily brushed off.

Mineral Preserved Organic Remains (MPO's): Metallic compounds from a corroding metal object replace structure of organic material such as textile or leather.

Pitted: An area covered with low areas or depressions.

Powdery: Corrosion in the form of tiny loose particles

Residue/Deposit: Vestigial remains of a material after a large part has been removed. May be from original use.

Surface Condition

Scratches: Linear marks on the surface caused by sharp or hard implement, often damaging outer surface or surface decoration/coating revealing fresher material underneath.

Comment if look clean and bright, as may suggest damage has occurred recently.

Soil: A black or dark brown material typically consisting of a mixture of organic remains, clay, and rock particles, usually from excavation.

Stains: Localised patches of soiling penetrated into the surface and cannot be brushed off or a localised discolouration, often caused by splashes of liquid or by contact with an acidic material, such as an adhesive or ink.

Surface coating: Transparent layer applied to the surface of an object. These maybe waxes, natural or synthetic resins intended as protective surface.

Surface dust and dirt / Particulate dirt: Loose dirt, dust, grime, soot or other contaminant, lying on the surface, can be brushed off relatively easily. Can contribute to corrosion, staining and abrasion.

Tarnish: Discolouration of a metal surface due to the formation of thin film of oxide, sulphide or other corrosion product. Used most often to describe the dark corrosion that forms on silver.

Wear: Gradual deterioration of the object's surface by use or any continued process.

Existing Repairs and Alterations/ Evidence of manufacture

Additions: Any pieces or parts that were added to the original artifact over the course of its history.

Alterations: Changes made to the object over the course of its history that affect or change its appearance or function.

Ancient repair: patches, rivets, solder, adhesives

Casting cores

Coating: A layer or film spread over a surface usually for protection. These maybe waxes, natural or synthetic resins.

Conservation treatment: Visible evidence of recent conservation work, e.g. fills, support backing. Worth noting position of conservation repairs as this may indicate vulnerable or weakened area. May not be immediately obvious.

Fill: Material replacing where the original is missing or a loss. Fills may be coloured and textured to blend in with the original surface.

Indigenous or historic repairs: Repairs made during active life of object.

Inlays, overlays

inpainting: Application to the surface of a fill or area of loss. Other word – retouching.

Existing Repairs and Alterations/ Evidence of manufacture

Inscriptions

Mineral Preserved Organic Remains (MPO's)

Overpaint: Term used when the paint is not the original. Over paint often hides areas of damage.

Repair: The act, task, or process of repairing an object. The repair may be an adhesive or consolidant, solder or rivet, patch, material support.

Residues

Tool marks

Physical Integrity

Bent: Misshapen with fold or kink in material, out of alignment, often referring to projecting elements such as feathers. There may or may not be a break at the bend.

Breaks / fractures:

Breaks: A separation between areas of a hard material such as glass, ceramic, wood, stone and other materials, usually caused by a sudden shock and often occurring at weak points. May also be used to describe damage to brittle paper or cardboard, where pieces have been snapped off.

Brittle: Once flexible material hardened and stiffened to the point that it shows signs of or is at risk of breaking, often for plant fibres, textiles, feathers.

Broken stitching threads / bindings: E.g. splits in seams, or broken threads used to secure parts or decorative elements, such as beads.

Broken/Detached/Separated: The object, or element of object, is in more than one piece.

Buckling: Of veneered or inlaid surfaces – Material has expanded in size but is fixed in position, so excess bulges or lifts up.

Chips: Marks or flaws made by breaking off or gouging out of a small piece of the object.

Organics glossary

Cracks: Narrow openings between two parts of a material that have split or become broken but may not be separated from each other or suffered loss. Usually used to describe breaks in solid materials such as stone, ceramics and wood. In plastics, refers to splits that follow the grain or direction of manufacture.

Creases/Wrinkles: Occur when a flat, sheet-like material such as paper or fabric has been folded over on itself.

Creasing (heavy or light): irregular pattern of lines, wrinkles or folds etc in 2d flexible materials, often clothing or large textiles, barkcloth., tends to be accidental rather than intentional.

Deformed / Distorted / Misshapen: Changes in shape and form, detracting from objects original appearance.

Degraded / Weakened / Loss of tensile strength / Fragile

Delamination: Separation of layers, may refer to separating of layers joined in construction of the object, may be between layers of same or different materials, or separation within a laminar material, e.g. Shell, mica.

Fold lines: regular sharp straight ridge or groove usually arising from material being folded for long periods of time, usually associated with textiles or large flat and flexible materials such as skins, barkcloth, and plant fibre.

Fragile: Physically delicate, easily broken, damaged or harmed.

Physical Integrity

Fragmentary: Extensive damage has occurred leading to the object or material being in many small pieces, either completely separated or partially connected. Also used to describe textiles where there is extensive loss, sometime irregular shaped islands of textile remaining loosely connected following insect infestation.

Fraying: Wearing away and/or unravelling of fabric, leaving loose threads.

Hairline fracture:

Holes: Punctures or cavities in the object caused by a variety of means but were not part of the original object.

Incomplete / Missing parts / losses: Minor, moderate or extensive? Detail what is missing? (missing leg, missing button, missing section of inlay, missing strand of beads) Any element or piece of the object or image that is loose or missing.

Loose or mobile elements / Loosened parts: Parts of the object are loose and can move when they should be fixed, often due to deterioration of joints and fittings, or where different materials are joined together. Also loosening of knots in wood.

Losses / Holes: (textiles, skins & leather, basketry & barkcloth). Describe whether there are isolated areas of loss, or extensive – single large area of loss, or network of adjacent small losses. Likely to spread, is material vulnerable to further loss around edges, small fragments minimally attached – or is the damage stable and unlikely to deteriorate further.

Organics glossary

Shattered (textiles): Extensive splitting and loss in very deteriorated and brittle textile, usually silk, resulting from chemical breakdown of the material.

Shrinkage: Where material has decreased in size, leaving gap or opening between joins. In textiles can cause **bag** (excess of material) or creasing where differential shrinkage between two different materials are joined.

Snagged or pulled threads: (textiles)

Splintering: Thin sharp slivers of wood, bone, ivory broken away from main body, along the grain, and projecting. Often around edge of break or split. May be at risk of snagging or further loss.

Split: (textiles, skin & leather, plant fibre & barkcloth) : A break in the material, damage usually resulting from deterioration and loss of strength of the material, sometimes the result of force but may be gravity, often along fold lines. Little loss of material.

Split: (wood, ivory), **Along the grain** or **across the grain**, usually result of the shrinking, drying, or from impact (there are lots of very specific terminology for splits in wood e.g. checks, but probably don't need to be that specific here?) Measurements of width and length of splits useful to monitor change. Clean fresh or bright wood inside split may indicate more recent damage. Often not clean break edge but associated with splintering.

Squashed / crushed: Inward or downward deformation resulting from external forces, usually of 3d objects in softer materials, e.g. hats, baskets.

Physical Integrity

Stiffened / Hardened / Inflexible: of material which was originally pliable and soft e.g. skins, leather, barkcloth.

Tear: (textiles, skin & leather, plant fibre & barkcloth) – Break in the material caused by force or impact; surrounding material in generally sound condition. Little loss of material, tear edges meet, but may be some fraying.

Tears/Rips: Separation between or across the fibres of canvas, paper or textile objects, usually beginning at the edge of the object and often following areas of weakness such as folds and initiated by physical damage.

Undulations / Buckling / Wrinkling / Cockling: Uneven deflection of a flat surface of usually flat 2 d materials such as mats, textiles, barkcloth, canvas paintings.

Warped / bowed: Concave or convex distortion of hard materials such as wood, bone, ivory, horn, often due to swelling and shrinkage of the material, but material not actually bent, cracked or broken.

Weakness: Loss of strength in the object that leaves it frail, fragile and liable to yield, break, or collapse under pressure or strain.

Worn: shows signs of wear/continuous use.

Organics glossary

Surface Condition

Abrasion: Damage to the surface caused by rubbing or friction.

Accretion / residues: deposit of foreign matter on the surface, e.g. mud, usually stuck to the surface. Residues often accretions arising from use – food residues.

Blisters: (convexity, bulge in paint surface).

Bloom: Bluish white cloudiness often on a painted or varnished surface, caused by moisture penetrating the surface.

Broken fibres / fibre loss / shedding of fibres:

Burns: Surface damage caused by fire or heat. Burned surfaces are usually black or brown in colour, friable and brittle. There may also be soot and smoke damage, water damage and melting or softening. This term may also be used to describe damage caused by sunlight or chemical pollutants such as light or mat burn.

Chipped: Small section or piece cut or broken off from hard material – implies loss of small amount of material often exposing fresher looking material underneath.

Corrosion / Tarnish: Of metal elements used in combination with organic materials: often the organic material exacerbates the corrosion. Rust, or green copper corrosion products can cause staining of the surrounding organic material.

Craqueleur / crazed surface: Network of cracks in a surface, e.g. painted surface, usually resulting from the surface drying out. Likely to be stable and not flaking.

Surface Condition

Crystalline deposits: Not all white crystalline deposits are salt growth, may also be remains of some applied chemicals such as pesticides.

Cupping / elevated edges: Concavity of islands of paint, leading to protruding or raised edges of the paint flake above the main surface, risk of further deterioration through snagging and catching.

Cuts: Implies damage caused by knife, scissors, or sharp implement, usually the surrounding material in robust condition.

Dents: Hollows or depressions in the surface of the object, often caused by pressure or an impact.

Discolouration / yellowing / fading / darkening: Permanent change in the colour of the material due to light damage or chemical change, may be overall, may be localised, often can see difference between where material is exposed to light and where covered.

Dust: Particulate material which has settled on the surface of the object and contributes to corrosion, staining and abrasion.

Dusty: Loose dust and dirt lying on the surface, can be brushed off relatively easily.

Dye transfer /bleeding / crocking: Spread of dye colour from coloured to uncoloured area – bleeding due to water, crocking due to excess dye rubbing off through friction.

Organics glossary

Fatty exudations: White waxy surface deposit found on skins/leather usually associated with movement of fats coming out of the material often resulting in changes in environment.

Fingerprints: The impression of fingerprints left on an object, sometimes contributing to staining of the surface.

Flakes: Small, thin pieces of varnish, paint or other layers that have become completely detached from the main support material, due to extreme cracking.

Flaking: Loss of paint layer or surface through loose or detaching small islands of paint or surface coating.

Friable:

Grime: A disfiguring deposit on or engrained in the surface of the material. Other word – surface dirt.

Ingrained dirt: dirt absorbed into the surface and not easily brushed off.

Odour: May indicate mould, or pesticide use, or arising from general deterioration of materials (e.g. musty smell). Only comment if very noticeable.

Paint loss (minor, major, extensive)

Powdering: (paint layer) Loss of paint layer through loose or detaching powdery usually the result of insufficient quantity of binding medium in paint as originally applied, or a breakdown in the binding medium as result of deterioration.

Puckering: (textiles) Localised wrinkling and distortion caused by uneven tension and gathering of fabric often around embroidery.

Surface Condition

Red rot: Powdery crumbly surface specific to leather, sometimes with strong smell.

Salt growth: White crystals on or emerging from surface of material, particularly on material which has been buried in ground.

Scratches: Linear marks on the surface caused by sharp or hard implement, often damaging outer surface or surface decoration/coating revealing fresher material underneath.

Comment if look clean and bright, as may suggest damage has occurred recently.

Soil: a black or dark brown material typically consisting of a mixture of organic remains, clay, and rock particles, usually from excavation.

Stains: Localised patches of soiling, penetrated into the surface, cannot be brushed off, often result of liquid or oils.

Surface coating: Transparent layer applied to the surface of an object. These may be waxes, natural or synthetic resins intended as protective surface.

Surface dust and dirt / Particulate dirt: Loose dirt, dust, grime, soot or other contaminant, lying on the surface, can be brushed off relatively easily.

Tacky or sticky surface: On plastics and rubbers may indicate severe deterioration of the material, may also be result of previous coatings or adhesives used.

Organics glossary

Tenting: (of paint)

Unsupported paint ledge: where gesso or material underneath paint layer is eroded away leaving jutting paint layer.

Water damage: often characterised by distinct white edged tide-lines, and there may be associated dye bleeding, running or loss of paint surfaces.

Wear: Gradual deterioration of the object's surface by use or any continued process.

Evidence of biodeteriation

Rot: The product of organic decomposition, sometimes seen in brown, white, or red particles on the object.

Mould: Another word for fungi; mould spores can germinate and grow within organic materials to cause staining and structural weakening. May appear as colourful powdery or downy growth on an object's surface, or as black spots.

Mildew: Specific type of mould. It can be downy or powdery. Could be seen as yellow spots which then turn brown or a whitish powder that slowly turn yellowish brown and then black.

Pests: Damage to objects caused by insects, rodents etc., usually through staining, soiling, and consuming surfaces and organic components. Evidence includes Pest Residue such as casings and frass (dust-like debris left by wood-eaters) and Pest Damage such as exit holes, and grazing (partially eaten surfaces).

Evidence of moth or carpet beetle infestation:

Small irregular shaped holes

Surface grazing

Detached fibres and fragments (fur, hair and feathers);

Webbing (white webbing)

Frass (gritty dust)

Larval skin casts and pupal bags

Dead or alive - small round beetles or moths

Organics glossary

Evidence of wood boring insects (wood but also woody materials such as basketry and plant fibre):

Small round exit holes:

Tunnels and channels (exposed tunnels):

damage where surface of wood has caved in due to extensive network of tunnels underneath:

frass (loose gritty dust coming out of holes):

Evidence of rodents:

Droppings:

Gnawed or chewed material:

Ragged edged holes:

Distinct smell:

Non museum pests:

Spiders:

Woodlice:

Cockroach casings:

Flyspecks:

Mould:

Fungal growth:

Loose powdery:

Ingrained staining:

Wood rot – dry or wet rot:

Foxing:

Existing Repairs and Alterations/ Evidence of manufacture

Additions: Any pieces or parts that were added to the original artifact over the course of its history.

Alterations: Changes made to the object over the course of its history that affect or change its appearance or function.

Conservation treatment: is there visible evidence of recent conservation work, eg fills, support backing. Worth noting position of conservation repairs as this may indicate vulnerable or weakened area. May not be immediately obvious.

Fill: Material replacing where the original is missing or a loss. Fills may be coloured and textured to blend in with the original surface. Old fills may become unstable as old repair materials deteriorate and weaken. Fills/painted areas may start to shrink with cracks appearing along their edges. New fills should be regarded as potential areas of weakness during handling and vulnerable to impact damage.

Indigenous or historic repairs: repairs made during active life of object.

Inpainting: Application to the surface of a fill or area of loss. Other word – retouching.

Overpaint: Term used when the paint is not the original. Over paint often hides areas of damage.

Repair: The act, task, or process of repairing an object. The repair may be an adhesive or consolidant, solder or rivet, patch, material support. If repair/adhesive weakens along a break-line, the join may widen and start to move.

Textiles glossary

Physical Integrity

Bent: Misshapen with fold or kink in material, out of alignment, often referring to projecting elements such as feathers. There may or may not be a break at the bend.

Breaks: A separation between areas of a hard material such as glass, ceramic, wood, stone and other materials, usually caused by a sudden shock and often occurring at weak points. May also be used to describe damage to brittle paper or cardboard, where pieces have been snapped off.

Brittle: Once flexible material hardened and stiffened to the point that it shows signs of or is at risk of breaking, often for plant fibres, textiles, feathers.

Broken stitching threads / bindings: E.g. splits in seams, or broken threads used to secure parts or decorative elements, such as beads.

Broken/Detached/Separated: The object, or element of object, is in more than one piece.

Creases/Wrinkles: Occur when a flat, sheet-like material such as paper or fabric has been folded over on itself.

Creasing (heavy or light): irregular pattern of lines, wrinkles or folds etc in 2d flexible materials, often clothing or large textiles, barkcloth., tends to be accidental rather than intentional.

Deformed / Distorted / Misshapen: Changes in shape and form, detracting from objects original appearance.

Degraded / Weakened / Loss of tensile strength / Fragile

Fold lines: regular sharp straight ridge or groove usually arising from material being folded for long periods of time, usually associated with textiles or large flat and flexible materials such as skins, barkcloth, and plant fibre.

Fragile: Physically delicate, easily broken, damaged or harmed.

Fragmentary: Extensive damage has occurred leading to the object or material being in many small pieces, either completely separated or partially connected. Also used to describe textiles where there is extensive loss, sometime irregular shaped islands of textile remaining loosely connected following insect infestation.

Fraying: Wearing away and/or unravelling of fabric, leaving loose threads.

Holes: Punctures or cavities in the object caused by a variety of means but were not part of the original object.

Incomplete / Missing parts / losses: Minor, moderate or extensive? Detail what is missing? (missing leg, missing button, missing section of inlay, missing strand of beads) Any element or piece of the object or image that is loose or missing.

Loose or mobile elements / Loosened parts: Parts of the object are loose and can move when they should be fixed, often due to deterioration of joints and fittings, or where different materials are joined together. Also loosening of knots in wood.

Textiles glossary

Physical Integrity

Losses / Holes: (textiles, skins & leather, basketry & barkcloth). Describe whether there are isolated areas of loss, or extensive – single large area of loss, or network of adjacent small losses. Likely to spread, is material vulnerable to further loss around edges, small fragments minimally attached – or is the damage stable and unlikely to deteriorate further.

Shattered (textiles): Extensive splitting and loss in very deteriorated and brittle textile, usually silk, resulting from chemical breakdown of the material.

Shrinkage: Where material has decreased in size, leaving gap or opening between joins. In textiles can cause **bag** (excess of material) or creasing where differential shrinkage between two different materials are joined.

Snagged or pulled threads: (textiles)

Split: (textiles, skin & leather, plant fibre & barkcloth) : A break in the material, damage usually resulting from deterioration and loss of strength of the material, sometimes the result of force but may be gravity, often along fold lines. Little loss of material.

Squashed / crushed: Inward or downward deformation resulting from external forces, usually of 3d objects in softer materials, e.g. hats, baskets.

Stiffened / Hardened / Inflexible: of material which was originally pliable and soft e.g. skins, leather, barkcloth.

Tear: (textiles, skin & leather, plant fibre & barkcloth) – Break in the material caused by force or impact; surrounding material in generally sound condition. Little loss of material, tear edges meet, but may be some fraying.

Tears/Rips: Separation between or across the fibres of canvas, paper or textile objects, usually beginning at the edge of the object and often following areas of weakness such as folds and initiated by physical damage.

Undulations / Buckling / Wrinkling / Cockling: Uneven deflection of a flat surface of usually flat 2 d materials such as mats, textiles, barkcloth, canvas paintings.

Weakness: Loss of strength in the object that leaves it frail, fragile and liable to yield, break, or collapse under pressure or strain.

Worn: shows signs of wear/continuous use.

Textiles glossary

Surface Condition

Abrasion: Damage to the surface caused by rubbing or friction.

Accretion / residues: deposit of foreign matter on the surface, e.g. mud, usually stuck to the surface. Residues often accretions arising from use – food residues.

Broken fibres / fibre loss / shedding of fibres:

Burns: Surface damage caused by fire or heat. Burned surfaces are usually black or brown in colour, friable and brittle. There may also be soot and smoke damage, water damage and melting or softening. This term may also be used to describe damage caused by sunlight or chemical pollutants such as light or mat burn.

Corrosion / Tarnish: Of metal elements used in combination with organic materials: often the organic material exacerbates the corrosion. Rust, or green copper corrosion products can cause staining of the surrounding organic material.

Crystalline deposits: Not all white crystalline deposits are salt growth, may also be remains of some applied chemicals such as pesticides.

Cuts: Implies damage caused by knife, scissors, or sharp implement, usually the surrounding material in robust condition.

Dents: Hollows or depressions in the surface of the object, often caused by pressure or an impact.

Discolouration / yellowing / fading / darkening: Permanent change in the colour of the material due to light damage or chemical change, may be overall, may be localised, often can see difference between where material is exposed to light and where covered.

Dust: Particulate material which has settled on the surface of the object and contributes to corrosion, staining and abrasion.

Dusty: Loose dust and dirt lying on the surface, can be brushed off relatively easily.

Dye transfer /bleeding / crocking: Spread of dye colour from coloured to uncoloured area – bleeding due to water, crocking due to excess dye rubbing off through friction.

Fatty exudations: White waxy surface deposit found on skins/leather usually associated with movement of fats coming out of the material often resulting in changes in environment.

Fingerprints: The impression of fingerprints left on an object, sometimes contributing to staining of the surface.

Friable:

Grime: A disfiguring deposit on or engrained in the surface of the material. Other word – surface dirt.

Ingrained dirt: dirt absorbed into the surface and not easily brushed off.

Odour: May indicate mould, or pesticide use, or arising from general deterioration of materials (e.g. musty smell). Only comment if very noticeable.

Textiles glossary

Surface Condition

Puckering: (textiles) Localised wrinkling and distortion caused by uneven tension and gathering of fabric often around embroidery.

Red rot: Powdery crumbly surface specific to leather, sometimes with strong smell.

Scratches: Linear marks on the surface caused by sharp or hard implement, often damaging outer surface or surface decoration/coating revealing fresher material underneath.

Comment if look clean and bright, as may suggest damage has occurred recently.

Soil: a black or dark brown material typically consisting of a mixture of organic remains, clay, and rock particles, usually from excavation.

Stains: Localised patches of soiling, penetrated into the surface, cannot be brushed off, often result of liquid or oils.

Surface coating: Transparent layer applied to the surface of an object. These may be waxes, natural or synthetic resins intended as protective surface.

Surface dust and dirt / Particulate dirt: Loose dirt, dust, grime, soot or other contaminant, lying on the surface, can be brushed off relatively easily.

Tacky or sticky surface: On plastics and rubbers may indicate severe deterioration of the material, may also be result of previous coatings or adhesives used.

Water damage: often characterised by distinct white edged tide-lines, and there may be associated dye bleeding, running or loss of paint surfaces.

Wear: Gradual deterioration of the object's surface by use or any continued process.

Textiles glossary

Evidence of biodeteriation

Rot: The product of organic decomposition, sometimes seen in brown, white, or red particles on the object.

Mould: Another word for fungi; mould spores can germinate and grow within organic materials to cause staining and structural weakening. May appear as colourful powdery or downy growth on an object's surface, or as black spots.

Mildew: Specific type of mould. It can be downy or powdery. Could be seen as yellow spots which then turn brown or a whitish powder that slowly turn yellowish brown and then black.

Pests: Damage to objects caused by insects, rodents etc., usually through staining, soiling, and consuming surfaces and organic components. Evidence includes Pest Residue such as casings and frass (dust-like debris left by wood-eaters) and Pest Damage such as exit holes, and grazing (partially eaten surfaces).

Evidence of moth or carpet beetle infestation:

Small irregular shaped holes

Surface grazing,

Detached fibres and fragments (fur, hair and feathers);

Webbing (white webbing)

Frass (gritty dust)

Larval skin casts and pupal bags

Dead or alive - small round beetles or moths

Evidence of wood boring insects (wood but also woody materials such as basketry and plant fibre):

Small round exit holes:

Tunnels and channels (exposed tunnels):

damage where surface of wood has caved in due to extensive network of tunnels underneath:

frass (loose gritty dust coming out of holes):

Evidence of rodents:

Droppings:

Gnawed or chewed material:

Ragged edged holes:

Distinct smell:

Non museum pests:

Spiders:

Woodlice:

Cockroach casings:

Flyspecks:

Mould:

Fungal growth:

Loose powdery:

Ingrained staining:

Wood rot – dry or wet rot:

Foxing:

Textiles glossary

Existing Repairs and Alterations/ Evidence of manufacture

Additions: Any pieces or parts that were added to the original artifact over the course of its history.

Alterations: Changes made to the object over the course of its history that affect or change its appearance or function.

Conservation treatment: is there visible evidence of recent conservation work, eg fills, support backing. Worth noting position of conservation repairs as this may indicate vulnerable or weakened area. May not be immediately obvious.

Fill: Material replacing where the original is missing or a loss. Fills may be coloured and textured to blend in with the original surface. Old fills may become unstable as old repair materials deteriorate and weaken. Fills/painted areas may start to shrink with cracks appearing along their edges. New fills should be regarded as potential areas of weakness during handling and vulnerable to impact damage.

Indigenous or historic repairs: repairs made during active life of object.

Inpainting: Application to the surface of a fill or area of loss. Other word – retouching.

Overpaint: Term used when the paint is not the original. Over paint often hides areas of damage.

Repair: The act, task, or process of repairing an object. The repair may be an adhesive or consolidant, solder or rivet, patch, material support. If repair/adhesive weakens along a break-line, the join may widen and start to move.

Stone, wall paintings and mosaics glossary

Physical Integrity

Breaks: A separation between areas of a hard material such as glass, ceramic, wood, stone and other materials, usually caused by a sudden shock and often occurring at weak points. May also be used to describe damage to brittle paper or cardboard, where pieces have been snapped off.

Brittle: Loss of strength and flexibility, causing the material to break when bent. Paper is said to be brittle when a corner will not withstand two complete folds without breaking. Plastics also become brittle, through the loss of plasticizing agents.

Broken/Detached/Separated: The object, or element of object, is in more than one piece.

Chip: Loss of a small amount of material as a result of a mechanical action.

Crack (Structural): Inherent in the matrix of the material, a major weakness. In stone this maybe the bedding planes.

Cracks: Narrow openings between two parts of a material that have split or become broken but may not be separated from each other or suffered loss. Usually used to describe breaks in solid materials such as stone, ceramics and wood. In plastics, refers to splits that follow the grain or direction of manufacture.

Flaking: An unstable condition in which areas of the original material become detached. Other words – **laminating, lifting**.

Fragile: Physically delicate, easily broken, damaged or harmed.

Fragmentary: Where part of an object is in many small pieces that are completely separated.

Holes: Punctures or cavities in the object caused by a variety of means but were not part of the original object.

Incomplete / Missing parts / losses: Minor, moderate or extensive? Detail what is missing? (missing leg, missing button, missing section of inlay, missing strand of beads) Any element or piece of the object or image that is loose or missing.

Lamination: Separation between layers of the original material. Can also describe between layers such as pigment and ground. Other words – **lifting & flaking**.

Lifting: A form of deterioration in which pieces of the original material are partially detached or raised. Other words – **laminating, flaking**.

Loss: An area where the original material is missing because of damage or deterioration.

Mechanical Cracks: Caused by movement or excessive stress.

Unstable: Object has sustained significant amounts of damage making its structure unstable or with extensive losses or breaks and is at risk of further damage.

Weakness: Loss of strength in the object that leaves it frail, fragile and liable to yield, break, or collapse under pressure or strain.

Worn: shows signs of wear/continuous use.

Stone, wall paintings and mosaics glossary

Surface Condition

Abrasion: Damage to the surface caused by rubbing or friction.

Accretion / residues: deposit of foreign matter on the surface, eg mud, usually stuck to the surface. Residues often accretions arising from use – food residues.

Blister: A convex deformation of the surface, hollow underneath.

Bloom: Areas of a white cloudiness to the surface.

Burns: Surface damage caused by fire or heat. Burned surfaces are usually black or brown in colour, friable and brittle. There may also be soot and smoke damage, water damage and melting or softening. This term may also be used to describe damage caused by sunlight or chemical pollutants such as light or mat burn.

Chalky: Powdering of the surface. Other word – **powdering**.

Craquelure: Network of random cracks over the surface – used for painted surfaces.

Dents: Hollows or depressions in the surface of the object, often caused by pressure or an impact.

Dirty: A deposit of dirt, dust, grime or other contaminant absorbed into the surface and not easily brushed off.

Discolouration: An overall change in the colour of a material, usually to a darker, more yellow or brown appearance. This may be caused by light damage or by exposure to acidic substances.

Dust: Particulate material which has settled on the surface of the object and contributes to corrosion, staining and abrasion.

Dusty: Loose dust and dirt lying on the surface, can be brushed off relatively easily.

Efflorescence: A phenomena whereby a whitish powdery material forms on the surface of the object.

Fingerprints: The impression of fingerprints left on an object, sometimes contributing to staining of the surface.

Flakes: Small, thin pieces of varnish, paint or other layers that have become completely detached from the main support material, due to extreme cracking.

Grime: A disfiguring deposit on or engrained in the surface of the material. Other word – surface dirt.

Ingrained dirt: dirt absorbed into the surface and not easily brushed off.

Porous: Absorbent, will let moisture/dirt in. Easily crossed or penetrated.

Powdery: Corrosion in the form of tiny loose particles.

Residue/Deposit: Deposit of foreign matter on the surface. Maybe from original use.

Scratches: Linear marks on the surface caused by sharp or hard implement, often damaging outer surface or surface decoration/coating revealing fresher material underneath. Comment if look clean and bright, as may suggest damage has occurred recently.

Stains: A localised discolouration, often caused by splashes of liquid or by contact with an acidic material, such as an adhesive or ink.

Stone, wall paintings and mosaics glossary

Surface Condition

Soil: a black or dark brown material typically consisting of a mixture of organic remains, clay, and rock particles, usually from excavation.

Surface coating: Transparent layer applied to the surface of an object. These may be waxes, natural or synthetic resins intended as protective surface.

Surface dust and dirt / Particulate dirt: Loose dirt, dust, grime, soot or other contaminant, lying on the surface, can be brushed off relatively easily.

Wear: Gradual deterioration of the object's surface by use or any continued process.

Primary Support type

The material the print/drawing/painting is on e.g., paper, silk, vellum, textile, board etc.

Recto: front of print/drawing/painting.

Verso: back of print/drawing/painting.

Flat: no distortions to the surface plane.

Undulations: overall distortions in the paper/vellum/silk.

Local cockling: smaller distortions in specific areas, such as corners/joints.

Crease: a lasting depression or ridge along the line of a fold in paper, fabric, or the sheet material.

Folded: an object, or a portion of an object, that has been bent or pressed so that one part is over another.

Delamination: A separation of layers; splitting.

Losses: areas of the primary support are missing.

Abrasions: any condition that is the result of friction between the surface of the artifact and another object.

Tear: a break in fabric, paper, or other sheet material as a result of tension or torsion.

Dirt: usually greyish on surface of primary support, may be ingrained into paper.

Staining: a local area of soiling, usually accidental.

Overall Discolouration: primary support generally yellow, brown, or darkened, usually caused by acid from poor quality secondary support materials, acid inherent in the primary support, or environmental exposure.

Crack: fractures caused by internal or external pressure to a surface. No loss is implied. Visible break in the surface, occurring when paper is creased or embossed; sometimes called “crazing” in photographs.

Dog-ear: term commonly used to describe a diagonal crease across the corner of a page.

Scratch: a linear scrape apparently caused by a sharp object.

Accretion: accumulation of extraneous material on the surface (accidental deposit on the surface of an object) such as flyspecks.

Adhesive Residue: may be from glue, paste, or pressure-sensitive tapes. Please indicate if this adhesive has yellowed.

Smudge: a dirty spot.

Water stains: an area where tide marks are present indicating the object was exposed to water.

Embrittlement: a loss of flexibility causing the material (e.g., paper, parchment, leather) to break or disintegrate when bent or curled.

Medium

The material with which the image has been created. E.g., printing ink (usually carbon black); iron-gall ink (brown, often faded to yellowish); sepia, bistre (both brown); watercolour; gouache (watercolour mixed with white pigment to make opaque, often flakes); pastel (powdery surface); charcoal (grey black, powdery); chalk; acrylic; oil etc.

Delaminating: flakes of pigment lifting from surface

Powdering: tiny granules of pigment not securely attached due to lack of binding medium

Cracking: media adhered to surface but cracks have appeared

Abraded: surface of media has been scratched or rubbed

Faded: usually caused by exposure to light. Most obvious when edges of pictures have preserved the original colour due to protection by top mount and exposed areas have faded

Blanched: The opaque, whitish appearance of paint or varnish caused by the leaching out of certain substance or by the pulverization of paint or varnish under pressure as in a scrape or scratch. In either case minute interruptions within the varnish or medium refract light producing a milky appearance. Moisture often causes blanching

Cupping: Lifting along the edges of cracks surrounding an island of paint so that the paint surface is bent concavely into the shape of a shallow cup

Bleeding: The separation of pigments, especially dyes, into adjacent areas

Silvering: Shiny or mirror-like discoloration in the shadow areas of a photographic image caused by the aging of excessive residual silver compounds

Leaching: e.g. of printing oils

Technique: the method by which the image has been created. E.g., ink painting; pencil drawing; woodblock print; etching; rubbing etc.

Secondary Support type

The material the primary support is attached to e.g. mount board; another sheet of paper (as in India laid/chine collé); inlay; or in East Asian formats, a silk scroll mount:

Inlaid: drawing is adhered on all edges into a “window” in a second sheet of paper. More recently using strips of Japanese paper.

Guarded: now obsolete method but still many e.g. in the collection. Paper strips folded in half were adhered to edges of drawings and then adhered to back board. Often visible as slight bulge under edges of drawing.

Float mount: drawing is not inlaid but hinged on all four edges on verso to back board, with the window showing all edges of drawing.

Clipped: edges of print or drawing are just covered by the window bevel.

Hinged: prints attached to back board using Japanese paper hinges and paste.

Tabs: small strips of Japanese paper attached to the edges of the verso to secure a print that has been float mounted to the backboard of its mount.

Lifting: Often at mount/inlay joints

Delamination: Linings separating out from one another, usually leaving bubbles where voids are present between layers

Fraying: Appearance of loose threads and unraveling of threads within silk mounts etc.

Undulations: overall distortions in the paper/vellum/silk

Local cockling: smaller distortions in specific areas, such as corners/joints

Crease: a lasting depression or ridge along the line of a fold in paper, fabric, or the sheet material

Losses: areas of the primary support are missing

Abrasions: any condition that is the result of friction between the surface of the artifact and another object

Tear: a break in fabric, paper, or other sheet material as a result of tension or torsion

Dirt: usually greyish on surface of primary support, may be ingrained into paper

Staining: a local area of soiling, usually accidental

Mounting/framing type

For flat-mounted items (see below) , and whether framed or unframed:

Solid Mount: top window of mount is adhered to back board and cannot be opened.

Overthrow: top window is hinged on one edge, usually top or left, of back board and can be opened.

Perspex Sandwich: drawing is enclosed in two sheets of Perspex, suspended on silk tabs at corners. Perspex is set into a solid mount.

Perspex Verso: Perspex sheet set into back mount board to show drawing on verso of paper. Mount is usually solid.

Evidence of biodeteriation

Foxing: brown or reddish-brown spots probably caused by mold or the oxidation of iron particles in the paper support, mount, or backing. Can be localized or peppered all over

Pest Damage: surface loss, tunneling, holes, fly specks, etc., obviously caused by insects or other pests

Existing Repairs & Alterations

Inpainting: New areas of paint to restore design or color continuity; restricted to areas of loss

Overpainting: Areas of repainting over existing original surface

Previous Repair: Evidence of previous conservation work on an old defect

Residue: That which remains of prior coatings, treatments, etc.

Tape: Pressure-sensitive/water-based tapes attached to object etc.

Evidence of Manufacture

Inclusion: Particle accidentally bonded to the surface of an object during manufacture (e.g. within the paper fibres)

Creases from production: e.g. heavily inked areas on fine paper can produce wrinkles

Ink marks/smudges: from printmakers etc.

Signs of papermaking: e.g. knots in paper fibres, drip marks etc.

Purposeful abrasion: e.g. metalpoint