



# EXPRESSIVE ARTS CONSERVATION

## Resource Content

This resource focuses on the role of a conservator and gives students the opportunity to analyse the condition of an object.

## Experiences and Outcomes

Although this resource does not directly link to the Expressive Arts experiences and outcomes. It does demonstrate a real life job that is linked to the arts field.

## Interdisciplinary Learning Opportunities

*Social Studies - People, past events and societies*

SOC 1-02a - By exploring places, investigating artefacts and locating them in time, I have developed an awareness of the ways we remember and preserve Scotland's history.



## **FACT SHEET**

### **What is conservation?**

Conservation refers to the preservation, protection and care of our cultural heritage. Conservators aim to extend the usable life of an object for as long as possible.

Conservation can be broadly divided into two categories; interventive and preventative conservation. Interventive conservation involves treatment to address the chemical and physical effects of damage and deterioration that has already happened - tear repair, stain reduction, humidification and pressing, even washing for example. Preventive conservation addresses the elements that can affect the condition of an item - the environment, building structure, the storage or display systems for example.

### **What is a Conservator?**

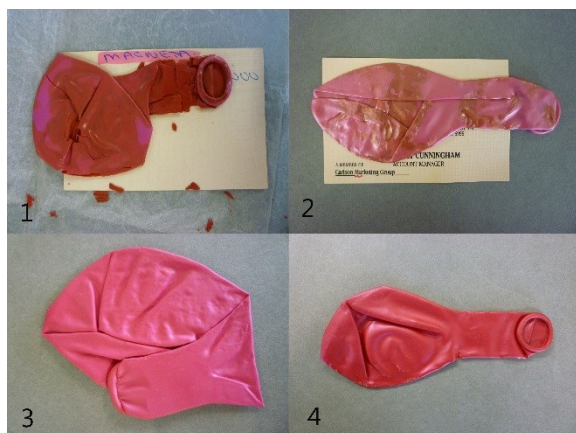
- Conservators work in museums, art galleries, archives or freelance to look after the objects and documents contained within them.
- Conservators tend specialise in a particular area depending on their interest, such as paper, paintings or objects.
- To become a conservator, you can either complete an undergraduate degree in conservation or an undergraduate degree in a related discipline followed postgraduate degree in conservation. There are some vocational routes in to the profession as well.

### **What is a condition report?**

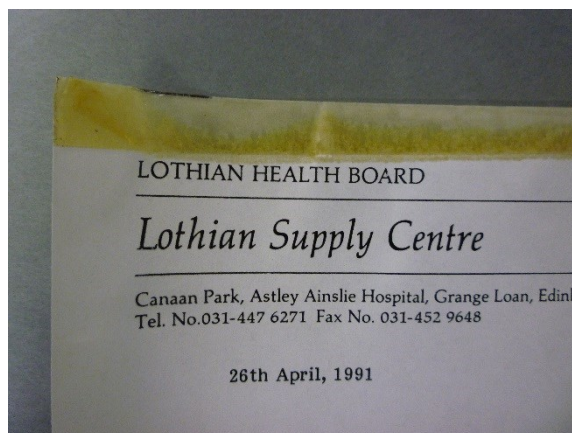
Before undertaking any conservation treatment, it is vital that the condition of the object is recorded. This includes detailing any damage to the object. Objects are also photographed fully before treatment and after treatment. This documentation highlights the condition issues affecting an item, aids in treatment decisions, and enables people who access an item in the present and future to understand the reasons for treatment and what has been done to an item and with which materials. This is important information if it is decided to reverse a treatment in the future.



## RESOURCE IMAGES



**EXA5.01**



**EXA5.02**



**EXA5.03**

Use the reference numbers below these images to help you find the corresponding downloadable images on the website.

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## **SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES**

### **1. Starter Activity - Class discussion**

- a. What is conservation?
- b. What is a Conservator?
- c. Why would you want to be a Conservator?
- d. What skills would you need to be a Conservator?
- e. Why do we need to conserve items?

### **2. Project – Write a condition report**

- a. Break into three groups. Each group is given a photograph of an item from LHSA's HIV/AIDS collections. Ask the groups to discuss the following questions:
  - i. What is the item made from?
  - ii. Who made it?
  - iii. How could it have been used at that time?
  - iv. How and where has it been damaged?
  - v. What might have caused this damage?
  - vi. Write a condition report using the template provided
  - vii. How would you fix this item?

### **3. Closing – Presentation**

- a. Explain your object and condition report to the class.



## ANSWERS

### EXA5.01

- Four balloons used in a health promotion campaign.
- Over times balloons have lost their flexibility and have become brittle.
- This is due to a loss of plasticiser. A plasticiser is a substance added to plastics to make them more flexible.
- This is a natural deterioration process for all plastics.

### EXA5.02

- A piece of paper with sticky tape at the top.
- Over time the adhesive on the sticky tape has become yellow.
- This is a natural deterioration process of sticky tape.
- Never use sticky tape on documents you want to keep for a long time!

### EXA5.03

- A newspaper.
- The newspaper was folded and stored in a cardboard box.
- Over time the newspaper has become yellow because the material (wood) used to make the paper has deteriorated.
- The folded areas have become very brown. This is because these areas were touching the cardboard box, which has become acidic as it aged. The acid from the box has transferred to the newspaper and caused the areas in contact to darken.



### Condition Report

Title		
Date		
Dimensions		
Materials Used		
<b>Condition</b>		
Surface Dirt		
Stain		
Creasing		
Tearing		
Areas of Loss		
Other		
<b>Treatment</b>		
<b>Photographic Documentation</b>		
Before Treatment	After Treatment	