



london  
transport  
museum

# Moquette

Collection care guidelines

MAYOR OF LONDON

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## INTRODUCTION

### Moquette collection

London Transport Museum is an educational and heritage preservation charity and Accredited museum. The Museum holds a collection of over 400 samples of moquette, dating from the 1920s to the present day. These guidelines provide information on labelling and storing moquette samples within museum collections.

Moquette is the durable, woollen seating material used on the Underground, buses, trams, trolleybuses and most recently, London's cable car over the Thames. Moquette was first applied to public transport seating in London in the 1920s. At that time the patterns were produced by the

manufacturers. With the creation of London Transport in the 1930s, designers were specially commissioned to create stylish, contemporary patterns for the Capital's transport system.

Derived from the French word for carpet, moquette is produced on looms using the Jacquard weaving technique. The pile is 85 per cent wool mixed with 15 per cent nylon and the backing is made of cotton. The weaving process has changed very little over time. The pile can be uncut (loop type), or made up of tufts (cut type) or can be a combination of both uncut and cut to make it extra hard-wearing.

## COLLECTION CARE

Before



After



### Labelling moquette

Labelling and marking museum objects is part of the SPECTRUM acquisition procedure required for Museum Accreditation. Each accessioned item must be marked or labelled with a unique number in a way that is as permanent as possible, without damaging the object. An object must be labelled to ensure that it can be linked to the specific information about it held by the museum.

Textiles can be labelled with their accession numbers using tags made from cotton tape, marked with ink, which are then sewn on to the object.

London Transport Museum's moquette collection was originally labelled with Tyvek labels and cable ties, which caused indentations in the pile of the moquette. All the samples have been relabelled with cotton tape labels, sewn on.





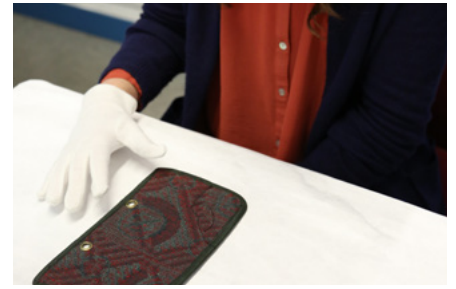
## Labelling moquette (continued)



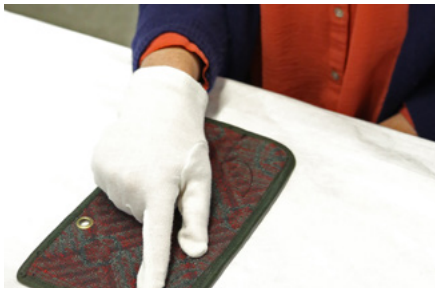
**CHECKLIST** Gloves, washed or unbleached cotton tape, fine cotton or polyester thread, scissors, needle and archival ink pen (water proof and does not bleed).



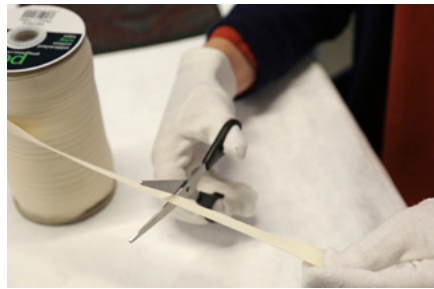
**1** Take the textile sample out of storage and place on a table covered with acid-free tissue paper or Tyvek.



**2** Assess the object to decide whether a sewn-on label is suitable. It must be possible to sew into the textile without causing damage. Never sew into a fabric that is in poor condition or fragile - use an alternative labelling method.



**3** Choose a location for the label. The label should be discreet, so it cannot be seen when on display. Be consistent as far as possible. For example, place on the top left corner on the back of every sample.



**4** Choose a cotton tape width and length that is suitable for the object and the length of the accession number. Cut the cotton tape with an extra 5mm at each end, to turn under. This avoids fraying.



**5** Write the reference number neatly on one side of the cotton label, with an archival ink pen. Ensure this is done at a safe distance from the textile sample.



**6** Turn under the raw edges of the cotton tape with a couple of stitches at each end using the fine cotton thread.



**7** Carefully attach the label using as few stitches as possible. Make sure the stitches don't go through the textile to the other side. Instead, sew between the fibres through the loops to secure the label.



**8** Assess the object to ensure the label is securely attached and won't catch on anything, which could damage the textile.







## Rolled storage for moquette

Rolling is an effective, efficient and space-saving storage method for flat textiles. Textiles that have either decorative beading or embroidery, or are layered or very fragile, might not be suitable for rolling. They should be stored flat.

It is advisable to use acid-free cardboard rolls or PVC drainpipe, cut to size. Ensure that the PVC drainpipe meets conservation standards before use. The diameter of the tube should be from 5-15cm, and the length 10cm longer than the textile.



**CHECKLIST** PVC drainpipe roll cut to size or acid-free cardboard tube, acid-free non-buffered tissue paper, scissors, archival ink pen (water proof and does not bleed), Tyvek label, cable tie, gloves, washed or unbleached cotton tape.



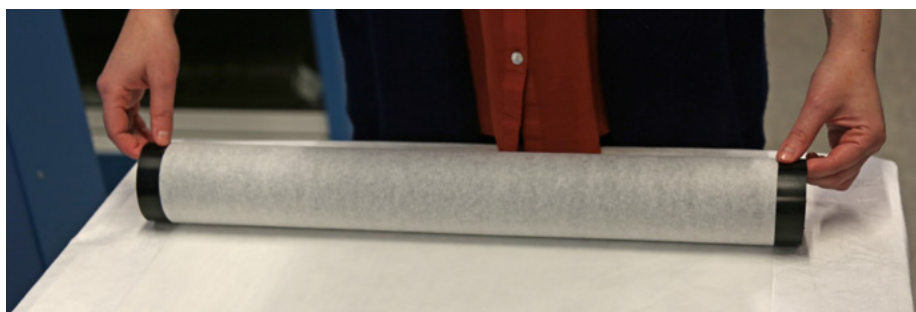
**1** Take the textile sample out of storage and place on a table covered with acid-free tissue paper or Tyvek.



**2** Assess the object to decide whether it is suitable to be rolled. Never roll a textile that is in poor condition, fragile, has beading, or is layered. Choose an alternative storage method. Be sure to remove all staples and pins before rolling.



**3** Ensure that the textile has a sewn-on label on the reverse (see 'labelling moquette' for guidance).



**4** Cover the PVC drainpipe roll or acid-free cardboard roll with two sheets of acid-free tissue paper, leaving 10cm of tissue paper unrolled at the end.





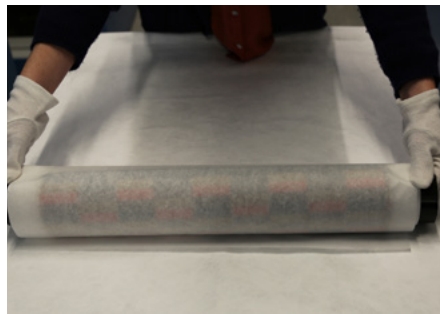
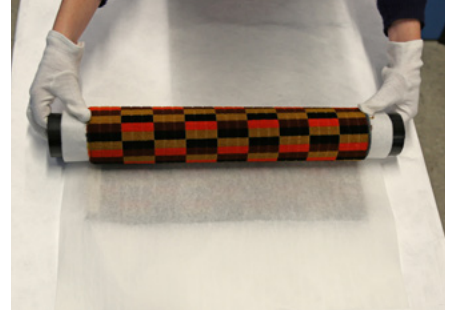
## Rolled storage for moquette (continued)



**5** Lay the textile flat on the acid-free tissue paper, ensuring that the textile is centred to the PVC pipe. If the textile has a pile, roll it face down so that the pile is on the outside of the roll. This puts the least strain on the fabric.



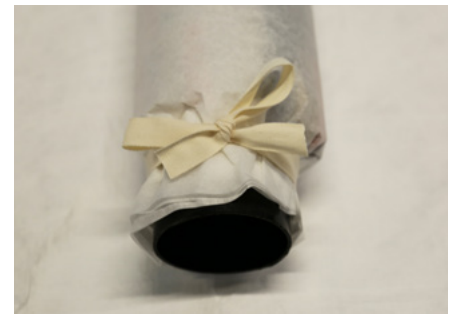
**6** Begin to roll, keeping the textile edges parallel to the edges of the acid-free tissue and aligned with the textile already rolled. The tissue forms an interleaving layer. If using sheets of tissue paper, add another when you come to the end of a sheet.



**7** When you get to the end, roll an extra layer of acid-free tissue paper around the object to protect the textile from dust and dirt.



**8** Cut two equal lengths of unbleached cotton tape, long enough to fit around the PVC roll.



**10** Write the accession number for the textile on a Tyvek label using an archival ink pen, so the textile is easily identifiable. Secure the label to the roll.

**11** The roll can now be returned to storage. To prevent the textile pile from compressing under its own weight, the roll will need to be supported. You can use Plastazote foam blocks. Cut a semi-circle or V-shape out of the Plastazote foam and this will hold the roll in place.

