

# Care and Maintenance

Recommendations for Artwork in  
the Fine Arts Collection  
U.S. General Services Administration



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The Fine Arts Collection  
U.S. General Services Administration**

U.S. General Services Administration  
Office of the Chief Architect  
Design Excellence and the Arts  
Fine Arts Program  
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# Introduction

**The Fine Arts Collection  
represents the history, culture,  
and ideals of America.**

**GSA is committed to properly  
maintaining and conserving  
these works of art so they can  
be both a joy and inspiration  
today and for the future.**

## Introduction

The Fine Arts Collection of the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) includes commissioned civic works of art that enhance the architecture of federal buildings; portable works of art commissioned under the federal patronage of the New Deal; works of art purchased with Art in Architecture (AiA) funds; and maquettes. The collection represents the history, culture, and ideals of our country. It is the mission of the Fine Arts Program to manage the portfolio of fine arts assets under GSA's stewardship to insure their location, accessibility, preservation, and appropriate use to enhance and promote superior workplaces for federal agencies and the public they serve.

## Conservation

**The profession devoted to the preservation of cultural property for the future. Conservation activities include examination, documentation, treatment, and preventive care, supported by research and education.**

–The American Institute for the Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (AIC)

Beginning in 1990, the Fine Arts Program initiated an agency-wide conservation program that identifies works of art that require conservation by inspecting artwork installed in each region every two years; developing a priority list of conservation projects based upon this inspection; implementing conservation projects through a National Conservation Contract; and assisting regions in the review, inspection, and acceptance of conservators and conservation work. Conservation is a two-step contracting process: (1) developing a professional condition assessment and treatment recommendation, and (2) performing treatment based upon the assessment and recommendations. The National Conservation Contract provides the mechanism for contracting conservation services on an agency-wide level. For the first time, qualified professional conservators are available to perform conservation projects for GSA. All principal conservators must be Professional Associates or Fellows of the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (AIC). Three firms, each with a geographic team, have provided these services since 1997:

- **Paintings** Page Conservation, Inc., Washington, DC
- **Sculpture** McKay Lodge Fine Arts Conservation Laboratory, Inc., Oberlin, OH
- **Textiles** Art Conservation Associates, Boston, MA
- **Architectural Arts** Art Conservation Associates, Boston, MA

## **Cyclic maintenance**

### **The periodic and routine maintenance of cultural property to insure its preservation.**

The National Conservation Contract also includes the preparation of maintenance instructions and cyclic maintenance plans for individual works of art that have been conserved. The cyclic maintenance guidelines contained in this document are generic in nature and are meant to be applied as appropriate for those works of art that have not received specific conservation treatment. These guidelines are based upon the experiences of the conservators who worked under the National Conservation Contract to assist GSA personnel in the care and maintenance of the artwork under their control. They reflect not only general information on specific material types and installation environments, but also specific situations encountered within GSA. Each section relates to a specific artistic media and material, and is meant to be used alone or in combination with other sections to address each unique artwork installation found in GSA buildings.

This document will be revised and enhanced as a maintenance program for GSA's Fine Arts Collection is developed.

It is our goal to prolong the time required for conservation through an active maintenance program thereby reducing conservation costs and preserving GSA's Fine Arts Collection for future generations.

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