

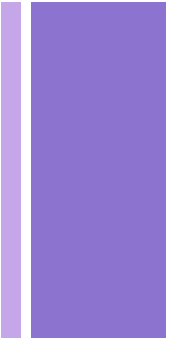
## Articulating Bodies

Developing and Disseminating New Tools for  
Historic Costume Display in Small Museums

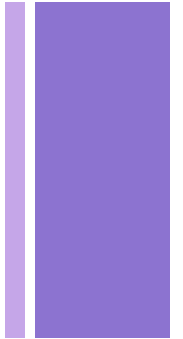
Camille Myers Breeze and Kate Herron Gendreau  
NEMA Conference 2016 | Portland, ME

# + Introduction

- We will **explore** the challenges *and* opportunities of mounting historic costume in the small museum environment

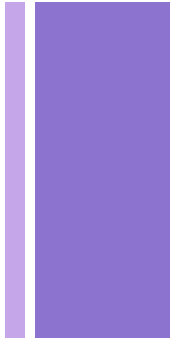


# + Introduction



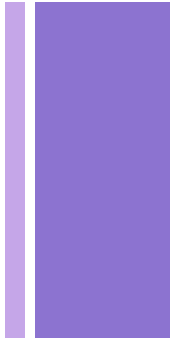
- We will **explore** the challenges *and* opportunities of mounting historic costume in the small museum environment
- We will **share** practical resources on preventative care of costume for collection managers

# + Introduction



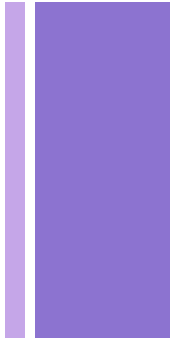
- We will **explore** the challenges *and* opportunities of mounting historic costume in the small museum environment
- We will **share** practical resources on preventative care of costume for collection managers
- We will **discuss** the non-verbal language of costume mounts and how they are at once a tool for preventative conservation and curatorial interpretation

# + Introduction



- We will **explore** the challenges *and* opportunities of mounting historic costume in the small museum environment
- We will **share** practical resources on preventative care of costume for collection managers
- We will **discuss** the non-verbal language of costume mounts and how they are at once a tool for preventative conservation and curatorial interpretation
- We will **consider** different methods and tools for mounting costume in relation to time, budgets, and in-house expertise

# + Introduction

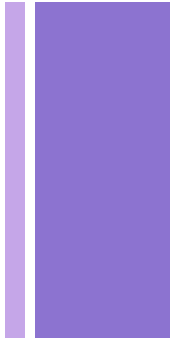


- We will **explore** the challenges *and* opportunities of mounting historic costume in the small museum environment
- We will **share** practical resources on preventative care of costume for collection managers
- We will **discuss** the non-verbal language of costume mounts and how they are at once a tool for preventative conservation and curatorial interpretation
- We will **consider** different methods and tools for mounting costume in relation to time, budgets, and in-house expertise
- We will **provide** an overview of the development and functionality of the Andover Figures costume-mounting system



# Introduction

## Guiding Questions



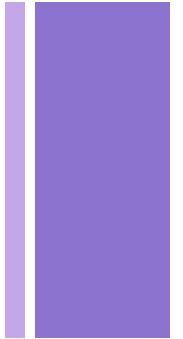
- Why address costume mounting?
- Why do store-bought dress forms not suffice?
- Where can we go from here?
- What is needed to move forward?
- What are my options?
- Which solution is right for my situation?
- How did we get here?



# The Opportunities

What Stories Can Clothing Tell?

- Personal identity
- Changing social constructs
- Industry and economics
- Gender/body politics
- Material culture
- To name just a few!

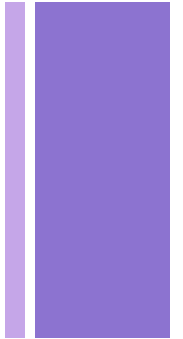






# The Opportunities

Fashion in the Museum



Charles James:  
Beyond  
Fashion.  
Metropolitan  
Museum of Art,  
Costume  
Institute, 2014.



# The Challenges

Why do store-bought dress forms not suffice?



All recent anonymous examples of costume mounting from small museums, historic houses, and societies across the New England region.



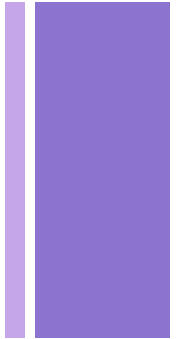
# The Challenges

## Form and Function



“Although mounts such as mannequins and dress stands can be purchased easily, they are rarely the right size and shape for historical costume and will often need adapting to fit. Underpinnings are also essential, not only as a substitute for historical frames such as paniers and crinolines, but as a supportive foundation, controlling the shape and arrangement of trousers, skirts, and sleeves.”

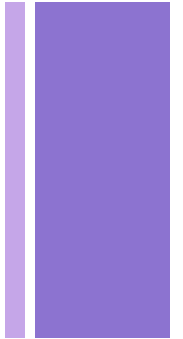
—Lara Flecker





# The Challenges

## Bridging the Divide



“Preparing a costume...can be a daunting prospect for someone who is unacquainted with mounting techniques, but, like any craft, it is something that can be taught and learned. Unfortunately, the lack of training courses and the scarcity of information on this subject has meant that many are expected to display costumes without any advice or assistance.”

—Lara Flecker

“There is...an enormous disparity in the educational content of museum exhibitions, as well as in the techniques employed and the types of costume displayed. This is related to the fact that, until fairly recently, there has been little or no formal academic and professional training for costume and textile curators.”

—Alexandra Palmer



# From Challenge to Opportunity

Communicating the Body Within

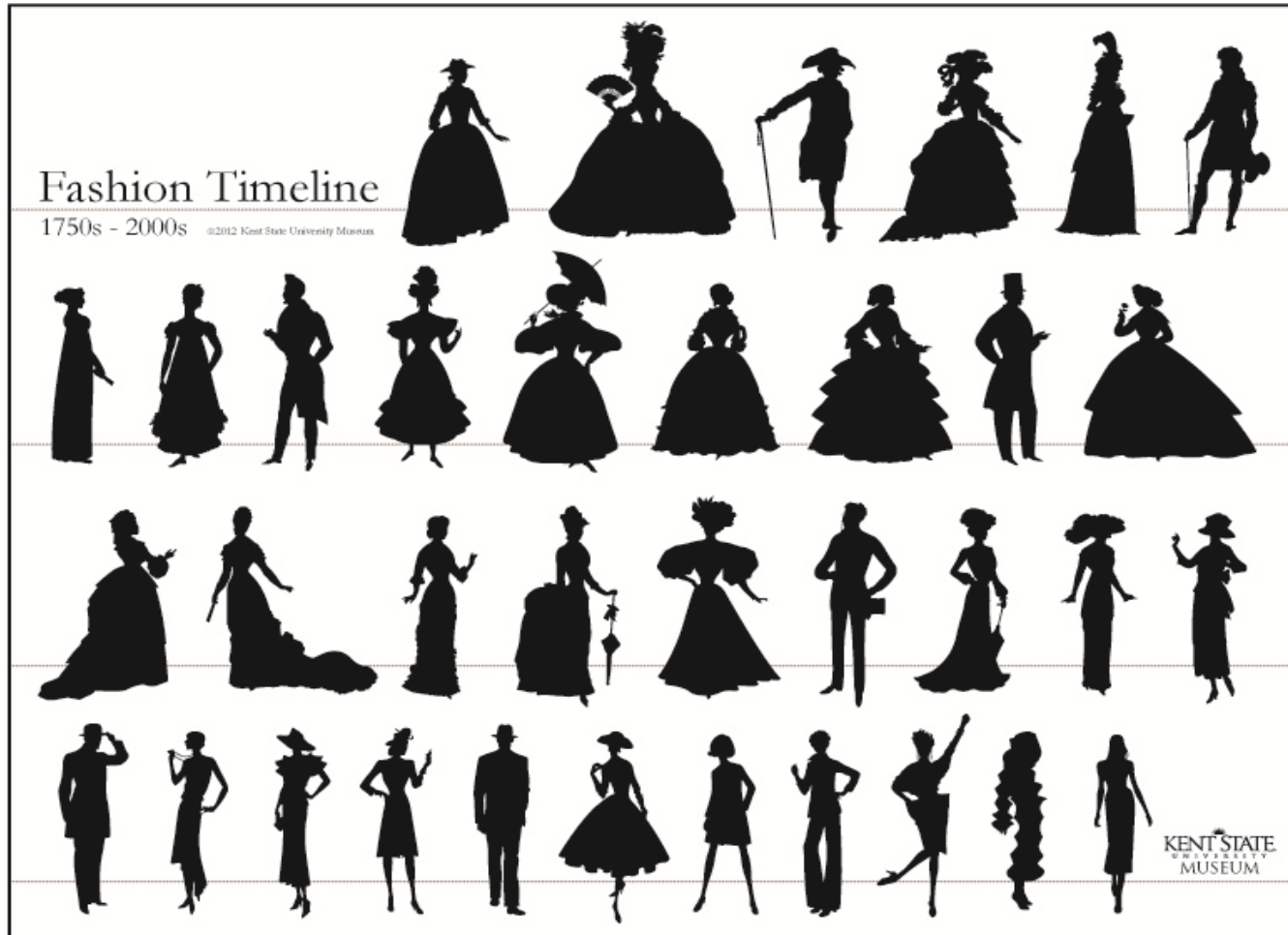


Costume Mounting—Before, During, After (Victoria and Albert Museum).



# Understanding Historic Silhouette

Clothes Make the (Wo/)Man



Fashion  
Timeline.  
Kent State  
University  
Museum,  
2012.



# Understanding Historic Silhouette

Where Can We Go From Here?



- University of Washington Digital Fashion Plate Collection <http://content.lib.washington.edu/costumehistweb/>
- Casey Fashion Plates <http://www.lapl.org/collections-resources/visual-collections>
- Kent State Visual Fashion Resources <http://libguides.library.kent.edu/c.php?g=278012&p=1853591>
- MET Costume Institute Collections <http://www.metmuseum.org/research/digital-collections/costume-institute>  
[http://www.metmuseum.org/collection/the-collection-online/search?&ft=\\*&deptids=8](http://www.metmuseum.org/collection/the-collection-online/search?&ft=*&deptids=8)

# + Today's Landscape

## What Are My Options?



Store Supply  
Warehouse

\$54-95

Non-archival/non  
customizable or quite  
costly to do so



University Products

\$826.75

Archival/customizable



Dorfman

\$625-1,845

Archival/customizable





# Handout:

## Display Systems Checklist



For each garment you wish to display, it is critical to weigh the following factors as you choose the best display system for your collection of historic dress.

Cost Effectiveness	What is the budget for your costume mounting project? What funding is needed for conservation treatments in order to stabilize and ready pieces for display?
Archival Safety	Are the costume mounts made of archival safe materials that will not harm the garment? What level of care is necessary for the garment?
Garment Condition	Does the garment have any tears, weak areas, unstable elements, stains, or fading that might make them unsuitable for display?
Garment Silhouette	Does the size and shape of your mount support the historic silhouette of the garment? If not, how easily can it be manipulated to correctly support it? Does the garment have a relatively simple silhouette that is straightforward to research and mount, or does it have more intricate details that require expert handling and knowledge?
Versatility	Is the costume mount intended for one time use or can it be repurposed for other exhibitions and garments? What size, shape, or gender is the costume mount compatible with?
Time	What kind of timeline does your exhibition need to meet? How much time can your staff set aside to safely dress each garment for display?
Staff Expertise	Does your museum staff have working knowledge of handling textiles and basic sewing skills? How much curatorial research will be needed to accurately interpret the garments for an engaging display?
Exhibition Space	Will your exhibition space accommodate a full 3D form or do you require a solution for a shallow space?

# + Cost Effectiveness



What is the budget for your costume-mounting project?  
What funding is needed for conservation treatments in order to stabilize and ready pieces for display?

# + Archival Safety



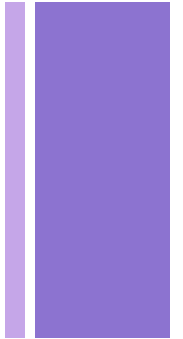
Are the costume mounts made of archival-safe materials that will not harm the garments?

What level of care is necessary for the garment?

# + Garment Condition



Does the garment have any tears, weak areas, unstable elements, stains, or fading that might make them unsuitable for display?

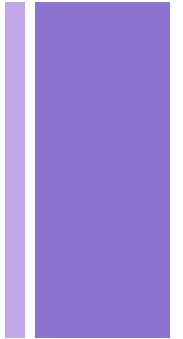


# + Garment Silhouette



Does the size and shape of your mount support the historic silhouette of the garment?

If not, how easily can it be manipulated to correctly support it?



# + Garment Silhouette



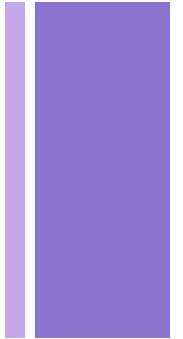
Does the garment have a relatively simple silhouette that is straightforward to research and mount, or does it have more intricate details that require expert handling and knowledge?

# + Versatility



Is the costume mount intended for one-time use or can it be repurposed for other exhibitions and garments?

What size, shape, or gender is the costume mount compatible with?

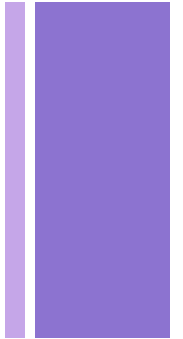


# + Time (and Space)



What kind of timeline does your exhibit need to meet?

How much time can your staff set aside to safely dress each garment for display?



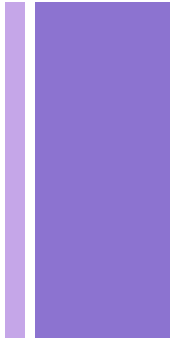


# + Staff Experience



Does your museum staff have working knowledge of handling textiles and basic sewing skills?

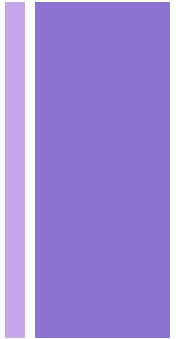
How much curatorial research will be needed to accurately interpret the garments for an engaging display?



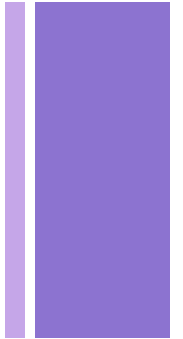
# + Exhibition Space



Will your exhibition space accommodate a full 3D form or do you require a solution for shallow space?



# + A New Solution



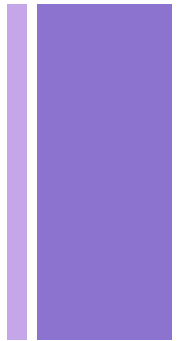


# A New Solution

How Did We Get Here?

Our partnership grew out of:

- Mutual interest in addressing the challenges of exhibiting historic costume in small museums.

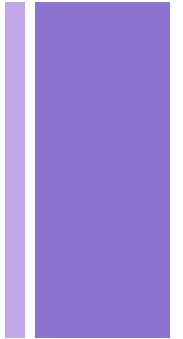




# A New Solution

How Did We Get Here?

- Desire to empower museum professionals and historic societies in a manner that did not sacrifice archival safety standards, museum resources, or the educational value of the visitor experience.





# A New Solution

How Did We Get Here?

- Kate's graduate research and capstone project that investigated the need for new tools and expertise to support small museum professionals working with fragile costume collections.

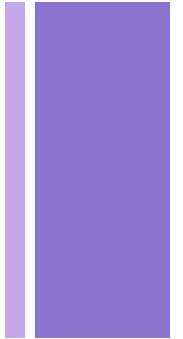




# A New Solution

How Did We Get Here?

- An MTS client need for a cost-effective but safe way to reinstall the costume in their small museum or historic house on a rotating basis.





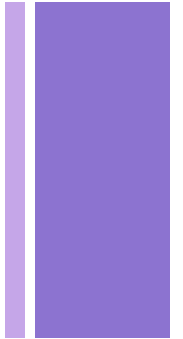
# A New Solution

## Andover Figures



Andover Figures is a costume-mounting system that includes:

- 10 different archival forms
- A kit for creating any historic silhouette
- Show fabric comes in a variety of skin tones
- Instructional booklet
- Hands-on training





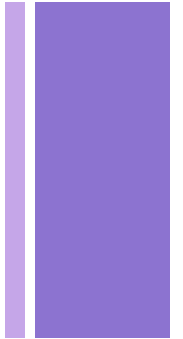


# A New Solution

## Andover Figures



- 100% archival materials
- Manikins compatible with any 5/8-inch pole
- Suspension forms hang from a bracket or stand
- Customizable and reusable
- Priced between \$150 and \$250 dollars





# Handout: Andover Figures Product Line



P.O. Box 5004  
Andover, MA 01810  
[www.andoverfigures.com](http://www.andoverfigures.com)  
[andoverfigures@gmail.com](mailto:andoverfigures@gmail.com)

## ANDOVER FIGURES PRODUCT LINE

Andover Figures carries four gender-neutral sizes suitable for children's, women's, and smaller men's garments:



**The Andover (M1)**  
17.75" x 10" x 4"  
\$150



**The Cambridge (M2)**  
18.25" x 18" x 4"  
\$200



**The Hampton (M3)**  
19" x 19" x 4"  
\$250



**The Shelburne (M4)**  
20.25" x 20" x 4"  
\$250

Two suspension forms are designed specifically for medium- to large-sized men's garments, as well as unisex items such as shawls, tribal blankets, and capes:



**The Exeter (S1)**  
23" x 18.5" x 2"  
\$150



**The Danbury (S2)**  
29" x 18.5" x 2"  
\$200

Four suspension forms are designed for women, but are also appropriate for smaller men's and unisex garments.



**The Newport (S3)**  
33" x 15" x 2"  
\$150



**The Dennison (S4)**  
35" x 16.5" x 2"  
\$200



**The Kennebunk (S5)**  
27" x 15" x 2"  
\$150



**The Portsmouth (S6)**  
34" x 20" x 2"  
\$200



# A New Solution

## Andover Figures

### Table of Contents



*The Andover Figures System* ..... 4  
 FORM OPTIONS ..... 4  
 STANDS ..... 4  
 CHOOSING A FORM ..... 6  
 MEASURING A GARMENT ..... 7  
 PURCHASING ANDOVER FIGURES ..... 7

*Preparing Garments for Display* ..... 8  
 CHOOSING SUITABLE GARMENTS ..... 8  
 SURFACE CLEANING AND REDUCING WRINKLES ..... 8  
 ESTABLISHING HISTORIC SILHOUETTES ..... 9

*Costume Mounting* ..... 10  
 PADDING THE TORSO ..... 10  
 SHAPING THE BUST ..... 10  
 ADDING LIMBS ..... 11  
 SUPPORTING SKIRTS ..... 11  
 APPLYING SHOW FABRIC ..... 12  
 INCORPORATING ACCESSORIES ..... 12

*Display Considerations* ..... 13  
 ENVIRONMENT ..... 13  
 LIGHTING ..... 13  
 PREVENTING THEFT AND DAMAGE ..... 13

*Resource Guide* ..... 14  
 SUPPLIES ..... 14  
 READINGS IN COSTUME AND TEXTILE CARE ..... 14  
 READINGS IN COSTUME HISTORY ..... 15  
 READINGS IN COSTUME MOUNTING ..... 15

*Other Services* ..... 16

*Acknowledgements* ..... 17

*Author Biographies* ..... 18

# + A New Solution Andover Figures

TABLE V:

Compatible Garments and Forms		
	Manikin	Suspension Form
Dress	✓	✓ *
Bodice	✓	✓
Shawl/cape	✓	✓
Uniform/suit		✓
Vest	✓	✓
Jacket/coat	✓	✓
Bathing suit		✓

\*Except for voluminous skirts

## *Measuring a Garment*

Measuring your garment is the next step toward determining which Andover Figure is the right choice. First lay the garment flat on a large, clean surface. Arrange it as if all buttons and hooks were closed (you need not actually close them.) Measure the exterior, rather than the interior of the garment to avoid excess handling. Measurements should be rounded up to the nearest half inch.



Garments should be laid flat on a clean surface when taking measurements.

### **Women's Clothing**

Record the following measurements in inches:

- Across the narrowest point of the waist when flat (not circumference)
- Across the bust at the under arms (not circumference)
- Shoulder to the narrowest point of the waist
- Waist to front hem of skirt/pant

### **Men's Clothing**

Record the following measurements in inches:

- Across the narrowest point of the waist when flat (not circumference)
- Shoulder seam to shoulder seam
- Shoulder to the narrowest point of the waist
- Waist to hem of pant

### **Unstructured Clothing**

Record the following measurements in inches:

- Shoulder seam to shoulder seam
- Shoulder to hem

## *Purchasing Andover Figures*

Once you have decided which Andover Figure you need, ordering is easy. You can use the enclosed custom order form for women's or men's/unisex clothing, or download additional copies from [www.andoverfigures.com](http://www.andoverfigures.com). Please use one order form for each type of Andover Figure you are purchasing.

Completed order forms should be scanned and emailed to [andoverfigures@gmail.com](mailto:andoverfigures@gmail.com). Order forms can also be mailed to Andover Figures, PO Box 5004, Andover, MA 01810. All orders will be acknowledged within three business days of receipt. Payment in full is due prior to shipment of your order. Local customers can arrange for pickup to avoid shipping charges.



# A New Solution Andover Figures

ding material such as polyester felt is excellent for constructing conical, push-up, and unibosom shapes. All but the final padding with a light material such as nylon net should be held within the sheath

## Adding Limbs

The legs of nylon hose are a built-in system for padding out any sleeves that a garment may have. Most sleeves are supported well with a few handfuls of polyester fiberfill. You aren't trying to fill the sleeves, just prevent them from falling flat from the shoulders. When finished filling the arms, knot the end of the nylon hose and roll back any excess so that it can't be seen. Balloon or Leg-o-Mutton sleeves will need additional light padding outside of the hose. Nylon net is the ideal material and is nearly invisible inside a sheer sleeve.

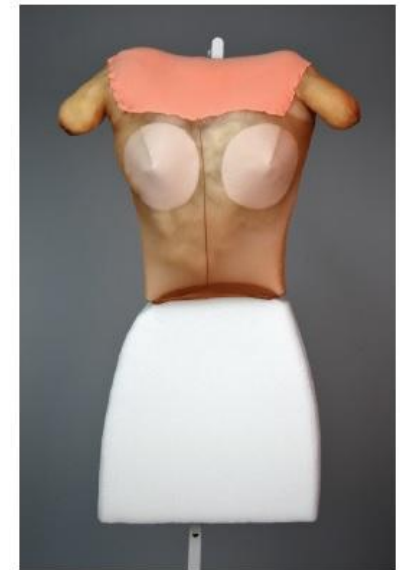


Less is more! Overstuffing arms can create an undesirable bowed shape. Use less stuffing just below the shoulder to help create a more natural posture.

Legs can be added to Andover Figures suspension forms using a second pair of nylon hose. Cut the feet off and insert polyester fiberfill, high-loft batting, or nylon net into the legs to give the suggestion of thighs and backside. Again, less is more to avoid lumps showing when the pants are on. Place the padded legs onto the bottom of the suspension form and align the waistband at waist level before dressing the pants.

## Supporting Skirts

Fitting the waist band of a garment to the Andover Figure is just the first step in supporting the skirt. Additional padding often must be used to create the bell, hoop, or bustle shape originally achieved with the aid of petticoats and crinolines. It is poor museum practice to use historic undergarments when dressing costume, so alternatives must be sought. Some skirts can be supported with rolls of acid-free tissue, nylon net, or polyester felt placed around the hips of the form. These materials can be basted to the sheath if necessary to hold them in place. Check that the hem of the skirt is parallel to the floor (with the exception of any train).



A nylon sheath secures padding on the torso and is held in place with two notches cut into the side of a suspension form (S4). Polyester felt helps to smooth and shape the bust before show fabric has been basted on at the neck.



# Handout: Resource Guide

- Costume mounting and collections care supplies
- Readings in costume and textile care
- Readings in costume mounting
- Readings in Costume History



P.O. Box 5004  
Andover, MA 01810  
[www.andoverfigures.com](http://www.andoverfigures.com)  
[andoverfigures@gmail.com](mailto:andoverfigures@gmail.com)

## ANDOVER FIGURES RESOURCE GUIDE

### *Supplies*

#### **www.fabric.com or local fabric stores**

Cotton and cotton/polyester knit fabrics, fine nylon net, polyester fiberfill, polyester batting, curved upholstery needles, sewing thread, goat hair artist brush.

#### **www.mieleusa.com and fine vacuum retailers**

You do not need an expensive vacuum to safely clean historic textiles. We recommend Miele canister vacuums because they have excellent filtration, feature variable-suction control, are built to last, and cost as little as \$300.

#### **www.storesupply.com**

The Store Supply Warehouse catalog carries three stands compatible with Andover Figures. Round wood manikin stands are available in black (SKU #70385) and natural wood (SKU #70384). Tripod wood manikin stands come in black (SKU #70383), white (SKU #70407), and natural wood (SKU #70382). Adjustable metal costumers, ideal for displaying suspension forms, are sold in black (SKU #70156), white (SKU #70157), and metallic grey (SKU #60468).

#### **www.universityproducts.com, www.talasonline.com, various archival supply catalogues**

Polyester felt, polyester batting, polyester film (Melinex®), UV-filtering lightbulb sleeve, UV filtering window film, acid-free tissue, acid-free storage boxes, micro-vacuum tools.

### *Readings in Costume and Textile Care*

Lennard, Frances and Patricia Ewer. *Textile Conservation: Advances in Practice*. Routledge, 2010. Print. ISBN 978-0750667906.

Mailand, Harold F. and Dorothy Stites Alig. *Preserving Textiles: A Guide for the Non Specialist*. Indianapolis Museum of Art, 1999. Print. ISBN 978-0936260716.

Museum Textile Services Handouts. Web. < [www.museumtextiles.com/resources](http://www.museumtextiles.com/resources) >

National Park Service Museum Handbook, Part I: Curatorial Care of Textile Objects. National Park Service, 2002. Web. < [www.nps.gov/museum/publications/MHI/Appendix%20K.pdf](http://www.nps.gov/museum/publications/MHI/Appendix%20K.pdf) >

Robinson, Jane and Tuula Pardoe. An Illustrated Guide to the Care of Costume and Textile Collections. Museums & Galleries Commission, 2000. Web. < [www.monheritage.mn/files/method/Care%20of%20Costumes%20and%20Textiles.PDF](http://www.monheritage.mn/files/method/Care%20of%20Costumes%20and%20Textiles.PDF) >

Textile Specialty Group Catalog. American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works. Web. < [www.conservation-wiki.com/wiki/Textiles](http://www.conservation-wiki.com/wiki/Textiles) >

### *Readings in Costume Mounting*

Flecker, Laura. *A Practical Guide to Costume Mounting*. Routledge, 2012. Print. ISBN 978-0415657914.  
Clothes Tell Stories: Costume Workbook. ICOM Costume Committee, 2015. Web. < [www.clothestellstories.com](http://www.clothestellstories.com) >

Notarfrancisco, Sabrina. "Mounting an Exhibit of Historical Costumes." Theater Design and Technology Summer, 2013: 42–52. Web. < [tdt.usitt.org/GetPDF.aspx?PDF=49-3Bentonexhibit](http://tdt.usitt.org/GetPDF.aspx?PDF=49-3Bentonexhibit) >



# Handout: Resource Guide

- Other Services



P.O. Box 5004  
Andover, MA 01810  
[www.andoverfigures.com](http://www.andoverfigures.com)  
[andoverfigures@gmail.com](mailto:andoverfigures@gmail.com)

## ANDOVER FIGURES RESOURCE GUIDE

### *Other Services*

In addition to developing and producing Andover Figures, Camille Myers Breeze and Kate Herron Gendreau are dedicated to supporting museums with the services, skills, and tools needed to deliver high-quality costume exhibits:



#### **Andover Figures Training Sessions** [www.andoverfigures.com](http://www.andoverfigures.com)

Andover Figures provides hands-on training sessions for your small museum. We will teach your staff and volunteers how to mount garments for display using Andover Figures manikins and suspension forms. We also cover how to choose appropriate garments, reduce surface wrinkles, and perform surface cleaning. Contact us for details and pricing.



#### **Exhibit and Collections Consultation** [www.khgarts.com](http://www.khgarts.com)

As Principal of KHG Arts, Kate Herron Gendreau supplies expertise and services to support the care and interpretation of museum textile collections. KHG Arts provides comprehensive collection inventories and rehousing, exhibition research and development, as well as programming opportunities that establish clear and engaging links between textile collections and the techniques, art forms, and historical value they represent.



#### **Textile Conservation** [www.museumtextiles.com](http://www.museumtextiles.com)

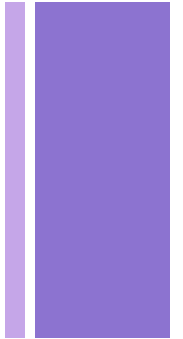
Camille Myers Breeze founded Museum Textile Services in 1999. MTS provides a full range of textile conservation treatments including conservation assessments, on-site surveys, cleaning, stabilization, and archival storage for historic clothing and textiles. Their website is a renowned destination for textile conservation information, instructional handouts, and the MTS Blog.



#### **Textile Training** [www.campbellcenter.org](http://www.campbellcenter.org)

The Campbell Center for Historic Preservation Studies in Mount Carroll, Illinois, offers a wide-range of Collections Care courses. Camille Myers Breeze teaches two textile conservation courses annually: Displaying Historic Textiles and Textile Stabilization Using Sheer Overlays. Harold F. Mailand teaches Introduction to Textile Preservation, Textile Preservation: Guided Practice and Technique, and Advanced Textile Preservation. Steven Rosengard teaches the Mannequin Making Workshop. Three certificate programs are offered including two in collections care.

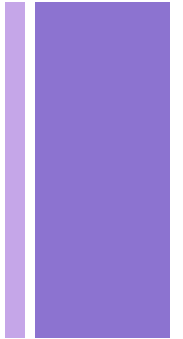
# + Handouts



- All handouts featured in this presentation (as well as a PDF version of this PPT) will be available on the NEMA Website [www.nemanet.org](http://www.nemanet.org).
- App for NEMA.
  1. Get “Whova” from the App Store or Google Play
  2. Sign with your social media account or email
  3. If you are asked to enter an event-specific passcode, please enter [nema2015](#)



# + Contact us



- Got questions? Learn more about Andover Figures, Kate, and Camille here:

[www.andoverfigures.com](http://www.andoverfigures.com)

[www.khgarts.com](http://www.khgarts.com)

[www.museumtextiles.com](http://www.museumtextiles.com)

# + Acknowledgements

Anne Bissonnette, Associate Professor of Material Culture and Curatorship and Curator of the Clothing and Textile Collection at the University of Alberta

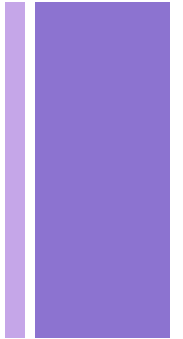
Katherine Burton Jones, Director of the Museum Studies Program at Harvard University Extension School

John Dunphy, Vice President and General Manager of University Products, Inc.

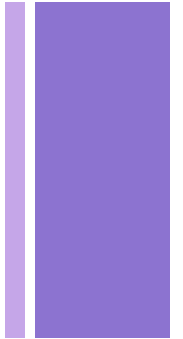
Jennifer Emerson, author and museum consultant

Leah Niederstadt, Assistant Professor of Museum Studies and Art History and Curator of the Permanent Collection at Wheaton College

Jan Williams, Curator of the Buttonwoods Museum at Haverhill Historical Society



# + Works Cited



Conservation Dress Form. N.D. University Products The Archival Company. UniversityProducts. Web.

Dorfman Conservation Forms. N.D. Dorfman Museum Figures Inc. MuseumFigures. Web.

Fashion Timeline, 1750–2000. 2012. Kent State University Museum. Kentstateuniversitymuseum. Web.

Flecker, Lara. *A Practical Guide to Costume Mounting*. London: Routledge, 2012. Print.

Harper's Bazaar. Dress and theLady. 1856. Harper's Brothers. New York Public Library Digital Gallery, 2005. Web.

Lucien, Lelong. Bergdorf Goodman sketches : Lelong 1931-1948, Image i2078811\_002. Metropolitan Museum of Art Costume Institute Digital Collections. Web.

Miller, Keira. An 18th Century Bride and an Introduction to Costume Mounting. *VAM*. The Victoria and Albert Museum, 11 December 2013. Web.

Palmer, Alexandra. "Untouchable: Creating Desire and Knowledge in Museum Costume and Textile Exhibitions." *Exhibitionism*. Spec. issue of *Fashion Theory* 12.1 (2008): 31–64. Web.

Plastic Female Full Body Mannequin, Headless. StoreSupply. Store Supply Warehouse LLC., N.D. Web.

Yannetta, Tiffany. Inside the Anna Wintour Costume Center's Charles James Exhibit. *NY.racked*. Vox Media Inc., 5 May 2014. Web.