

“Before beginning work, examine the materials closely to determine if the surface characteristics, media, and /or condition require that cleaning be under taken by a conservator. Examples of materials in this category include pastel, charcoal, graphite pencil, colored pencil, and water color renderings or drawing;”

The above quote stands out from the reading material that covers in depth what to do with pretty much everything else. There came a point where I started to feel that there was a redundancy in the text that would refer so much to what you could not do with these particular materials. As noted above the solution was always to take the material to a conservator. What I would like to know is what the conservator would do with these materials.

From an artist’s stand point, there is a product called spray fix that is used to ‘fix’ a work of pastel, charcoal, chalk, graphite pencil, and colored pencil. This product allows the media to become permanent so that you can continue to work on top of it without smudging the work. Granted, I do not know the chemical makeup of this product, but I would look into it as a first choice for conserving those particular materials.

Watercolor materials will generally not flake or crack but are vulnerable to continued water damage. Gouache paints (an opaque watercolor used more often in architectural renderings) when used very thickly will crack and flake and is also water reactive at any time.

Other than the issue above, I found the text to be informative and as mentioned by a classmate the drawings in the appendix were the most memorable. I feel that this book is a manual more so to be pulled out and studied over and over as you are learning the ‘proper’ technique. Of all the various things to do and not do, I feel pretty comfortable at sitting down for a few hours and removing/replacing old paper clips. I did look for the part about vinegar, but I think I missed it somehow.

I get the feeling that the ways in the book are not always adhered to, I say this based on photographs of many archivist seen holding materials without the proverbial white gloves, both in the book, in images from my adopted archives, and in images from the recent press release for the VSU archives. I guess that the gloves are only needed when handling photographs or other delicate objects. From an archivist point of view when is an object, book, or manuscript considered delicate enough to pull out the gloves?