

Think Outside of the Box: Displaying Paper Objects Without Using Classic Methods

Toilet paper is one of our daily necessities. However, when it becomes a museum object that needs to be carefully treated and stored, it takes a lot of effort because of its light, thin, and soft properties. This essay targets preventive conservation of the toilet tissue object by utilizing friction and static electricity. Unlike other paper objects, toilet paper has unique properties; for example, it is thinner to be torn apart, lighter to be blown away, and more sensitive to moisture. For those reasons, we need to preserve and display this kind of object differently than we would more typical paper objects.

We focus on how to preserve and display this kind of object by choosing suitable materials and trying different methods of fixing museum objects. Due to its vulnerable structure and hygroscopic features, we avoid using any adhesive on the object directly. Instead, we try to use friction and static electricity. First, we made use of the storage methods traditionally used for textiles and fiber objects to fix the via friction. Through friction tests, we found the object could sit steadily on the textile. Then, we made a deep window with an inner tray for each toilet paper object. Last, we fixed the object with imperceptible strips to preserve sliding and falling. We also found static electricity could function to hold the toilet tissue object.

The object is a manuscript written by Lu Hsiu-lien on toilet paper with a ballpoint pen when she was imprisoned

during the Kaohsiung Incident in 1979. This manuscript focuses on New Feminism and the political issue she has long been concerned with, which is quite important in the development of both society and politics in Taiwan. The manuscript used to be displayed on a poster by sticking it to copy paper with double-sided tape, which resulted in deterioration. As a result, it required treatment when it was housed in the National Museum of Taiwan Literature.

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