

DIGITAL AGNES

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Prepping a Garment for a Photo Shoot

Patterns for All Bodies: Repatterning the Collection of Canadian Dress at Agnes
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SPEAKERS

Marissa Monette

KEYWORDS

Museum collections, conservation science, fashion history, Collection of Canadian Dress

TRANSCRIPT

[Music]

Marissa Monette: My name is Marissa Monette. I am the Conservation Technician here at the Agnes and I'm currently doing some conservation work in preparation for mounting the teagown for photography to go along with the *Patterns for All Bodies* project. For mounting for photography, instead of focusing just on the structure and the stability for storage, I'm also going to be looking at the surface and at the appearance to ensure that there's no interruption to the visual interpretation of the viewer. A big part of my conservation work that I'll be focusing on is to be doing some lost compensation, because there are a lot of tears in those particular areas. So, I'll be doing a silk crepe line underlay and I'll be bridging those tears with a colour-matched mercerized cotton bridge which then I'll use a buttonhole stitch. And I'll hold those pieces together with some insect pins and then I'll use hair silk which is stable and very, very thin so it won't be noticeable to the eye. So, that when it is being photographed and those detail shots are being focused on there won't be any interruption to that interpretation. In addition, on the hemline I'll be doing a silk crepe line underlay with weft stabilization stitches because there is an inherent weakness in the way that the stripes on the fabric were constructed. And it has caused the way that the fabric was bent underneath the hem and the way that that was abraded as probably the wearer walked, it has come apart. So, I'll be replacing – placing each thread carefully and then replacing the weft with hair silk once again. And then the next step in this process will be really to look at the size of the gown and really get to know the wearer and the original wearer of this dress so that I can prepare a mannequin and then also prepare any undergarments required to really appropriately display the silhouette of the tea gown when it is mounted for photography. The silhouette is very important because it was the way that the garments were designed and the way that we present them in photography is the way we want to most accurately honour those original dressmakers and those original pattern makers from those eras. Not only for historical context from a research perspective but also visually for the viewer to really start to understand and put a painting together in their mind that that era was going to be like. In addition, when you take into account the silhouette when you are mounting, especially for more fragile pieces in the collection, they are

constructed to distribute their weight in very specific areas. So, the strength of the garment lies in the way that the silhouette is put together. So, we need to ensure that we are supporting those areas of strength by using replica bustles and petticoats to ensure that there's no damage and there's no further issues that will arise based on the handling and the manipulation that we need to do when we do put a garment like the tea gown on a mannequin for photography.