

ABSTRACT

Hidden Tricks and Sword Grips

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In planning a mount two important questions are what aspects of the object are important for viewers to see and if there are any elements of fragility. When multiple aspects need to be seen for the object to be understood or the objects fragility limits the possibility of displaying it to convey its intent, this can be complicated. In this talk I discuss a case study from the V&A's theatre collection where these aspects combined, leading to the need for some interesting solutions.

When displaying theatre costume elements we try to present them as the audience would see them, often with some sense of the animation these pieces would have had on stage. The Victorian costume for the demon, Mephistopheles included a shoe and glove used to create special effects during a sword fight on stage. It was important to see the bland side that the audience would have seen as well as the way that the special effects worked. The glove in particular was also quite fragile, limiting our ability to convey the grip of the sword. I'll show how using floating mounts with a mirror and an articulated acrylic hand we were able to highlight the hidden tricks of these objects and safely bend the glove into a sword grip.

BIO

Jo Dickinson

Transitioning into museum work after studying Archaeology, Jo has worked at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (2016-2022) and the National Army Museum, London (2014-2016).

She has been involved with mounting, preparing, packing and installing objects throughout her time at these institutions, working on projects related to both long term display and temporary or travelling exhibitions. Jo has an interest in Conservation, which has led to further studies and the development of knowledge and practices she includes in her mounting approach.