Mounts
for long term storage:

2 projects at the Oakland Museum of California's Collections and Research Center

Materials, Techniques and Results of Two Collections Rehousing Projects:

American Indian Baskets

Historic European American Hats

Storage mounts support the objects, reduce direct handling, and increase collection access.

Now our registrars may immediately and safely access objects for research and curatorial purposes

The individual mount trays conform to standardized sizes, calculated to save shelf space

An example of mounts providing access: Native Council members curating baskets in OMCA's History Gallery.

The mounts allowed 225 baskets to be safely transported into the gallery from our off-site storage facility. Non-staff community members worked with the baskets. No direct handling was necessary until the objects were actually installed.

MATERIALS

- *Ethafoam*
- *backer rod*
- *Tyvek*
- *archival corrugated cardboard*
- *sheet and loose batting*
- *Impulse sealer*
- *bamboo skewers*
- *cotton and polyester Stockinette*
- *twill tape*
- *hot glue*
- *Mylar*
- *magnets*
- *Volara*








The basket grant was the first of these projects to be completed.
Image taken during the re-housing: Basket hats on their trays.

The Basket Grant

- *Date of Project: 2007/ 2008, Funded by a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services*
- *# of Baskets Housed: 2,582*
- *Labor: 4 technicians & 1 registrar, 6 months full time*
- *Object Origin: Mostly California tribes but also including examples from Southwest, Eastern Woodland, and Northwest Coast cultures.*
- *Object Dates: from the late 1800s to the 1920s*

BEFORE:

Baskets sealed in plastic bags without mounts on open pallet racking (the plastic bags trapped mercury gas).

AFTER:

Baskets on individual storage mounts in compactor shelving

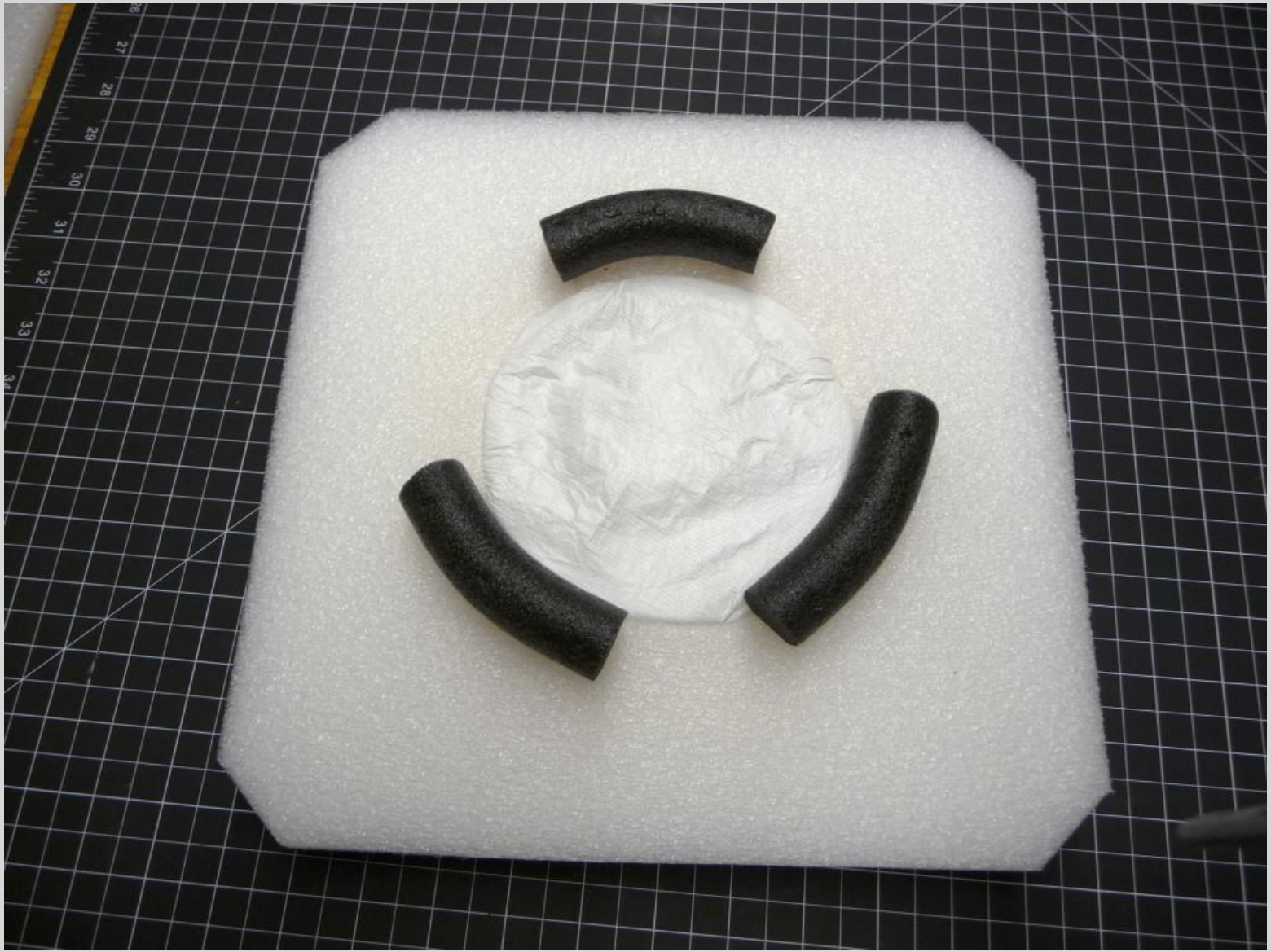
Those same hats on their shelving

Many of the mounts were quite elaborate, as needed to support basket elements or breaks in the material.

The majority of the mounts were simple, as in the mount for this Pomo basket.

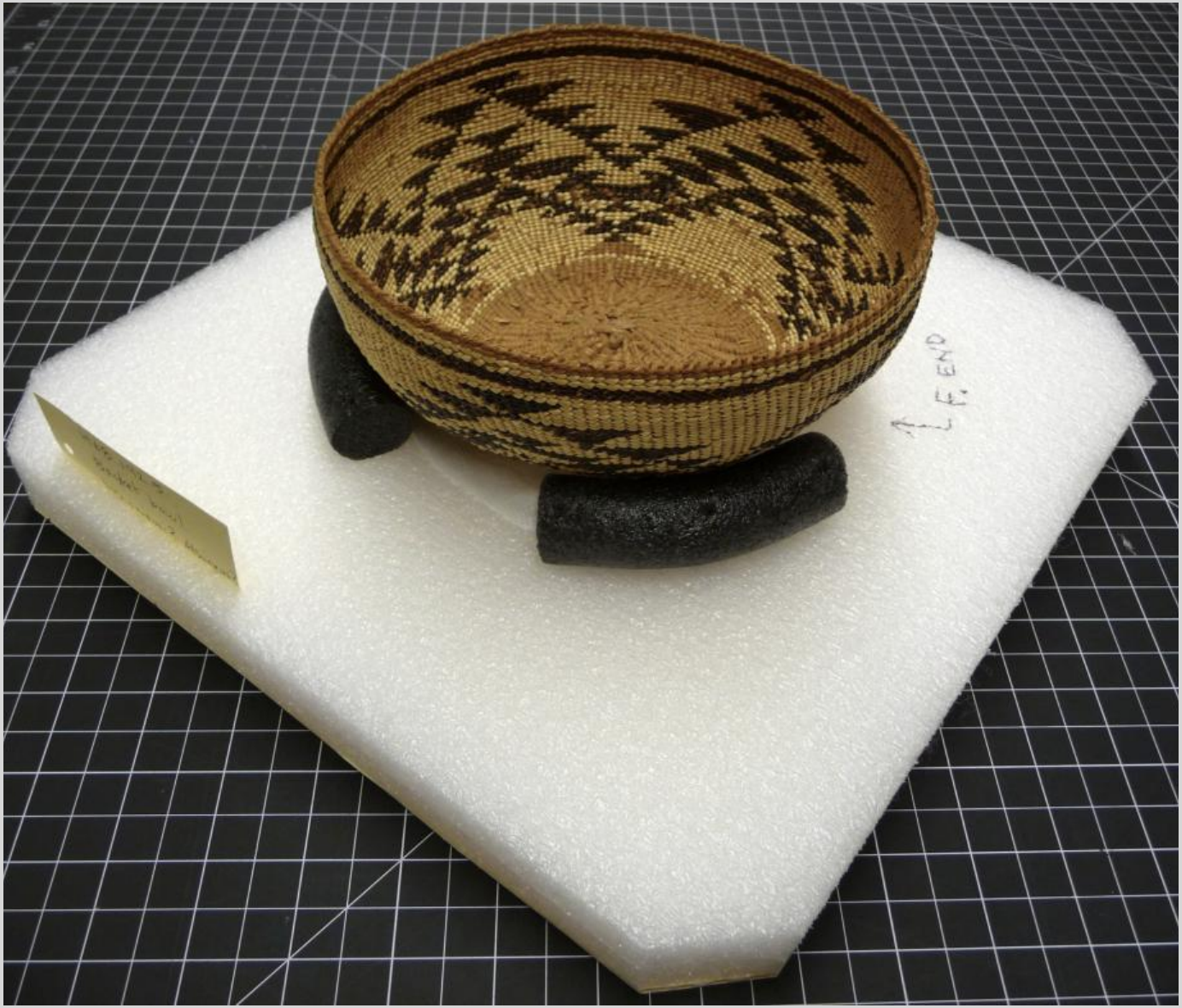
Please note that the registration tag and the accession number are written directly on the mount tray

TECHNIQUE: a simple mount

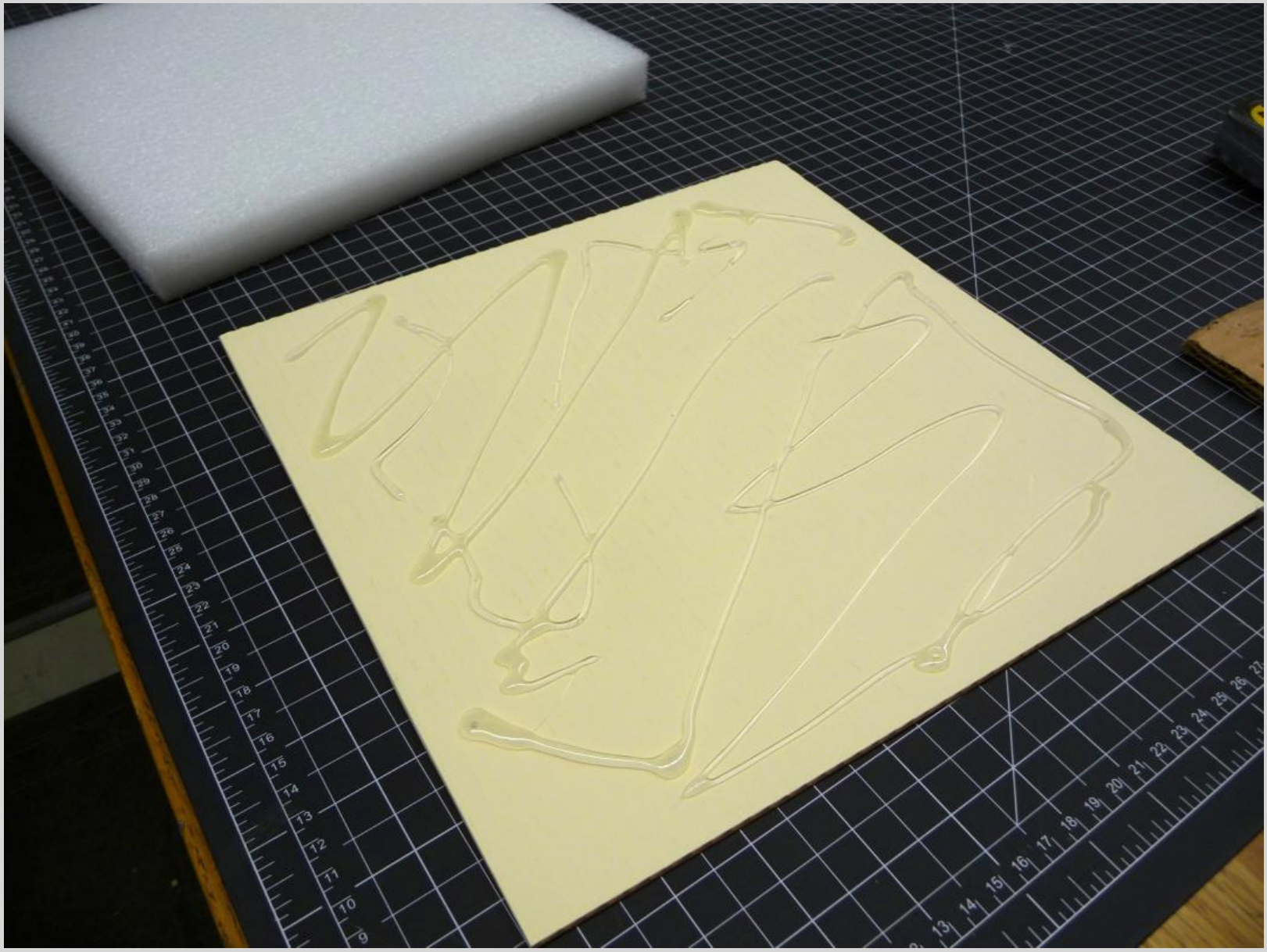


Klamath River basket bowl.

A Feature of this piece is that it has a round bottom.

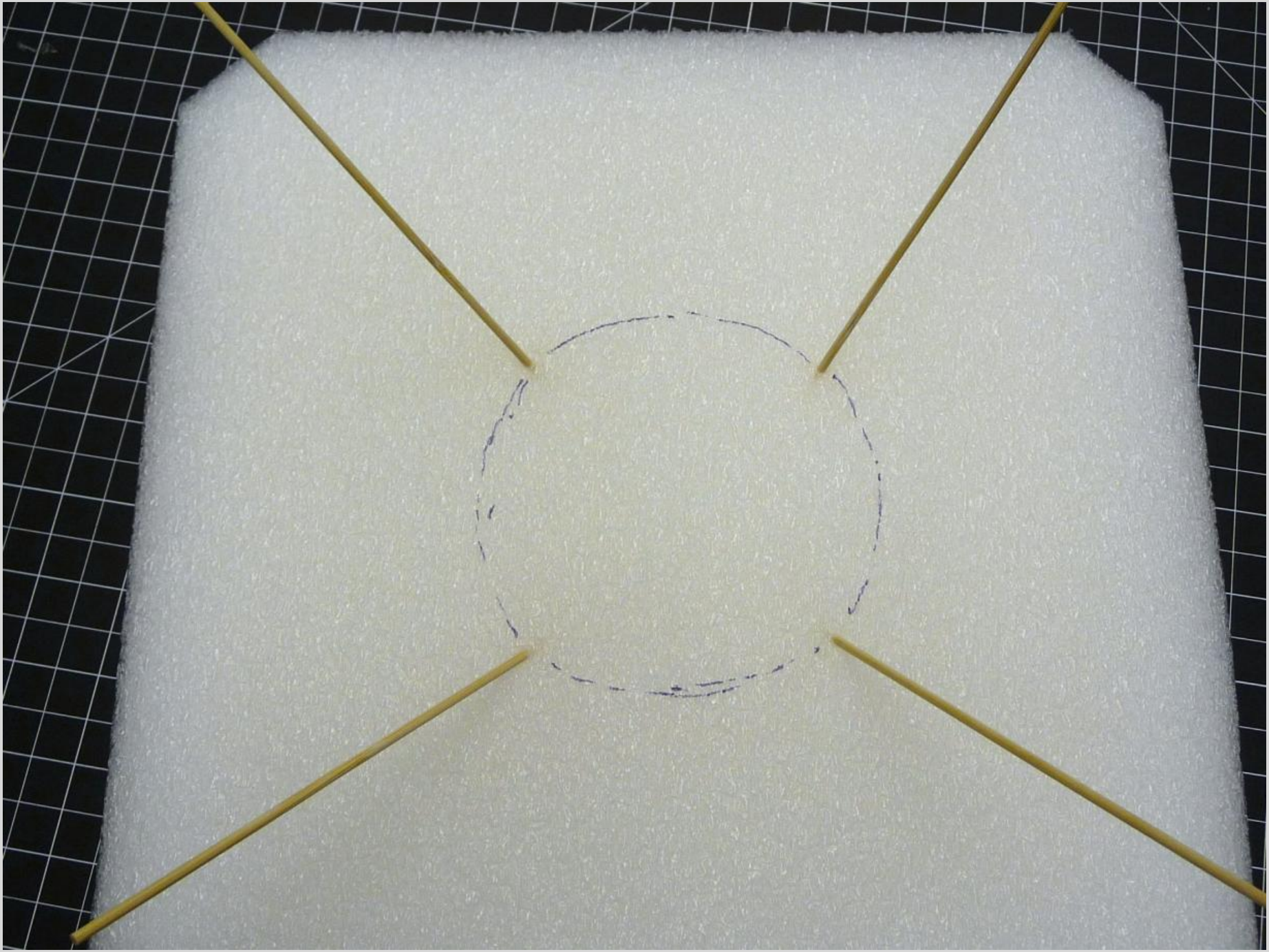


The tray: hot glue and archival corrugated cardboard

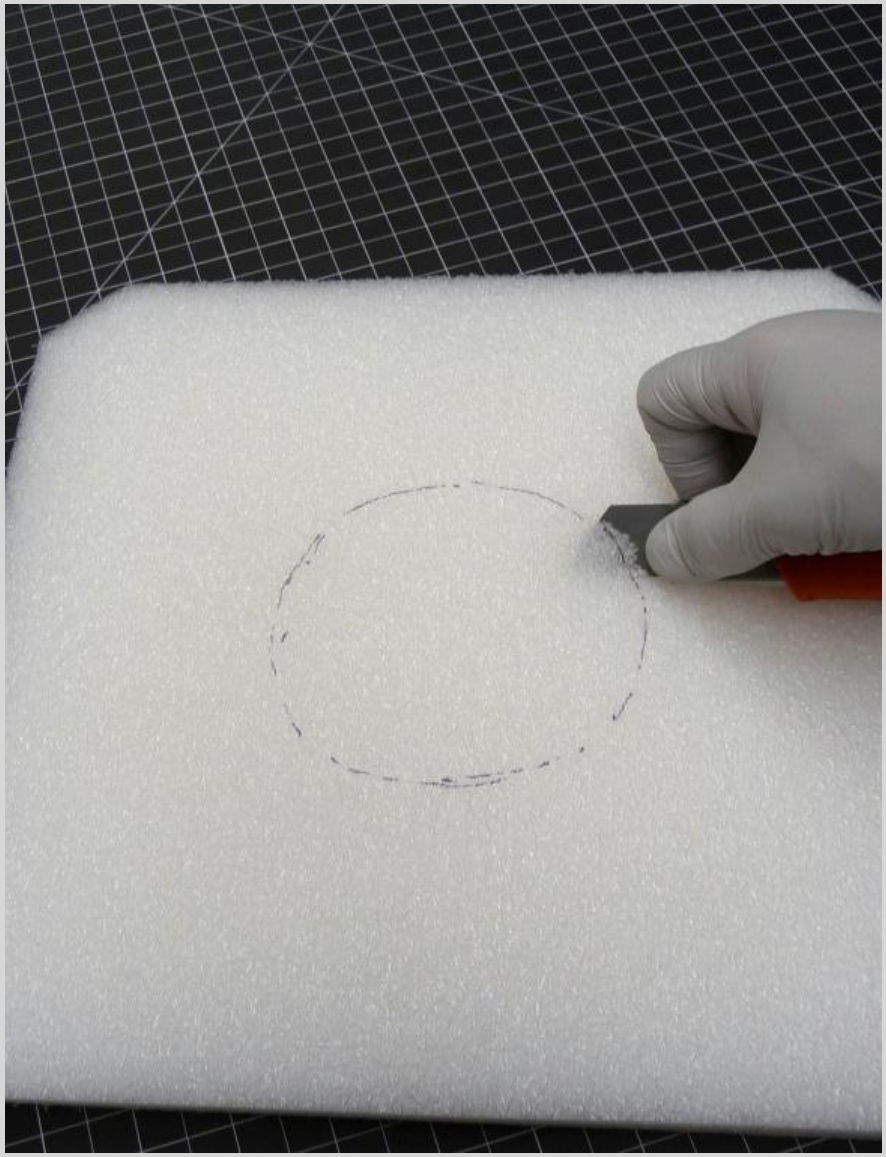


One inch Efoam was used to provide a foundation for bamboo skewers, which were used to affix mount elements.

Marking the footprint of the basket with skewers



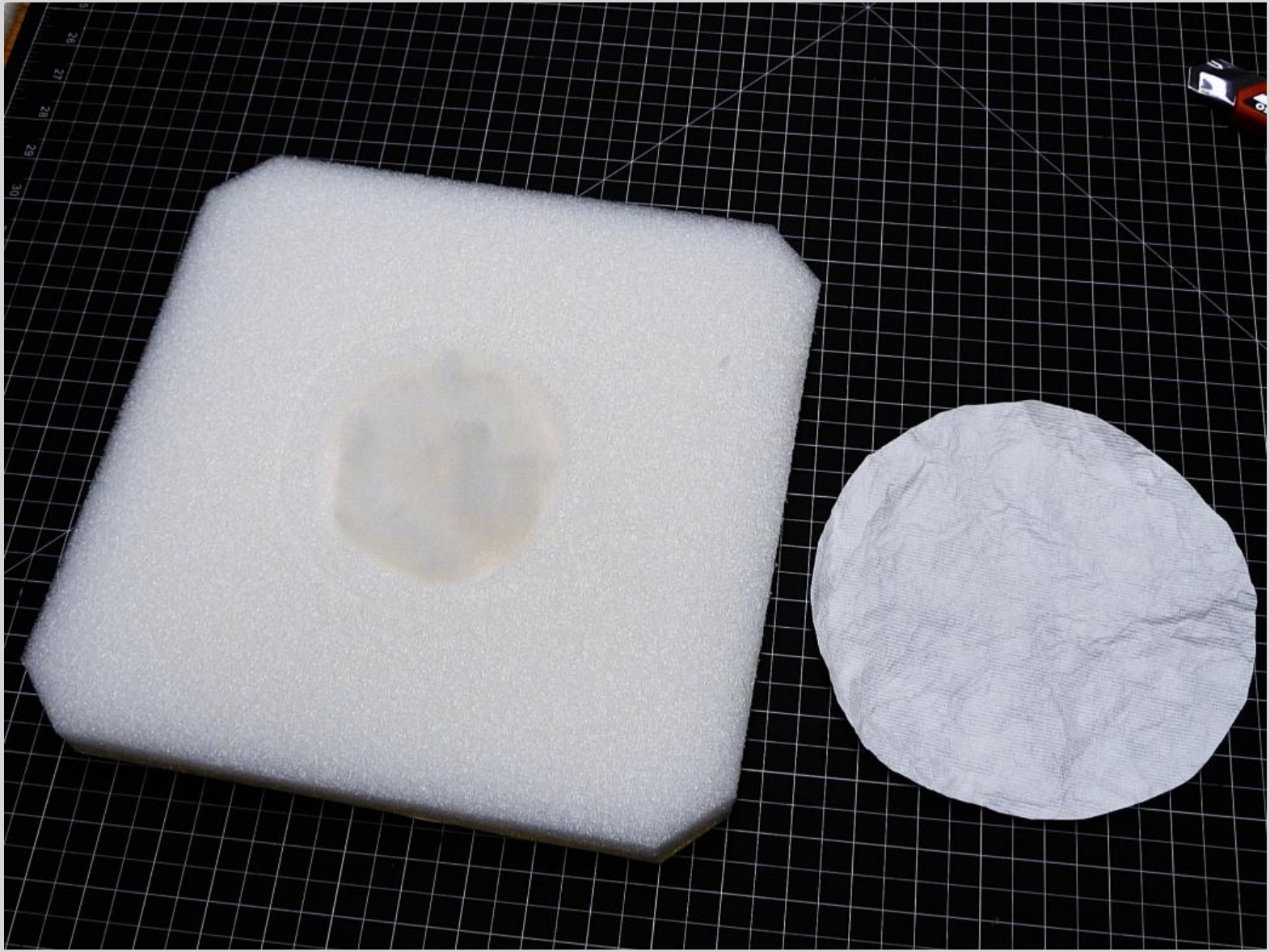
A divot is cut into the tray



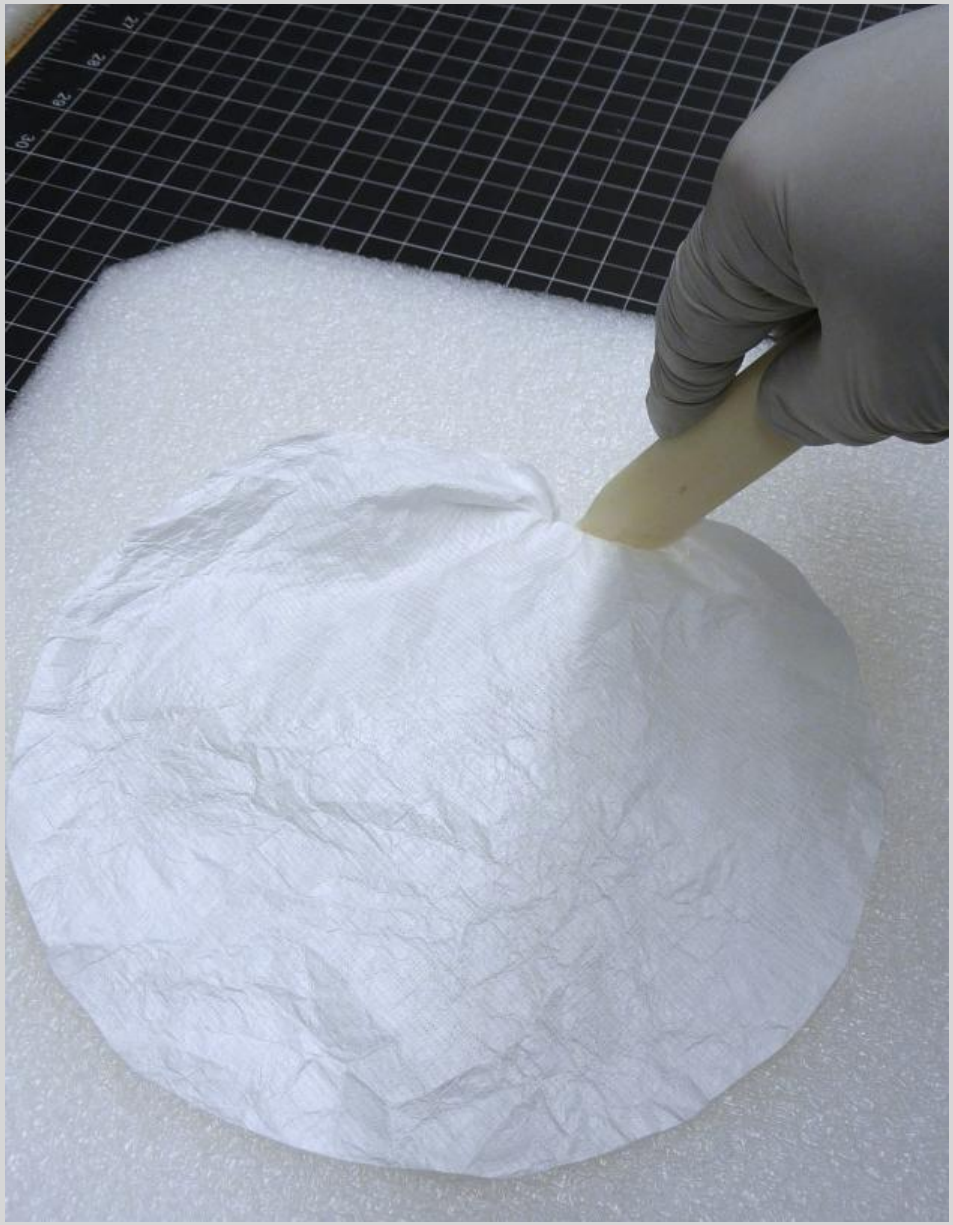
A shallow cut is made encircling the divot

Loose polyester batting fills the divot

Tyvek is cut to just larger than the diameter of the divot



Tyvek is tucked into the cut using a bone burnisher



This makes a padded recess for the basket's bottom

Next, backer rod is held to the basket's contour

The backer rod is emplaced with bamboo skewers

Whenever possible, bamboo skewers rather than hot glue were used to affix mount elements.

Skewers allowed us to affix the mount elements to the tray with the basket in place. This gave us more accurate placement and reduced handling of the object. The mount elements are re-positionable and easily removable. The skewer ends were clipped unless the mount element needed to be removed to release the basket.

Before clipping, the angle cutter is pressed into the Ethafoam or backer rod, which springs back, leaving the skewer ends beneath the surface on the finished mount, protecting the object.

Many thanks to conservator Tom Fuller for training our staff in these techniques!

Both skewers and hot glue were employed in making a mount for this Hupa basket hat


H16.3592
basket hat
Hupa
Northern, CA
Gift of Mrs. Philip E. Bowles
W5,1,A,6

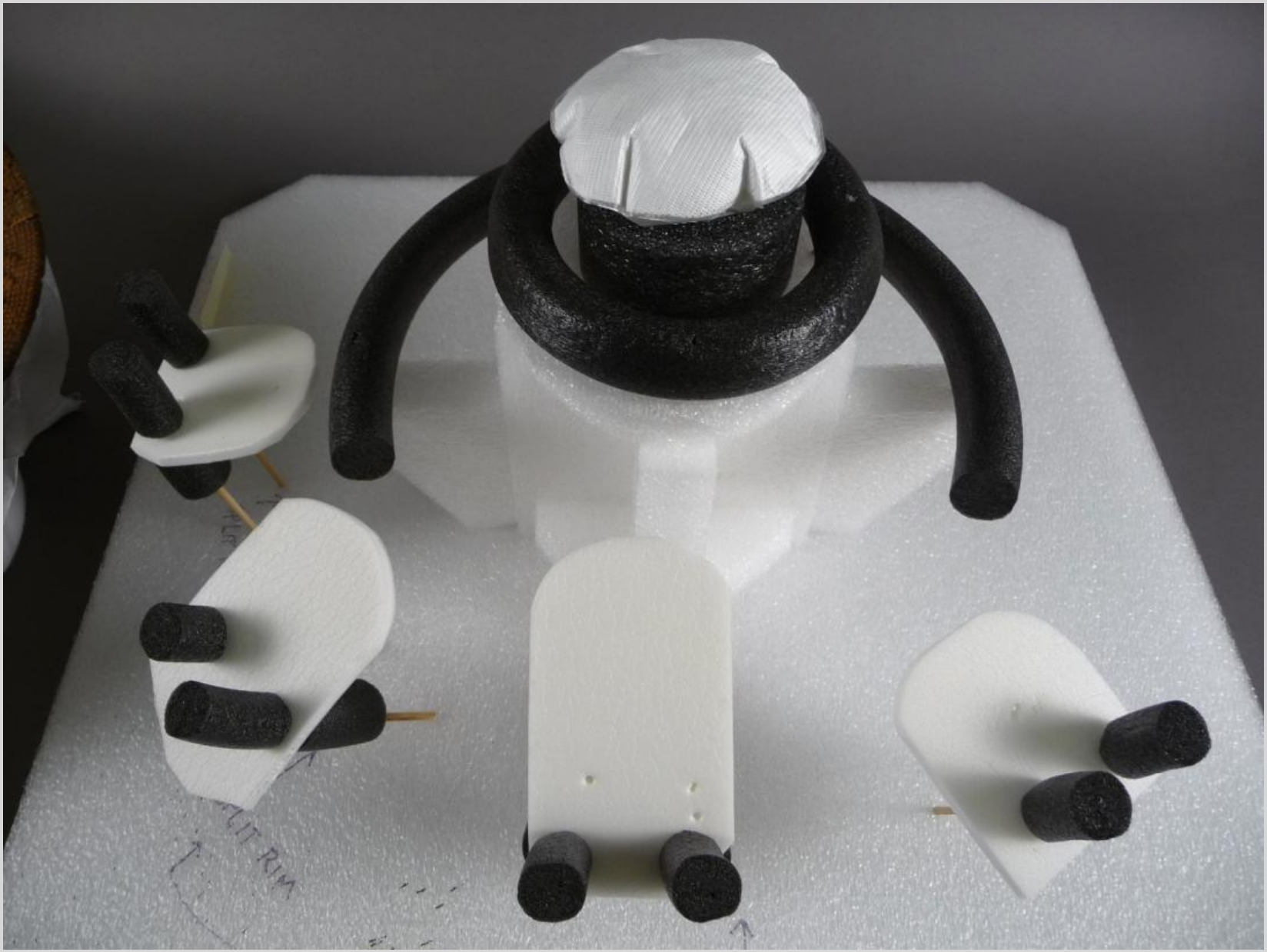
A raised backer rod ring for a Paiute canteen

This accommodates a pointed bottom


4182.6

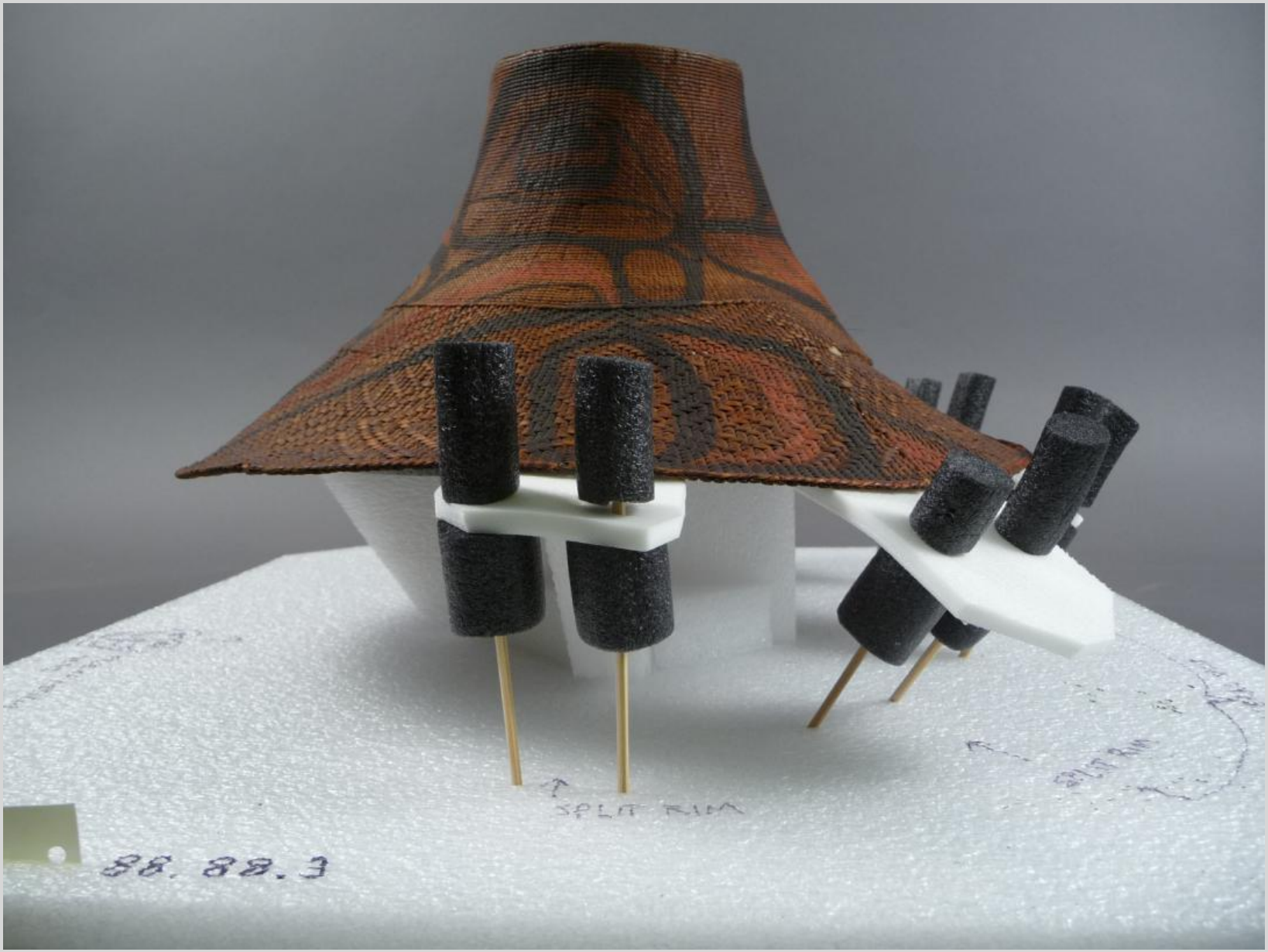
This mount features a shaped, raised Ethafoam and backer rod cradle

An elaborate mount For a Kwakiutl basket hat - note the Tyvek pillow




SPLIT RIM

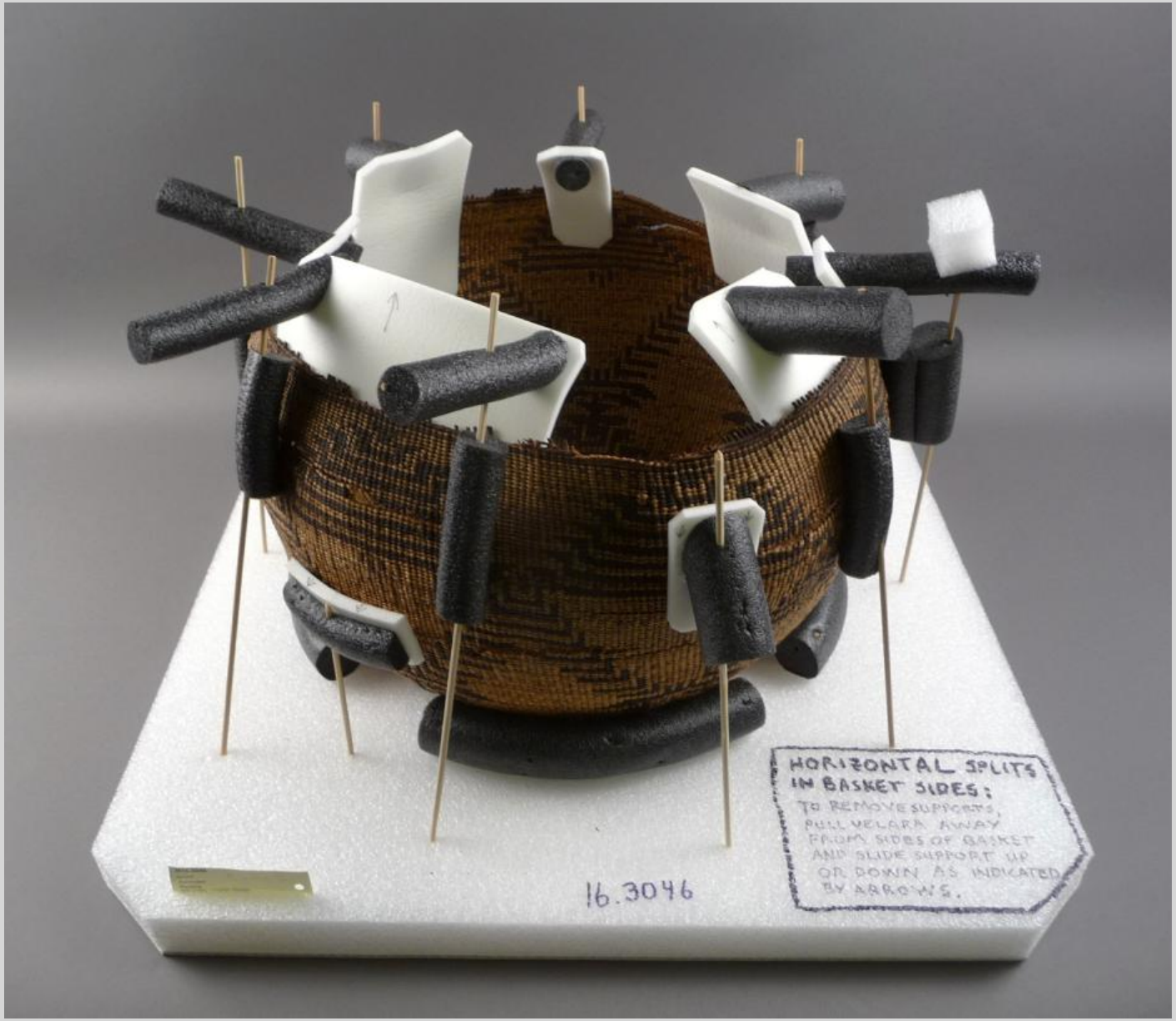
We used Volara supports for splits and breaks in the baskets



The support is skewered to tray,.

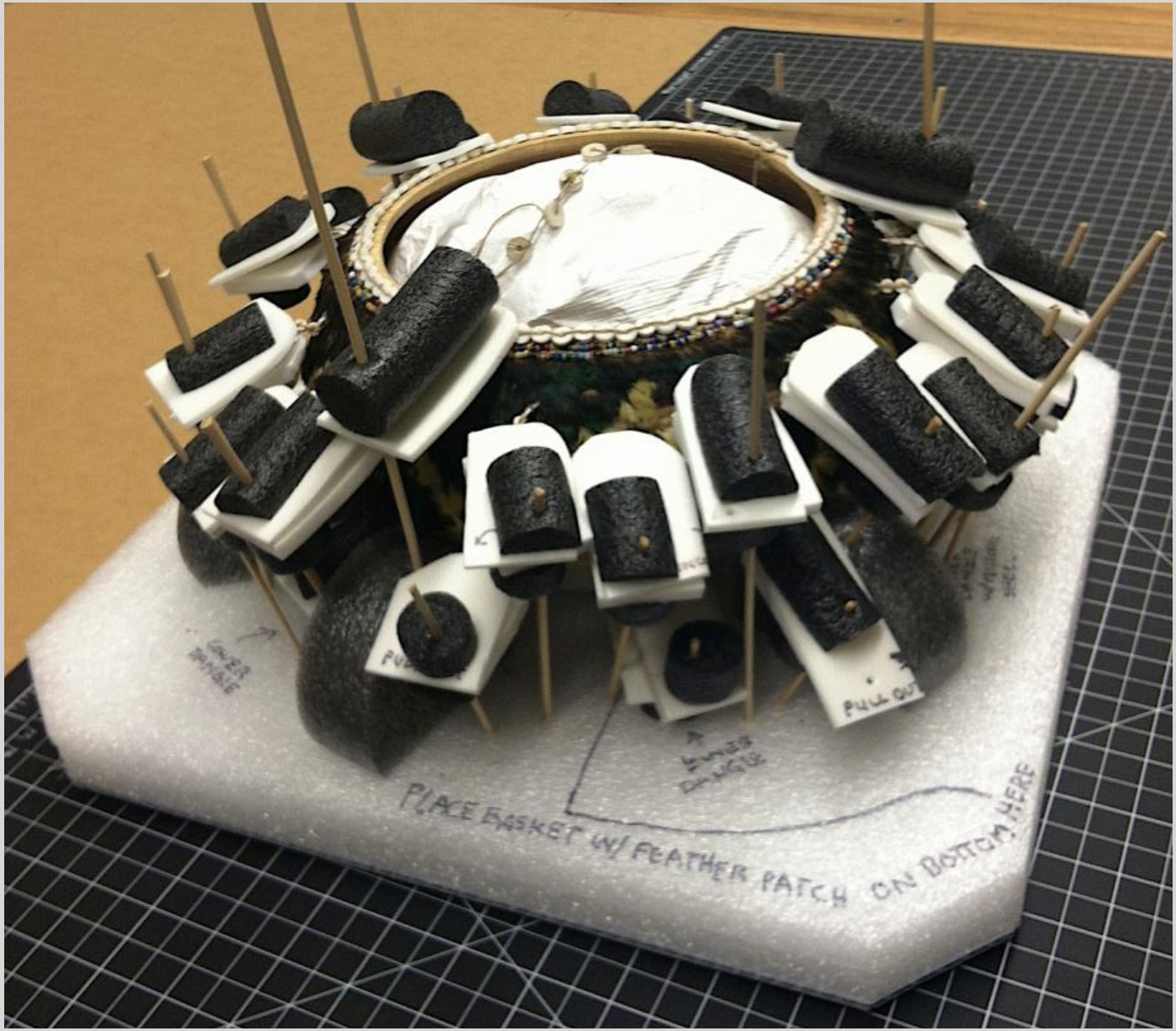
then raised into place to stabilize the split in the basket brim

A more elaborate use of the same principle.
Cautionary notes and instructions were written directly on the trays.



Volara and backer rod are here used to support splits in this basket's sides – note that the skewers provide a structural element for the mount.

A feathered Pomo gift basket with multiple shell tassels.



Volara clamps support the tassels and hold them away from the feathers.

Cradle basket: the sun-shade at the top is loosely attached by a single point.

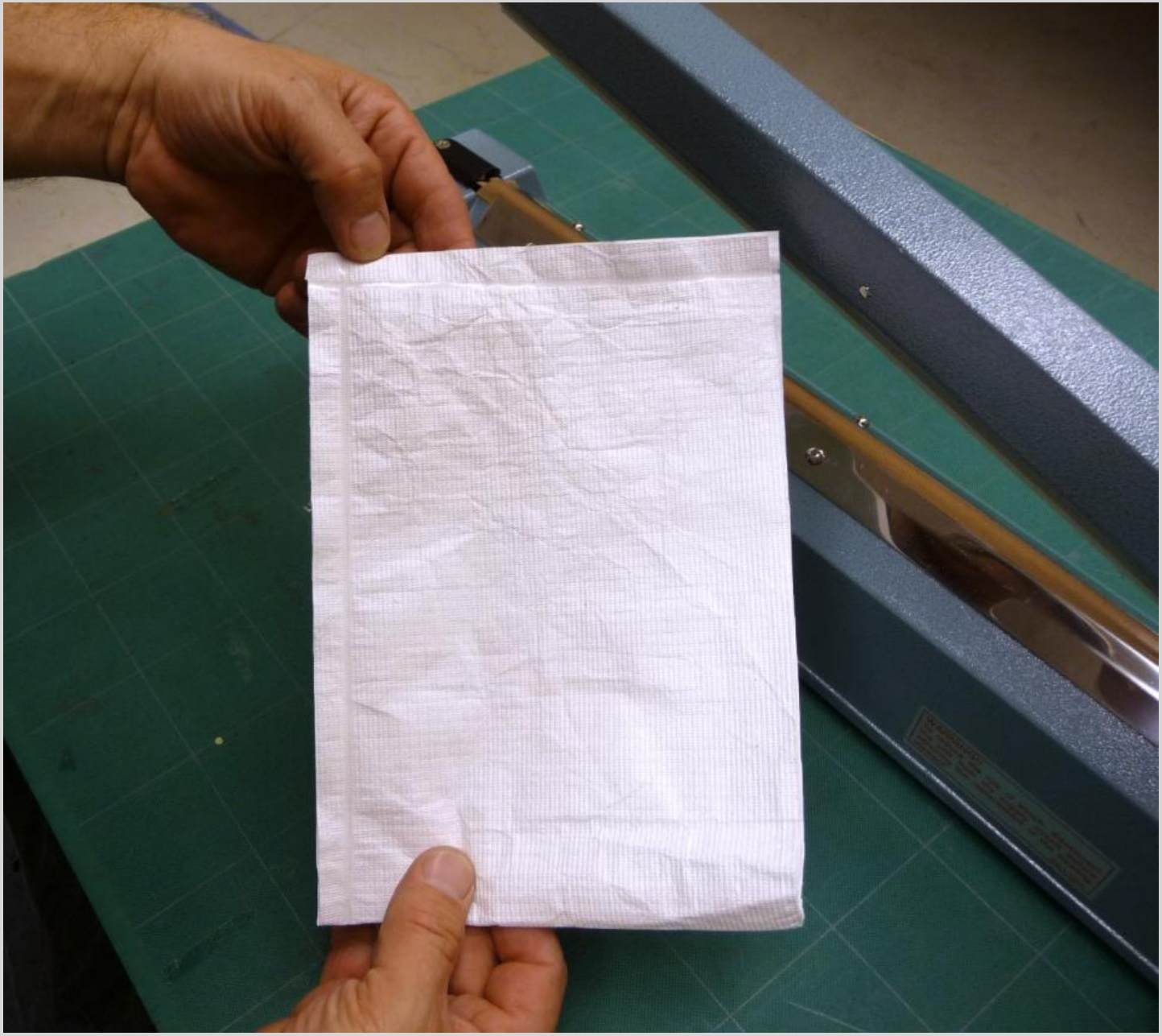
Volara stabilizes the sun-shade

Note the Tyvek pillow

This winnowing basket is 4 feet across

Technique: making Tyvek pillows with an impulse sealer

This impulse sealer is the same as would be used for sealing plastic bags



Turning the envelope inside out allows for a smooth seam on 3 sides.
Fill with polyester batting.

And seal.

This basket is almost entirely supported by Tyvek pillows

The re-housing of the hats was done after the baskets were completed.

The Costume Grant: Hats

- ***Date of project: 2008 through 2012, Funded by a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services***
- ***# of Hats Re-housed: 630 hats (of 5,626 objects in the costume collection)***
- ***Labor: 2 technicians & 1 registrar, 4 months full time***
- ***Object Origin: European American***
- ***Object Dates: from the early nineteenth century to the present***

BEFORE:

Hats stored without individual mounts in Plexiglas boxes - please note the fire chief helmet at the bottom of box

AFTER:

Hats on individual storage mounts in powder coated cabinets and shelving - Note the same fire chief helmet, now on its individual mount

Cabinets have drawers for ease of access. Again, mount tray sizes were standardized for efficient use of space.

For the hat project, Ethafoam trays were dropped in favor of archival cardboard only, as the mount materials were generally hot glued rather than attached with bamboo skewers. Hot glue allowed for more elaborate mount structures and a larger range of binding/affixing options. For example; attaching volara to backer rod as in this mount for that same fire chief helmet.


7051.2

Skewers did continue to be used as needed, as for the air raid warden's helmet on the lower right.

Here the Volara supports also used in the basket project are utilized to stabilize the "wing" of this hat – made from the pelt of a grebe.

Notes continued to be written directly on the mount trays

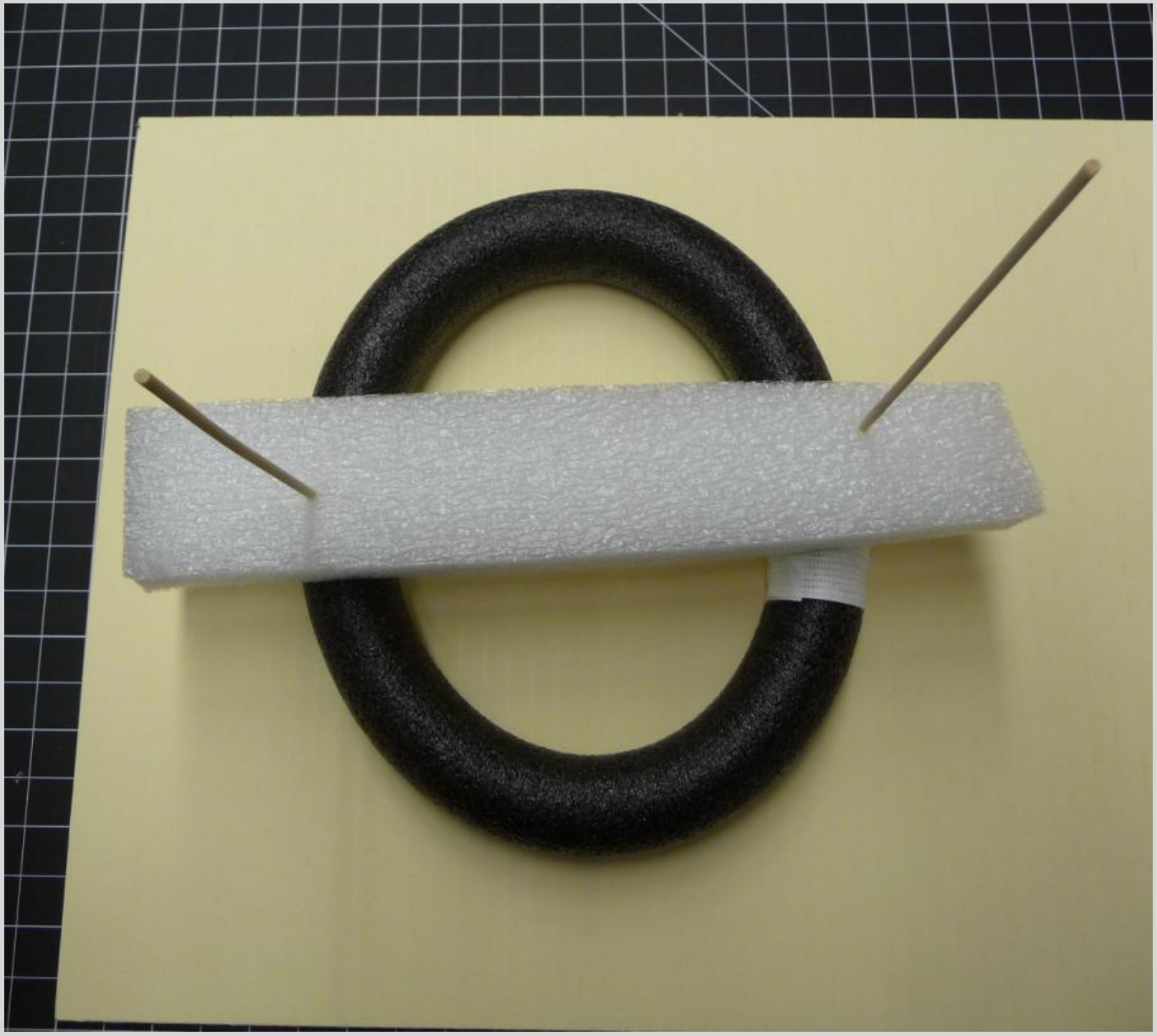
Technique: Maynard Dixon's hat

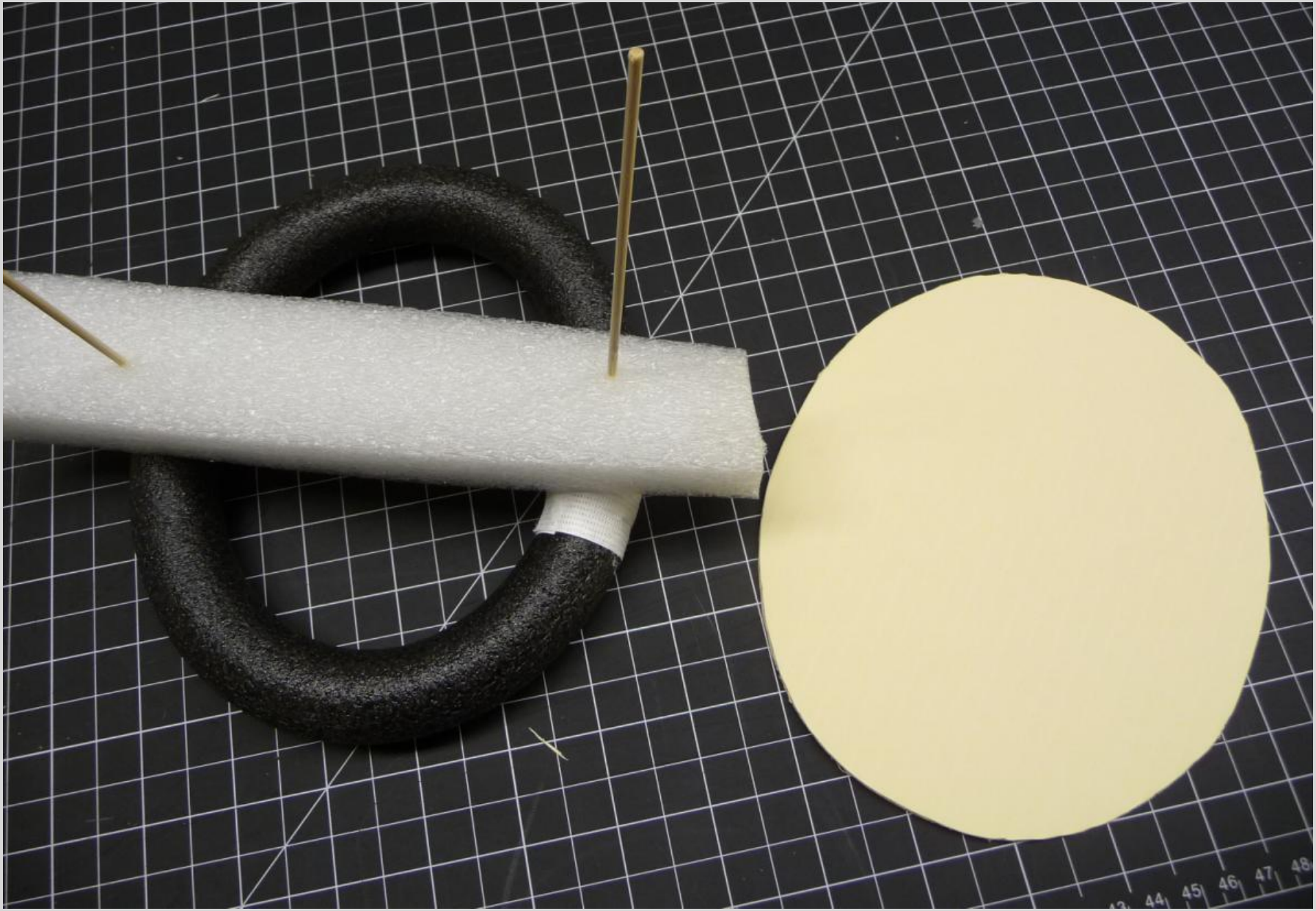
Many of the mount concepts for the hat re-housing were adapted from the basket project, but additional techniques were provided by Denise Migdail, of the Asian Art Museum.

Backer rod ring, hot glued with Tyvek sealing the seam

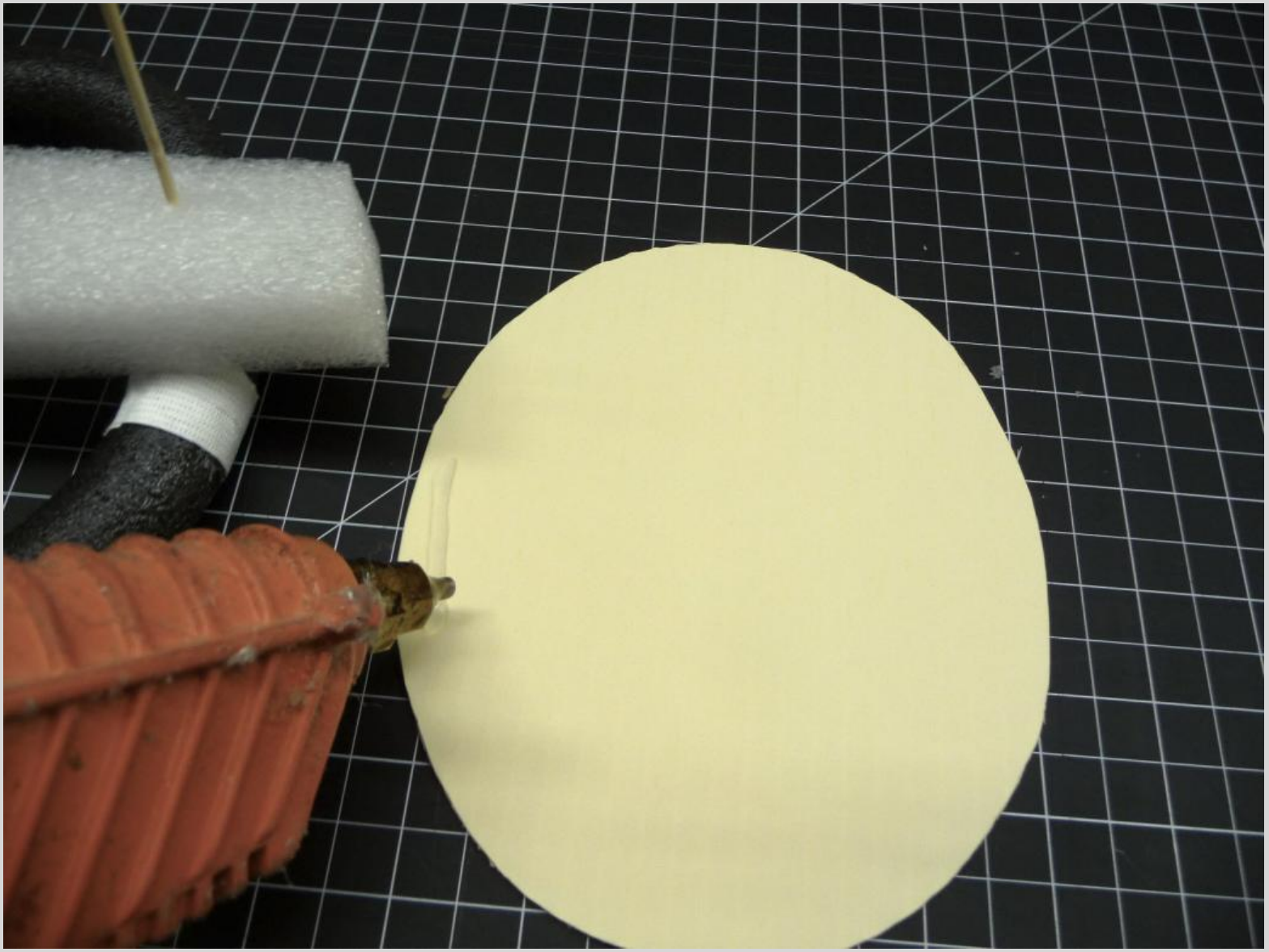
The ring is shaped into an oval corresponding to the interior

Cardboard is cut to shape





and glued.



Checked for size and shape

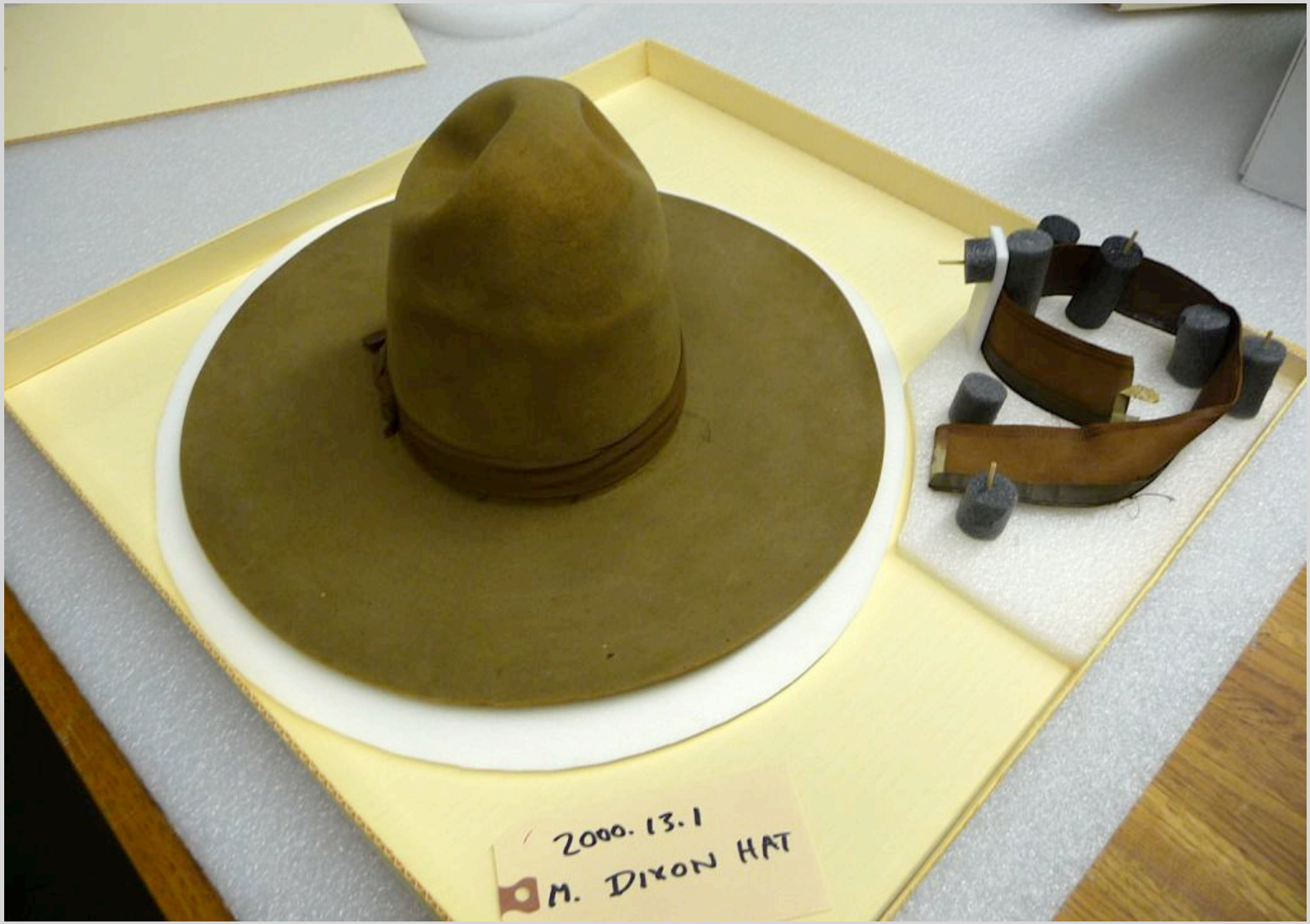
Volara is glued to the ring

The brim dimension is enscribed on Volara

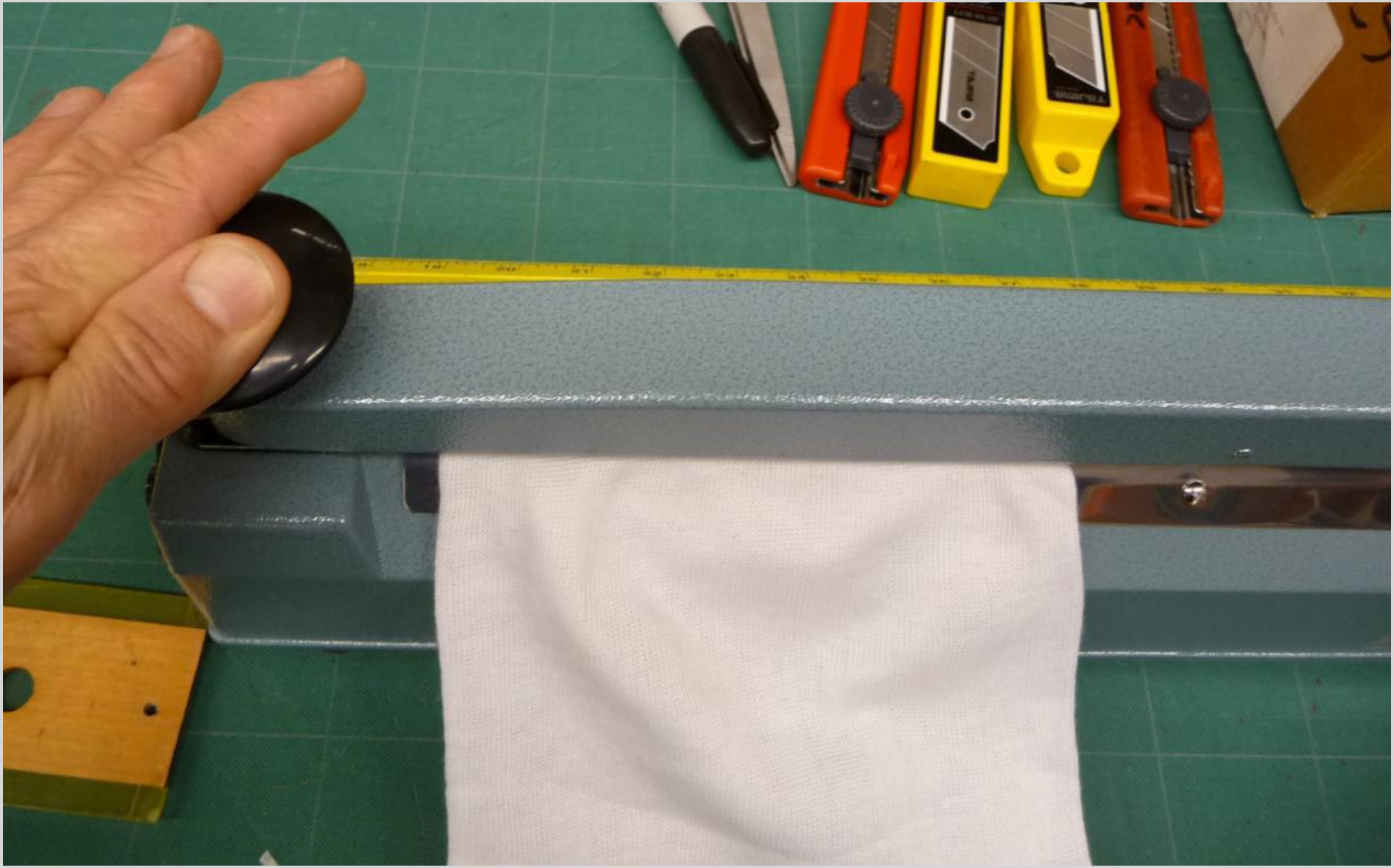
The Volara and a cardboard riser is cut

All three are glued together

and affixed to the tray for the finished mount – note the broken sweat-band attached to tray with skewers, backer rod and Volara.



Technique: impulse sealer on polyester Stockinette

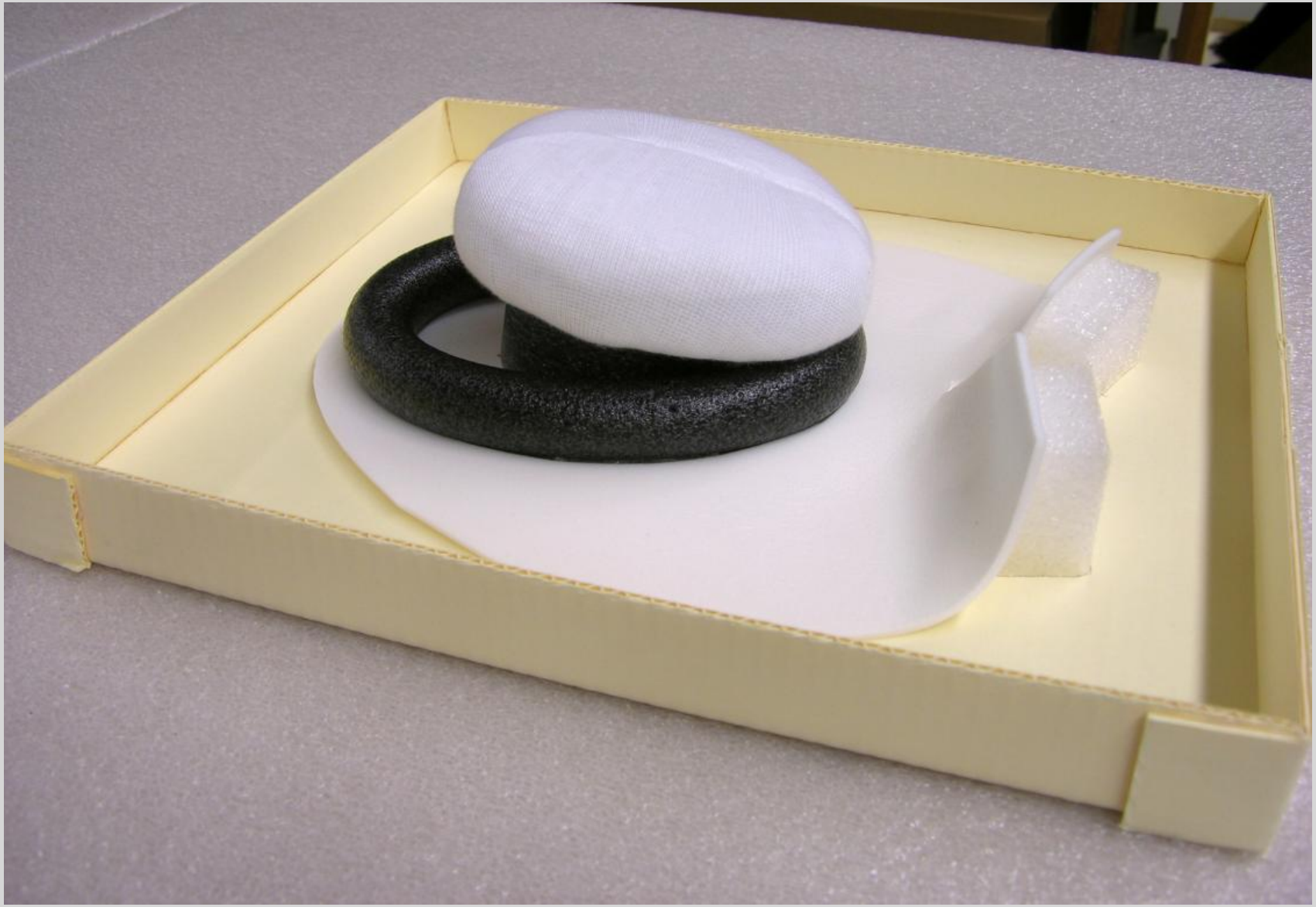


Sealed Stockinette stretched over Ethafoam and batting to make a head form. Once again, turning the material inside out creates a smooth seam.

The Stockinette is tucked into a slit in the Ethafoam (as shown before using Tyvek in the basket project)

This is the head form hot glued to the Efoam and Volara mount. Note the angled support to accommodate the brim of the hat.

Women's hats
were often the most elaborate.



Mounts were raised to accommodate hats with veils

Note the veil falls naturally while its weight rests on the tray.

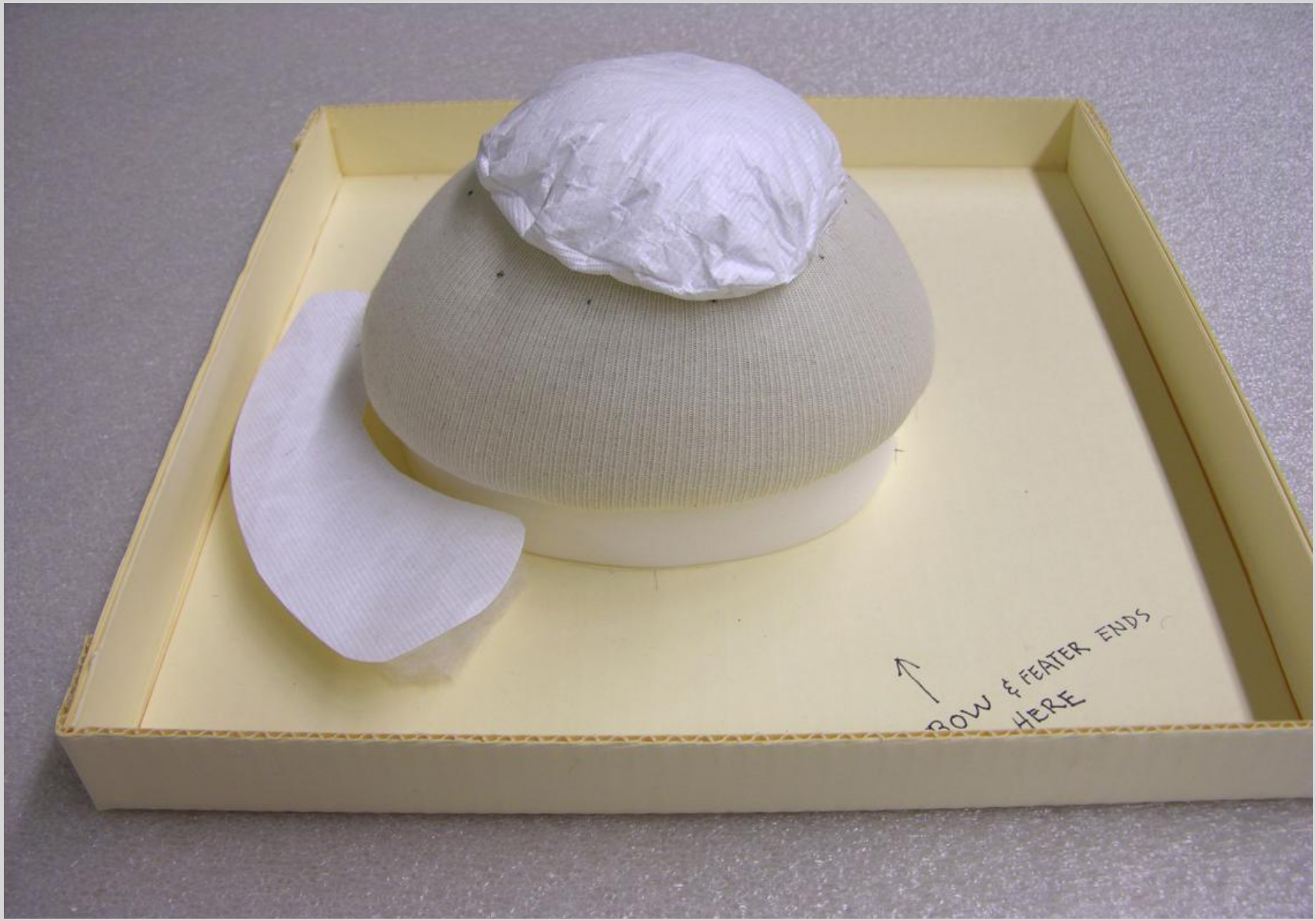
2”, 3’, and 4” backer rod was often used for structure.


4315.104

Here, Stockinette is stuffed with soft batting to fill the “hair net” element of the hat:


4315.102

Here, a Tyvek pillow is glued on top to support a lace element in the hat without snagging:

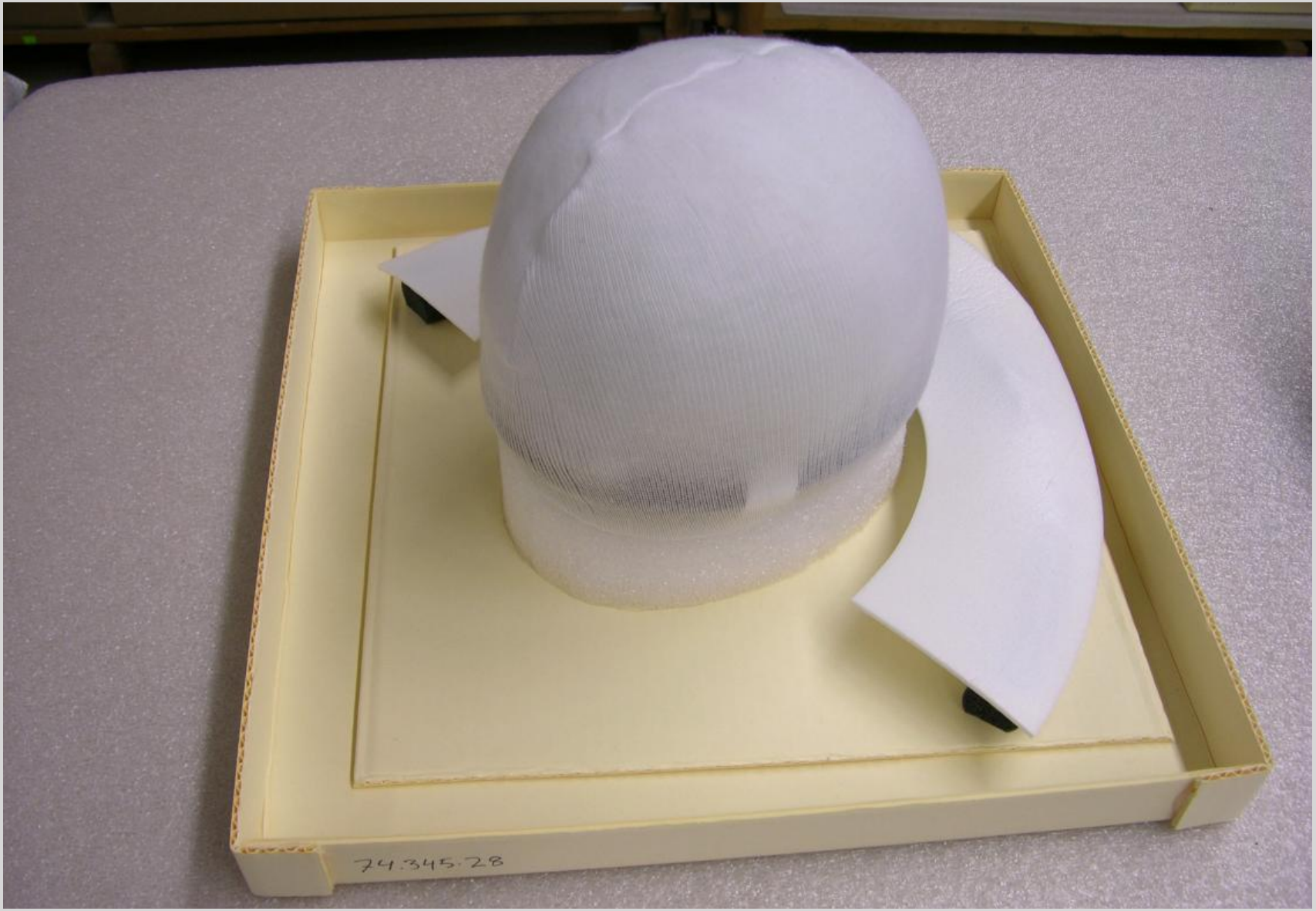



FNDS

A bridge structure:

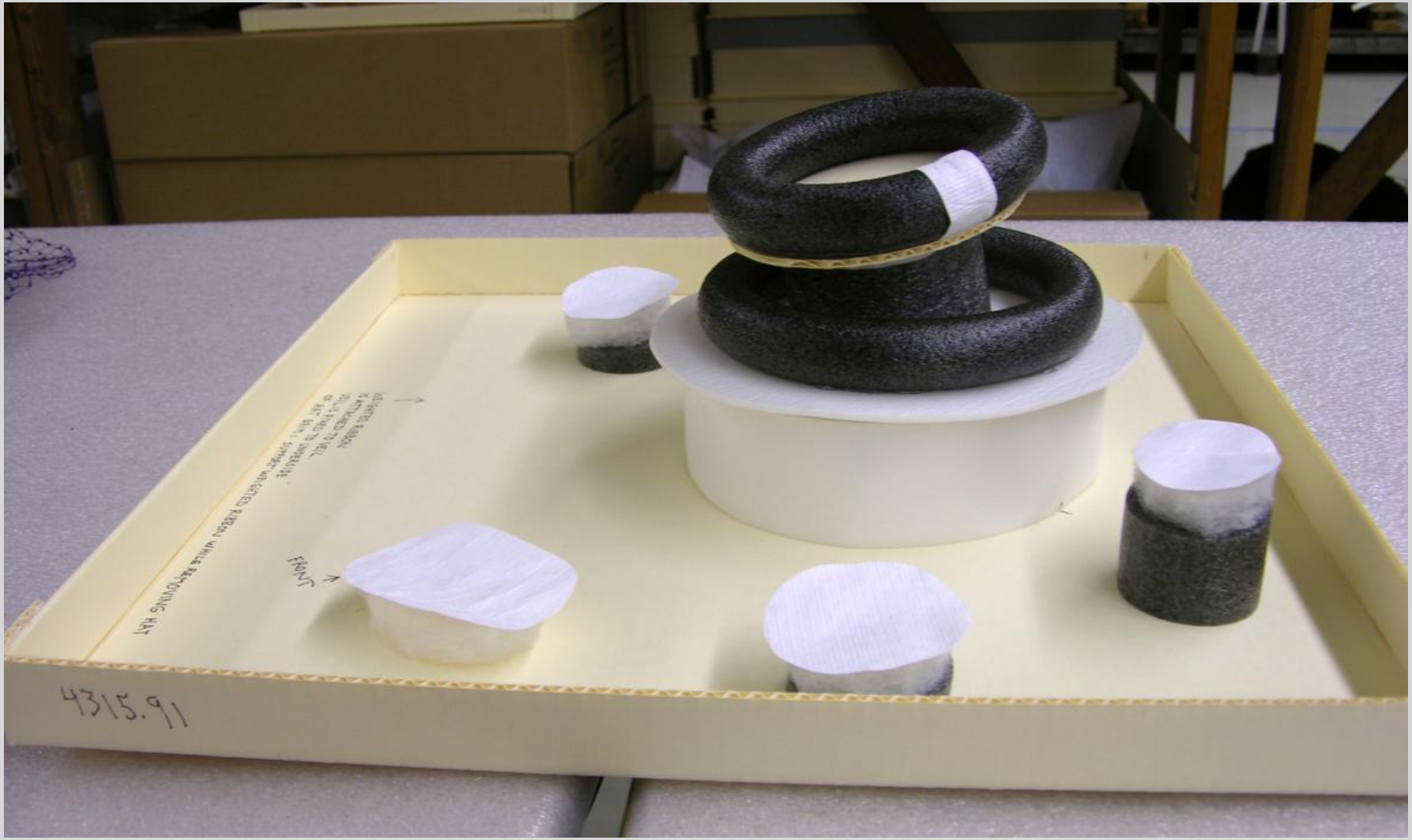

CORD

A good example of sealed Stockinette over batting and Ethafoam. The hat's brim is supported with Volara glued to backer rod.




74.345.28

Note the backer rod rings, similar to those used with the basket hats, but here angled to reflect the contours of the hat:



Please note the tube around which the ribbons are wrapped

Technique: ribbon tube

Mylar is rolled with several turns into a tube

Cotton Stockinette is slid over the Mylar

And the ends are tucked inside


TUBULAR
1 ROLL PER BOX
12 ROLLS PER CASE
Tex-Care Non-Sterile
STOCKINETTE
Tex-Care Medical

A good example of mylar tubes used to support this hat's ribbons.

For the hat collection, overhead open shelving was used save space in our storage facility. We made Tyvek curtains to protect the objects from light and dust.

Tyvek curtains

Magnets - both disks and flat strips - were hot glued inside the hem of the curtains for an easily repositionable hold.

Curtains can be lifted up

Or folded back to access the objects.

In conclusion; each individual piece in both our basket and hat collection has been stabilized and supported with a long-term storage mount.

Ease of access to researchers and staff was a key goal

as well as secure, space-efficient storage,

and reduced handling of the objects for their long-term survival.


Thank you!
From the Oakland Museum of California's
Collections and Information Access center