**Conservators Jamie Robinson and Zenzie Tinker from Zenzie Tinker Conservation Studio give an insight into washing Lee’s pregnancy dress for display**

[Sounds of water swishing]

**Jamie** - We do a sort of number of running rinses and standing rinses and tilt the table which helps it all kind of flow through.

I'm Jamie and I'm one of the textile conservators here. And this is a very exciting project to be working on, we're all, you know, we all feel very attached to these objects. This one in particular, I went to assess and condition check when I was pregnant and seeing it now, it's really lovely that it's finally going on display.

So it’s weirdly kind of repetitive the way that we do it just so that we know that we're getting total coverage to exactly the same degree. So you want like the same amount of pressure and the same sort of distribution. And it's the sponging that helps dislodge the soiling and activate the detergent in this solution. So the water acts as a sort of a detergent in its own right, and then the detergent that we're using, as well as that, is a cotton specific detergent that helps to sort of activate it. And then we've added a soil suspension agent as well, which helps to prevent the dirt from redepositing on the object. But it's all in the sponging!

This is the dress that Lee Miller wore when she was pregnant with Antony in 1947. And it's made from this lovely lightweight seersucker fabric. So the variation in the weave kind of creates this puckered effect. It's a very easy fabric to wear. And it's printed with the striped design with little flowers, and sort of zigzags and the construction itself, which is really interesting. It's a sort of wraparound dress that then has an apron front that folds over the top with a lovely gathered waistband, and a wide waistband strap that wraps around.

**Zenzie** - When we we're cleaning all day, or doing wet cleaning for several days, I quite often get the sound of sponging in my dreams.

**Jamie** - There's lots of really interesting things that you discover about a garment, when you have the time to lay it out and look at it in a wet cleaning bath as well. We were talking about how the fabric's been pieced together, and you can find the selvages and work out how economical they were with the, the fabric and this is really the first you know, to have a whole day to look at something this closely is really exciting. And you learn loads as well. This process will inform the mounting process as well.