

News in Conservation



The e-paper from the International Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works

Issue 42, June 2014

An Unbroken History: Conserving East Asian Works of Art and Heritage – IIC 2014 Congress programme



LONDON, HONG KONG - Every two years, IIC mounts a major international conference on a topic of current interest. These meetings are designed to bring together like-minded specialists, to summarise and debate the latest progress and practice, and to present recent advances, research and new thinking.

IIC is delighted to present the 25th biennial IIC Congress and, for the first time, in a sub-tropical region which brings its own, very particular problems of preventive conservation.

The 2014 event will be held from the 22nd to the 26th of September at Hong Kong's City Hall, situated in the heart of the city. The Congress has been organised in partnership with the Leisure & Cultural Services Department of the Government of Hong Kong.

Register for this exciting event NOW at the IIC web-site:

<https://www.iiconservation.org/congress/2014hongkong>

IIC 2014 Hong Kong Congress -

Congress Programme
now available.
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www.iiconservation.org

Work starts on restoration of Warkton's Montagu Monuments

WARKTON - Work has started to restore Warkton's hidden treasure, the Montagu Monuments, thanks to a Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) grant of £318k towards the £489k project. The Montagu Monuments are significant 18th century memorial sculptures in the Grade I listed St Edmund's Church in Warkton, UK and include four marble memorial sculptures of international importance, which draw visitors from all over the world. Two of the monuments were created by French sculptor Louis-François Roubiliac and are considered to be surpassed only by his monument to Lady Elizabeth Nightingale at Westminster Abbey in London.



Cleaning the monument to Lady Mary Duchess of Montagu, 1775

St Edmund's Parochial Church Council and the Buccleuch Living Heritage Trust are leading the project, and have appointed The Prince's Regeneration Trust (PRT) as project manager to oversee the conservation work. PRT will also manage the delivery of an ambitious programme of activities to improve access and heritage interpretation, create a new learning and outreach programme, and engage the local community.

The restoration work started with the cleaning of the most recent monument, dedicated to Lady Elizabeth Montagu Duchess of Buccleuch.

Ros Kerslake, Chief Executive of PRT, says, *'These monuments are a hidden gem in the heart of Northamptonshire, but the marble has now reached a worrying state of deterioration. It is a huge relief that the HLF has provided the funding and that the work can now start. The setting of these sculptures, a medieval church in a quiet Northampton village, makes the experience of seeing them even more special and unique. It is our responsibility to make sure these internationally-important monuments receive the care and attention they deserve.'*

Vanessa Harbar, Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund East Midlands, welcomed the works: *'These four monumental statues are considered masterpieces of exceptional significance, spanning the Georgian era from 1749 to 1829. Two of them are designed by Louis Francois Roubiliac, widely considered the greatest sculptor in England in the 18th century. Problems with the monuments were first highlighted in the 1970s, it is great news that appropriate preservation work has now commenced. HLF is delighted to play its part in ensuring Northamptonshire can share these magnificent pieces of craftsmanship with future generations.'*

Creating training opportunities is also a key aspect of the project. PRT is currently recruiting to fill a digital media work placement to record the progression of the project and a restoration work placement.

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Editorial

Only slightly more than two months left to the IIC 2014 Hong Kong Congress, one of the main events in the calendar, and preparations are under way to ensure delegates will enjoy a memorable event. We finally have details of the programme published in the IIC News section and you will agree that the line-up looks rather impressive. There is still time to register so if you haven't done so visit:

<https://www.iiconservation.org/congress/register>

It's that time of the year again – time to renew your IIC membership and continue to be part of our community and enjoy the benefits that membership brings. You will find the updated list of fees in the IIC News section and if you wish to renew online you can do so by visiting:

<https://www.iiconservation.org/about/membership>

In this issue Yuki Russel from Norfolk Archives describes a treatment on a large-format WWII map and in her report she describes how she dealt with the problem of metal pins and labels attached to the map.

NiC caught up with Shellie Cleaver, author of the hilarious comic strip “The Conservator versus Life” to talk about the idea behind the blog and the book.

Following on, Paola Ricciardi provides a comprehensive review of *Non-Invasive Analysis of Painted Surfaces*, a two-day international symposium held in Washington DC, in February 2014.

Finally a reminder that the next available date for submission of articles to *NiC* is July 1st; if you are thinking of contributing get in touch at news@iiconservation.org

Enjoy!

Barbara Borghese
Editor

The restoration placement is to work alongside conservation and restoration professionals at Skillingtons, who have been commissioned to carry out the work.

Conservation Manager Paul Wooles says that so far the cleaning on the first monument, dedicated to Lady Elizabeth Montagu, is going well. *‘I cannot believe how well the figures are coming out with just one application of poultice. In 49 cases out of 50 you'd find you're left with areas where you have more stubborn ingrained dirt. But that's not the case here. It might be something to do with the quality of the marble, but even so, it's very surprising. Maybe when we come to the other monuments we'll become unstuck, but this has been very successful.’*

This monument is also affected by sugaring – when the internal structure of the marble starts to become granular and powdery. To prevent this, a solution is applied to try to halt the sugaring process –this is known as consolidation. After that the Skillingtons team will repoint defective joints in the monument.

Paul says, *‘We had to do some emergency consolidation several years ago, because the monument seemed to be going into self-destruct mode... since then the sugaring on Elizabeth seems to have stabilised. However, there now appears to be sugaring on the monument to Mary Duchess of Montagu, so we're here just in time really.’*

The team will face its biggest challenge when working on the oldest monument (dating back to 1752), which is dedicated to Sir John, the second Duke of Montagu. The iron work which supports the marble is corroding, which means Skillingtons will have to dismantle the monument carefully, repair its structural core and then reassemble it like a complex jigsaw puzzle.

Completion of the work is estimated for December 2014.

The Prince's Regeneration Trust supports and strengthens communities by rescuing and reusing important British buildings at risk of being lost forever through demolition or decay. It is one of The Prince's Charities and has HRH the Prince of Wales as its President. There are 20 charities in the group, which is the largest multi-cause charitable enterprise in the UK.

Learn more about their work at: www.princesregeneration.org

The Buccleuch Living Heritage Trust is an educational charitable trust formed in 1984, by the 9th Duke of Buccleuch to administer the educational and public access to the four great historic family homes of the Duke of Buccleuch: Bowhill House and Country Estate, Boughton House and Gardens, Drumlanrig Castle in Dumfriesshire and Dalkeith Palace in Midlothian.



News in Brief...

Glasgow School of Art fire: Iconic library damaged

GLASGOW – A fire, which swept through Glasgow School of Art in Scotland nearly destroyed an iconic library that had been recognised as being one of the finest examples of art nouveau in the world. Named after the architect which designed it, the library is housed in the Charles Rennie Mackintosh building which was completed in 1909 and has an A-list rating, meaning it has been classified by Historic Scotland for its age and rarity. The building took 12 years to be completed and features distinctive sandstone walls and large windows.

In the aftermath of the event, it became clear that the contents of the library were safe. Firefighters, who arrived on location promptly within four minutes of the alarm being raised, succeeded in protecting the vast majority of the building, by forming a human wall up the west end of the main staircase and containing the fire. There were no reports of any human casualties.

Speaking to the press about the loss of the library, Muriel Gray, the school chairwoman said: "Mackintosh was not famous for working in precious materials. It was his vision that was precious and we are confident that we can recreate what was lost as faithfully as possible. The UK government has said it would make a significant contribution towards the costs of restoring the building.

Born in Glasgow, Mackintosh was an architect, designer, water colourist and artist and also the main representative of Art Nouveau in the United Kingdom.

The UK Institute of Conservation (ICON)

put out a call for volunteers which resulted in offers of help with a list of people including conservators, joiners, architects and archivists ready to offer their services. The conservation department staff at the National Galleries of Scotland (NGS), were asked to assess the condition of artwork including works produced by undergraduate students for their final degree show. This initial assessment will allow a programme of remedial work to be drawn up.



The building before the fire

© Finlay McWalter, CC Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported

EU Council conclusions on cultural heritage adopted

BRUXELLES –The Council of the European Union has adopted Conclusions on Cultural Heritage as a strategic resource for a sustainable Europe. It's the first time the Council has adopted conclusions specifically on this issue. The Council recognises that cultural heritage is a major asset for Europe and an important component of the European project.

The Council also emphasised that cultural heritage has an important economic impact, including an integral part of the cultural and creative sectors and constitutes a powerful driving force of inclusive local and regional development. The Conclusions call for more resources to be invested in cultural heritage and for the mainstreaming of cultural heritage in national and European policies. Member States are invited to consider including cultural heritage in the framework of the next Council Work Plan for Culture which will be implemented from 2015 onwards.

Read the Council draft conclusions on cultural heritage as a strategic resource for a sustainable Europe [here](#).



Michelangelo's David has weak ankles

FLORENCE – A new study published in the Journal of Cultural Heritage argues that Michelangelo's statue of David is at risk of toppling under its own weight.



The statue of David in its current location in the Galleria dell'Accademia in Florence

Researchers from the National Research Council (CNR) and the University of Florence, Italy, said that a series of micro-fractures on the legs have been discovered and that David's ankles could be too thin to support its 5,572 kilograms. They performed tests on plaster replicas of the statue inside a centrifuge, exposing them to pressures stronger than the force of gravity.

In a statement, experts from the CNR said: "Micro-fractures are visible in the left ankle and the carved tree stump (that bears part of the statue's weight), threatening the stability of the sculpture."

The statue's weight, together with its pose and poor-quality construction marble, has long worried experts given that Florence has a seismic past with earthquakes recorded throughout its history. One solution favoured by some expert would see the statue moved to a purpose-built anti-seismic building.

The David, unveiled in 1504, originally stood in Piazza della Signoria, one of the city's main squares, where the uneven surface meant it spent a long time leaning forward. Researchers believe that the cracks developed as a result of long-term exposure to the elements and stress caused by the uneven distribution of the statue's weight.

In 1873, after 469 years the David was moved to Galleria dell'Accademia in the current location and a copy was erected on the original site.

Conservation Scientist wins 2014 Plowden Medal

LONDON - Dr Jim Tate, the long serving Head of the Department of Conservation and Analytical Research at National Museums Scotland, was awarded the Royal Warrant Holder Association's 2014 Plowden Medal in recognition of his significant contribution to the advancement of conservation and his unwavering passion for the application of science in promoting the understanding of artefacts. The award was presented with the medal at the Royal Warrant Holders Association Luncheon in London on 3rd June 2014.

The Plowden Medal recognises the impact that Jim Tate's extensive knowledge of science had on the world of conservation. Extremely focused on raising the awareness of conservation, he has co-published around forty papers and articles and has been involved in the organisation of conferences, seminars and events as well as the promotion of conservation and conservation science in Scotland and beyond.

Among his many achievements and undertakings, he supported the world of conservation science as initial co-chair of the Heritage Science group of the Institute of Conservation, and the UK's heritage science community is now reaping the benefits not only of Jim's commitment to increasing the awareness and recognition of this specialised field, but also the respect this has commanded amongst his peers through his involvement in the initiation, development and establishment of the National Strategy for Science in Heritage, for which he has presented evidence to the House of Lords.

The gold medal, inaugurated in 1999, is awarded by the Royal Warrant Holders Association in memory of the late Hon. Anna Plowden CBE. The Medal is presented annually to the individual who has made the most significant recent contribution to the advancement of the conservation profession.

For more information visit: <http://www.royalwarrant.org/about-us/plowden-medal-conservation-award>

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Objects from Tutankhamun's war chariots to be restored

CAIRO – A team of conservators has begun restoration work on a group of objects belonging to one of Egypt's most famous pharaohs. Decorated gold-leaf-on-leather objects from the chariot of Tutankhamun's are currently undergoing restoration by an Egyptian-German team at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo.

The objects, which have never been adequately studied, were part of Tutankhamun's war chariots, the trappings of the horses and the sheaths of weapons. The designs encompass a combination of Egyptian and Levantine motifs which illustrates the political and cultural interconnections between Egypt and the city-states of the Levant in the 14th century BCE.

Gold-leaf decoration showing a hunting-scene (a dog and a griffin attacking an ibex) using motifs from Levantine art.

The team involved in the project is composed of both conservators and archaeologists from the Egyptian Museum Cairo, the Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum Mainz, the Institute of Near Eastern Archaeology of the University of Tübingen (which excavated and studied similar objects at the site of ancient Qatna in Syria) and the German Archaeological Institute in Cairo. The project will include a full archaeological and technological analysis of the artefact group.

Thanks to funding provided by the Federal Republic of Germany, a specialised restoration laboratory has been set up at the Egyptian Museum in Cairo. To support professional development, scholarships are being offered to Egyptian restorers to receive specialised training at the Römisch-Germanisches Zentralmuseum in Mainz, Germany.

The project will be conducted over three years, after which there will be a public exhibition in the Egyptian Museum.

Source: German Archaeological Institute. *Objects from Tutankhamun's war chariots to be restored. Past Horizons. June 01, 2014, from:*

<http://www.pasthorizonspr.com/index.php/archives/06/2014/objects-from-tutankhamuns-war-chariots-to-be-restored>

Mark Rothko back on display at Tate Modern

LONDON – A painting that was vandalised with graffiti ink in 2012 is back on display at Tate Modern following conservation treatment that lasted 18 months.

The painting, valued at £50 million (\$84 million) is titled 'Black on Maroon' and is one of the iconic Seagram Murals donated to the Tate by the artist in 1970.

The Seagram murals were commissioned for New York's Four Seasons restaurant in 1958. The painting arrived in London for display on February 25, 1970 - the day the artist committed suicide aged 66.

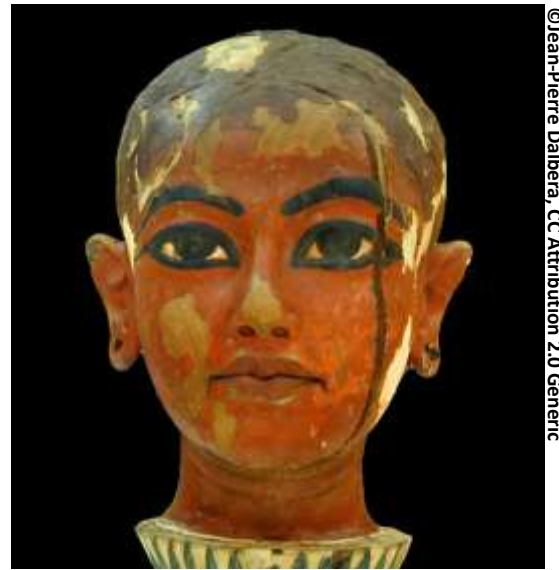
The man responsible for the act of vandalism, Włodzimierz Umaniec, was jailed for two years in December 2012. Talking about the result of the conservation treatment, Sir Nicholas Serota, director of the Tate Art Museums and Galleries said in a news conference: "To see the extent of that damage later that day, one had no idea whether it would be possible to restore it or not, the result is much more successful than we could have hoped for."

A team of conservators and researchers that included Rachel Barker, Bronwyn Ormsby and Patricia Smithen worked over a period of nine months to research methods for removing the ink from the delicate paint layers, and to assess the appropriate solvents and cleaning methods. The following nine months were needed to perform the actual treatment that allowed the painting to get back on display after the ink was removed and the surface restored.

The treatment was filmed and a video covering the duration of the project was produced and it is now available for viewing from the Tate's website at: <http://www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/video/restoring-rothko>

Or from you tube at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AGqAggmwyMU>



Head of Tutankhamun from his tomb

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Conserving a Second World War Bomb Map of Norwich



by Yuki Russell

In 2007, a Second World War bomb map of Norwich was relocated from storage at the Norwich City Engineering Department to the Norfolk Record Office at the Archive Centre (Norwich, UK) for permanent archival storage. The item had been one of the most popular maps in the collection: any public exhibition of the item has typically been followed by increased requests for its use and repeated trips from storage.

At the end of 2012, the decision was taken to conserve a Second World War bomb map of Norwich (UK). The map was created by the Norwich Air Raid Precautions Department during the war, featuring 679 paper labels marking the bombs which fell on the city from 1940 -1944. The location of each label represents the site, date and size of each bomb.

Repetitive handling of the original was made necessary by the lack of a usable digital image. The condition of the map was such that no adequate facsimile could be made, despite several attempts at capturing a quality, detailed image. Hence, one of the main objectives in bringing the item to conservation was to produce a digital surrogate.

The strong demand for digitisation prioritised conservation of the map, though its very poor condition alone easily justified conservation treatment, with some archival information being at serious risk of permanent loss.

At 188cm high, 182cm wide and 8cm deep, the map was comprised of three separate ordnance survey maps. The adjoining sheets were directly mounted onto two wooden fibreboards with a wooden stretcher. Interestingly,



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the map had 679 small paper labels attached with metal pins. Many being heavily distorted, the numerous labels were certainly a factor in obstructing previous endeavours to produce a clear digital image, with information written on them not easily captured by the camera. The metal pins holding the labels were corroded to various degrees. Corrosion was believed to be the result of the various organic acids emitted from the poor quality fibreboard and inappropriate environmental conditions, especially those under which the map was previously stored.

The chief concern was discolouration, with the map appearing extremely darkened throughout. The entire verso of the map was in contact with the poor quality wooden backing board, suggesting the paper had been oxidised by volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and other types of organic acids generated in the board.

On the reverse of the backboard, the sharp ends of the pins were protruding through the board, which necessitated extreme care in handling especially during transport from storage.

The main obstacle to viewing this vital archival information however, was the distortion of the labels and the method by which they had been mounted. Additionally, densely clustering of labels in certain areas (representing severely bombed locations) further obscured the data.

Assessment and treatment proposal



Details of labels and pins on the recto of the map

The scale and complexity of the item as a whole required me to establish the best conservation approach, weighing the benefits of various degrees of intervention against time constraints. As part of this assessment, the individual labels were categorised by condition, allowing me to prioritise their treatment. The markers were therefore divided into the following groups:

- Approximately one quarter of the labels and their pins needed to be replaced urgently as they were at risk of becoming detached from the map.
- Approximately one quarter of them needed to be flattened, as they were distorted to various extents and were illegible.
- The remainder, though firmly attached and flat, were illegible and showed signs of deterioration, such as corrosion spreading through the paper.

The other major concern regarding the stability of the item was the presence of the wooden fibreboard. Composed of poor quality materials, the structure adhered to the entire verso of the map, leaving it exposed to potential further deterioration, leaving the backboard untreated was therefore considered seriously detrimental to long-term preservation. However, replacement of the board would necessitate removal of all labels and pins.

Taking these facts into account, two separate treatment options emerged:

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- The first option was to minimise treatment with the focus being on digitising the map.
- The second option was a more comprehensive programme involving stabilising the paper labels and replacing the backboard to achieve a long-lasting improvement in the condition of the map.



The pins visible from the verso of the map and one of the labels

Choosing the first option would imply that the fundamental causes of the gradual deterioration would remain. The benefit of the second option was the stabilisation of the item as a whole. Prioritising long-term preservation was clearly the route by which to proceed. However, the removal of the 679 labels would be a considerably more time-consuming treatment compared to the first option.

I had serious reservations regarding the first option: once superficial work had been carried out and the necessary digital images obtained, it was feared that genuine conservation work would no longer be a priority, with further work being postponed indefinitely. Once the demand for a usable digital image was met, was it possible that the condition of the item itself might be disregarded over time? It was, in-fact, the need for digitisation that led to the map to be earmarked for conservation in the first place.

Mindful of these risks, it was therefore established that the more comprehensive programme of treatment was the most favourable approach to the item and the situation.

Conservation treatment

After establishing a means of safe handling of the labels throughout the project, all labels and pins were removed. This removal enabled access to the structure of the map.

Provided the colours were not fugitive, washing the map was the preferred cleaning method. However, aware of the risk of causing dimensional change in the three individual sheets, this was eventually decided against. Therefore, surface cleaning was chosen along with tear repair and lining of the whole map.

Each label was washed individually in a small container in order to ensure identification at any stage during washing.

After washing, alkalisation with calcium hydroxide was undertaken. The labels were then flattened and lined with two layers of Japanese paper. In addition to discoloration, the original locations of pin-holes were a serious issue as these were located extremely close to the text (sometimes even obscuring it) or at the very edge of labels. In some cases, due to the miss-location of holes, pinheads and rust stains, information contained on the labels was rendered illegible. The lengths of the worse affected labels were extended in order to accommodate the new pin holes and to reattach them to the map. The extension was made with two layers of Japanese paper. The entire reverse of each label was then covered with a Japanese paper dyed with direct dye in order to blend the new extended segment with the original brown-coloured label.

In selecting a new backing board, a Tycore™ Support Board was employed. With its honeycomb cell structure, Tycore™ boards were chosen not only for quality and long-term stability but also assured low weight of the complete assembly without compromising rigidity.

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After reattaching the wooden battens to the new backboard and despite the belief that the map would be used less once digitised, as the intention was to store the map vertically, it was critical to make sure that tension of the whole map was sufficiently maintained. Heavy weight Japanese paper hinges were therefore attached equidistantly along all edges in order to firmly tension the sheet in all directions. The outer stretcher was then reassembled using new stainless steel screws.



The map during one of the phases of treatment

Despite the complex and extensive procedures of preparation and treatment up to this point, the remaining tasks were relatively straightforward. By referring to a location map of labels made prior to treatment, the labels were returned to their original locations. New stainless steel pins, thinly coated with Paraloid B72, were used to replace the original corroded pins. One significant improvement was the visibility of written information with the replacement pins being relocated at the

newly extended edges where the labels were previously severely damaged.

An additional backing of Plastazote® was added to the back of the new board; this was done so that the sharp ends of the pins which were previously protruding through the board were adequately supported and covered, both securing the labels in place and assuring safe handling.

On completing treatment, a bespoke packing was made for the map. An oversized four-flap enclosure was produced using Tyvek® sheet. In addition to the external cover, the recto was covered by two corrugated plastic panels. Previously, the item was simply wrapped in a single, large sheet of Tyvek®. Due to the size and nature of the map, the Tyvek® easily snagged on the distorted paper labels when uncovered and so the problem was resolved by the new protective panels.

Finally, digitisation was carried out with whole and detailed images being made available to the public. Conservation of the paper labels contributed significantly to the production of a clear image of each label. The original map is now stored in a controlled environment with handling kept to an absolute minimum.

All of the digital images are available on CD and can be purchased through the Norfolk Record Office website <http://www.archives.norfolk.gov.uk> or accessed using the computer terminals in the search room.



Yuki Russell completed her second MA in Conservation of Works of Art on Paper at the University of Northumbria in Newcastle (UK). Since then, she has been working within the Conservation Section of the Norfolk Record Office at the Archive Centre.

All images in this article are copyright of the Norfolk Record Office

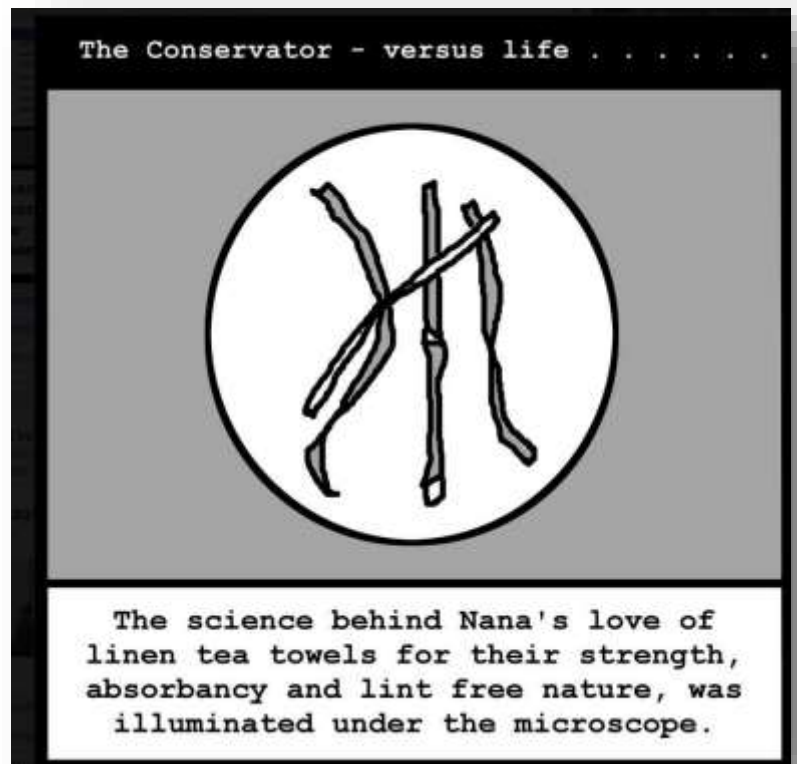
The story behind “The Conservator versus life”

by Shellie Cleaver

If you inhabit the realms of social media and are part of online conservation/preservation groups chances are you have come across a comic strip called ‘The Conservator versus life’.

The comic, exploring the world through the eyes of conservators, caught NiC’s attention some time ago and has since delighted us with its fresh brand of humour and wit.

NiC caught up with the author Shellie Cleaver and asked her to share the story behind the idea and a few strips.



"I had just completed the first of two years study at Melbourne University in Australia, to become a conservator. It was the summer holidays and for some time, I had found aspects of conservation and how it related to life quite humorous, and had wondered about creating comics based on it.

On the first of January 2013, inspired by a friend’s son who had been regularly creating comics and posting them on his blog, I began. Using very simple graphics for the comics, I started a Facebook page and a blog and committed to regularly posting.

Initially I wanted to test the idea out and remain anonymous, as I had no idea how it would be received; it was a fine line between getting the word out about the comic, and not letting on that I was the author. It started with my university friends and somehow, in a year it had reached 1000 likes on Facebook, with people from all over the world following it.

Currently I try to post two comics a week that highlight the quirks particular to conservators. I try to make them accessible for those outside the industry, so they can learn something about what conservators do.

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Some of the comics betrayed the fact that the author of *The Conservator* was part of our university group, as they made reference to things that had recently happened in our classes. Word started to spread, people began asking who it was, guessing and even placing bets, or so I was told. I was even asked directly, and had to deny it - this was particularly difficult given my inability to lie!

My university friends also created a poll so people could vote on who they thought the author was and I was on the list. Luckily for me there was another student who was considered more likely...

At the end of the final year of study, I had to work out how to reveal my identity. I wanted to fess up to my university friends as the

comic had provided some fun and distraction for us, and their requests for *The Conservator* to reveal themselves were mounting. I confided in a friend from university, asking for her help to devise a plan. In my final thesis presentation, I alluded to the fact I was *The Conservator*, some people did 'get it' but it was too subtle for most. In the end, I just had to tell some of my classmates, and the word spread.

Creating the comic strip has now become a regular part of my weekly routine and I am always listening out for comments from conservators that I could use in a comic.

After one year of creating these simple comics, over 100 of them were compiled into a small printed book."

The book is available from:

<http://au.blurb.com/b/5045221-the-best-of-the-conservator-versus-life-2013>

You can visit the *Conservator Versus Life* on Facebook or bookmark the author's blog on:

<http://theconservator.wordpress.com/>

Shellie Cleaver came to the conservation industry from Sydney, Australia, with a background in Fine Arts. Having furthered her education in small business management, she moved to Melbourne and completed a postgraduate qualification, becoming a painting conservator in December 2013. Upon graduating Shellie led the creation of the new international conservation magazine, *The Condition Report*, which aims to connect the conservation industry with artists, other museums professionals and the general public - <http://www.theconditionreport.com.au>

The comic strips used in the article are copyright of Shellie Cleaver



Reviews

The Non-Invasive Analysis of Painted Surfaces

A two-day international symposium
Washington DC, February 2014

By Paola Ricciardi

The conference was organised by ICOM-CC Paintings Working Group, ICOM-CC Scientific Research Working Group, FAIC and the Lunder Conservation Centre. It was held on 20-21 February 2014 in the McEvoy Auditorium at the National Portrait Gallery & Smithsonian American Art Museum, located in downtown Washington, DC.



The conference programme included fourteen plenary lectures, two short talks and a panel discussion. Talks on day 1 focused largely on analytical imaging methods, while day 2 included presentations of multi-technique case studies followed by an afternoon focused on X-ray fluorescence (XRF) analyses. About 150 people were in attendance, including a large number of students and young graduates.

The audience was welcomed by Tiarna Doherty, Chief of Conservation at the Lunder Conservation Centre. She

introduced the first speaker for the day, David Saunders, Keeper of Conservation and Scientific Research at the British Museum. David's inspiring keynote address challenged the audience with a thorough discussion of the benefits and drawbacks of non-invasive analyses compared to analyses which do require sampling artworks. Starting with a comparison between two analytical studies of the sarcophagus of Seti I carried out in the early 19th and the early 21st century, David introduced the two main types of motivation behind technical analyses: to understand the histories of production, use and meaning of objects, and to understand the material nature of objects in view of their future preservation. Case studies highlighted the variety of analytical methods nowadays available for analysis of art objects: from simple visual examination to a range of complex imaging methods, from various types of spectroscopic point analysis to the detailed examination of samples. Finally, David outlined the main points one should keep in mind when faced with the ever-challenging conundrum 'to sample or not to sample': employ collaborative decision-making, carry out a risks vs benefits analysis, ensure rigorous documentation of each process and retain samples and all technical information for the future.

Philip Klausmeyer from the Worcester Art Museum discussed the use of laser shearography to quantify and map induced strain in canvas paintings. This imaging method, relatively new to the field of cultural heritage science, was used to monitor the mechanical response of oil paintings on canvas to thermal gradients and to assess the suitability of different backing materials for a stretched canvas. Most recently, shearography data have been tentatively correlated with topography information such as the presence of cracks on a painting's surface.

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Haida Liang from Nottingham Trent University presented a state-of-the-art instrument used to analyse painted surfaces by optical coherence tomography. This imaging technique yields 'virtual cross sections' of easel and wall paintings, thereby allowing the study of the stratigraphy of painted layers, otherwise unobtainable by non-invasive methods. It can also be used for real-time monitoring of the drying process of varnishes and of the effectiveness of conservation treatments.

Opening the afternoon session, Gwendoline Fife and Tyler Meldrum discussed the results of a project involving institutions in the Netherlands, Germany and the United States, focused on the use of nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) spectroscopy to monitor the effects of organic solvent treatments on paintings. They showed the importance of understanding the effect of different cleaning techniques for an improved risk assessment and proved the usefulness of NMR for an effective comparison of such techniques.

Austin Nevin from the Politecnico di Milano discussed the use of fluorescence lifetime imaging (FLIM) to map and identify pigments in 19th century paintings including a painting on paper by Vincent Van Gogh. FLIM revealed the presence of a highly luminescent white pigment with a lifetime of about 1.2 microseconds, which the team were able to identify as a zinc-based material with small amounts of copper impurities giving rise to the unusually strong and long-lived luminescence emission.

Lori Wong from the Getty Conservation Institute showed the results of comprehensive study of the wall paintings in the tomb of Tutankhamen by means of portable instrumentation. The paintings' layer stratigraphy and the presence of past conservation treatments carried out on the four walls of the pharaoh's burial chamber were successfully investigated despite harsh environmental conditions which put the analytical equipment to the test.

Bruno Brunetti from the University of Perugia summarised the activity of the European mobile laboratory called 'MOLAB', part of the EU-funded project CHARISMA. He compared the analytical performance of different kind of portable spectroscopic equipment and showed the results obtained in a few of the 60 projects that the MOLAB team has been involved with in 19 European countries, travelling over 176,000 km in 10 years. Day 1 ended with a reception at Cuba Libre restaurant which I was not, alas, able to attend...

I had the pleasure of delivering the first talk of the second day of the conference, presenting the cross-disciplinary approach taken by the MINIARE project at the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge for the study of illuminated manuscripts. My talk focused on the need to employ multiple methodologies, including visual observation, analysis of the quire structure, infrared imaging, photomicroscopy, reflectance spectroscopy and XRF to shed light on the authorship of the complex and extensive decorative programme of a 13th century Psalter.

Kate Seymour, Marya Albrecht and Melissa Daugherty from the Stichting Restauratie Atelier Limburg discussed their technical analysis of two 15th century Spanish panel paintings as if they were investigating a crime scene, using multiple methodologies. The iconography, the construction methods and apparent modifications of the panels as well as the information gained about the painting materials and techniques all contributed to the conclusion that the panels were painted in Barcelona or Catalunya by either Jaume Huguet or Joan Reixach.

Jennifer Mass from the University of Delaware described the combined use of XRF and UV-induced visible and infrared fluorescence imaging to study the alteration of cadmium sulphide pigments in paintings by Edvard Munch and Henri Matisse. The combination of multiple imaging techniques proved invaluable in detecting both incipient and advanced alteration of these pigments on monumental paintings which could not be comprehensively studied by site-specific methods.

Maria Kokkori from the Art Institute of Chicago shared her insights into 'Painterly realism of a football player – colour masses in the 4th dimension', a 1915 painting from Kazimir Malevich's 'suprematist' period. Most intriguingly, Maria discussed the identification of cobalt violet, very unusual for Russian standards at the time because of its high price and its social and political connotation as a 'bourgeois material'.

The afternoon session focused on the use of XRF, certainly one of the methods most widely used by conservation science professionals to analyse works of art. The session was opened by Nicholas Barbi from PulseTor LLC, one of the industrial sponsors of the conference. He introduced ELIO, a new portable XRF spectrometer developed in collaboration with XGLab srl, specifically designed for cultural heritage applications.

Brian Baade presented a comparative discussion of portable vs laboratory-based XRF instruments, based on the analysis of historically representative paint samples carried out with his co-authors at the University of Delaware. He focused particularly on the effectiveness of XRF at identifying traditional paint driers and siccatives as well as the mordants associated with red lake pigments.

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In two short talks, Aniko Bezur from the Centre for Conservation and Preservation at Yale University and Erich Uffelmann from Washington and Lee University gave examples of ways in which portable XRF equipment can be used to train both conservators and chemistry students.

John Delaney from the National Gallery of Art in Washington delivered the final talk presenting a novel macro-scanning system which combines XRF with visible to near-infrared reflectance hyperspectral data. In one of his case studies, he presented material maps of a multi-panel painting by Cosimo Tura, in which the combination of the two imaging modalities was key to identifying the presence of a copper green pigment (possibly a copper resinate) in landscape areas which now appear brown. He also discussed a promising new application of pump-probe two-photon microscopy to distinguish pigment mixtures from layering effects without the need for sampling. This talk was followed by a panel discussion chaired by Chris McGlinchey from the Museum of Modern Art in New York City about present and future trends in the use of XRF to analyse cultural heritage objects.

Proceedings of conference papers will be published in 2015 by the Smithsonian Institute Press following peer-review. This will be a full colour publication, available both in print and online in open access, entitled 'Advances in the Non-Invasive Analysis of Painted Surfaces: Applications to Conservation'.

Videos of all the plenary lectures as well as the panel discussion are freely available at:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL7gn_68Hr4h_qnMshu8PN6wZdPrKoa6sL



IIC News

IIC 2014 Hong Kong Congress - Provisional Programme

Monday, 22 September 2014

08:30	Registration opens at Hong Kong City Hall Lobby
09:30	<i>Refreshments</i>
11:00	Opening ceremony
11:45	The Forbes Prize Lecture
12:30	<i>Lunch</i>
13:00	Meeting for Gabo Trust, Getty Foundation, Brommelle Memorial Fund, Beishantang and IIC Opportunities Fund grant recipients
14:00 – 15:40	<p>Paper Session 1a - Conservation of Textiles 1: Excavated treasures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conservation of a silk robe excavated from the Loulan mural tomb, Xinjiang <i>Xiaojing Kang</i> - The heritage of Tang Dynasty textiles from the Famen Temple: Technological and stable isotope studies <i>Regina Knaller, Florian Ströbele</i> - Conservation of a gauze jacket excavated from the tomb of Zhou Yu (c. 1244) in Zhenjiang, China <i>Shuqi Lou, Fang Wu</i> - Conservation study of Ming Dynasty silk costumes excavated in Jiangsu, China <i>Chen Wang</i>
15:40	<i>Refreshments</i>
16:10 – 17:30	<p>Paper Session 1b - Conserving Silk and Thangkas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conservation of thangkas in The Palace Museum, Beijing, China <i>Jirong Song, Xiaoji Fang</i> - Pathways to unravelling the past: Silk borders of Buddhist paintings conserved from China, Japan, Korea, and the Himalayas <i>Jennifer Walker</i> - Studies on naturally-dyed silk for painting exposed to museum display <i>Boyoung Lee, Hyoseon Ryu</i>
17:30	<i>End of Session</i>
18:30	Welcoming Reception at Hong Kong Museum of Coastal Defence sponsored by AXA Art Asia

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Tuesday, 23 September 2014

09:00 – 11:00	<p>Paper Session 2a - East Asian Lacquerware – from Analysis to Treatment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conservation study of Jiazhutai lacquerware excavated from the Dayunshan Han Dynasty tombs, Jiangsu, China <i>Xiaoli Chen, Weijun He</i> - Technical investigation of an eighteenth-century Chinese Imperial carved lacquer screen <i>Václav Pitthard, Sabine Stanek, Martina Griesser, Christiane Jordan, Silvia Miklin-Kniefacz</i> - Chinese Lacquer: Much More Than Chinese Lacquer <i>Michael R. Schilling, Herant Khanjian, Julie Chang, Arlen Heginbotham, Nanke Schellmann</i> - Measuring mercury emissions from cinnabar lacquer objects <i>Donna Strahan, Masahiko Tsukada</i> - The reproduction of samples of Chinese export lacquer for research <i>Marianne Webb, Michael R. Schilling, Julie Chang</i>
11:00	<i>Refreshments</i>
11:20 – 12:40	<p>Paper Session 2b - East Asian Paintings: Imported and Exported Materials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The analysis of complex modern Vietnamese lacquer paintings <i>Bettina Ebert, Michael R. Schilling</i> - Culture and trade through the prism of technical art history: A study of Chinese export paintings <i>Haida Liang, Lucia Burgio, Kate Bailey, Andrei Lucian, Chris Dilley, Sonia Bellesia, Chishing Cheung, Charlotte Brooks</i> - Conservation of an oil portrait of <i>The Empress Dowager Tze Hsi of China</i> <i>Jiasun Tsang, Inês Madruga, Don Williams, Jenifer Bosworth, David Hogge</i>
12:40	<i>Lunch</i>
13:00	<p>Meeting of Student Delegates Meeting of IIC Regional Group representatives Thematic talk offered by Crystal Computer Graphics Limited</p>
14:00 – 16:00	<p>Paper Session 3a - Conservation and Analysis of Asian Wall Paintings and Sites</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Facing the past in China: Contemporary challenges of architectural conservation <i>Martha Demas, Lori Wong, Neville Agnew, Linli Li, Dong Chen, Qing Chen</i> - New approaches to conserving the wall painting heritage of Bhutan <i>Stephen Rickerby, Lisa Shekede, Dorjee Tshering, Tshewang Gyalpo, David Park</i> - Conservation research at Dunhuang: The pivotal role of Cave 260 for conservation education and policy <i>Sharon Cather, Xudong Wang, Bomin Su, Stephen Rickerby, Lisa Shekede, Xiaowei Wang</i> - On-site conservation of the tomb mural of the Western Han Dynasty at Xi'an University of Technology, Xi'an, China <i>Jian Feng, Fengyan Zhao, Shuzhen Li</i> - Vast and dispersed: developing portable facilities for non-invasive analysis and recording of heritage sites in China <i>Bomin Su, Zongren Yu, Sharon Cather</i>

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16:00	<i>Refreshments</i>
16:20 – 17:40	Paper Session 3b - Conservation of Textiles 2: From a Fur coat to a Celebratory Hanging <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conservation of a fur court robe of the Qing Dynasty <i>Yunli Wang, Chunlei Wang</i> - The consolidation of mud-silk: A Southeast Asian textile <i>Kate Blair, Karen Thompson</i> - The analysis and conservation of a Chinese silk birthday hanging of the Qing Dynasty <i>Angela Cheung, Louise Sam, Lydia Messerschmidt, Evita Yeung</i>
17:40	<i>End of Session</i>
18:30	Reception cum visit to "Bruce Lee: Kung Fu • Art • Life" Exhibition at Hong Kong Heritage Museum sponsored by Crystal Computer Graphics Limited
*09:00 - 17:30	<i>Trade Fair & Posters Display</i>

Wednesday, 24 September 2014

09:00 – 10:40	Paper Session 4 - Conserving Metals and Composite Objects: From Archaeological Objects to Iron-paintings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presenting the conservation of archaeological bronzes from Sanxingdui, China, in the museum context <i>Celine Lai</i> - Assessing the condition of archaeological cast iron objects using non-destructive methods <i>Hyeyoun Lee, Hyungho Park, Juhye Cho, Jaeun Yu</i> - Wuhu iron paintings: Basic research and conservation of a four-sided lantern <i>Lydia Messerschmidt</i> - Corroded applied lead-based decoration (<i>hyomon</i>) on Japanese lacquer: Principles and case studies <i>Richard Wolbers, Shayne Rivers, Yoshihiko Yamashita</i>
10:40	<i>Refreshments</i> Poster and Student Poster sessions
12:30	<i>Lunch</i>
13:30	Cultural Tours in Hong Kong
18:30	Reception at British Consulate-General Hong Kong (by invitation)
*09:00 - 14:00	<i>Trade Fair & Posters Display</i>

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Thursday, 25 September 2014

09:00 – 11:00	<p>Paper Session 5a - Preventive conservation and the Environment 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An assessment of nine engraved sites in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region <i>Andrew Thorn, Valerie Magar</i> - Modelling temperature and humidity in storage spaces used for cultural property in Japan <i>Masahide Inuzuka</i> - Installation of an environmental monitoring system in the Chapel of Our Lady Guia, Macau <i>Zhong Tang, Shibing Dai</i> - Developing heritage climatology for collection preservation in changing sub-tropical climates through a trapping survey in Hong Kong <i>Peter Brimblecombe, Jody Beenk, Christopher Mattison</i> - Understanding storage environmental stability during power outages: A key issue in sub-tropical climates <i>Edward Kinfai Tse, Waishan Tsui</i>
11:00	Refreshments
11:20 – 12:50	<p>Paper Session 5b - Preventive conservation and the Environment 2</p> <p>Three thematic papers and Panel Discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Environmental conditions for safeguarding collections: Future trends <i>Sarah Staniforth</i> - Environmental conditions for safeguarding collections: A background to the current debate on the control of relative humidity and temperature <i>Jo Kirby Atkinson</i> - Environmental conditions for safeguarding collections: What should our set points be? <i>Julian Bickersteth</i>
12:50	Lunch
13:00	Meeting and Reception of IIC Fellows
14:20 – 15:40	<p>Paper Session 6a - East Asian Art on Paper</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The cicada and the crow: Chinese stone rubbings <i>Susan Catcher</i> - Paper lining: Techniques based on knowledge and experience <i>Keisuke Sugiyama, Jinxian Qiu, Hisashi Hakamata</i> - Broken history: Redefining eighteenth-century Korean portrait painting mounts <i>Meejung Kim</i>
15:40	Refreshments
16:10 – 17:30	<p>Paper Session 6b - Conservation of Textiles 3: Examination and Conservation in Practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One hundred boys, one hundred challenges: The examination and conservation of two Viennese folding screens decorated with a Chinese silk embroidery <i>Edith Oberhumer, Maarten R. van Bommel, Matthijs de Keijzer, Suzan de Groot, Rudolf Erlach, Regina Hofmann-de Keijzer, Regina Knaller</i> - Chinese painted silks for the European market in the Victoria and Albert Museum: Conservation treatment developments <i>Elizabeth-Anne Haldane, Zenzie Tinker</i> - Thai textile conservation: Building bridges regionally and culturally in a twenty-first-century context <i>Julia M. Brennan, Parichat Saengsirikulchai</i>
17:30	End of Session

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18:30	Congress Dinner at Jumbo Floating Restaurant
*09:00 - 17:30	Trade Fair & Posters Display

Friday, 26 September 2014

09:00 – 11:00	<p>Paper Session 7a - Analysis and Conservation of East Asian Glass, Ceramics and Stone</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The conservation of ceramic roof ridge decorations in Shiwan, Guangdong, China <i>Haiyan Huang, Haobin Shi</i> - Non-destructive comparative analysis by X-ray fluorescence of Asian and European seventeenth- to nineteenth-century glass <i>Florian Knothe, Stephen Koob, Robert H. Brill</i> - The colourful hub of the Silk Road: A study of glass beads excavated from two Shanpula tomb sites in the Khotan area of Xinjiang, China <i>Qian Cheng, Jinlong Guo, Huajie Zhang, Bo Wang</i> - Traditional craftsmanship and technology of Jianyang black wares from Fujian, China <i>Pamela B. Vandiver, Chandra L. Reedy</i> - A study on the problems and conservation of Leizhou stone dogs <i>Huan Zhang, Xiaoqing Liu</i>
11:00	Refreshments
11:20 – 12:40	<p>Paper Session 7b - Innovative Manufacture and Treatment of East Asian Paper</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Composition and manufacturing techniques of wallpaper in the Bower of Purest Jade (<i>Yu cuixuan</i>), The Forbidden City, Beijing <i>Yue Ma, Yong Lei, Shiwei Wang</i> - Chinese export watercolours: Employing enzymes, rigid gels and micro-emulsions for the removal of stains, adhesive and backings <i>Melissa Lewis, Teresa Coleman</i> - From Quanzhou to Oxford: An account of the Selden Map of China and its conservation <i>Robert Minte, Marinita Stiglitz, Keisuke Sugiyama, Mark Barnard</i>
12:40	Lunch
13:00	Thematic talk offered by AXA Art Asia
14:00 – 15:10	<p>Paper Session 8a - Approaches to the Conservation of Polychromy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conservation of a polychrome terracotta warrior of the Qin Dynasty, newly excavated from vault 1 in Xi'an, Shaanxi, China <i>Desheng Lan, Dongfeng Wang, Tie Zhou, Bo Rong, Yin Xia</i> - New insights into Jin and post-Jin polychromy and refurbishment practices: A multidisciplinary, multi-analytical approach <i>John Twilley, Kathleen M. Garland, Marc F. Wilson</i> - A two-step consolidation approach in conserving an unfired clay statue <i>Eddy Leung, Dominic Kan, Ronnie Kam</i>
15:10	Refreshments

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15:30 – 16:40	<p>Paper Session 8b - <i>New Conservation Materials and Applications</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Looking through a window: The conservation and reconstruction of an ivory window of Sundari Cok at the Patan Royal Palace, Nepal <i>Gabriela Krist, Regina Anna Friedl, Manfred Trummer, Tatjana Bayerova, Kathrine Schmidt</i> - Conservation of amber at the Metropolitan Museum of Art: Regalrez 1126 as a consolidant and adhesive for amber and copal <i>Linda Yingchun Lin, Adriana Rizzo</i> - Reincarnating the Lotus: Repair of a contemporary life-size cloisonné figure <i>Elizabeth Wild</i>
16:40	<p>The Poster Prize The Student Poster Prize The Keck Award Honorary Fellow presentation Announcement of IIC 2016 Congress Venue Closing speeches</p>
17:45	<i>End of Session</i>
18:30	Farewell Reception at Asia Society Hong Kong Center sponsored by the Robert H N Ho Family Foundation Centre for Buddhist Art and Conservation at The Courtauld
*09:00 – 16:00	<i>Trade Fair & Posters Display</i>

Membership Renewal 2014- 2015

This issue of *News in Conservation* will be published at the same time as the renewal forms are sent out for the new membership year, July 2014 to June 2015. Your renewal form will be sent to you under separate cover.

Why should you renew?

Well, what did your last year's membership of IIC bring?

1. You can now download all papers from *Studies in Conservation*, *Reviews in Conservation* and IIC Congresses back to 1952, all from the IIC's web pages – and all for free! *Studies in Conservation* is 50% larger – by two issues: it is now published six times a year. So that means you are getting 50% more research and practical experience, 50% more of the latest in heritage science, 50% more in the way of insight and analysis – for much less than a 50% increase in your membership fee.
2. You can list your own specialities in the field and search for others with the same specialities and interests quickly and accurately with the improved membership database searching via the IIC web-site.
3. We held the second IIC Student and Emerging Conservator Conference in Copenhagen in September 2013, building on the success of the first such event in London in 2011. This was again an opportunity for those joining the profession to find out what the world of conservation is really like, as well as to meet future colleagues and discuss how their futures could develop. We are already planning the 2015 event, so watch this space!

What could you be missing?

There is much more to come!

1. For the first time IIC will be in Hong Kong for the 2014 Congress (22nd to 26th September). This will be an innovative and informative event, allowing discussion of a wide range of topics related to East Asian heritage in all its forms. It will also give the international community of conservation professionals the chance to meet, network and share their experiences in an exciting venue.

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2. IIC is taking a lead and making a difference: the 2014 Hong Kong Congress will also feature its first integrated dialogue session as part of the programme, focusing on the very current topic of environmental control in relation to heritage conservation.
3. And other events? We are planning further talks, seminars at AGMs and other exciting things. Keep following us for updated information on future events and activities.
4. We intend to expand and develop the help given by the IIC Opportunities Fund to the members it supports – see <https://www.iiconservation.org/about/awards/opportunities>

For the new membership year, the subscription rates are:

Students £25

Individuals £70

Fellows £100

Institutions £360.

Personal members (Fellows, Individuals and Students) will shortly receive a renewal form; institutions will receive an invoice separately. No renewal form will be sent if you have already paid your subscription for 2014 - 2015, if you pay your subscription by standing order (UK members only – reminder already sent), or if your subscription is paid by someone else.

The easiest - and quickest - way to pay your subscription is by paying online at the IIC web-site www.iiconservation.org where you will find the membership renewal link on the very front page.

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Call for Papers – News in Conservation

News in Conservation (*NiC*), the e-paper from the International Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works, is looking for contributions in the form of articles, long features, news, and reviews to be published in one of the future issues. Topics of interest can be discussed with the editor and can range from treatment papers to opinion pieces.

NiC enjoys a wider international audience from very diverse backgrounds. Published six times per year in digital format, it is delivered via an email alert to members and freely downloadable from the IIC website in open access.

NiC is an evolving project, one that exists thanks to the support of authors and writers that contribute articles and other informative material guaranteeing a steady flow of relevant content. IIC aims to mould our e- paper to fit our community's evolving interests and preferences; for this reason we invite comments and feedback and we maintain a continuous link with our social media activities.

Since being launched as an electronic publication, *NiC* has been growing steadily and in the past year has increased its readership and its overall reach. *NiC* has been praised on various social media networks by comments left by users and often cited as a good example of successful conservation outreach effort.

With continuous help and support, *NiC* will continue to deliver conservation news to the world of conservation, aiming to grow and reach further afield.

If you want to contribute please contact Barbara Borghese
news@iiconservation.org

To download a free issue visit: <https://www.iiconservation.org/publications/nic>

More News

Digitally enhanced Mark Rothko's Harvard Murals to be exhibited

CAMBRIDGE, MA – To mark the opening of their newly renovated and expanded facilities, the Harvard Art Museums announced that the inaugural special exhibition will be Mark Rothko's Harvard Murals. The exhibition will present innovative, non-invasive digital projection as a way to return an important Rothko mural series to public view, as well as to encourage study and debate of the technology.

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Panel One, Panel Two and Panel Three, 1965

The digital conservation approach used on the works employs specially calibrated light as a tool to restore the appearance of the mural's original colours, which had faded during the 1960s and 1970s when the five large-scale canvas paintings were on display in a penthouse dining room at Harvard University. High levels of natural light coming through the floor-to-ceiling windows ultimately caused Rothko's colours to fade, and the five paintings showed differing patterns of colour loss.

Deemed unsuitable for exhibition, the murals were

put in storage and were largely overlooked in the past half-century of Rothko scholarship. In the mid-1980s, Harvard conservators began studies to explore why the colours had faded so quickly in the hope that these important murals might be returned to public view. Eventually they determined that one factor in the fading was the presence of Lithol Red, an unstable organic pigment that the artist used in all five paintings. A conventional conservation treatment of retouching damaged or faded paint was not considered as a suitable solution because of the large areas of colour loss and the delicate, thinly painted, and unvarnished surfaces. Such treatment would in fact be irreversible and would potentially obliterate the artist's hand—violating key principles of conservation.

The current approach used a camera-projector system that includes custom-made software developed and applied by a team of art historians, conservation scientists, conservators, and scientists at the Harvard Art Museums and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Media Lab. For each mural, the camera captures images of its current state and compares them to a photograph representing the original, un-faded colour. A "compensation image," is sent to a digital projector that illuminates the mural and restores the colour. For a certain period of time each day, the projector lights will be turned off, in order for visitors to study the paintings in their current state.

The research, technical analysis, and conservation treatment on Mark Rothko's Harvard Murals have been made possible in part through the generous support of the AXA Art Insurance Corporation, the Bowes Family Foundation, InFocus Corporation, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Ezra and Lauren Merkin, Novartis International AG, Lief D. Rosenblatt, and the NBT Charitable Trust.

To learn more about the project visit: <http://www.harvardartmuseums.org/>



What's on + NiC's List

Call for papers

Courtauld Research Forum Symposium: The Intelligent Hand, 1500-1800

8 November, 2014

The Courtauld Institute of Art, London, UK

Call for Papers Deadline: Monday, 30 June, 2014

Problems Connected with Keeping and Conservation of Collections in Museums

9-10 October 2014

Szreniawa, Poland

Deadline for papers: 19th September 2014

For further information write

to: konserwacja@muzeum-szreniawa.pl

"Adapt and Evolve: East Asian Materials and Techniques in Western Conservation" Icon Book and Paper Group Conference

8-10 April 2015

London, UK

Please submit abstracts to:

adaptandevolve2015@gmail.com by 30 June 2014.

For further details visit:

adaptandevolve2015.wordpress.com

Archaeology 2015 Conference: Ancient Cultures in the Lands of the Bible

21-23 June, 2015

Jerusalem

More details on the conference and main topics are available on the website: <http://www.holy-land-archeology.com/>

A comprehensive list of events taking place around the world, in and around the field of conservation. Write to news@iiconservation.org if you wish to add your event

Conferences/Seminars

42nd LIBER Annual Conference : Research Libraries in the 2020 Information Landscape

2-5 July 2014

Riga, Latvia

For further information about this event visit:

<http://liber2014.wp.lnb.lv/>

Poles, Posts And Canoes: The Preservation, Conservation And Continuation Of Native American Monumental Wood Carving

21-22 July 2014

Tulalip, Washington USA

For more information visit:

<http://www.hibulbculturalcenter.org/Events/Symposium/>

2nd International Congress on Science and Technology for the Conservation of Cultural Heritage

24- 27 July 2014

Sevilla, Spain

For more information visit:

www.technoheritage.es/Sevilla.html

Identification and Conservation Strategies for Color and Digital Prints

28 July 2014

Budapest, Hungary

For more information visit:

www.getty.edu/conservation/

ICOM-CC Triennial Conference - Building Strong Culture through Conservation

15-19 September 2014

Melbourne, Australia

For more information visit: <http://www.icom-cc2014.org/>

25th biennial IIC Congress : An Unbroken History: Conserving East Asian Works of Art and Heritage

22- 26 September 2014

Hong Kong, China

For more information visit:

www.iiconservation.org

Management of Cultural Heritage and Cultural Memory Institutions

18-20 September 2014

Istanbul, Turkey

For more information visit:

www.unak2014.unak.org.tr/en/

45th Annual IASA Conference : Connecting Cultures : Content, Context, and Collaboration

5-9 October 2014

Cape Town, South Africa

For further information about this event visit:

<http://2014.iasa-web.org/>

Symposium Technical Drawings and their Reproductions 2014

6-7- October 2014

The Hague, Netherlands

For further information about this event visit:

<http://www.restauratoren.nl/actueel/tr14/item683>

CME/2014/Croatia Annual Conference : Museums and Innovations

14- 16 October 2014

Zagreb, Croatia

For more information visit: icme.icom.museum

Forum Kunststoffgeschichte 2014 "Plastics Heritage" and Panel Discussion on 'Bioplastics - designing with an upcoming material'

22 - 24 October 2014

Berlin, Germany.

For more information visit: <http://www.forum-kunststoffgeschichte.de>

5th symposium on Preserving Archaeological Remains in Situ (Paris 5)

Kreuzlingen, Switzerland

April 12-18, 2015

For further information about this event visit:

<http://www.paris5.tg.ch>

Courses/Workshops

Bachelor in Conservation/Master in Conservation-Restoration at SUPSI (Scuola Universitaria Professionale della Svizzera Italiana)

Lugano, Switzerland

Deadline for application: June 2014

For information about scholarships for the Bachelor program and to download the information brochure in English, please go to:

www.cr.supsi.ch

Workshop on Aqueous Cleaning

1 -2 July, 2014

Universidad Politecnica de Valencia, Valencia, Spain

Instructors: Richard Wolbers and Paolo Cremonesi

For further information write to:

restauracion@upv.es

Short Course on Islamic Codicology

15-19 September, 2014

University of Cambridge, Cambridge, UK

To register your interest, please contact:

admin@islamicmanuscript.org

SOIMA-LATAM 2014: Safeguarding Sound and Image Collections

3 – 18 November 2014

Mexico City, Mexico

To download application forms and for more information please visit:

<http://www.iccrom.org/soima-latam-2014->

Workshop on the Conservation and Restoration of Urushi (Japanese Lacquer) Ware COURSE

5-28 November 2014

Cologne, Germany

For further information about this event visit:

http://www.tobunken.go.jp/~kokusen/en/nt/urushi_ws_2014.html

For more information about conferences and courses see the IIC website:

www.iiconservation.org