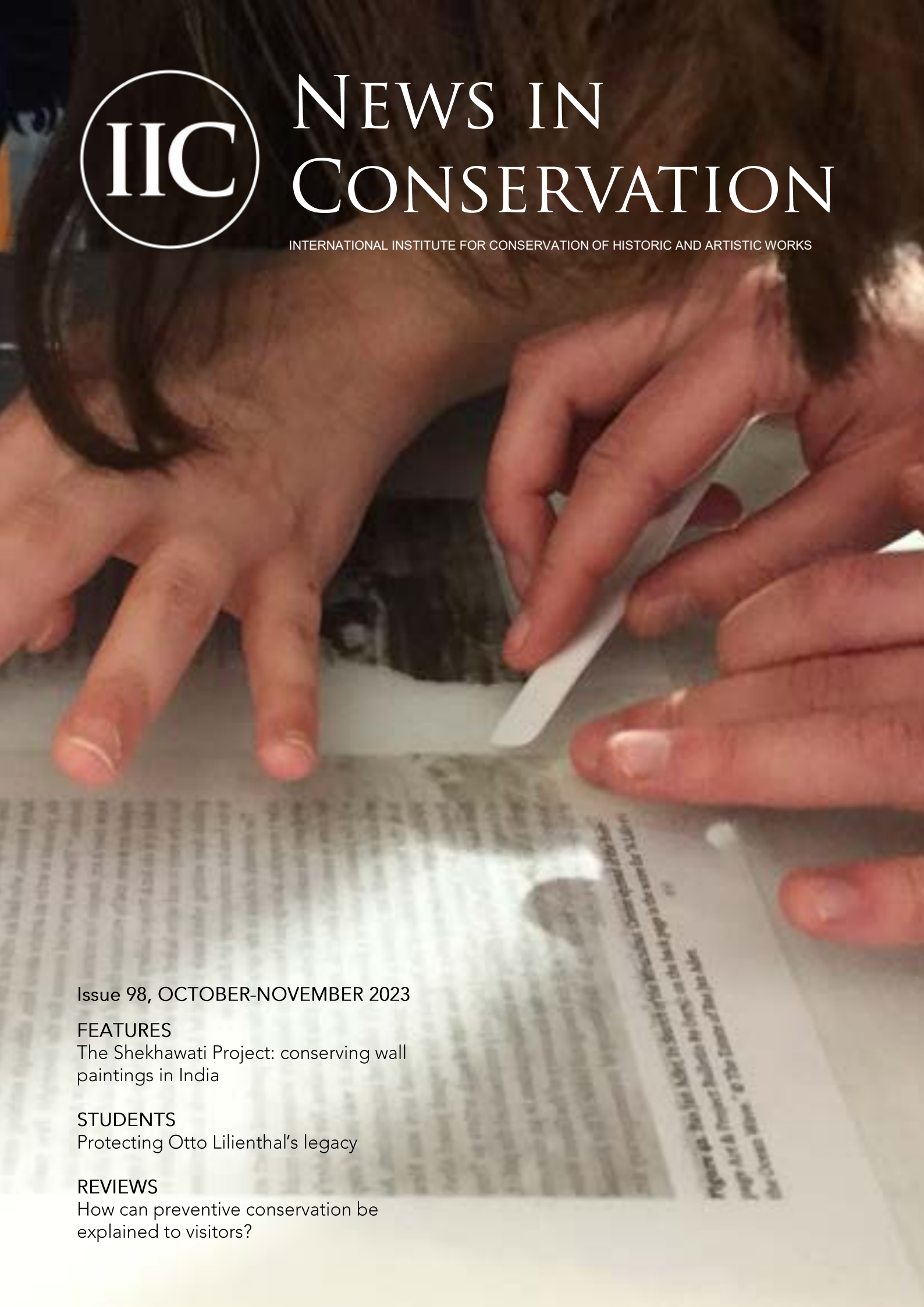




NEWS IN CONSERVATION

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR CONSERVATION OF HISTORIC AND ARTISTIC WORKS



Issue 98, OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 2023

FEATURES

The Shekhawati Project: conserving wall paintings in India

STUDENTS

Protecting Otto Lilienthal's legacy

REVIEWS

How can preventive conservation be explained to visitors?

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Published six times a year, *News in Conservation (NiC)* provides a platform for members of the conservation community to share the latest research, interviews, and reviews; to promote new events, products, and opportunities; and to call for papers, ideas, and involvement. *NiC* also provides updates from the IIC Council and Regional Groups. *NiC* continues to evolve to better fit the needs and interests of our increasingly global conservation profession.

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Cover Image

Mathilde Bezon and Camille Jallu restoring the pages 146 & 147 of Bas Jan Ader's monographic book (*Recent Painting #14*). Photo © Béatrice Balcou, 2023 (Story on p. 10).

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CONTENTS

4 THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

EDITOR'S SOUNDING BOARD



6 NEWS IN BRIEF

FAIC Oral History Project receives grant

Queens Museum controversially repurposes artist's materials

Great Wall damaged

Morocco after the earthquake

BONUS CONTENT stories



10 FEATURE ARTICLES

From Reproduction to Original: Restoration's Role in Béatrice Balcou's Recent Paintings, by John Gayer

The Shekhawati Project: A shared mission towards the Conservation of mural paintings in the Shekhawati-Rajasthan, India, by Cécile Charpentier, Giovanna Carravieri, Sabine Cotte and Harpreet Tandy

24 IIC NEWS

IIC Opportunities Fund: Meet recipient Guilherme Dias

Science for Conservators: book 1 is ready for purchase (IIC member discount)

IIC and Routledge announce a new open research publishing partnership

Join IIC's new Committee for Professional Development and Standards

How to become an IIC Fellow (next deadline is 30 November)

Fellowship Corner & Meet our Trustees



30 STUDENT & EMERGING CONSERVATOR

Balkan Fieldwork Training in Mosaic Conservation, by Shoun Obana



Protecting Otto Lilienthal's legacy with vibration isolation, by Amira Kellner, Charlotte Holzer and Kerstin Kracht

Register for IIC-SECC 2023 *Testing the Waters* and see the programme

44 REFRAMING CONSERVATION THROUGH SUSTAINABILITY

Climate action: How are conservators in Latin America acting? by Marina Herriges

48 BOOK REVIEWS

Art Conservation: Mechanical Properties and Testing of Materials, review by Marjolein Hupkes

Conservation of Time-based Media Art, review by Prof. Pip Laurenson

IIC Book Club event reviews and BONUS CONTENT

56 EVENT REVIEWS

How can Preventive Conservation be communicated and explained to visitors and users? review by Maria Carmela Grano, Martina Scoccimarro, Martina Riello, Konstantina Elmaloglou, Bianca Costi Farias, Sofia Ceseri, Denise Crepaldi and Stefania De Blasi

Preventive Conservation Workshop at SRAL, review by Kosara Yovcheva and Pinja Nousiainen



68 ANNOUNCEMENTS

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK



The final morning of the very successful ICOM-CC Triennial Conference in Valencia in September was a plenary session focusing on *Museums as Influencers: The Agency of Conservation and Conservators*. The whole conference had as its theme *Working Towards a Sustainable Past*, and this session was intended to allow discussion on where the profession sees itself in advocating for sustainability. There were statements from ICOM-CC, IIC and ICCROM highlighting how these sister organisations have been working for our field in this area. I presented the IIC case and began by emphasising the value of collaboration. I took the delegates back to 2014 when IIC and ICOM-CC held back-to-back conferences (ICOM-CC's Triennial meeting in Melbourne and IIC's Biennial Congress in Hong Kong) which resulted in the [joint declaration on environmental guidelines](#). We have continued to work closely with ICOM-CC on sustainability since then, and at the same time have ensured ongoing collaboration with ICCROM. This resulted in the [IIC / ICOM-CC / ICCROM Joint commitment on climate action in October 2021](#).

I picked up on a comment that IIC Secretary General and Professor Jane Henderson made during the opening panel session at the Valencia Conference, namely that we conservators may see ourselves as lacking in power to change and influence matters, but from outside the profession, we are seen as having significant power, particularly in regard to collections for which we care. Many of us also work in museums and galleries which are known to be some of the most trusted of organisations.

I then detailed how IIC continues to take an active lead in not just talking about, but taking action on, climate change. IIC is helping pioneer knowledge, promote access to learning and empower conservators worldwide. It is a core part of our next five-year strategic plan. Our starting point continues to be the UN Brundtland commission of 1987 definition of sustainability: "Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

But the reality is that the speed in which climate change is affecting our lives on this planet means that we need to move a very great deal faster than we currently are to achieve this level of sustainability. July was the hottest month on record, Antarctic Sea ice is the lowest on record, for four consecutive months this year the global ocean surface temperature has hit a record high. These changes are rapid and potentially

irreversible with consequences that we are too slowly coming to grips with. And we know what we need to do – shift to renewable energy; use land, water and nutrients sustainably; radically reduce what we are taking unsustainably from the planet and protect and restore nature.

IIC believes we need to do three things:

1. Get our own houses and workplaces in green order – IIC is providing practical tools to do this online, look out for the forthcoming Race to Net Zero programme and toolkits on the IIC website.
2. Conservators need to take a leading and informed role to ensure cultural heritage adapts as best it can to climate change – IIC has initiated and is committed to working with our fellow professional conservation partners, ICOM-CC and ICCROM, to facilitate this.
3. Use our trusted position to tell the good news of what we can do to make a cleaner and more sustainable planet – IIC was present at COP26 in Glasgow as the only heritage organisation in the Green Zone and has run active programmes at COP27 and will at the forthcoming COP28.

Together with ICOM-CC and ICCROM we can and must make a difference.

With my best wishes,

Julian Bickersteth
IIC President

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MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

It seems, for a lot of people, the catalyst for climate action is their lived experience of extreme weather. Yet we can all see that these extremes are becoming increasingly more frequent and part of a 'new normal'. The [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's \(IPCC's\)](#) most recent assessment report reiterates that our planet warms roughly linearly with how much planet-heating gas we pump into the skies and oceans. Every fraction of a degree past the 1.5 degree centigrade threshold depends on how fast we are at deploying climate solutions and transformational change.

We have a moral and professional duty to act. As Jane Henderson and Julian Bickersteth highlighted at the recent ICOM-CC Valencia conference, conservation professionals

are often uniquely positioned within organisations to help drive and lead positive environmental change. Typically, we either think we are not in a position to influence the decision makers, or we've overestimated what we can achieve in a year and underestimated what we can do in 10 years! That's why it's important to ensure that our sector is not only committed to net zero by 2050 but has a realistic plan that aligns with the [UNFCCC Race to Zero](#) campaign for delivering this non-negotiable target. Later in October, IIC will be launching a net zero pilot programme, initially for members, to not only advocate for change but to show how they are taking steps to reduce their emissions and environmental impacts. In addition IIC, in partnership with Routledge

F1000, has launched a [new Open Access collection focused on Conservation and Leadership](#), which we hope will provide a space for our community to share leadership insights and perspectives in a way that promotes global knowledge sharing across different contexts and boundaries.

The net zero pilot initiative will be driven by our [Joint Commitment for Climate Action](#) with ICOM-CC and ICCROM and underpinned by our [Joint Declaration on Environmental Guidelines](#). There will be a free programme of support for individuals, including freelancers, as well as organisations and institutions so we can ensure our field is contributing to international targets, and together we are working to create a sustainable and resilient sector.

Sarah Stannage
IIC Executive Director

EDITOR'S SOUNDING BOARD



Just reading Julian's and Sarah's columns this issue has instilled in me a sense of awe for the many and varied programs that IIC has recently created and engaged with in order to better serve, connect, and empower our diverse global membership.

In the last few years, IIC has transformed into an energized community of action (including on the topic of finding more sustainable practices within our profession) and leadership (creating training

and mentorship especially for early career conservators and those practicing in areas with fewer professional resources and connections). Inspired by this rapid and welcomed change at IIC, I thought *NiC* could use a fresh new look.

I hope you enjoy and even have fun with this latest issue of *News in Conservation*, finding that it radiates with the same inspiring energy we feel as part of IIC.

Sharra Grow
IIC Editor, News in Conservation

NEWS IN BRIEF

FAIC ORAL HISTORY PROJECT RECEIVES GRANT

Since 1975, more than 500 interviews have been conducted to capture the history of the profession of conservation as a project of Dr. Joyce Hill Stoner with support from the Foundation of the American Institute for Conservation (FAIC).

For many years, those interviews have been stored on fragile magnetic media (cassette and microcassette tapes) and in transcript form at the Winterthur Museum, Garden & Library near Wilmington, Delaware (USA).

Now, with the help of a grant of \$50,000 USD from the Berger Family Foundation, work is underway at Winterthur to digitize, preserve, and improve access to the FAIC Oral History Project Collection in the Winterthur Library.

“The FAIC Oral History Project is a unique, vital resource for understanding the history and development of the conservation field,” said Dr. Joyce Hill Stoner, who has led the project since 1975.

The project began in 1974 when Rutherford John Gettens, one of America’s pioneer conservation scientists who worked at the original technical laboratory of the Fogg Art Museum at Harvard, spoke at the American Institute for Conservation meetings in Cooperstown, N.Y.

“To come to the point quickly, I think we should begin to think about collecting material for a history of the conservation of cultural property,” he said. “Knowledge of the beginnings and growth of our profession is a necessary background for training programs in art conservation... We wouldn’t really be a profession without a stepwise history of growth.”

Gettens emphasized the necessity of recording personal recollections, anecdotes, and informal doings that would tie together “serious events.” After the meeting, he went to his summer home and began to make handwritten notes about his early experiences at the Fogg but passed away 10 days later at age 74. . .



To continue Gettens’s proposal, George Stout, W. Thomas Chase, and Stoner met in March 1975 and discussed the possibility of beginning an oral history project and establishing an archive to safeguard early records associated with the conservation profession. Six months later, in September, the board of directors of the FAIC approved the project under the leadership of Stoner.

The first interview took place on September 4, 1975 (with George Stout, Richard Buck, Katherine Gettens, Chase, and Stoner), and in 1976 Charles Hummel, curator of the Winterthur Museum at the time, wrote a

letter consenting to house the oral histories and archives in the Winterthur Research Building. In 2004, the files were officially transferred to the Winterthur Archives for professional management, with some support funding provided by Debra Hess Norris, director of the Winterthur/ University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation. In 2000, Rebecca Rushfield became the co-coordinator of the oral history project.

Over the years, more than 160 international volunteer conservators and students have assisted with conducting interviews.

"The Winterthur Library began collecting the professional papers of notable figures in the conservation field in 1981," said Rebecca Parmer, library director at Winterthur. "Together with the FAIC Oral History Project collection, these collecting activities have made Winterthur an important center for the study of the conservation profession."

Once completed, the digitized recordings will be available online through the Winterthur Library's digital collections and on the FAIC website.

"We anticipate that this project will drive new interest and engagement in the field of conservation and the work of its professionals, an especially timely project as FAIC prepares to celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2023," Parmer said.

Jason Brudereck
Communications Manager
Winterthur Museum, Garden & Library

QUEENS MUSEUM CONTROVERSIALLY REPURPOSED ARTIST MATERIALS

Artist Xaviera Simmons' solo exhibition *Crisis Makes a Book Club* opened at the Queens Museum (New York City) in October 2022 displaying a large rectangular structure as the centerpiece of her site-specific installation. The black outer walls were covered with white text which included the artist's thoughts on race as well as quotes from James Baldwin's "On Being White... and Other Lies". Inside the rectangular space were seven video works by the artist which could be accessed by visitors through an open wall. The exhibition closed in March 2023, and the Museum prepared for Tracey Rose's show *Shooting Down Babylon*.

It wasn't until Rose's exhibition opened that Simmons became aware that the Museum had reused the wall structure from her exhibition as part of *Shooting Down Babylon*. The shocked Simmons recalled, "I worked with the Museum to build a site-specific work for the atrium that was large, expensive, and conceptualized completely by me. It took a long time to



Rebecca Parmer, library director at Winterthur Museum, Garden & Library, is overseeing a project to digitize and improve access to more than 500 interviews that have been conducted to capture the history of the profession of conservation. Image courtesy of Jason Brudereck.

conceptualize the feeling of an exterior that had one tone and interior that had another tone. I worked very hard to select the dimensions and materials, and the structure was built to my specifications. It is a sculpture just like any other work." Simmons reiterated, "Those were not temporary walls. That was a sculpture site specifically made for the show, built and fundraised for by the artist."

Simmons contacted the Queens Museum requesting that the remains of her installation be

removed from the current show and the Museum did comply, closing the exhibition in order to deconstruct and rebuild Rose's installation, sending Simmons images of the deconstruction process.

In response to questioning, a Queens Museum spokesperson explained that it is common for museums to reuse or repurpose portions of exhibition structures for future installations and temporary structures to save on costs and waste in efforts to make their

museum practices more sustainable. But the question of where the fine line between justifiable material reuse and violation of an artist's rights is still in need of much discussion within the artworld.

Simmons also questioned whether or not the Museum would have made the same decisions had the installation been by a more prominent artist such as Joseph Beuys or Donald Judd (*ostensibly not a coincidence that both are White males while Simmons is a Black woman; yet more food for thought*).



Left: An example of work by Xavier Simmons "They're All Afraid, All of Them, That's It! They're All Southern! The Whole United States is Southern!", 2019. Acrylic paint on canvas. SFMOMA" Image by [Rob Cordero/Flickr](#). Licensed through [CC BY-NC 2.0](#)

Center: *Great Wall of China* by [Robin Zebrowski/Flickr](#). Licensed through [CC BY 2.0](#)

Rights: *Timmel* by [mauro gambini/Flickr](#). Licensed through [CC BY-NC-ND 2.0](#).

GREAT WALL DAMAGED

On August 24, two Chinese construction workers in the Shanxi province allegedly caused irreversible damage to the Great Wall. The suspects were eventually identified as a 38-year-old man and a 55-year-old woman from the Chinese autonomous region of Inner Mongolia.

Officials say the investigation is ongoing but have released the report that the two suspected workers had observed an already existing opening in the UNESCO World Heritage Site and decided to enlarge the area to create a shortcut allowing their construction vehicle to pass through, rather than taking the time to drive around, the wall segment.

This portion of the Great Wall, known as the 32nd Great Wall, is located 215 miles west of Beijing in the Yang Qianhe Township in Youyuxian County. This section of the wall was built during the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) and includes a well-preserved watch tower. In total, the Great Wall covers over 20,000 kilometers and was begun over 2,000 years ago.

While China has been cracking down on vandalism recently, the government has also been working to create infrastructure to support more tourism. With nearly \$2 billion (USD) invested, over 2,400 kilometers of road have thus far been completed, enabling better access to the ancient structure.



MOROCCO AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE

Over 3,000 people have been reported dead and thousands more injured and homeless, after the 6.8 magnitude quake on 8 September and later aftershocks. It is widely reported that the common red brick construction of homes in the High Atlas Mountain region (the area which suffered the worst of the damage) is particularly vulnerable to crumbling, making it difficult to find those buried beneath the brick remains.

This being the strongest earthquake in the area in a century, damage inevitably extended to cultural heritage sites and museums as well. The Tinmel Mosque, located in the mountains, had just undergone a restoration campaign when the earthquake hit. In an instant, the 1,000-year-old mosque had crumbled to the ground.

In Marrakesh, the medieval old town (a UNESCO World Heritage site known as the Medina) was also devastated by the natural disaster, including the historic Mellah Jewish district. The famous 12th-century

Koutoubia Mosque suffered severe cracking, and many witnessed the famous minaret swaying back and forth, threatening to fall. The Kharbouch Mosque did not fare as well, losing its minaret to the quake and injuring several people in the process. The beautifully tiled hilltop palaces, citadels and casbahs of Marrakesh also suffered great damage, originally built by the Amazighs, indigenous people of Morocco. These tribal families built palaces which stood as symbolic and physical reminders of their great power, which dwindled with Morocco's independence from France in the 1950s.

With so much of the damage up in the mountains, it has been difficult to get aid (both Moroccan and foreign) up to many areas, and the remoteness of so many historical and cultural sites, including ancient rock engravings, has led to years of neglect making these important structures even more vulnerable to disaster.

Click on the **BONUS CONTENT** button to delve into these stories on the IIC Community



Kyle Taylor/Flickr (CC BY 2.0)

CLEANING DAVID

See how Michelangelo's sculpture is cleaned every two months.



Omar Laboy/Flickr (CC BY-NC-ND 2.0)

HELPING AN OLD MUSEUM

Much needed renovations on the Venkatappa Art Gallery will occur over the next year.



Schizoform/Flickr (CC BY 2.0)

MUSEUM FLAUNTS ITS FAKES

Read about the Courtauld's exhibition of the fakes and forgeries in its collection.

FROM REPRODUCTION TO ORIGINAL:



RESTORATION'S ROLE IN BÉATRICE BALCOU'S *RECENT PAINTINGS*

By John Gayer

Brussels-based French artist Béatrice Balcou's artistic practice focuses on the care of artworks in collections. This, for example, is demonstrated via Untitled Ceremonies, her ongoing performance series. Using written instructions, photo-documentation, white gloves, tools, and 'placebos'—the artwork substitutes—she highlights processes of unpacking, handling, assembling, presentation, disassembling, and repacking; the types of things museum visitors don't usually get to see.

But in *Recent Paintings*, her solo exhibition at Brussels' Beige Gallery, Balcou's focus has taken a new direction, by bearing down on what it is conservator-restorers do.

The gallery's press release, which emphasized this aspect as well as her non-hierarchical approach, stated: "The work of Balcou typically highlights the different agencies that take part in the life of the artwork: the technicians, the registrars, sometimes even the cleaning agents and, in the case of *Recent Paintings*, the restorers and in another way the publishers of art books. Balcou therefore levels the playing field between the artist, photographer, editor, collector, printer, restorer." (*Recent Paintings* Béatrice Balcou, Beige, Rue Coppens 3, 1000 Brussels, 31 March–13 May 2023). Consider too that, despite the exhibition's title, not a single canvas was shown—only

damaged reproductions of paintings taken from monographs on Bas Jan Ader, Agnes Martin, Claude Rutault and J.M.W. Turner, objects that conservators treated especially for this presentation.

Moreover, the works' unique characteristics were not lost on viewers. Questions and comments made in response to the talk Balcou and Francisco Mederos-Henry presented in the gallery, for example, concerned the images' new-found importance and unexpected consequences. While one audience member asked about their status—Does it now rival the actual paintings?—another proposed that the time and energy put into repairing gives rise to the idea of restoration as a moral act that could, occasionally, become a fetishization (Artist Talk with Béatrice

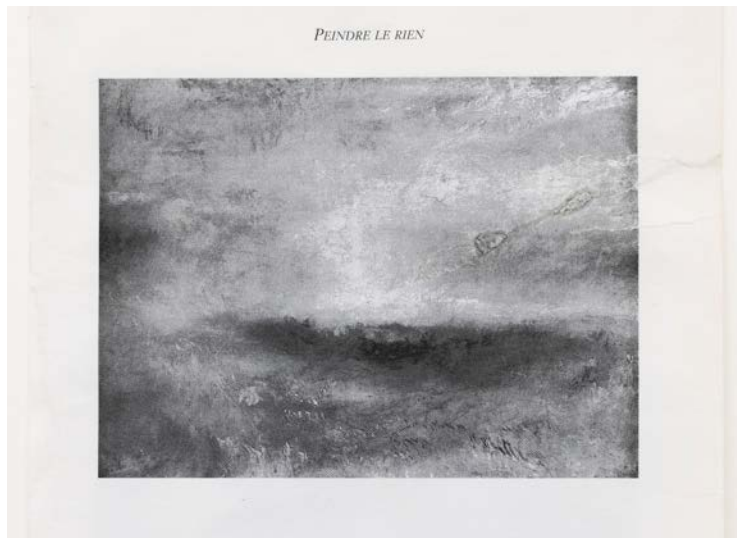


Recent Painting #3 (Agnes Martin, dir. Lynne Cooke, edited by Yale University Press, 2012, p. 35) 2023. Colored inks, rainwater, vinegar, dust, watercolor, wheat starch paste and 100% Kozo Japanese paper on coated wove paper, 25.3 x 18.9 cm. Courtesy Béatrice Balcou and Beige Gallery, Brussels

Recent Painting #3 (Agnes Martin, dir. Lynne Cooke, edited by Yale University Press, 2012, p. 35) 2023. Colored inks, rainwater, vinegar, dust, watercolor, wheat starch paste and 100% Kozo Japanese paper on coated wove paper, 25.3 x 18.9 cm. Courtesy Béatrice Balcou and Beige Gallery, Brussels



Recent painting #9 (Turner/ peindre le rien, Lawrence Gowing, éditions Macula, Paris, 1994, p. 95) 2023. Black ink, rainwater, extracts of dead leaves, graphite pencil, wheat starch paste and 100% Kozo Japanese paper on coated wove paper, 20.5 x 13.3 cm. Courtesy Béatrice Balcou and Beige Gallery, Brussels



Recent Painting #4 (Agnes Martin, dir. Lynne Cooke, edited by Yale University Press, 2012, p. 39) 2023. Coloured watercolor, wheat starch paste and 100% Kozo Japanese paper on coated wove paper, 25.3 x 18.9 cm. Courtesy Béatrice Balcou and Beige Gallery, Brussels



Balcou and Francisco Mederos-Henry, Beige Gallery, Brussels, Belgium, 22 April 2023. Recording courtesy Ann Cesteleyn, Beige Gallery).

I, in contrast, felt it important to learn more about the project's background. Thanks to Ann Cesteleyn, Beige's gallerist, I was able to talk with Béatrice Balcou and her collaborators—Francisco Mederos-Henry, Heritage Scientist, Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage Belgium, and Professor of Heritage & Applied Sciences, École Nationale Supérieure des Arts Visuels de La Cambre, and Mathilde Bezon and Camille Jallu, two of La Cambre's paper conservation students—at the artist's Brussels studio.

John Gayer: What triggered this project?

Béatrice Balcou: To answer your question, I must mention my other projects, all of which deal with the background of artworks. I have taken the art technician's role in many of my performances, done a project with an entomologist, and occasionally worked with conservators too. News of my projects usually spreads by word of mouth, and people agreed to participate simply because they liked what I was doing. But for this project, I proposed to deepen my relationship with restorers to see what could happen. The

grant I received also enabled me to compensate the students for their work.

During this time, my ideas kept evolving, but eventually the project would focus on paper restoration. Having known Francisco for several years, I also discussed the project with him. He believed that, since I wanted to experiment, I should invite students to my studio and see how things go. Then he proposed two of La Cambre's paper conservation students—Mathilde, who was in her last year, and Camille, a third-year student.

Mathilde Bezon: At the beginning, Camille and I started doing condition reports and developing plans for images by Turner and Agnes Martin. But on our next visit to the studio, Béatrice had new images for us and that was difficult for us to understand.

BB: Yes, since Mathilde and Camille visited once or twice a week, I continued to think about the project while they were away. Changing things did not make it easy for them. In fact, they had already treated one of the pages, when I decided it would be better to show its verso.

(Agnes Martin, dir. Lynne Cole University Press, 2012, p. 10). Black ink, rainwater, tea, dust, starch paste and 100% Kozo coated wove paper, 25.3 x 21 cm. Courtesy Béatrice Balcou and Beige

Recent Painting #13 (Claude Rutault *definitions / méthodes*, edited by Intelligence Service Productions, Paris, 1981, p. 27) 2023. Black ink, rainwater, tea, China ink, graphite pencil, methyl cellulose paste and 100% Kozo Japanese paper on coated wove paper, 29.3 x 21 cm. Courtesy Béatrice Balcou and Beige Gallery, Brussels

Recent Painting #14 (Bas Jan Ader – *Death is elsewhere*, Alexander Dumbadze, edited by The University of Chicago Press, 2015, pp. 146–147) 2023. Black ink, lemonade, watercolor, China ink and wheat starch paste on Typing paper and Lens tissue paper, 22.9 x 30.2 cm. Courtesy Béatrice Balcou and Beige Gallery, Brussels



MB: That was one of the most challenging things. Our mending was done on the verso and then, suddenly, it was to be exposed. In one of our discussions, which included the gallerist, there was agreement that this was the right choice. But it was also very interesting to be able to experiment as we did. For the Agnes Martins, we wanted our work to be invisible and, of course, that was impossible. Treating this coated paper was tricky and the success of our inpainting also varied.

BB: This idea to have the verso of one Agnes Martin be its recto surprised me, but I preferred to show that side. That verso had this special quality. But for Camille and Mathilde, who had enjoyed experimenting, the approaching deadline added pressure. Their work would be on view and their professor might come to see it.

MB: We did think these things and felt we needed more time. We had to find good solutions that could be quickly executed.

JG: Complications pervaded this collaboration. Their double sidedness certainly differs from double-sided works of art on paper. You had to come to grips with this to move forward.

Francisco Mederos-Henry: I recall you did want to show the backs at one point.

BB: I did want to show the rectos and versos of a few works, but discussions with a framer were unproductive. And the gallery was so small.

JG: That reminds me of 2001's *Verso: The Flip Side of Master Drawings* at the Fogg Art Museum. That exhibition proposed they were 3-dimensional objects.

FM-H: The free-standing structures that support such works can be massive.

BB: I visualized these works more as sculptures than pictures. For me, it was important to see their volume

JG: I found that the depth of the frames and absence of matting do accentuate their volume and materiality. They allow the curling in the paper and juxtaposition of original and treatment materials to show themselves.

MB: That's the thing with paper. It retains the memory of nearly everything that has touched it. While we agreed to use paper from the same book—not the damaged books, but other copies—to fill losses in



Studio view Béatrice Balcou. Photo © Ann Cesteley, 2023

some cases, the differences in fiber orientation between the new and damaged pages created tension. Though we tried to reduce the resulting distortions, they remain visible.

FM-H: For which works?

MB: The Rutaults, the Bas Jan Ader, but mostly the Agnes Martins.

BB: For the Agnes Martin with the blue square, the lines in the new and damaged images did not correspond. The difference was tiny, but noticeable.

FM-H: This I didn't know. How did you solve this issue?

BB: We tried various things, but it was solved by obtaining a new copy of the book.

JG: Did color differences create problems?

MB: No. Things affecting the structure of the fibers—gel washing, drying and flattening—they were the

main problem. They caused sheets of the same paper to differ.

FM-H: I think this is beautiful because the reproductions are not reproductions anymore. They have developed an individuality.

BB: Each becomes an original.

FM-H: This is unorthodox in conservation. This project shows how conservators' interventions combine with artworks to create new material entities. While we like to see ourselves as an invisible hand, we are helping something new emerge from things that have come to us from the past. Sometimes I think an awareness of this would help us change our approach to conservation and the materials we use.

BB: This also concerns the art world. In museums, the captions usually only list the artist's name, the work's title and date, and the materials used, not the restorers, assistants or others who take charge of them. I have recommended changes in a few museums, but for practical reasons, the captions must follow a format.

JG: How to best represent artworks via info labels, is a good question. In the course of treating paintings, I have often seen them as composites that, as more and more hands work on them, keep evolving.

BB: And it's still about the individual's genius!

FM-H: This is why I like that Béatrice lists the original materials, the degradation materials, and the restoration materials. We, as restorers, tend to only consider the original materials as comprising the body of an artwork, which is not all that there is. The whole timeline of added materials is missing. This project, though, conveys the idea of the object's lifespan via its materiality.

BB: But without a high degree of precision, so much information could cause confusion. For example, there was a restorer who, while treating one of my wood sculptures, added a piece of plastic to it. And that material is now listed in the work's caption. While this is part of the work's history, this detail implies it was I who added the plastic, when it was, in fact, introduced years later.

FM-H: Yes, it's not easy, but I appreciate how this project offers a glimpse into our world. It offers new ways of seeing how we

approach materials, how we restore, and why we restore, because why would you restore a copy, you know? It raises interesting questions.

JG: It seems to be part of this process of ongoing assessment and revision, like what happens in science.

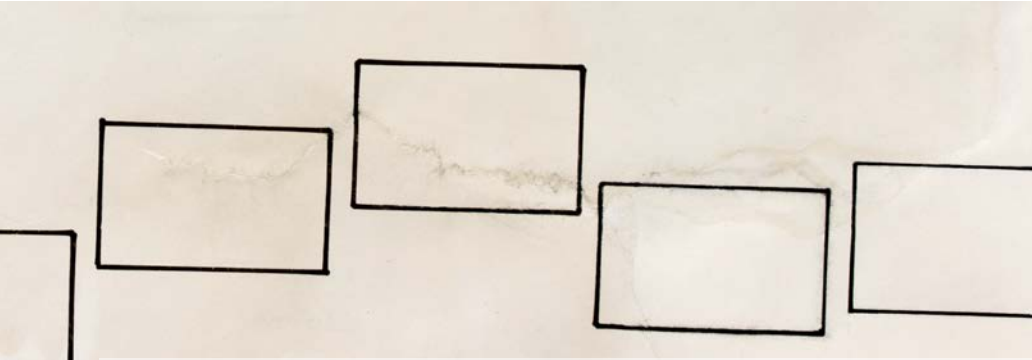
MB: At the exhibition's opening, a friend and I were talking about restoration, and we agreed that it is not perfectly objective. Since choices are involved, it's always subjective. But though we know something of science, we continue to be seen as craftspeople. So, I think it's controversial to say there is no objectivity. The first rule we learn in school is never work systematically, that every case is different.

FM-H: Yes, science has this influence on contemporary society. In conservation-restoration, science has somehow created this illusion that our decisions can be totally objective. For example, this is not original, therefore we remove it. Even though I am a heritage scientist, I am against this binary approach that says things are either true or false. The info we provide to our fellow conservator-restorers tends to support this false view. Science is an interpretation, and some find this difficult

"This is unorthodox in conservation. This project shows how conservators' interventions combine with artworks to create new material entities. While we like to see ourselves as an invisible hand, we are helping something new emerge from things that have come to us from the past."

Mathilde Bezon and Camille Jallu restoring the pages 146 & 147 of Bas Jan Ader's monographic book (*Recent Painting #14*). Photo © Béatrice Balcou, 2023





Recent Painting #12 (Claude Rutault définitions/ méthodes, edited by Intelligence Service Productions, Paris, 1981, p. 26) 2023. Black ink, rainwater, tea, China ink, graphite pencil, methyl cellulose paste and 100% Kozo Japanese paper on coated wove paper, 29.3 x 21 cm. Courtesy Béatrice Balcou and Beige Gallery, Brussels

to accept. Sometime the pieces of info we provide are seen as the way to go. Restoration hinges on the interpretation of the object and the results can be super subjective.

MB: There were times during the project when we discussed choices and results, which needed to be such and such, where Camille and I thought: this is not restoration. But then we agreed that what we're about to do, we won't usually do—that this is contemporary art. It's what the artist wants us to do. It's restoration, just not how we're used to doing it. Here, the losses and the mending would show.

FM-H: You're saying it's not restoration because that's not how restoration has evolved. We decided that mending should not be visible. There was a time in the past when the restoration of paintings by the Flemish primitives were shown in a more archaeological way. The degradations were not disguised. The few still on view in museums look weird. When I first came to Belgium from Mexico, I thought the Belgian way was much more interventionist. But now I've become used to that,

and when I visit Mexico, I think they could do more.

MB: I know. That's why using paper from another copy of the same book instead of conservation paper was difficult for us.

BB: I wanted the restorations to be visible from the beginning, but I didn't know how that could be done. That's why we had to experiment. I was inspired by Kintsugi—literally gold seams—the Japanese ceramic restoration technique which highlights the joins with gold. It's a philosophical way of showing the object's history instead of making it look new. In the end we worked very well together to create something unique.

FM-H: That's good to know. They were not a random choice. Though Mathilde and Camille's approaches differ, both are very openminded and curious.

BB: It was really important for me to hear their views, which provided new perspectives on how to proceed.

Learn more about Béatrice Balcou's *Recent Paintings* exhibition [HERE](#)



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John Gayer is a graduate of the Ontario College of Art, the University of Toronto (BA, art history), and Queen's University (MAC 1992, paintings conservation), who lives in Finland. He completed a paintings conservation fellowship at the National Gallery of Canada and has worked at the Art Gallery of Ontario, Wimsatt & Associates Art Conservation (Kensington, Maryland), and HAM Helsinki Art Museum. From 2019 to 2021 he served as Nordic Association of Conservators – Finland's delegate to the European Confederation of Conservator-Restorers Organizations (E.C.C.O.).



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THE SHEKHAWATI PROJECT

A SHARED MISSION TOWARDS THE CONSERVATION OF MURAL PAINTINGS IN THE SHEKHAWATI-RAJASTHAN, INDIA

By Cécile Charpentier, Giovanna Carravieri, Sabine Cotte and Harpreet Tandy

The Shekhawati Project (TSP) is an international association created by a team of conservation experts based in Paris, France in collaboration with an Indian NGO. We are a passionate and committed group of expert conservators, architects and historians, active in India since 2016.

In past years we have offered workshops with the aim to integrate both Indian and international viewpoints on the preservation of the region's mural paintings. Our efforts were focused on raising awareness of urban management issues involving the local community for a sensible re-use of buildings, for promoting long-term durability of the traditional materials and for collaborating with craftsmen who are masters of the ancient artisanal techniques.

OUR STORY

In 2016, connected through our professional activities in France and Italy, we joined together to form a temporary *équipe* and held a professional on-site consultation in India. Once in Rajasthan, we all fell in love with the beauty, the kindness of the



The Shekhawati Project
Conservation & Restoration of Frescoes

population and the vastness of the region's historical heritage. India, to us, encompasses so many things: history, spirituality, diversity, festivals, craftsmanship, authentic and stunning adornments, traditional foods, brightly coloured fabrics, perfumes, flowers, as well as a high level of modernization. But an enormous amount of conservation work was sorely needed, and the lack of funds available inspired us to envision on-site workshops with a combination of volunteers and interns.

THE SHEKHAWATI REGION

The Shekhawati region in Northern Rajasthan is famous for its frescoes and painted *haveli* dating from the 19th and early 20th centuries. These exceptional palaces are covered with frescoes and murals on both their interior and exterior walls, creating an extraordinary open-air art gallery—a testament to the great splendour of that era. Just a walk through any of the towns of Shekhawati will transport you back in time. The palatial mansions decorated with glorious painted walls and façades and skilfully engraved doors and gates bear witness to the great wealth of the merchants (*marwaris*) who owned them. These buildings are a tangible symbol of the then flourishing trade of wool, spices, opium and rice.

Unfortunately, the mid-20th century marks the decline of the region, and the merchant families gradually emigrated to the bigger cities of Delhi, Mumbai and Kolkata. As a result of this, many *haveli* were abandoned or poorly maintained. Despite the region being recently revitalized by developing tourism, there is a strong need for conservation treatment of *haveli* murals to avoid their relentless disappearance.

Regrettably the historical palaces are rarely occupied by their owners. The cost of maintenance is very high, and due to the complex inheritance system in India, it is difficult to make conservation decisions even for urgent structural interventions. Harsh climate conditions, poor waste management, lack of urban planning and, often, the use of inappropriate or unsustainable materials don't help.



HAVELI, THEIR WALL PAINTING TECHNIQUE AND ICONOGRAPHY

The Shekhawati's haveli were the result of a unique combination of availability of local materials and skilled labour needed to execute construction. The walls' thickest layers are made of brick prepared from local red clay, stone fragments and *dhandhala* (calcium-rich hardpan soil). This material was brought from quarries located in nearby towns such as Mandawa, Bissau, Fatehpur or Churu and played a major role in building the haveli.

The painting technique, unique to the region, is called *arayish* and is very similar to the Italian *fresco lustro* technique. The images were painted on wet plaster composed of lime, marble powder, powdered seashell, curd and natural pigments and finished when the plaster had set or dried. The outcome is a very smooth surface, which was then polished with an agate stone, giving it a semi-shiny appearance. After the mural dried, final details were then added using a mixture of pigments and lime. Today, only a few craftsmen still practice the *arayish* technique, which puts it at risk of being lost and disappearing.

Iconography is another element of curiosity and wonder as it depicts Hindu mythology including scenes from the Ramayana (e.g., Hanuman paying respect to Ram and Lakshman) and the Mahabharata (e.g., Krishna stealing Gopi's clothes, machan or ghee from his mother Yashoda). There are also scenes from everyday life, such as a local dance game like *dandiya*, and historical scenes from the British colonial era (e.g., fighting or marching soldiers, trains, bicycles and cars).

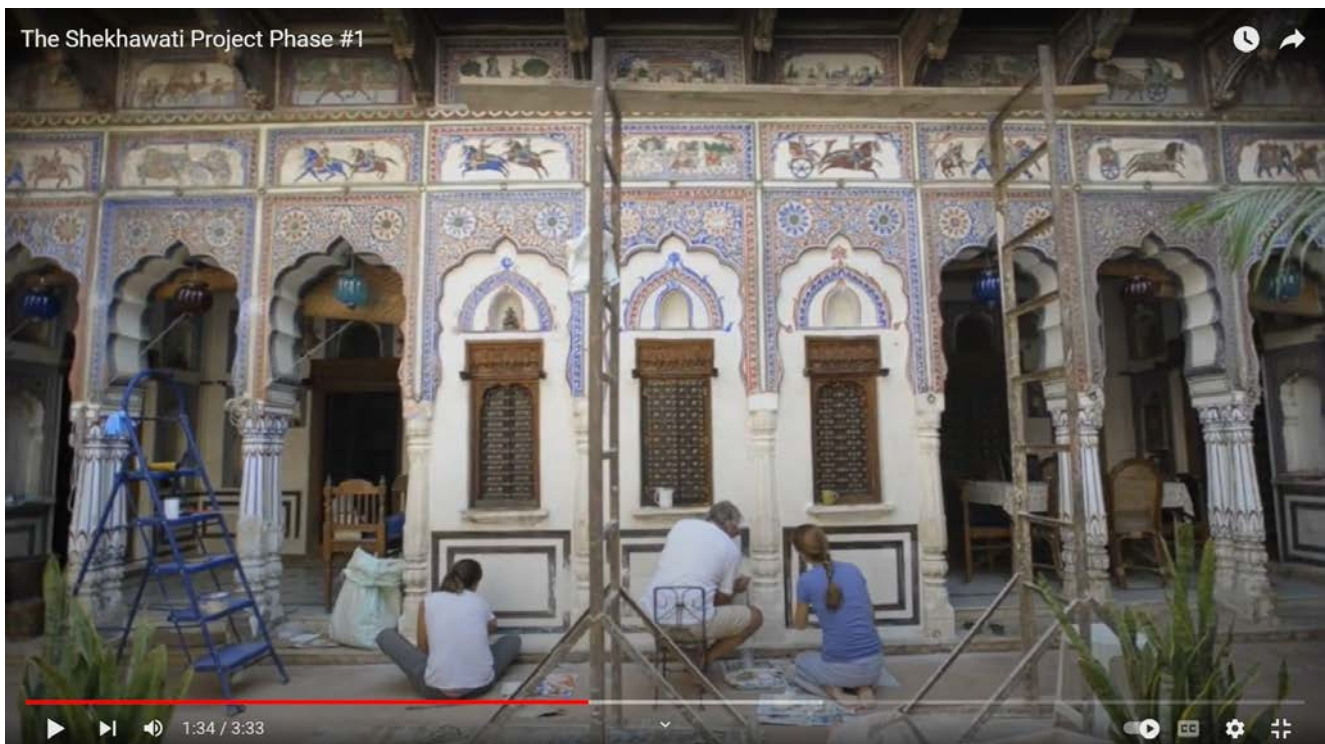
WORKSHOP AND ENVIRONMENT

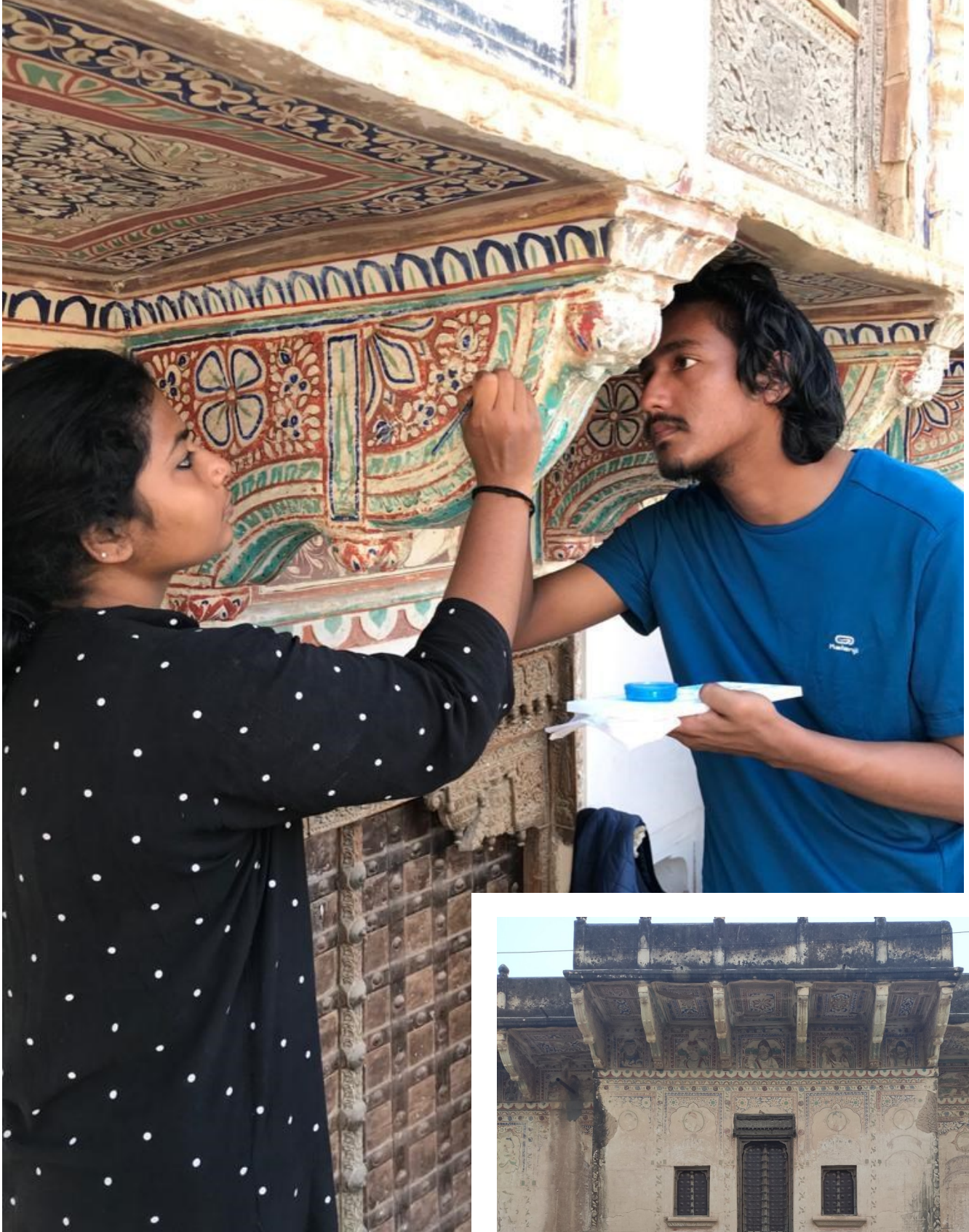
The Shekhawati Project hosts experienced conservators and students from different conservation programmes worldwide to offer an opportunity for research and developing a better understanding of interventions for this vast painted heritage. Our main concerns are sharing knowledge, comparing techniques and ethics and learning from each other's experience during daily discussions with a constant evaluation of our work and interactions.

The Project came to life with the belief that the conservation of this heritage is an important part of the rehabilitation of the region. These towns' pressing issues of waste management and flooding are directly associated with the vulnerability of the art sites. TSP, in tandem with local managers, hopes to persuade regional administrations to implement urban services and improvements. This action could directly impact the condition of the buildings and their frescoes. The Project advocates for economic change through development of sustainable tourism—in close liaison with local entrepreneurs—to preserve traditional skills and promote an adapted reuse of the buildings in a holistic approach that integrates heritage monuments into the needs of modern life.

CONSERVATION TREATMENT: SCIENTIFIC APPROACH

During the two months of our first workshops in the small town of Fatehpur, we operated on private properties ("Prince Haveli" in Fatehpur, "Gulab Ladia





Above: students retouching the painted walls of the Gulab Rai ladia Haveli. Workshop TSP 2020. Mandawa. Image courtesy of The Shekhawati Project

Right: Increase in the level of the foot traffic. Detail of the main entrance. Fatephur, Shekhawati. Image courtesy of The Shekhawati Project

Left: Video introducing "The Shekhawati Project: Conservation & Restoration of Frescoes". Click on the image to watch the video or click [HERE](#).





Gulab Rai Ladia Haveli , General view. Workshop TSP 2020. Mandawa, Shekhawati. Image courtesy of The Shekhawati Project

Haveli" in Mandawa) in collaboration with knowledgeable owners and the International Conservation Scientific Lab (Prof.ssa Maria Letizia Amadori, Department DiSPeA, University of Urbino). Together we have been able to collect, in our final reports, a significant amount of information about the original materials and traditional techniques through onsite observation, documentation, datalogger recording to monitor environmental fluctuations (T-RH) and analysis of samples with non-invasive ED-XRF spectrometer investigation.

An intern, Ilaria Alessi, wrote her dissertation, *Increasing Cultural Awareness Through Analysis of Materials and Techniques*, for her master's degree at Cardiff University, UK (Master on Science in Conservation) in 2021. Her work added precious information about the deterioration phenomena affecting the paintings.

The protocol for the treatment is the result of collective observation, evaluation of data, exchange of experience and numerous testing sessions. We had some especially challenging aspects such as identifying previous interventions in order to establish a designated

"original" level as a reference. In this type of scenario, it is more complicated to obtain a clear ethical, historical and aesthetic guideline to define which over-paint to remove or save.

The huge amount of painted wall surface is a huge factor because of work-time issues and the high cost of conservation supplies. For instance, we have debated how to manage the in-painting of vast areas of loss and applying final protection on frescos.

The specific climate conditions, the air pollution and the large surface of the murals led to a compromise between needs and hindrances—a meeting point between the options of advanced products (like nano technology and silicate-based solutions) and local materials and the know-how (local lime-based derivatives and their application, and the recreation of images) of painting craftsmen.

ADVOCACY

Our advocacy activity includes talks and conferences to increase awareness and share knowledge

with Indian cultural heritage and conservation associations and institutions such as [Sahapedia](#), an online resource on the arts, culture and heritage; [IGNCA](#) (Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts); and [Mody University's](#) Architecture Department.

SOCIAL INVOLVEMENT

The social and urban impact that the Shekhawati Project could promote is encouraging. The strong participation of young Indian women at every stage can contribute to their professionalization and broader empowerment. Many young women students left their families for the first time in order to join TSP, finding an opportunity to build strong friendships with peers and colleagues from abroad.

The Project has also been a vehicle for raising awareness of urban management issues through showcasing local conservation sites. Supporting the community for the practical reuse of buildings and the revival of local skills is a more holistic approach which would integrate heritage monuments into the necessities of every-day life. Being aware that urban planning and heritage conservation are intrinsically linked together, we advocate for the region's economic revival through the development of sustainable tourism and propose lobbying local governments to implement protective measures for the monuments, including town infrastructure and waste management which directly impact the condition of the buildings and their frescoes.

Learn more
about The Shek-
hawati Project
and their ongo-
ing work!
CLICK HERE

A GLIMPSE INTO THE FUTURE

The pandemic forced TSP to suspend our yearly workshop in 2020. However, we are currently raising funds, hoping to launch a new onsite residency soon, collaborating with the local community as best as possible.

Sharing information about the reopening of TSP workshops will draw attention to the value of this exquisite heritage; to continue to raise awareness, we also support the idea of a permanent local conservation centre with training programmes.

<https://www.theshekhawatiproject.net/>



Cécile Charpentier: Founder, French-American Private Practice Conservator, Painting Expert, Graduate of the École du Louvre, Paris (Museology). Master in Cultural Conservation, University of Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne. Cécile is an admirer of Indian art. She is based in Paris and heads many major restoration sites world-wide and has 30+ years of experience.



Giovanna Carravieri: Co-founder, Private Practice Conservator, specialized in Italian frescoes. Graduate of the School of Cremona, Italy. Giovanna studied art history at the University of La Sapienza in Rome and at the University of Paris IV-Sorbonne. She is based in San Francisco where she founded "Kalos Art Conservation". She worked as a conservator for numerous sites in Rome, Florence, the Vatican City and Paris, and has 30+ years of experience.



Sabine Cotte: Co-founder, French-Australian Private Practice Conservator, based in Melbourne, graduated from Institut National du Patrimoine (Paris), ICCROM (Rome) and has a PhD from University of Melbourne, where she also teaches in Conservation and Art Curatorship. She has led several workshops in the Himalayan Region for UNESCO, ICCROM and private NGOs, focusing on training local people in conservation and in disaster recovery, and has 30+ years of experience.



Harpreet Tandy: Co-founder, Indian-Italian Private Practice Conservator, based in Melbourne where she co-founded Delta Conservation. She has a master's degree in wall paintings, stone, stucco and architectural surfaces conservation from SUPSI (Scuola Universitaria della Svizzera Italiana), Switzerland after a bachelor's degree from Italy (Conservation department in "G.B. Cignaroli, Verona). She worked as a conservator on several projects on wall paintings and historical buildings in Italy, Switzerland, India and Australia.

MEET GUILHERME DIAS

As one of the Opportunities Fund recipients, I am very grateful and honoured for the support IIC has given me. Receiving this fund was a unique and transformative opportunity. The fund partially covered the costs to buy a Lenovo Legion Y520, a portable computer that allowed me to continue my master's research in photograph conservation at the Preservation and Management of Cultural Heritage Program at Casa de Oswaldo Cruz, Fiocruz, Brazil. Before that, I had an old and slow computer that didn't meet my academic and professional needs.



IIC OPPORTUNITIES FUND

With this notebook, I was able to migrate all my resources, data, software and digital tools that were essential for the development of my research project at the program. My project involves researching and recording the methods, materials, and decision-making processes used in the conservation treatment of Marc Ferrez's 19th-century photographic production. In addition, the laptop has also helped me to participate in courses, webinars and online events on photograph conservation, expanding my knowledge and my exchange with colleagues in the conservation field. I was also able to share my work with other researchers and professionals in the field, receiving valuable feedback and suggestions.

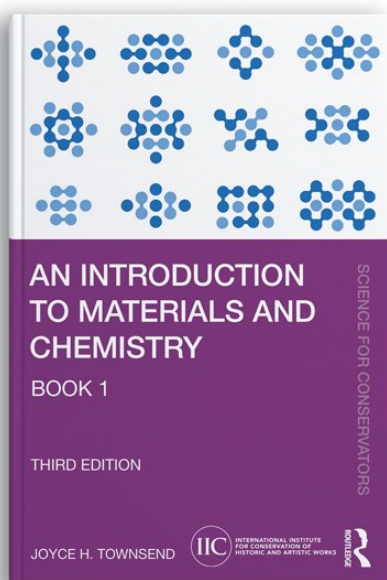
In short, the grant was fundamental to my personal and professional growth as a photograph conservator, especially in times of uncertainty like the past few years. I am very happy and satisfied with the results I achieved thanks to this grant. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the International Institute for Conservation for providing me with this fund. You do an amazing job promoting and supporting the conservation of cultural heritage around the world. I hope I can contribute to your mission through my affiliation, research and practice in the field.

This laptop will be very useful in the coming years: not only because it will be easy to bring to congresses and research meetings, but also because it will allow me to process data collected in my professional work and academic production.

Yours sincerely,
Guilherme Dias



Guilherme at his computer. Image courtesy of Guilherme Dias



SCIENCE FOR CONSERVATORS BOOK 1 IS OUT NOW!

An Introduction to Materials and Chemistry

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Information
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We are delighted to announce that the Science for Conservators series is being revised and fully updated by Routledge, and it will be extended in scope. Book 1: *An Introduction to Materials and Chemistry* by Joyce H. Townsend is now available, and IIC members will receive a 30% discount.

This new edition of *An Introduction to Materials and Chemistry*, book 1 in the updated Science for Conservators series, provides conservators and conservators-in-training with a very basic introduction to the language of chemistry and to the scientific approach.

Purchase
the book
HERE

The original series has provided key basic texts for conservators throughout the world since its publication in the late 1980s. Scientific concepts are basic to the conservation of artefacts of every type, and these introductory volumes provide an essential theoretical background for conservators who have entered the field without scientific training. It is designed for pre-programme, student and personal study, and also serves as a checklist of scientific terms for those working in English as a second or third language.



IIC AND ROUTLEDGE ANNOUNCE A NEW OPEN RESEARCH PUBLISHING PARTNERSHIP

IIC and Routledge - leading Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS) publisher, have partnered to launch a special open research publishing collection - a first for the sector.

This special online collection is hosted on Routledge Open Research, the world's first open research publishing Platform specifically for the HSS community, which combines, articles, and other research outputs in one interdisciplinary venue. The publishing venue utilizes the publishing model, technology and knowledge pioneered by leading open research publisher F1000 to provide HSS scholars with a rapid and transparent publishing venue, whilst also giving authors the opportunity to increase the discoverability, accessibility and reach of their research.

The IIC Collection explores and shares research and perspectives of conservation and leadership from different contexts, including changing contexts and emerging contexts, as well as visions for future leadership within the field of cultural heritage conservation. Sarah Stannage, Executive Director at IIC, commented: "We are delighted to partner with Routledge to offer this first initiative focusing on leadership and by showcasing the value of practice-based open research within our global conservation community".

Dr Joelle Wickens, guest advisor for the collection and Associate Director of the Winterthur/ University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation, commented: "I am thrilled to be working with IIC and Routledge on

an initiative that responds to the call to diversify and globalize the voices that contribute to scholarship in our field and to make that scholarship available to all."

Juliet Harrison, Head of Content Acquisition, F1000, commented: "We are delighted to have the opportunity to partner with such a likeminded organisation as the IIC, to enable their researchers to increase the discoverability, accessibility and reach of their research for real-world impact. This is a significant step for the IIC in advancing its aim of democratizing knowledge, and we are privileged to be chosen to accompany them on their open research journey."

The IIC Collection enables all research outputs to be published open access, as well as benefitting from invited and open peer review, article versioning, archiving and indexing. In addition to research articles, the Collection enables authors to publish a variety of peer reviewed and non-peer reviewed content such as books, data notes, software tools, methods articles, policy briefs, case studies, posters, slides and technical reports.

Further details about the scope of submissions for this first initiative can be found [HERE](#).



JOIN IIC'S NEW COMMITTEE FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND STANDARDS

Building on recent successes with IIC's '[Adapt: Conservation and Leadership in a Time of Change](#)' and through a partnership with Centro Conservazione e Restauro La Venaria delivering '[Emerging Skills for Heritage Conservation](#)', we are now hoping that some of you would like to step forward and help steer IIC's thinking and delivery even further, so we can achieve the goals set out in our [Strategy 2030](#).

The new committee will play an important role in guiding standards and consolidating, expanding, and coordinating IIC's international skills and training partnerships, which have at their heart equitable access to learning, the exchange of knowledge and expertise.

Further details on how to apply can be found on the [IIC website here](#).

Closing Date for Applications: 15 October 2023

IIC FELLOWSHIP

Becoming an IIC Fellow connects you to a network of colleagues who are respected internationally and are committed to advancing the profession for the common good.

Our Fellows are trusted for their high standard of excellence and expertise, have peer recognition, and a voice that is amplified through our networks. The culture of generosity among our Fellows means that knowledge and learning are shared across a growing and inclusive network.

We are encouraging applications from people who have a few years solid experience in their careers, who approach conservation with intelligence and nuance, and a desire to enhance the profession. You don't have to be very senior or at a huge institution, with an enormous publications list to become a Fellow.

Typically, people start to think about applying for Fellowship 10 years or so into a career (including your training) – but this is a very rough guide. Your experience may be demonstrated through the projects you have worked on, your leadership or in helping conservation branch out in new ways.

Nominations are received and reviewed by the Fellowship Committee and IIC Council before going to ballot three times a year. **The next deadline is 30 November.**

Learn more about becoming an IIC Fellow [HERE](#).



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FELLOWSHIP CORNER



Omid Oudbashi has a BSc, MA and PhD in conservation of cultural and historical properties from the University of Art and the Art University of Isfahan, Iran, received in 2001, 2006 and 2013, respectively. He is currently associate professor in the Department of Conservation of Cultural and Historical Properties at the Art University of Isfahan and is also senior Andrew W. Mellon Conservation Fellow in the Department of Scientific Research at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, USA. His research interests are the deterioration of archaeological objects, especially the corrosion mechanism of ancient metals in terrestrial, marine and outdoor environments; preventive and archaeological conservation; application of scientific methods in study and conservation of historic and artistic works, archaeometallurgy and ancient metalworking; metallography of ancient and historic metals; and ancient techniques and methods of production and decoration in other inorganic materials including stone, glass and pigments.

IIC Fellow Omid Oudbashi is associate professor at the Art University of Isfahan, Iran. Image courtesy of Omid Oudbashi.



Mercedes Isabel de las Carreras has a master's in museology and specialized in restoration of easel and panel painting, polychromed sculpture and contemporary art. She was trained in Argentina and abroad, and participated in several international meetings and symposiums thanks to grants awarded from abroad. She worked as restorer of colonial paintings at the TAREA Foundation project for 12 years. She is chief of the Collection Management Department at the National Museum of Fine Arts in Buenos Aires, a position won by a national contest in 2008. Mercedes has extensive experience in the coordination and organization of conservation and restoration of cultural heritage projects. She developed educational training skills through different courses and workshops in the restoration of easel paintings given in Argentina and collaborates in the organization of contemporary art annual seminars. She has published articles on conservation of contemporary art, colonial paintings, and restoration of sculpture in different institutions.

Mercedes, FIIC, works at the National Museum of Fine Arts, Buenos Aires. Image courtesy of Mercedes Isabel de las Carreras.

MEET OUR TRUSTEES

Dr. Luiz Souza holds a master of science degree in chemistry, obtained through his research conducted at the esteemed KIK-IRPA – Institut Royal du Patrimoine Artistique in Brussels, Belgium, 1986-87. His research during this period was centered on the preservation of stone and the development of conservation techniques.

For his Ph.D. in chemistry, Dr. Souza pursued experimental work under a research fellowship at the Scientific Department of the Getty Conservation Institute in Los Angeles, USA, spanning from 1992 to 1994. Dr. Souza's Ph.D. studies have contributed significantly to the advancement of knowledge about gilded wood materials and techniques in colonial Brazil.

Since 1989, Dr. Souza has been dedicated to both teaching and research at CECOR – the Center for Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Properties. A pioneering institution in Brazil, CECOR is committed to conservation education, research, and services to the community, and it is housed within the School of Fine Arts at the Federal University of Minas Gerais in Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais.

Dr. Souza has played pivotal leadership roles in academia. He served as the director of CECOR twice, first from 1999 to 2000 and again from 2020 to 2022. Additionally, during the period from 2000 to 2004, he held the position of graduate program coordinator at the School of Fine Arts, and from 2009 to 2013, he served as the director of the same institution.

He has contributed significantly to international academic organizations, having served as a member of the ICOM-CC Directory Board for four mandates (1993-96, 1999-2002, 2002-2005, 2014-2017) and as an elected member of the Council of ICCROM for two terms (2007-2011, 2011-2015).



Luiz Souza, IIC Council Member, on scaffolding. Image courtesy of Luiz Souza.

Within Brazil, Dr. Souza leads the LACICOR – Conservation Science Laboratory at the School of Fine Arts of the Federal University of Minas Gerais. This laboratory has been instrumental in numerous cases, encompassing material analysis of works of art and cultural heritage, preventive conservation, risk assessment, and management. Notably, Dr. Souza and his research colleagues and team played a pivotal advisory role in the ongoing reconstruction of the National Museum in Rio, which was devastated by a fire in 2018.

Currently, Dr. Souza holds the position of deputy-director of CECOR, while also being a member of the Council of ICOM Brazil, as well as being an active member of the Council of ANTECIPA – the Brazilian National Network of Research in Technology and Heritage Science, an organization he helped establish as a founding member. He recently served as a permanent member of the ICOM Working Group on Sustainability.



BALKAN
FIELDWORK
TRAINING
IN
MOSAIC
CONSERVATION

By Shoun Obana



Object 1967,0405.11 Currently on display on the West Staircase at the British Museum is an early Christian depiction of Psalm 42:1 "As the deer pants for streams of water, so, my soul pants for you, my God". Photo © Trustees of the British Museum (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0)

One of the many pleasures of being a conservator is the occasional glimpse we get into the past, gained through the objects we treat. At a glance, a fragment of mosaic pavement may appear to be no more than a decorative arrangement of tesserae and mortar. Yet viewed through the eyes of the ancient Romans, the colourful symbols and motifs that adorn the mosaic might reference mythologies or scriptures and speak to joyous feasting or religious worship.

The Romans were arguably the most influential civilisation of the past. They left their legacy in the art, architecture, laws, literature and languages of the world around us. Extending as far north as Scotland to as far south as Morocco, physical signs of their empire can be found scattered throughout our cities and landscapes and range from utilitarian artefacts displayed in our museums to the archaeological remains of their lavish villas.

At the British Museum, I am part of the team of conservators who care for stone, wall paintings and mosaics. We work to ensure the preservation of the Museum's extensive collection of Roman mosaics that are both on display and in storage. A holistic approach to conserving these objects requires not only an understanding of material science, degradation pathways and conservation techniques, but also the integration of ethical treatment considerations, the historical context of the objects and an appreciation for their manufacturing.

STOBI: HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND WORKSHOP PERSPECTIVE

In June of this year, I travelled to the archaeological site of the ancient Roman city of Stobi in the Republic of North Macedonia, to carry

out fieldwork training. For three weeks, I attended a programme of lectures, excursions and practical sessions in the "Conservation of Roman and Late Roman Mosaics" which was run through the Balkan Heritage Field School. On the course, I hoped to develop my understanding of the conservation of mosaics and to become better equipped to care for the mosaics at the Museum.

With over 1500 m² of mosaic pavements at the site, Stobi provided an ideal setting. Further adding to the course's offering was the combined knowledge of the course's tutors, specialist mosaic conservators and academics, Tome Filov and Dr Mishko Tutkovski of the National Institution of Stobi. Their lectures furnished students with in-depth knowledge of the Roman history of Stobi and presented a comprehensive discussion of the archaeology of the region with a focus on mosaics.

The first historic records of Stobi are by the Roman historian Titus Livy circa 197 BCE, where he talks of Stobi's growing importance for salt trading after the Roman conquests of Macedonia. Over the following six centuries, it underwent periods of prosperity and decline. Then in the 5th-6th



Students from the 2023 field school taken above the floor mosaic of the Theodosian Palace at Stobi. Photo © Kristen Jones

centuries it became the capital city of the Roman province Macedonia Secunda. The city was eventually abandoned in the late 6th century CE due to repeated barbarian raids and climatic changes leaving its extensive mosaic pavements hidden until their excavation during World War I.

In some form or another, mosaic conservation projects have existed intermittently since the 1930s, though it wasn't until 2009 that the National Institution of Stobi started its long-term strategic conservation programme to support the preservation and display of Stobi's mosaics. The ongoing programme sees conservation work being carried out in annual stages by groups of students who pay to receive training through the in-situ conservation of at least one mosaic per cohort. This seems to be an effective business model where course leaders strike a good balance between prioritising project work and teaching the students. Since 2012, conservation work has been completed on the Theodosian Palace, the narthex of the Episcopal Basilica, the atrium and triclinium of the Episcopal residence, and part of the House of Parthenius.

2023's field school saw us participate in the in-situ conservation of the outdoor floor mosaic at the Theodosian Palace, aptly named due to the assumption that emperor Theodosius I had stayed here during his visit to Stobi in 388 CE. The teaching programme was made up of a series of lectures, practical sessions and excursions covering the history of mosaics in North Macedonia, traditional mosaic making techniques and mosaic conservation methods and materials. Practical work also included a period of

laboratory-based work involving the conservation of a wall mosaic from near the Temple of Isis on the site.

Before beginning the in-situ conservation of the floor mosaic on site, lectures were delivered on the theory of mosaic conservation and included details on mosaic stratigraphy and mosaic types. Discussions on the choice of mortar used in mosaic conservation incorporated both ethical decision-making combined with scientific analysis. Through condition assessing and lectures, we became familiar with the various forms of damage and deterioration that can be present on a mosaic ranging from missing, loose or cracked tesserae to the presence of failing previous restorations and biological growth. The condition of the floor mosaics was recorded during documentation sessions which involved written, photographic, technical graphic and photogrammetric techniques. Conservation treatments included mechanical cleaning of the mosaic surface, removing old and deteriorated cement repairs, stabilising and consolidating the mosaic structure, mortar mixing and placement, replacing destroyed nucleus, filling lacunae, edge repairs, resetting tesserae and consolidation of tesserae. I was particularly happy to gain experience in the detachment and relaying of sections of the mosaic using a gauze facing and adhesive. Towards the end of the



New mortar being laid under a section of mosaic that has been supported and lifted using a gauze facing and adhesive facing.
Photo @ Shoun Obana

“By our first excursion to the archaeological site of Heraclea Lyncestis in Bitola, it felt more like a day out with friends than an educational visit.”

course, we participated in lectures and workshops on traditional mosaic making techniques which included tesserae production using a hammer and hardie. This proved to be a relaxing activity which took us into the shade during the hot Macedonian afternoons.

Our cohort was an international group of seven students who had travelled from as far as Ireland, New Zealand, China and the United States to participate in the course, each with varying motivations to learn about mosaic conservation. Also on site were a group of students studying a course on the conservation of Roman ceramics and glass. The residential nature of the field schools, combined with Stobi’s relatively remote location, meant that from the outset we lived and worked closely with each other, quickly forging friendships and connections.

By our first excursion to the archaeological site of Heraclea Lyncestis in Bitola, it felt more like a day out with friends than an educational visit. Our second excursion took us to the city of Ohrid where we were taken on an in-depth tour of the city which included the National Ohrid Museum and a range of historic buildings and sites. On our final excursion we crossed the border into northern Greece to visit historic sites and museums in the towns of Pella and Vergina.

MADE POSSIBLE THROUGH FUNDING INSTITUTIONS

My attendance at the course was jointly funded by the British Museum and the Zibby Garnett Travel Fellowship (ZGTF). The Fellowship is a charitable trust providing financial assistance to early career professionals allowing them to broaden their understanding of conservation worldwide. Recipients of their awards travel internationally to study regional heritage crafts and conservation techniques and bring these skills back to the UK. Eligible subjects of study include historic buildings; historic designed landscapes and historic gardens; allied trades, techniques, skills and crafts; and skills relating to decorative arts and artefacts. The Fellowship recognises the richness of skills that exist internationally in these areas. Since its establishment in 2000, it has awarded over £150,000 to over 139 students, covering more than 40 countries across the globe. The ZGTF was founded in memory of Zibby Garnett who administered the Historic Decorative Crafts course at the Lincolnshire College of Art and



Design, now known as Lincoln University. One year following Zibby's early death in 1999, the trust was launched. The study subjects funded by ZGTF reflect Zibby Garnett's own interests and work. I am incredibly grateful to both the trust and the British Museum for their generosity and support. My experience in the Republic of North Macedonia was not only educational but also an enlightening eye opener to the rich culture and heritage of the Balkans. I strongly encourage any UK based conservation students or emerging conservation professionals to apply for a ZGTF grant if they have a learning opportunity that requires funding. It might be of particular interest to students wishing to add to or diversify their practical experience in conservation during the early stages of their careers.

ON REFLECTION

I feel incredibly fortunate to have gained such focused experience in this area of conservation, using skills and techniques that until now I had only read about. Learning under experts and leaders in the field was a unique opportunity which has increased my appreciation for the vastness and complexity of mosaic conservation as a specialism.

Until I found the programme at Stobi, my search for a course in Roman mosaic conservation with resourced and experienced staff proved difficult, as providers were few and far between. This might suggest that in today's conservation sector, the skills of the mosaic conservator should be considered equally as valued as the schools and workshops of Roman craftspeople who produced the mosaics. It is interesting to consider the importance of teaching mosaic conservation and its promotion as a mode of mosaic preservation in and of itself.

As archaeologists continue to discover ancient Roman mosaics, the skills of the mosaic conservator become increasingly valuable. Without them, the tesserae and mortar they are made from are at risk of decay. Knowledge held in their fabric and design could remain uninterpreted, leaving information on the livelihoods of the Romans vulnerable to loss through the passage of time. For these reasons I feel privileged to have been able to attend the course and hope to develop my skills further through my continued work caring for mosaics at the British Museum.



Top left: Students creating their own mosaics using traditional materials and techniques. Photo © Yiduo He

Bottom left: A section of lifted mosaic being embedded in freshly laid mortar. Photo © Lisa M Roland

Above: Group of students removing failing historic restorations from the floor mosaic at the Theodosian Palace at Stobi. Photo @Shoun Obana

Shoun Obana is an emerging conservator from County Antrim in Ireland. In January 2023 Shoun graduated from the Conservation of Archaeological and Museum Objects MA programme at Durham University. He is currently based in London where he works as a conservator at the British Museum as part of their Stone, Wall Paintings and Mosaics Conservation Team.



PROTECTING OTTO LILIENTHAL'S LEGACY WITH VIBRATION ISOLATION

By Amira Kellner, Charlotte Holzer and Kerstin Kracht



Figure 1: Monoplane glider wings and frame ring in the middle.
© Deutsches Museum, CC-BY 4.0

The monoplane glider “Normalsegelparat” (as seen in Figure 1 and 2) was invented and built by Otto Lilienthal in 1894 and marks one of the first steps in human flight. One of the remaining copies of the glider has belonged to the Deutsches Museum in Munich since 1904. Time and poor storage have damaged the glider. It is in such fragile condition that it has been replaced, during exhibition, by a replica.

Since 2019, a team of conservators has been working on the preservation of the original glider in preparation for a new exhibition on historic aviation. An interdisciplinary cooperation between the Museum and the Institute of Mechanics at the Technical University (TU) in Berlin was initiated to study the effects of vibration isolation on the future support structure.

VIBRATION ISOLATION

Every step on the floor, every unevenness during transportation, every impact of the showcase causes vibration. Dynamic and mechanical strains and stresses caused by shock and vibration can damage the sensitive exhibit. For example, the fragile wooden structure can break, the textile and the heavy metal and wood parts can move and cause abrasion. We are able to describe these risks qualitatively, however we are not able to describe them quantitatively, since the glider is a very complex structure consisting of many different materials which all exhibit different mechanical behaviour and strength values. The goal is therefore to achieve maximum vibration reduction. In this project wire rope isolators (see Figure 3) have been used to design an encased pedestal which is able to both dampen and isolate the Lilienthal glider from vibration. Wire rope isolators are highly efficient elements due to their six degrees of freedom and nonlinear mechanical behaviour.

The general goal of the study was to develop different concepts for the vibration isolated support structure of the object. This contained the modelling of the glider and the different concepts using the finite element method (FEM). Based on the calculation results, the concepts have been compared, and conclusions have been drawn to provide the Museum with recommendations.

THE FINITE ELEMENT METHOD (FEM)

The FEM is a calculation method use to analyse complex structures.

Synonyms are "finite element modelling", "finite element analysis", FEM and FEA. In this bachelor project, the FEM is used as a tool to test and adjust the construction of the support system, compare different choices of material and decide on the positioning of the vibration isolators (here, wire rope isolators). FEM software like Abaqus®, which has been used in this study, runs in three steps. The first step is the pre-processing which embraces the geometry design, definition of material behaviour and parameters as well as boundary conditions



and the excitation (load) of the object. The creation of the mesh, which is the subdivision of the geometry into cells called elements, is also part of the pre-processing. Afterwards, the processing is the generation and solution of the equation system which is built using the mesh and the gathered information on material, boundary conditions and load. The visualization of the results is part of the post-processing.

In this study a general static analysis, which analyses the effect of static forces like the gravitational forces as well as the modal analysis, has been carried out. The modal analysis is a method to investigate the natural vibration

behaviour of objects described by the parameters: natural frequencies, mode shapes and modal damping.

DEVELOPING THE SUPPORT CONCEPT

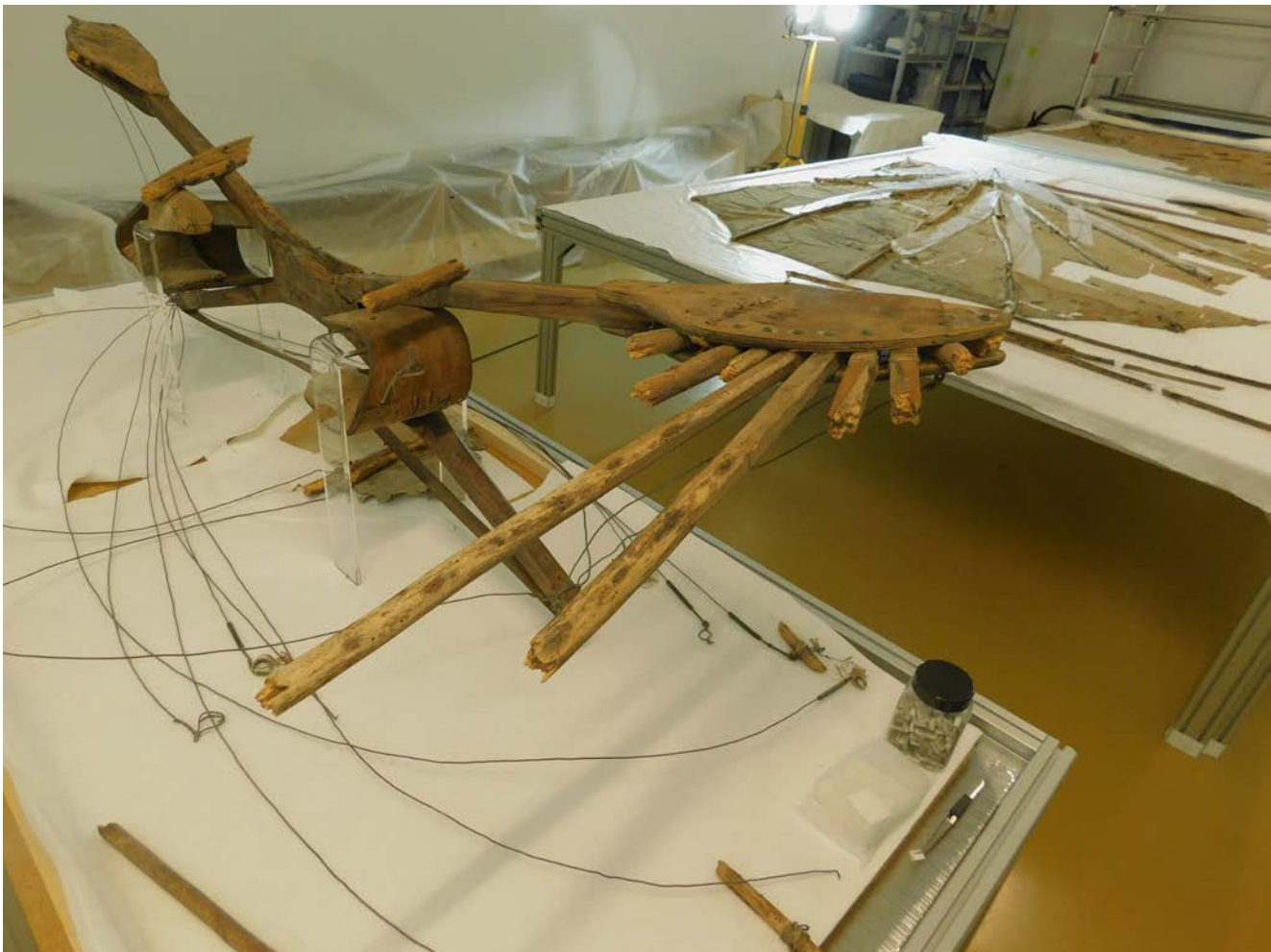
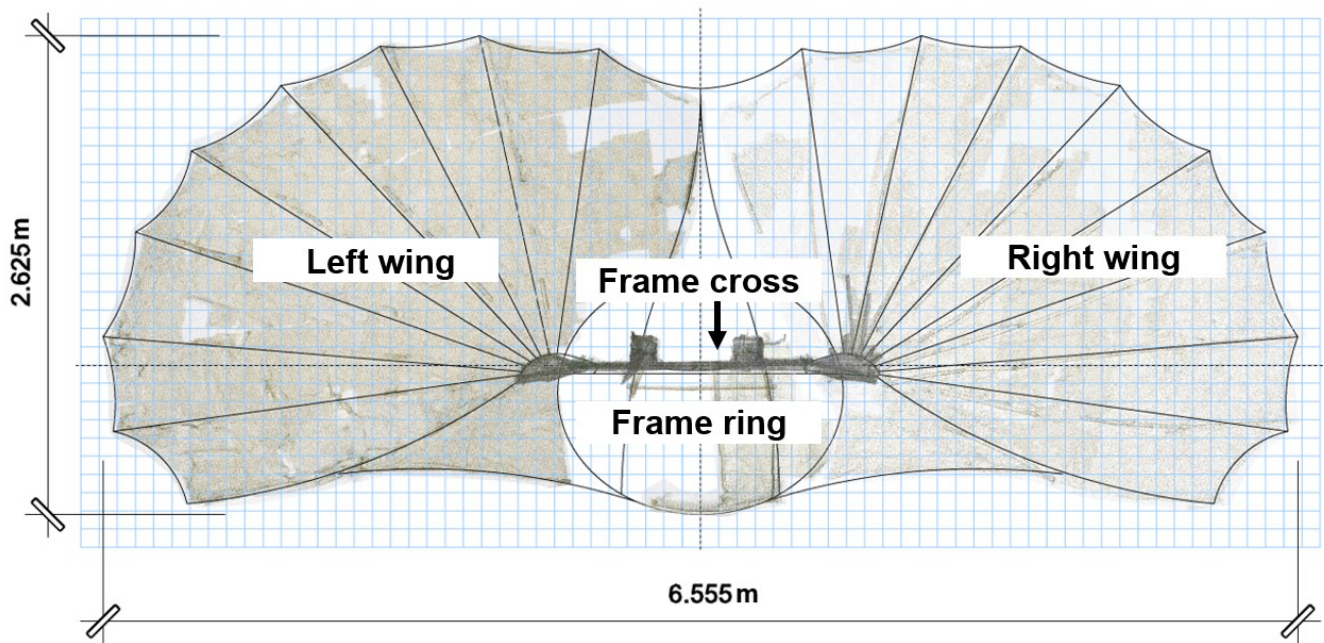
The general idea in creating a support was to implement the wire rope isolators between two stiff boards to affect a working vibration isolation (As seen in Figure 4).

Amongst other requirements, the design of the support structure should allow the Lilienthal glider to be transported with it. This was implemented by placing the construction on height-adjustable tables with wheels. Due to the size of the glider, the support structure was divided into three sections: two parts for the wings and one for the frame ring. The three parts can be connected to each other after transportation. The frame cross and the wires will be hung up on the ceiling which will be designed in the

future. Another challenge was preventing relative motion between the glider and its support since this could lead to friction damage. Therefore, friction tests were carried out with the support of the chair of system dynamics and friction physics at TU Berlin. Three different fabrics typically used in conservation were tested. It has been found that the fabric with a twill weave has the best adhesion.

MODELLING

One of the main challenges was the lack of data regarding the historical objects and materials which make up the glider and their impact on its geometry and weight. To address these unknowns, the glider



Left: Figure 3. Wire rope isolator. Image courtesy of Amira Kellner, Charlotte Holzer and Kerstin Kracht

Top: Figure 1a. A picture of the glider with main dimensions and labelling of the different parts. Image courtesy of Amira Kellner, Charlotte Holzer and Kerstin Kracht

Bottom: Figure 2. Monoplane glider frame cross and tensioning wires. Image courtesy of Amira Kellner, Charlotte Holzer and Kerstin Kracht

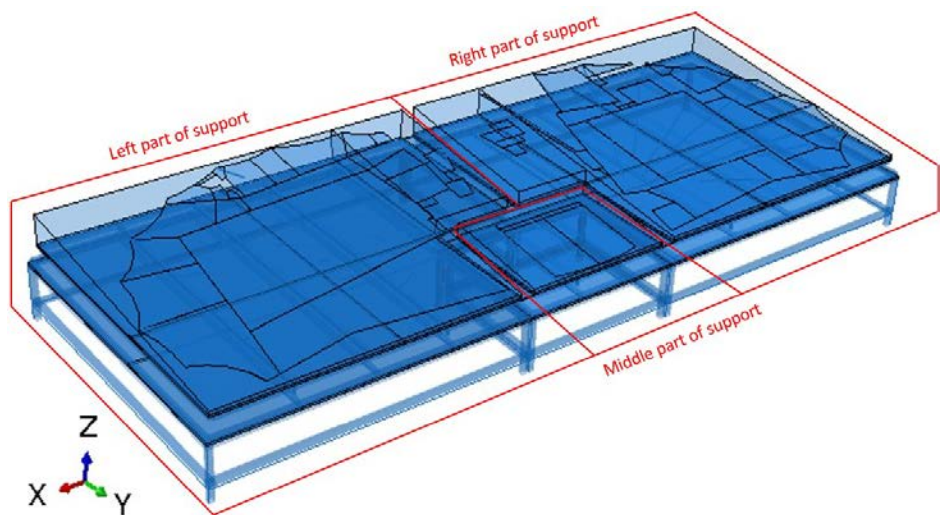


Figure 5: Complete geometry model of the glider and the support structure. Image courtesy of Amira Kellner, Charlotte Holzer and Kerstin Kracht

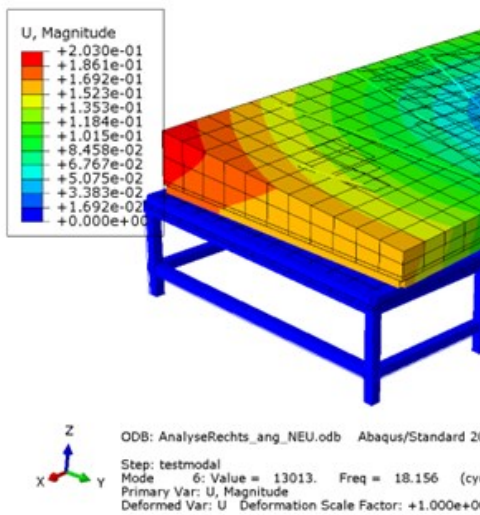


Figure 6: FEM Results – right part of the structure (a links to: 1st Eigenmode before adaptations; 6th Eigenmode after adaptations; 6th Eigenmode after adaptation). Image and videos courtesy of Amira Kellner, Charlotte Holzer and Kerstin Kracht

was first modelled. To simplify the iterative modelling process, our model focused on the most common materials on the glider as well as the different stages of decay of the wood. The metal elements were not modelled but their weight was added as a gravitation-

al force. For the design concepts of the vibration isolated pedestals, simplifications, like the absence of screws, have been conducted. The main challenge was the handling of the nonlinear and three-dimensional behaviour of the isolators. However,

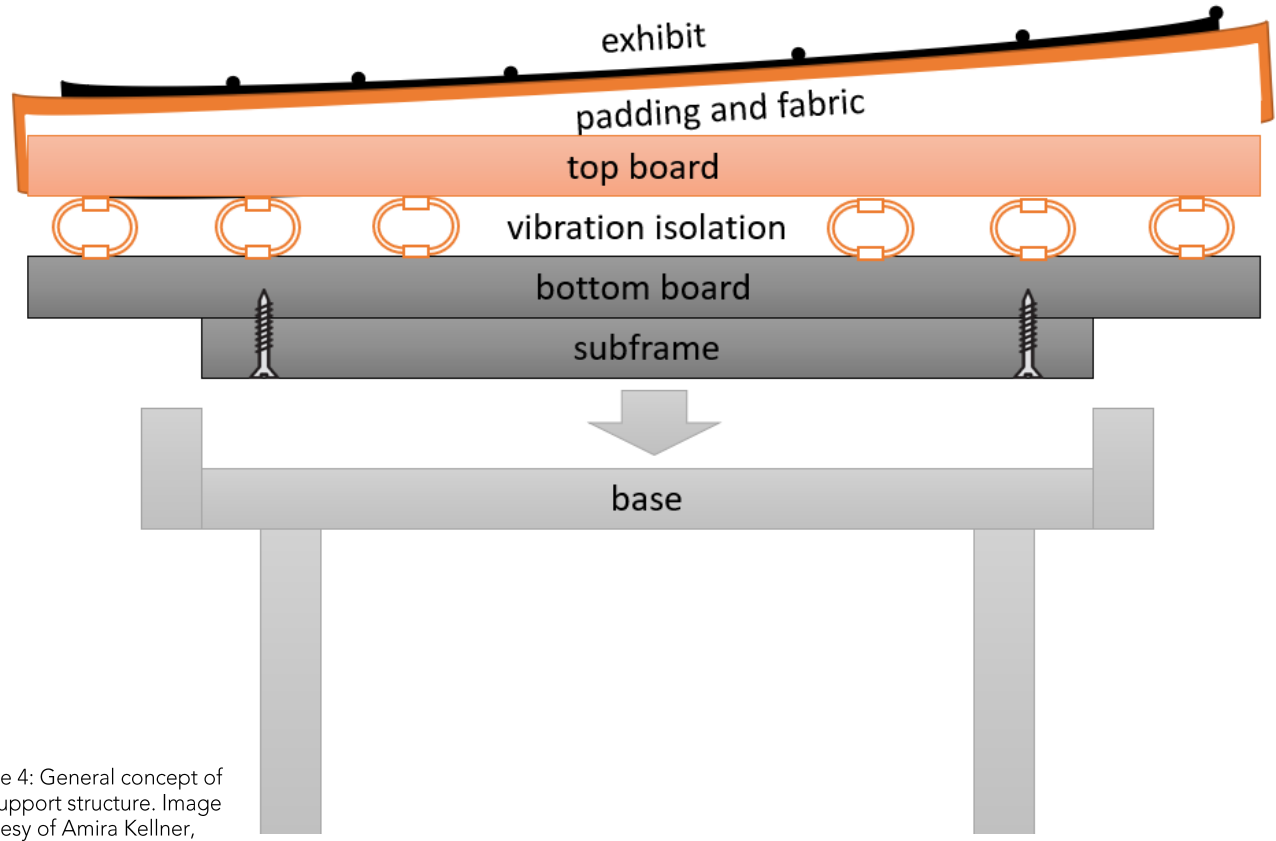
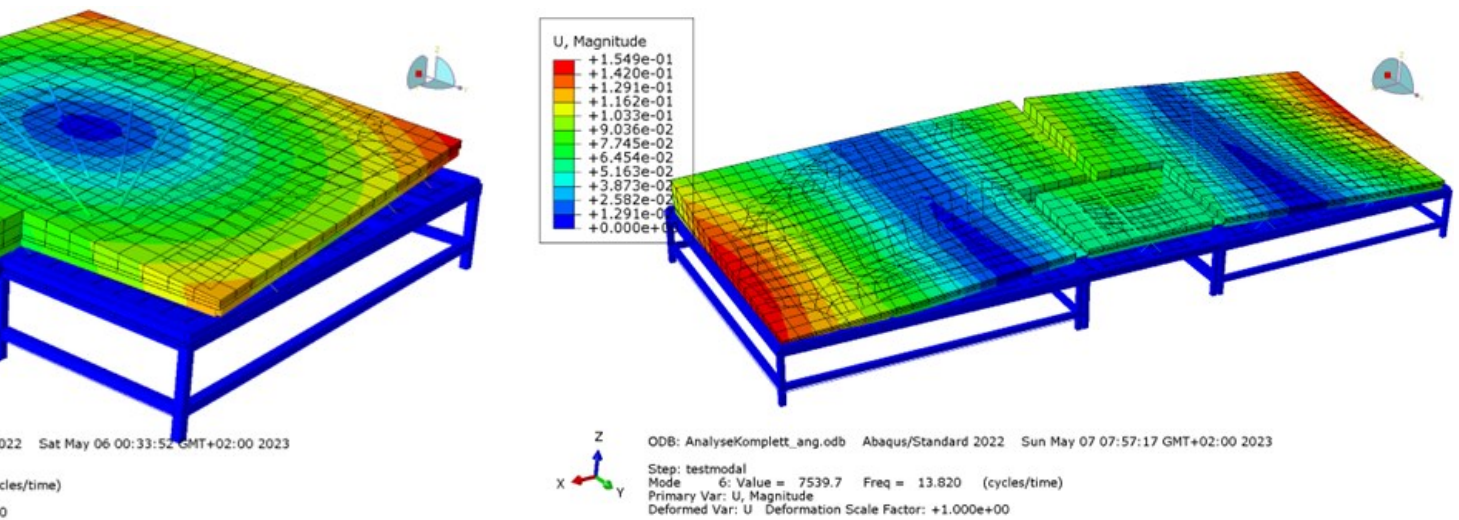


Figure 4: General concept of the support structure. Image courtesy of Amira Kellner, Charlotte Holzer and Kerstin Kracht



after adaptations) Click image to see video
 Eigenmode before adaptations; 8th Eigenmode
 before adaptations; and 8th Eigenmode after adaptations.
 Image and videos courtesy of Amira Kellner,
 Charlotte Holzer and Kerstin Kracht

Figure 7: FEM Results – assembled structure (after adaptations) Click image to see video links to:
 6th Eigenmode of the assembled structure before adaptations; and 6th Eigenmode of the as-
 assembled structure after adaptations. Image and videos courtesy of Amira Kellner, Charlotte
 Holzer and Kerstin Kracht

since small vibration amplitudes were assumed, the stiffness and dampening behaviour of the wire rope isolators have been linearized at the operating point.

With respect to the table, two versions (one commercial design and one hand-made customized design) have been compared based on the calculation results. We chose the hand-made version; the geometry of the finished model can be seen in Figure 5.

RESULTS

Typically, the main excitation frequency in buildings—due to footsteps, construction and usual first ceiling natural frequency of steel-concrete construction—is assumed to be from 20 Hz to 30 Hz. Therefore, in order to affect a well working vibration isolation, the first natural frequency of the structure should be 3 Hz, much lower than the excitation but high enough for the system to be stable. Based on practical engineering knowledge, the sixth frequency of the mounting (without deformation of the structure) should be around 15 Hz in combination with the first natural frequency in which the boards themselves start to deform, which should not be lower than 35 Hz. The parts of the support structure (left, right and middle part as seen in Figure 5) were first set up separately from each other and then assembled and connected to the entire support structure.

Configuring the vibration isolation in a way that matched those requirements was harder than expected. The right part of the entire support structure

(Figure 5) came closest to the desired results. Different adaptations were tested, including changes in the material and the number of table legs used to stabilize the structure, as well as the location and number of isolators. In the end the first isolation frequency was acceptable at 2.8 Hz. The sixth isolation frequency was at 18.2 Hz, which is a bit too high but could be considered acceptable since the board deformed for the first time at 31.9 Hz. The corresponding mode shape is shown in Figure 6.

The middle part of the entire support structure (Figure 5) was even more challenging. Even with a lot of adaptations, the natural vibrations causing deformation of the board and the vibrations caused by the isolation occurred at the same time. Therefore, the assembled structure (as seen in Figure 7) proved to be almost impossible to adapt since every change to the assembled structure also changed the normal frequencies of the separate parts. The static analysis showed no remarkable stress on the structure for any of the parts.

The results made it clear that it was difficult to configure the vibration isolation when the structure was assembled. Therefore, alternative designs should be discussed as a next step. One alternative, for example, would be allowing for a small gap (approximately 10 mm) between the tables so that only the separate parts need to be configured. It is also still necessary to measure the actual excitations that will impact the structure, simulate the response of the system to those excitations and finetune the system accordingly. The isolators are adaptable even after construction; they can be moved, and new isolators can be added.

Want to learn
more?
Click [HERE](#)
for access to Amira
Kellner's Bachelor
thesis.

CONCLUSION

Vibration and shocks are still underestimated dangers for historical objects like the monoplane glider. Using vibration theory, conservation science and FEM made it possible to develop and analyse a potential concept for a support structure that will protect the glider. The results of the analysis were not entirely satisfactory, but they are a respectable base for an advanced development of the vibration isolated support

structure. Furthermore, during the conceptual design, the friction tests and the modelling, we gained new insights that can provide a basis for the future of this project as well as similar projects. Otto Lilienthal's goal was to promote interest in flying and to bring the topic closer to people in an understandable way. By displaying and protecting the glider, the Deutsche Museum ensures, with the project "Operation Lilienthal", that Lilienthal's work will be continued for many years to come.



Amira Kellner is a mechanical engineering student at the Technische Universität Berlin. During her studies, and also in her previous student jobs (including the German Aerospace Centre) she focused on interdisciplinary topics like the interface between engineering and politics. Outside of her studies she volunteers at Engineers Without Borders.



Dr Charlotte Holzer is a textile conservator, currently working at the Deutsches Museum, Department of Conservation and Exhibition Technology. She holds an M.A. in conservation-restoration from the University of Applied Arts Vienna and a PhD from the Technical University of Munich. Her focus lies on technical textiles, support structures and preventive conservation for the Museum's aviation, space and maritime collections.



Dr Kerstin Kracht studied physical engineering and completed her PhD at the Technische Universität Berlin in 2011, investigating the vibration behaviour of oil paintings depending on ageing. Since 2017 Kerstin has been working as a consultant on numerous high-profile projects in her capacity as one of the leading experts in designing vibration-reducing and shock-absorbing measures in a museum environment, including transport, display and museum storage. For more information visit: <https://smart-vibrations.net/>

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CLIMATE ACTION: HOW ARE CONSERVATORS IN LATIN AMERICA ACTING?

By Marina Herriges
Associate Editor for *Reframing Conservation Through Sustainability*

Momentum is growing internationally towards sustainable practices in conservation benchwork and research.

Last August, during the IIC Fellows meeting, Satish Pandey gave a very interesting presentation about the efforts to address sustainable development practices and the challenges they face in India.

Interestingly, the issues and challenges highlighted by Satish were very similar to those faced in other countries in the Global South. One of the challenges presented by Satish addressed western environmental standards not being suitable for climates in India, mainly due to the different climate zones within the country. Brazil faces a similar situation.

Talking about the Global South, I spoke with Josefa Orrego, who is a conservator at the Museo Chileno de Arte Precolombino in Chile, and has interests in community involvement related to conservation decision-making and embedding sustainability in conservation practice, particularly in the regional context of Latin America. Josefa recognises the potential of the conservation profession to make meaningful contributions within the larger museum framework.

Josefa carried out interesting research on exploring the extent to which Latin American conservators engage in climate action to minimise their environmental impact and address the challenges of climate change. She interviewed 12 Latin American conservators from eight different countries – Mexico, Dominican

Republic, Colombia, Brazil, Peru, Paraguay, Argentina and Chile. Her goal was to compare and contrast their efforts with those taken and recommended by bodies and networks from other parts of the world, particularly Europe, the United Kingdom and North America. Josefa also believes that acquiring more data concerning conservation efforts in this geographical context could provide valuable insights into the field, allowing the Global South to diverge from actions more typical of the Global North.

Josefa shared her thoughts on why there is a need to make conservation practices more sustainable: “there is room for the conservation field to enhance its methodologies and embrace greater environmental sustainability. A case in point is our continued reliance on energy-intensive equipment to manage environmental conditions, the excessive utilisation of challenging-to-recycle materials, and the incorporation of hazardous chemicals in our treatment processes. However, it is heartening to note that as our awareness of the repercussions grows, we are witnessing the emergence of new discussions and novel solutions to address these challenges.”

Josefa also found it challenging to locate potential case studies of Latin American conservators actively engaged in actions to mitigate their environmental footprint. “For a moment, it seemed my project might

Wikipedia Latin American
Map. By Stidmatt. [Original
location](#). Licensed under CC
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CLIMATE CHANGE: How Are Latin American Conservators Playing Their Role?



Author: Josefa A. Orrego Trincado
Special thanks to Supervisor Caitlin O'Grady

I. Introduction

Climate change severely threatens people and their heritage worldwide, requiring urgent and cross-cutting actions to mitigate it. For conservators, diverse resources have been created to assist them in making more informed decisions concerning their environmental impact. Nonetheless, these mainly come from associations and networks in the Global North that can only be found in English, posing the question of what initiatives conservators take in other regions, such as Latin America.

Interviews were conducted with Latin American conservators to identify their actions to tackle climate change. The aim was to observe whether these differed from those taken elsewhere, acknowledge the circumstances under which these professionals labour, and identify the sector's challenges and areas for improvement to achieve sustainability. Findings reveal that although Latin America might seem problematic for a "best practice" conservation, its reality triggers positive changes in this respect. Ultimately, collaboration and communication are vital for achieving significant results.

II. Associations and Networks with Available Resources

Some available resources include websites compiling information on sustainable practices for heritage institutions, such as those provided by the CCI, Icon and the Wiki page by the AIC.



Other resources involve a carbon calculator for conservators created by Sustainability Tools in Cultural Heritage, a guide for reducing hazardous chemicals and two handbooks for managing waste and energy elaborated by Sustainability in Conservation and Ki Culture, respectively.

III. Methodology



As illustrated in the map on the left, 12 conservators participated in the interviews, coming from Mexico, Dominican Republic, Colombia, Peru, Brazil, Paraguay, Chile and Argentina. Their workplaces varied between museums, universities, and independent practice.

The scope of the questions encompassed what **actions** they were undertaking to mitigate the climate crisis from within their profession, what their **motivations** were for acting this way and, lastly, what were their **perceptions** on how other conservators in Latin America are approaching the matter: whether it is a predominant topic in the current discussion or not.

Because multiple plausible initiatives can be taken for sustainable conservation, the responses to the question of 'actions' were classified into **three categories**, as exemplified on the right. Participants could carry out actions in more than one category.

- Changing Practices**
Actions with immediate effects, e.g., recycling or preferring a product over another based on its carbon footprint.
- Research**
Development of new methodologies, knowledge, and products that pose a sustainable option for conservators.
- Education**
To embed environmental sustainability into conservation training programs or to share knowledge with colleagues.

IV. Findings

Interviewees manifested their concern about the environmental impact implied in conservation practice. This section details the initiatives they undertook and their motivations. Their perceptions of how the issue is being addressed in the region are also illustrated.

Changing Practices

- 8 participants mentioned reusing and recycling materials:
 - Highlighted planning mindfully each treatment they carried out.
 - Commented on donating leftovers to smaller institutions.
- 9 indicated reducing the use of hazardous chemicals:
 - Explained changing pesticides in pest management for anoxia treatments.
 - Stressed the importance of keeping up with recent international publications.
- Among their motivations were...
 - Making the most of materials due to financial constraints and complex procurement of materials. This reality was spontaneously remarked on by 7 participants, making it quite cross-cutting.

Research

- 3 interviewees were leading sustainable research projects:
 - Worked extracting alkaloids from an Andean plant to use them for pest management. (Peru (Isa et al. 2022).)
 - Created a laboratory to rescue pre-Hispanic techniques for conservation treatments. (Mexico (Garcia-Alonso & Sámano 2021).)
- Among their motivations were...
 - Providing sustainable solutions to a restricted local market and promoting traditional knowledge.
- Education**
- 3 participants shared their knowledge of sustainability:
 - Spread their insights obtained from international associations with colleagues.
 - Inserted environmental sustainability in activities for conservation students.

Perceptions

Interviewees were divided about their perceptions:

- 6 Said climate change was not sufficiently addressed in the region.
- 6 Indicated regional activities aiming to improve conservation that indirectly promoted sustainable practices, e.g., managing collections with low budgets.

Finally, all participants drove attention to the need for more and broader instances to share and exchange local experiences and solutions.

V. Conclusion

Interviews with Latin American conservators reveal actions that **reduce their environmental impact**, with **economic constraints** and **challenging access to materials** being vital influence factors. Conclusively, **exchanging local experiences** and **disseminating more information** is essential to **inspire others** and **make progress towards sustainable conservation**.



Poster presented at the AIC Annual Meeting in Jacksonville, 2023. Image courtesy of Josefa Orrego

hit a dead end. However, the events took a turn when I began conversing with professionals operating within the region. They shared insights about ongoing practices and projects, revealing that many of these endeavours inadvertently aligned with environmental sustainability, albeit without it being their primary aim.”

It was heartening to hear the actions conservators from Latin America are taking towards climate action—prolonging the lifespan of materials and donating them, when no longer useful, to smaller institutions that lack access was one of them. They have also been re-evaluating long-standing conservation solutions to adapt in their local practice and address climate change.

Utilising local knowledge and traditions were also mentioned as endeavours. Ancient and traditional methods offered effective solutions for diverse conservation processes and applications. According to Josefa: “What set these projects apart was not only their revival of nearly lost knowledge, as external and globalised solutions took precedence, but also their provision of locally relevant alternatives. This was particularly significant given Latin American conservators’ challenges in accessing conservation materials. Maintaining and nurturing these efforts in the future is paramount.”

Collaboration and dissemination of knowledge were also mentioned

Josefa, author of featured poster Image courtesy of Josefa A. Orrego Trincado



“For a moment, it seemed my project might hit a dead end. However, the events took a turn when I began conversing with professionals operating within the region. They shared insights about ongoing practices and projects, revealing that many of these endeavours inadvertently aligned with environmental sustainability, albeit without it being their primary aim.”

as a way forward. “Some professionals were affiliated [with] international conservation organisations and networks, thus accessing cutting-edge information. Their drive to educate present and future colleagues about these subjects holds immense value, as it fosters a greater consciousness and understanding of environmental sustainability within conservation practices. A key takeaway from my research was the imperative to promote broader networks among Latin American conservators, encouraging the sharing of our experiences searching for environmentally conscious solutions and our outcomes. Collaboration is always essential for driving substantial change!”

Josefa’s findings are indeed noteworthy. Collaboration and networking will enable conservators to address this issue together. I believe local knowledge and traditions are key to moving conservation practice forward. ICCROM’s programme [Net Zero: Heritage for Climate Action](#) has been showcasing this by working with communities; emphasising local knowledge; and scientific conservation data in Brazil, India, Indonesia, Kenya and Kiribati. There are other institutions doing similar work; for instance, check out [IberMuseus](#). It is worth a look.

Josefa Orrego would like to thank all participants for generously dedicating their time, collaborating and sharing their valuable insights during the interviews.



Marina Herriges is an object and textile conservator based in Glasgow, Scotland. Marina is a PhD student at the School of Social Sciences, University of Glasgow, where she researches the interconnection between heritage conservation, climate change and colonialism. She is a guest visiting lecturer at the MPhil Textile Conservation, University of Glasgow. Marina is Regional Programme Manager for IIC and has worked in a range of different heritage and conservation organizations in Brazil, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom.

ART CONSERVATION: MECHANICAL PROPERTIES AND TESTING OF MATERIALS

Review by Marjolein Hupkes

*Art Conservation: Mechanical Properties
and Testing of Materials*

By Dr. W (Bill) Wei

Jenny Stanford Publishing (2021)

164 pages / 20 colour & 44 B&W illustrations

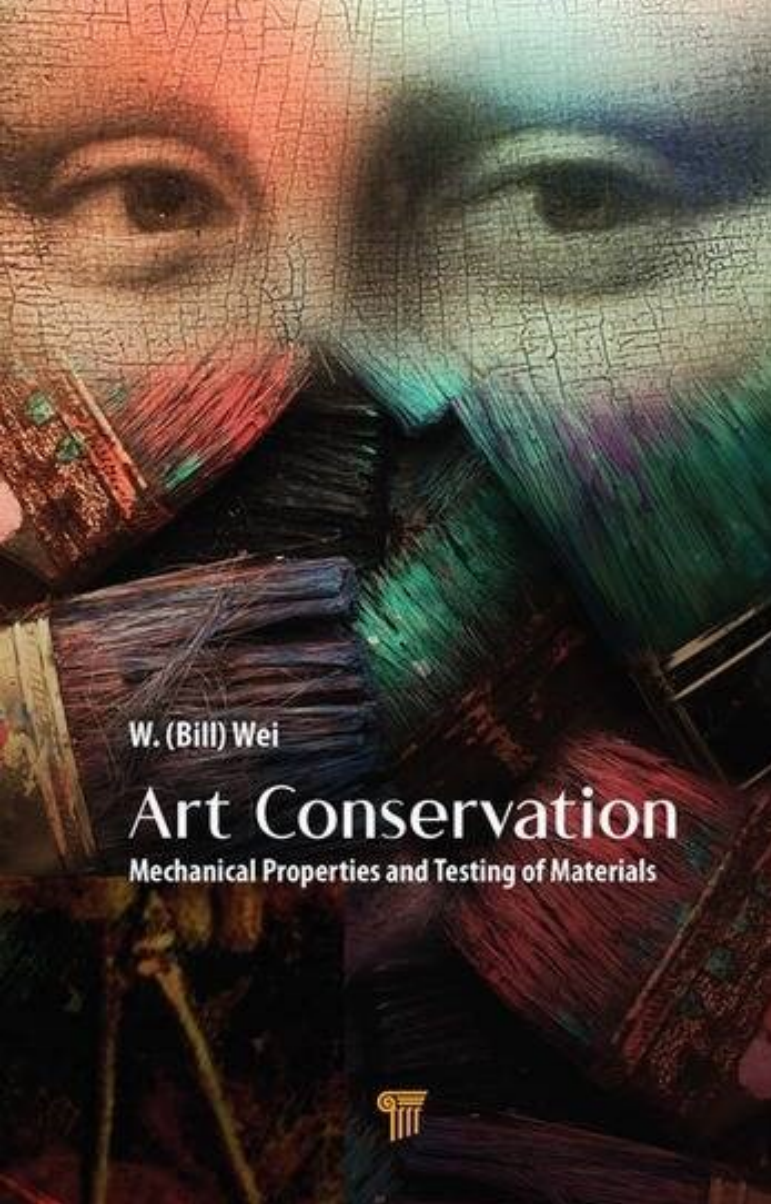
Hardcover / 129.95 (USD)

ISBN 9789814877688

A*rt Conservation: Mechanical Properties and Testing of Materials* delves into the often-overlooked aspect of mechanical properties in the conservation and restoration of art and cultural heritage objects. With its clear explanations, practical examples and comprehensive coverage, this book is a valuable resource. As a conservation student at the University of Amsterdam, I have been fortunate to meet Dr W (Bill) Wei as part of the science curriculum of the programme. This was just a brief encounter, as the majority of the science modules were focused on chemistry as well as the use of analytical techniques; this illustrates the gap that Dr Wei's book is attempting to fill within conservation education and training. The book starts with the author's personal story and his entrance into the world of conservation, which closely aligns with his enthusiastic and engaging teaching style.

One of the standout features of this book is Dr Wei's ability to present complex concepts in an accessible and understandable manner. The author has taken

great care to explain technical topics related to the mechanics of materials without assuming a deep engineering background from the reader. By using clear language and relatable examples, even those without prior knowledge can grasp the fundamental principles of mechanical properties and testing. For those who have touched upon these basic concepts during their studies, the book provides a valuable base to revisit and refresh their memory. As part of the conservation team at Stichting Restauratie Atelier Limburg (SRAL), I encounter many different objects and problems. This includes our practical conservation projects as well as research projects related to specific objects or conservation methods and materials. This kind of research is often carefully balanced between scientific soundness and practical applicability. Artworks generally do not allow for numerous tests and experimentation, and duplicating an object is often challenging. To distil certain processes from complex treatments, a proper understanding of the mechanics (as well as the chemical aspects) is crucial.



Left and detail on following page. *Art Conservation: Mechanical Properties and Testing of Materials* book cover. Image courtesy of Jenny Stanford Publishing

W. (Bill) Wei

Art Conservation

Mechanical Properties and Testing of Materials



“By focusing on the often-neglected aspect of mechanical properties, the book addresses a critical knowledge gap in the field.”

In my opinion, the book provides this knowledge in a very useful way.

The book follows a logical and well-structured progression, building upon the concepts introduced in earlier chapters. It begins by highlighting the aforementioned lack of emphasis on mechanical training in conservation training programmes and addresses the resulting confusion and uncertainty in dealing with mechanical restoration treatments. By focusing on static and dynamic loads, stress and strain and the relationship between force and deformation, the book establishes a solid foundation for understanding the mechanical behaviours of materials. The author's expertise and attention to detail are evident throughout the book, providing clear explanations of complex concepts and supporting them with illustrative figures and diagrams. The inclusion of practical examples from real conservation scenarios further enhances the book's relevance and applicability.

Furthermore, the book places great emphasis on the correct use of language and terminology which is a pivotal aspect when engaging in interdisciplinary discussions with professionals from different fields. By categorizing and defining key terms related to force, weight, deformation and failure, the book ensures that readers possess the necessary vocabulary to communicate effectively. This attention to precise language fosters clear and accurate communication, facilitating collaboration and understanding between various disciplines involved in art conservation.

Another useful aspect of the book is its inclusion of practical exercises. These exercises provide readers with the opportunity to apply the theoretical concepts they've learned and to gain hands-on experience. By using simple equipment and materials like rubber bands, readers can explore force, elongation, stress and strain thereby deepening their understanding of mechanical properties. This practical approach not only enhances the learning process but also makes the content more engaging and relatable, connecting theory to real-world applications.



The book does acknowledge the limitations of its approach, particularly in complex or unique situations. Dr Wei advises readers to seek additional expertise and consult specialised literature when confronted with specific material properties that may require more nuanced analysis. In terms of presentation, the book incorporates basic mathematical equations and utilises standard international (SI) units. This attention to detail ensures consistency and facilitates understanding across various contexts. By employing standardized units, readers can easily compare and analyse data, while the use of mathematical equations provides a solid foundation for quantitative analysis of mechanical properties. This consistent and rigorous approach to presenting information enhances the book's value as a reliable and comprehensive resource.

Overall, the book is well-structured, with each chapter building upon the previous. The clear headings, sub-headings and summaries at the end of each chapter aid in navigating the content and reinforce key

concepts. The inclusion of an appendix with a conversion table for selected units adds practical convenience and ensures consistency in measurements. Furthermore, it allows the reader to use the publication as a reference book and as a starting point for further research.

Art Conservation: Mechanical Properties and Testing of Materials is an invaluable contribution to the field of conservation and restoration. By focusing on the often-neglected aspect of mechanical properties, the book addresses a critical knowledge gap in the field. Its emphasis on precise language usage, practical exercises, and mathematical rigor sets it apart as a valuable resource for conservators and other professionals involved in art conservation. While further exploration of different testing methods would be advantageous, the book succeeds in providing a solid foundation in mechanical properties, enabling readers to navigate the complexities of material behaviour to then make informed decisions in their conservation practices.



Marjolein Hupkes is a conservation and restoration graduate from the University of Amsterdam (2019). She currently works at SRAL (Maastricht, The Netherlands) as part of the conservation team specialized in paintings and painted objects.

CONSERVATION OF TIME-BASED MEDIA ART

Review by Prof. Pip Laurenson

Conservation of Time-based Media Art
Edited by Deena Engel and Joanna Phillips
Routledge (2022)
578 pages / 32 color & 60 B/W illustrations
ISBN 9780367460426

The inclusion of *The Conservation of Time-Based Media Art* in the Routledge Black Book series signals a coming of age for this relatively young area of practice. Since time-based media works began to enter collections, museums have debated who should be responsible for their care. It was not until the 1990s that museum conservators began to seriously consider the conservation of these artworks, and the result was an expansion of practice to address a different set of needs and vulnerabilities, requiring new knowledge, skills and approaches. What emerged was a generous and highly collaborative field, and this book excellently documents current practice as it has emerged within this context.

This book tracks a set of practices that sit largely within the conservation departments of major contemporary art museums in Europe and North America, which is distinct from, although often inspired and informed by, grassroots media initiatives and archival practice. It is organised into four sections: *Caring for Time-based Media Art*, *Building a Workplace*,

Cross-Medium Practices in Time-based Media Conservation and *Medium-Specific Practices*. Its triumph is in making these often-invisible practices both visible and accessible through its 23 contributions.

The first section of the book, *Caring for Time-based Media Art*, contains many gems, including Renée van de Vall's chapter "Theories of Time-based Media Art Conservation: From Ontologies to Ecologies". With exceptional clarity, van de Vall condenses the shifts in approach to change, loss and what is important to preserve, tracking a growing adoption of an ecological approach. Her chapter provides the bedrock for where we see things developing in a decentring of the conservator in conservation discourse and an acknowledgement of conservation as a distributed and shared endeavour.

Comprising a mix of single authors and roundtables, some chapters share a specific viewpoint of individualised expertise and reflection, while others have been written collaboratively, made manifest in two ways. Some chapters have been co-authored; for example, the excellent chapter on disk imaging by Eddy Colloton, Jonathan Farbowitz, and Caroline Gil Rodriguez walks the reader through a comprehensive introduction to the subject. In other cases—for example Kate Lewis's account of "Building a Time-based Media Conservation Lab: A Survey and Practical Guide, from Minimum Requirements to Dream Lab"—single authors have shouldered the responsibility to canvas widely the opinions of others in the field, doing the work of bringing their colleagues' perspectives together.

Another lens through which to view this book is as an account of how ideas and practices travel through the connection and movement of people. It is notable how quickly the field has established shared approaches and come to take this standardisation for granted. In some cases, the history of this development remains obscured. In others, the importance of recounting particular histories is a testament to how individuals and their values have adapted to the needs of the art and how this has shaped institutions. The co-authored chapter "A Roundtable:

Implementing Cross-Departmental Workflows at SFMOMA” tells such a story. As early as 1992, SFMOMA’s collection team, spearheaded by Jill Sterrett, championed a cross-departmental approach to address the needs of time-based media works coming into a collection by establishing the internal group, Team Media—a move that built the confidence with which SFMOMA was able to acquire complex media artworks. This vision for meaningful collaborative working is rightly acknowledged in the roundtable that documents its history as “a model that famously inspired others”. Reflecting the warmth of a reunion, mid pandemic, this chapter lays out the values of apprecia-

tion, respect, empowerment, validation and inclusivity that underpinned this endeavour. At its heart Team Media conveyed a sense of belonging to everybody involved and of trust as a tool to blur boundaries and territory without ever losing sight of individual expertise.

The chapter “Outside the Institution: Crossing the Boundaries of Communities and Disciplines to Preserve Time-Based Media” is one of the rare moments where the events of the world outside the conservation lab break through. The urgency of these grassroots efforts rings out, as the reader is given an insight into the

extraordinary work that is under-acknowledged in the history of this practice. This work predates the emergence of time-based media conservation within the professional field of art conservation and is rooted in community activism, independent television in the US and independent media arts organisations worldwide. It represents the ticking time bomb of managing time-based media histories with scarce resources within precarious institutions or outside institutions altogether within specific communities. While it forms part of the intersecting worlds of which our practice is composed, it has its own protagonists, context and values. Does the history of community archiving and grassroots media organisations and activism need its own workbook, or do we need to re-think the boundaries of how time-based media conservation is defined and advocated for?

The fourth and final section of the book is eminently practical and addresses medium-specific practices and challenges and the expertise that has been developed over many years of dedicated work. For example, “Caring for Analog and Digital Video Art” by Agathe Jarczyk and Peter Oleksik speaks to extraordinary depth of knowledge gained from careers where experts such as these have worked in private practice, in the contemporary art museum and teaching within universities.

Throughout, I have valued the accounts from those who work freelance as an important acknowledgement of this part of the ecosystem. Tom Cullen plays an invaluable role supporting countless artists, institutions and festivals in the installation of complex time-based media works of art, and an insight into his practice is an important

CONSERVATION OF TIME-BASED MEDIA ART



EDITED BY DEENA ENGEL
AND JOANNA PHILLIPS



Book cover for *Conservation of Time-Based Media Art* courtesy of Routledge.

contribution to this book. His account reminds us that, without the careful labour and skill of those responsible for installation, time-based media art is spectacularly absent when it fails.

An argument made against producing such a book is the concern over how quickly it might date. However, whilst championing the values of agility and responsiveness to changing artistic practice and a changing world, there is great value in recording this moment, not least to act as a record that can be shared, critiqued, undone or built upon.

There are some blind spots in this book, and the politics of conservation is largely absent. This is even more extraordinary given that, although conceived in 2018, this book was worked on during a time of extraordinary upheaval and reckoning. Despite the detailed and valuable accounts of digital storage and the management of different forms of media and components, there were only two passing references to the environmental impact of maintaining these conditions. In the chapters on documentation, there is no dissection of the authority of documentation, the perpetuation of the neutral voice, and the institutional power of its construction.

I wanted to see more acknowledgement of debates about how we diversify the field, address the

“Another lens through which to view this book is as an account of how ideas and practices travel through the connection and movement of people. It is notable how quickly the field has established shared approaches and come to take this standardisation for granted.”

crisis of climate change, and what it means for those who have developed their expertise on the ground to see time-based media conservation enter the curriculum.

There is always a lag in any book, and the work that is emerging from a younger generation who are exploring approaches that question fundamental tenets of the field are not reflected. This is to say that I hope there will be other books that will follow this one, but for now, I am incredibly grateful to the editors and authors who laboured to produce this extraordinary collection while the world was in turmoil. It is a testament to a roll call of extraordinarily talented and committed folk capturing a body of knowledge which has emerged and has been developed over the past 30 years. In the autumn of 2023, a new MSc in the Conservation of Contemporary Art and Media launches at UCL in London, where a major component of the programme is time-based media conservation. This book will be an invaluable resource for me, my students and all those who are rising to the challenge of caring for these works, old and new, within their collections and communities. I hope it will sit alongside other publications where different voices might be heard, and distinct types of publication will emerge, that will all contribute to the development of the field. This publication is certainly a milestone in that history, and to be strongly recommended.



Pip Laurenson, ACR, is professor of conservation at UCL and director of the MSc in the Conservation of Contemporary Art and Media at UCL East. Pip has 30 years of experience in the conservation of contemporary art and established Time-based Media Conservation at Tate in the 1990s.



IIC BOOK CLUB

The IIC successfully launched its new initiative, the IIC Book Club, which aims to push the boundaries of knowledge and connect enthusiasts, scientists, scholars, and restorer-conservators. This innovative platform allows members to delve into the captivating world of inspiring conservation publications, while also providing a unique opportunity for author interviews, invigorating panel discussions, and exploration into other relevant disciplines. The Club's ultimate goal is to foster active engagement among participants, encouraging them to go beyond the conventional and explore new dimensions of art conservation and its interconnected fields.

The chosen text for the inaugural IIC Book Club is *The Alchemy of Paint: Art, Science and Secrets from the Middle Ages* by Spike Bucklow. The journey began the week of 12 June 2023, with an [introduction](#) to the text presented by the author himself, Spike Bucklow. Participants have been receiving weekly updates detailing chapter overviews and links to additional reading materials, facilitating a comprehensive understanding of the book's content.

In one of the Book Club's online sessions, Assistant Professor Marte Johnsen presented a fascinating talk about the white pigment, titanium dioxide (a recording of this talk has been made accessible on the IIC Community Platform, [accessible here](#)). This pigment has been circulating in our material world for over a century, found in paint, paper, plastic, food, and cosmetics. Marte shared her deep interest in the industrial story behind this white pigment, which was a Norwegian innovation in 1916. She had personally

travelled multiple times to the mine in Sokndal, Norway where ilmenite, the raw material for titanium dioxide, is extracted, documenting the mining industry's devastating impact on the local nature and landscape in this unique geological area.

Marte's presentation was an absolute success, captivating the audience with her insights into the materiality and environmental consequences of the white pigment. Her artistic project, exploring the industry through photography and fieldwork, added a compelling dimension to the Book Club's discussions. Participants praised Marte's dedication to shedding light on this essential aspect of art conservation, making the seemingly immaterial pigment visible and tangible in its real-world context.

Book Club members also had the privilege of engaging in a short talk by Spike Bucklow. (A recording of this talk has been made accessible on the IIC

Community Platform, [here](#).) This interactive session, which took place on the 25th of July, allowed participants to delve deeper into the book's themes, art, science, and secrets from the Middle Ages. Spike also provided insightful perspectives on the significance of writing in conservation, shedding light on its importance in making a difference. His talk inspired participants to come together as influential voices and explore ways to contribute to the advancement of this field more generally.

Spike's discussion was equally well-received and considered a resounding success. Spike's expertise and engaging communication style created an enriching experience for everyone involved. Participants appreciated the opportunity to interact directly with the author, gaining valuable insights into the

historical and scientific aspects of paint alchemy. His book has so far proven to be an exceptional choice, sparking thought-provoking conversations among the Book Club members.

Now the IIC Book Club eagerly awaits the upcoming panel discussion and Q&A session at **9:30am (BST)** on **October the 3rd**. The anticipation is high as members look forward to further engaging with Marte Johnslie and Spike Bucklow, and gaining a comprehensive understanding of the fascinating interplay between art, science, and conservation. Any late-comers can still register for the Club [here](#).

Alexandra Taylor
IIC Book Reviews Coordinator & Associate Editor



Click on the **BONUS CONTENT** button to access the Book Club event reviews by Ausrine and Julie on the IIC Community Platform!

This past June marked the inaugural IIC Book Club, beginning with the book *The Alchemy of Paint: Art, Science and Secrets from the Middle Ages* by Spike Bucklow. Here we have insightful reviews of the first two Book Club discussions. Our reviewers are **Julie Fassbender** (pictured on the right) and **Ausrine Dambrauskaite** (on the left) whose review is featured in English and Lithuanian! We hope these lovely articles entice you to join in on more Book Club events to come, including on 3 October!

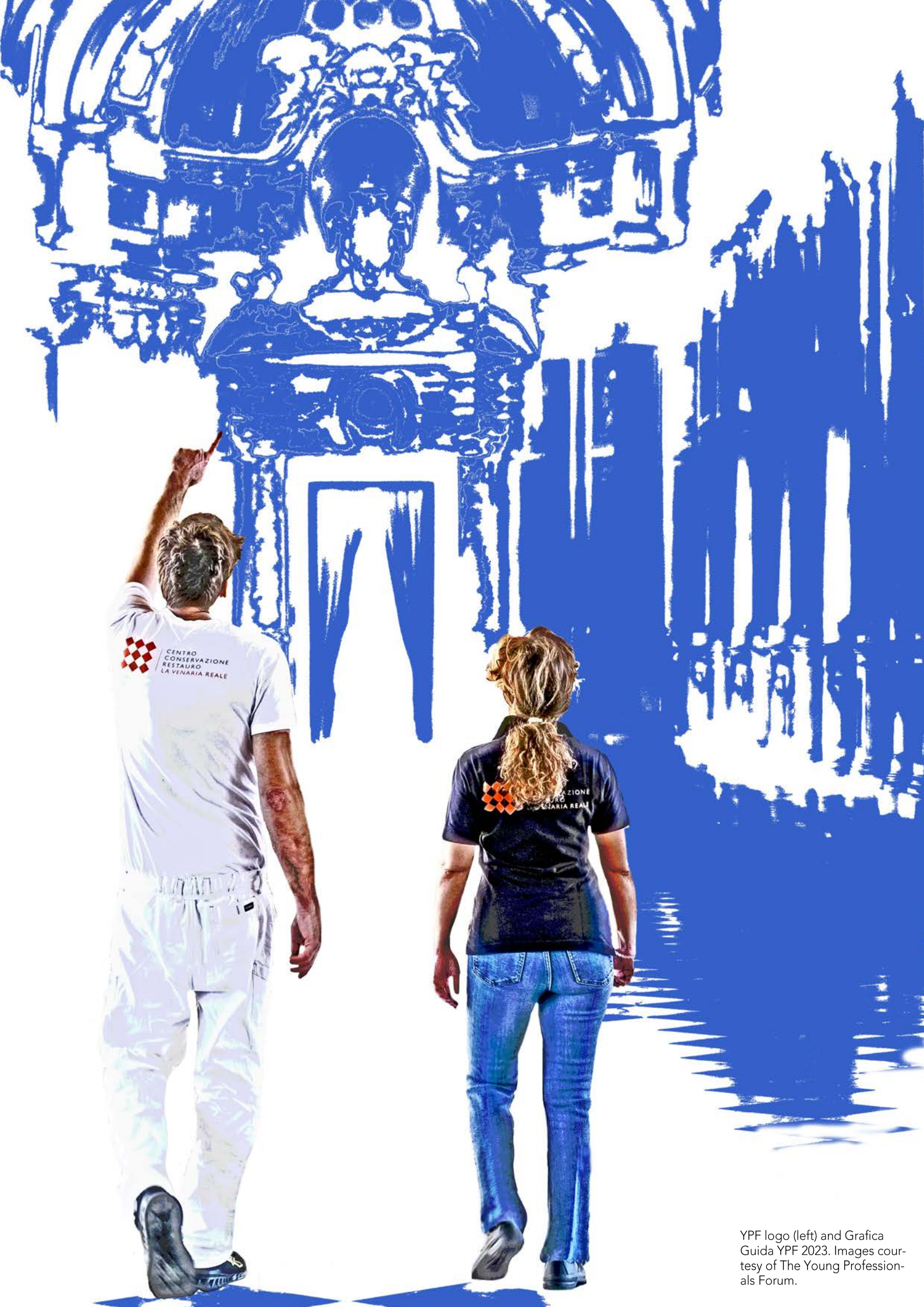


HOW CAN PREVENTIVE CONSERVATION BE COMMUNICATED AND EXPLAINED TO VISITORS AND USERS?

By Maria Carmela Grano and
Martina Scoccimarro
With: Martina Riello, Konstantina
Elmaloglou, Bianca Costi Farias,
Sofia Ceseri, Denise Crepaldi and
Stefania De Blasi

We are professionals and students from various branches of cultural heritage including conservation science, art history and archaeology. Our collaboration was formed earlier this summer at Centro Conservazione e Restauro "La Venaria Reale" in Torino, Italy, as part of the Young Professionals Forum 2023, How Leadership, Strategy and Networking Operate on Preventive Conservation.





CENTRO
CONSERVAZIONE
RESTAURO
LA VENARIA REALE



CONSERVAZIONE
RESTAURO
LA VENARIA REALE

We were chosen by an international commission (CCR, IIC and Fondazione Magnetto) to participate in the workshop titled *Preservation Protocol for Collections in Historical Residences*, scheduled for June 28th to 30th, 2023.

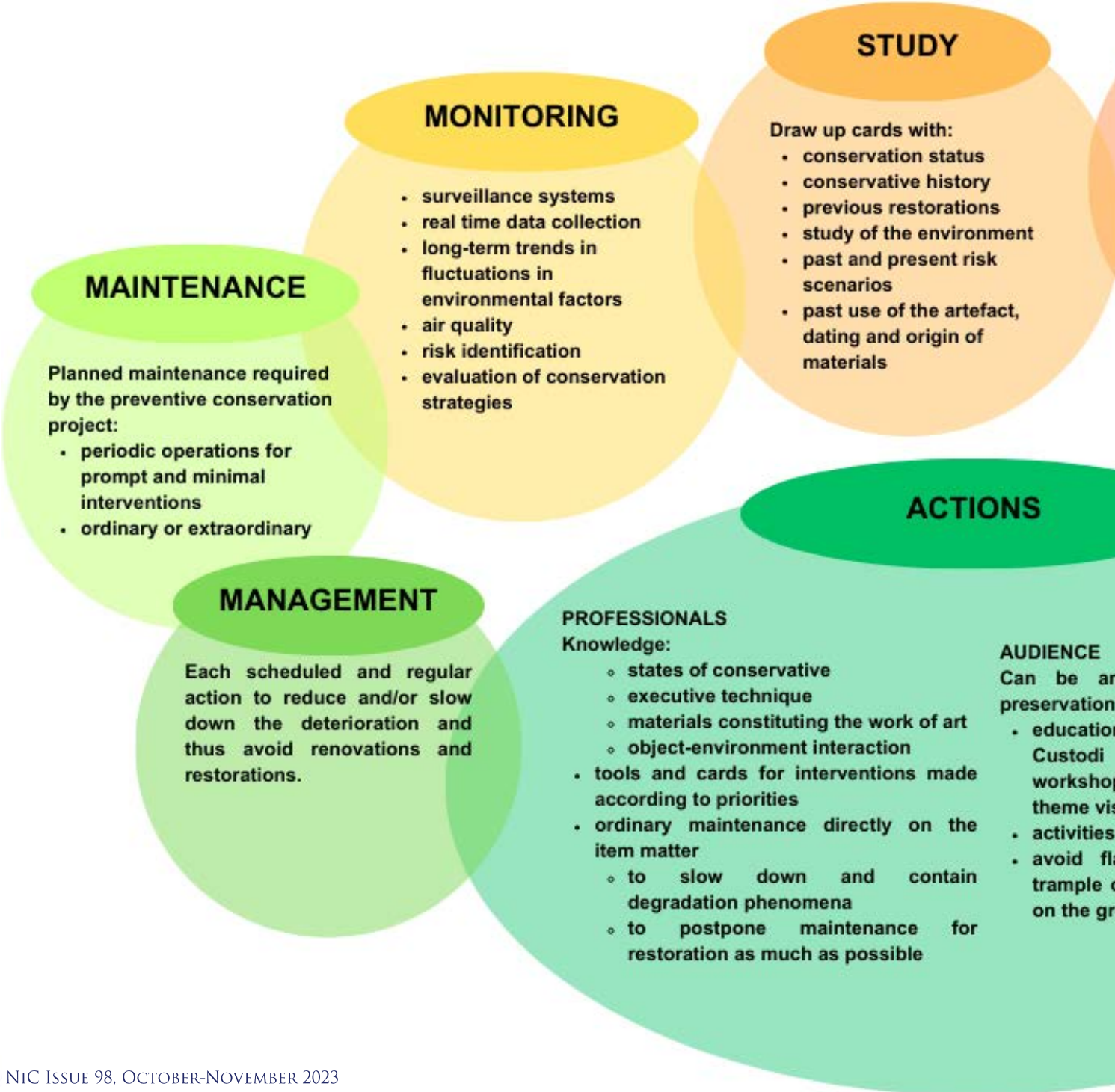
During those three days, we met and cooperated with different conservation professionals who have been working on the maintenance operation of the Reggia di Venaria,

for over 10 years. We learned about the importance of preventive conservation and its communication. Additionally, we came to appreciate the importance of understanding a site's historical context when creating and implementing the necessary maintenance measures for its long-term preservation, which involve assessing the potential risks to cultural heritage. We had the opportunity to visit the Reggia, the fountain of

Hercules and its sculptures in the gardens' site (a year ago they started monitoring the restored area) where we learned how to conduct conservation assessments based on observation, taking into account the potential risks they may suffer.

These days of training and exchange came at the end of a vast and interesting series of interactive remote workshops, from May to June, in which we discussed

PREVENTIVE CONSERVATION



Right: Scientific formula used to describe preventive conservation.

Left: The codependency among factors that influence preventive conservation.

Images courtesy of Stefania De Blasi

$$PC = \int_t^{\infty} [R - (3M \times S \times A)] \delta t$$

RISKS

Damage and loss when the object is both susceptible and exposed to the agent

Risk assessment:

- CPRAM
- ABC method
- QuickScan
- Carta del Rischio

an active protagonist for the
of cultural heritage
n through projects (such as 'I
del futuro, siamo noi!'),
ps, visits to open sites or special
sits;
for public along the tour path;
ash shots, touch the works,
on antique carpets, throw waste
ound.

challenging topics—from the protection, conservation and recovery of cultural heritage in places destroyed by war, to prevention and sustainability as critical tools for climate change. We learned about impact assessments used to better manage cultural heritage and environmental guidelines for artistic and historical works, and we got the chance to put into practice some of the most important interdisciplinary approaches and leadership skills needed to manage them.

After our theoretical classes on the first day, and our experience visiting the site at the beginning of the workshop, the CCR workshop leaders asked us to create a two-minute video describing preventive and programmed conservation. What a challenge this was for a young group with different specializations, to reflect and discuss the problems and difficulties in preserving cultural heritage!

After discussing and sharing our ideas, we agreed that using scientific language was the most suitable option and developed a mathematical formula to explain it.

Preventive conservation can be described with an integral, i.e. a sum of various factors over time

that must be subtracted from the risks (R) of deterioration and alteration of the heritage.

The factors to be multiplied are:

3M= (Monitoring + Maintenance + Management)

S= Study and filing of the state of conservation in the present

A= Both positive and negative actions (of scholars, conservators, managers, public).

From the mathematical point of view, it is clear that if only one of the factors of the formula is equal to zero (meaning that it is not implemented) preventive retention cannot be guaranteed (the total sum will equal zero).

This is the slogan we chose for our formula:

"If we want to describe preventive conservation with a formula, we would have to subtract the risks from the sum over time of 3M: Monitoring + Maintenance + Management, multiplied by Study and Actions. The solution is in our hands!"

You can watch the video we made, which is available online: (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cc4EKv-H_n0).



Accidental damage caused by museum visitors, stepping on an exhibited carpet. Image courtesy of Young Professionals Forum 2023.

With the conviction that our team could communicate the complexity and scientific nature of this issue without trivializing or oversimplifying the meaning, we worked to describe the contents and process of preventive conservation in a more friendly and understandable manner. Our idea for this message was to make everyone feel involved and responsible for the conservation of cultural heritage, focusing on collaboration and regular maintenance actions as key factors in limiting the loss of history and cultural identity in the future.

From the point of view of the recording of maintenance actions, since we visited the Savoia Royal Residence on a day when it was open to the public, we were not able to see the work of the curators in action. It would have also been productive to visit on a Monday when the Museum is closed to visitors and the curators are able to survey the galleries. However, we were able to observe some of the more common

types of damage caused by visitors, like stepping on the carpets, sitting on the armchairs, touching the tapestries and so on.

The video shows, in a simple and immediate way, that everyone has a role in preserving our heritage from degradation, showing the damage and loss when these risks are not adequately communicated to stakeholders and to the public.

Our scientific formula is an invitation to museum and cultural site managers to apply preventive conservation protocols with the support of specialists and conservation scientists who can consult and coordinate the work of architects, conservators, art historians and restorers. In this direction, the Centro Conservazione e Restauro "La Venaria Reale" has been integrating training activities, preventive conservation plans and educational paths while also fostering communication plans and scientific dissemination. See, for example, the educational didactic project entitled *We are the*



YPF 2023 Young Professionals Forum "In Our Hands" video. Courtesy of Centro Restauro La Venaria Reale. Click the image above to watch the video or follow the link [HERE](#).

Guardians of the Future!, which focuses on activities that professionals, and also visitors, can put in place to avoid, or reduce as much as possible, future deterioration and losses.

As stated in our video, "the preservation of cultural heritage is a shared responsibility. Through effective collaboration and regular actions we could contribute to limiting future losses of our history and cultural identity."

#BeTheProtagonist
#culture #management #opportunity #climatechange



Maria Carmela Grano mariacarmela.grano@ispc.cnr.it Preventive conservation scientist, post-doctoral research fellow at Italian CNR Institute of Heritage Science. Expert in the conservation and management of outdoor monuments, cultural landscapes, and ancient hydraulic structures (watermills, cisterns, channels) as well as their local management practices which provide tools to manage environmental factors and mitigate climate risks.



Martina Scoccimarro mscoccimarro@estudiantes.unsam.edu.ar Advanced student at Universidad Nacional de San Martín, Argentina, pursuing a bachelor's in conservation and restoration of cultural heritage, working on the final project centered in sustainable preventive conservation for heritage collections. Engaged in research projects at Centro de Estudios sobre Patrimonios y Ambiente (UNSAM) related to environmental monitoring. Actively involved in CHIOMA project, a collaboration between UNSAM (Argentina), INGV, and Accademia dei Lincei (Italy), focusing on biomonitoring.



PREVENTIVE CONSERVATION WORKSHOP AT SRAL

Review by Kosara Yovcheva and Pinja Nousiainen

In mid-June, SRAL (Stichting Restauratie Alteier Limburg) held a three-day workshop on preventive conservation. The workshop featured informative lectures by Vinod Daniel, Kate Seymour and Johanna Strombek, covering topics of great importance to professionals involved in the care of museum collections and cultural property. Key topics included the importance of prevention and risk management, as well as monitoring in cultural institutions.

The workshop format comprised morning sessions dedicated to theoretical lectures followed by practical sessions held in local museums during the afternoons. The event brought together a diverse group of fifteen individuals from various countries and professional backgrounds, all working with museums or collections. The workshop was open to students, emerging professionals and seasoned experts, all of them sharing a common interest in enhancing their knowledge and skills in preserving the objects under their care. Witnessing individuals from different backgrounds, all interested in the same topic, was a joy.

The morning theory sessions, hosted by Vinod Daniel, provided an overview of the goals for preventive and interventive conservation. Vinod's emphasis on the importance of monitoring in cultural institutions focused on ten agents that affect the long-term preservation of collections including disasters, fire and pests.

In preparation for the practical exercises in the afternoon, Kate Seymour provided an extensive explanation of technical concepts such as light, colour perception, the light sensitivity of objects and worldwide illumination standards. We then went to the Bonnefanten Museum where we split into two groups. Each group was equipped with the same tools, including Lux and UV meters, as well as a data logger with which we were to examine different parts of the museum exhibition spaces.

The beginning of the practical session in the Bonnefanten Museum. Picture provided by SRAL, The Conservation Institute

One group focussed on the permanent exhibition while the other explored the temporary exhibition. We recorded data, creating graphs that depicted the Lux levels in each room and the specific locations of the paintings. We took note of the factors contributing to the Lux levels and assessed the overall condition of the rooms. We tried to figure out how the airflow in the space behaves and if the conditions vary within the rooms we visited. We presented our findings to the other participants and the instructors and received valuable feedback in return. In this assignment it became clear how much conditions can change even just meters apart, and even if this does not surprise a skilled conservator, it can come as an unpleasant surprise to a curator or museum administrator. This is why a shared vocabulary and understanding is vital. During this practical exercise, we focused on taking measurements in the best way possible and discussed the importance of repeating the same measurements to collect consistent data.

Vinod Daniel's outstanding global experience of working in a variety of environments and conditions on five continents was an appreciated source of information. His hands-on approach to making improvements (achievable even on a restricted budget but with reasonable planning) are much needed in many museums. He noted that sometimes best results are not the ones with the largest budget but with the most careful planning.

On the afternoon of the third day, we visited the Maastricht Natural History Museum where we were generously granted access to the Museum's storage rooms and

depot. This unique opportunity allowed us to apply the knowledge acquired during the morning theory session, specifically focusing on the four factors for prevention of insect infestation. The paleontological collection is held in the basement, and zoological objects are on the upper floor. Both locations had their benefits and problems – the Museum (like so many others) suffers from a lack of space due to an ever-growing collection. These two collections and locations provided an excellent starting point for our discussions on what kind of threats the storage locations might bring to the materials and how to improve conditions. For an art conservator or conservation student, examining storage spaces with taxidermy specimens and fossilized bones was an interesting assignment.

During our visit, we conducted an overall evaluation of the Museum's depot and storage rooms. We assessed the existing conditions and identified areas where improvements could be made. We observed the possible threats to the collections coming from visitors, insects, exposure to light, humidity, temperature, pesticides and materials used to pack and keep the objects. Subsequently, we formulated a set of recommendations aimed at enhancing the overall conditions of the Museum. Many of these problems exist in other museum collections—the lack of space, resources and environmentally controlled working areas. Other observations focused on the question of safety; how easy it is to get in or out of the collection storage rooms?





Top Left: Lecture in the permanent exhibition of Maastricht's Natural History Museum /Picture provided by SRAL, the Conservation Institute

Top Right: Data recording of Lux levels/ Picture provided by SRAL, the Conservation Institute

Bottom: Practical session in the permanent exhibition of the Bonnefanten Museum/ Picture provided by SRAL, the Conservation Institute



Right: Practical session in the temporary exhibition of the Bonnefanten Museum/
Picture provided by SRAL, the Conservation Institute

Below: Successful end of the third day and the workshop/
Picture provided by SRAL, the Conservation Institute



“...sometimes best results are not the ones with the largest budget but with the most careful planning.”

The final two lectures concluded the workshop with insightful presentations on topics related to the field of conservation. Joanna Strombek enlightened us on the crucial aspects of packing and transporting paintings. Joanna is a paintings conservator in SRAL and has wide experience in working with canvas paintings and the development of new techniques in conservation.

Kate Seymour is a senior paintings conservator and head of education at SRAL. Her lecture shed light on storage and exhibition management. She shared examples of successful storage design from the Netherlands to highlight how storing and exhibiting art objects can be done with care and safety while also keeping sustainability in mind.

We are grateful for the opportunity to learn about preventive conservation and to then put that

knowledge into practice in a real environment. This workshop provided us with sufficient knowledge and confidence necessary to develop effective preventive conservation plans within our respective institutions and areas of expertise. The workshop allowed professionals of different backgrounds to find common ground in the care of museum collections.

This workshop was the first of its kind organized by SRAL’s team. Some of the topics discussed seemed very clear to the participants with a background in conservation studies, but for others, many of the covered issues were new; this opened up areas where multidisciplinary discussion is needed in the museum field.

Special thanks to the Bonnefanten and the Natural History Museum of Maastricht for allowing the group to visit their facilities.



Kosara Yovcheva holds an MA with Honours in conservation & restoration from the National Academy of Arts in Sofia, Bulgaria. She is winner of the annual thesis prize from the Institute of Art Studies, Bulgarian Academy of Science. Currently she is a paintings fellow in Stichting Restauratie Atelier Limburg (SRAL). Kosara’s interests are in the areas of canvas paintings and textile conservation.



Pinja Nousiainen is a 3rd-year student in Metropolia University of Applied Sciences in Helsinki, Finland. She is majoring in paintings conservation. Her background is in art education, and she has worked for a decade in the Design Museum in Helsinki. Pinja did her 12-week internship in Stichting Restauratie Atelier Limburg this summer. Her interests are in working with paintings and foraging mushrooms.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALLS FOR PAPERS

Washington Conservation Guild's 3-Ring Circus
11 January 2023
Washington DC (USA)
Call for submissions by: 27 October 2023
For more information visit: <https://washingtonconservationguild.org/2023/09/27/call-for-abstracts-three-ring-circus/>

The Arctic throughout History: Visual and Cultural Conceptions
5 April 2024
New York Public Library, New York (USA)
Call for papers due: 16 October 2023
For more information and to submit abstracts write to: arcticsymposium@nypl.org

Archiving 2024
8-11 April 2024
Washington DC (USA)
Paper submissions due: 15 November 2023
For more information visit [HERE](#).

CONFERENCES, SYMPOSIUMS

Back, Now, and Then 2023
Understanding Dieter Roth's POeMETRIE series & the Ate of Plastics, bridging science and art
12-13 October 2023
Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, Austria
For more information visit: <https://www.conftool.net/backnowandthen2023/>

7th Edition of International Meeting on Retouching of Cultural Heritage (RECH7-2023)
12-13 October 2023
University of Lisbon, Portugal
For more information visit: <https://sites.google.com/view/rechgroup/home?authuser=0&pli=1>

Environments, Materials and Futures in the 8th Century: Historians of Eighteenth-Century Art & Architecture (HECAA)
Boston, Cambridge and Providence (USA)
12-14 October 2023
For more information visit: <https://sites.google.com/umb.edu/hecaa30>

Midwest Regional Conservation Group Symposium
12-14 October 2023
Kansas City (USA)
For more information visit: <https://www.midwestconservation.org/news/midwest-regional-conservation-guild-annual-meeting-2023>

IADA 2023: XV International IADA Congress
16-20 October 2023
Leipzig, Germany
For more information write to: congress@iada-home.org

The State of the Art 21 (IG-IIC)
19-21 October 2023
Verona, Italy
For more information visit: <http://www.igiic.org/?p=9027>

Wood Science and Technology III: methods to examine panel paintings and their preventive and remedial conservation
19-21 October 2023
Maastricht, the Netherlands
For information please contact: education@sral.nl

7th Safety and Cultural Heritage Summit: Preserving our heritage and protecting our health
27 October 2023
Washington DC (USA) Smithsonian American Art Museum
For more information and registration visit: <https://www.potomacaiha.org/event-5407330>

Examining Lifecycles of Time-Based Media Art (LACMA TBM Colloquium)
27 October 2023
Academy Museum of Motion Pictures, Los Angeles (USA)
For tickets and information visit [HERE](#).

Photomechanical Prints: History, Technology, Aesthetics, and Use
31 October-2 November 2023
Washington DC (USA)
For more information visit [HERE](#).

IC-MEMO (ICOM International Committee of Memorial Museums) Conference
~~4-5 November 2023~~ Cancelled
Amsterdam
More information on a new event coming soon

Western Association for Art Conservation (WAAC 49th Annual Meeting)
6-8 November 2023
Houston, Texas (USA)
For more information visit: <https://www.waac-us.org/waac2023annualmeeting>

Future Talks 023: Materials Matter—cold and current cases in the conservation of the modern
8-10 November 2023
Munich, Germany
For more information visit: <https://dnstdm.de/en/ft-023-callforpapers/>

Eastern Analytical Symposium

13-15 November 2023

Plainsboro, New Jersey (USA)

For more information visit: https://eas.org/?page_id=2348**AICCM 50+/-50 National Conference 2023**

15-17 November 2023

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra

For more information visit: <https://aiccm.org.au/>**Bridging the gap: synergies between art history and conservation**

23-24 November 2023

Oslo Norway

For more information visit [HERE](#).**52nd AIC Annual Meeting: Salt Lake City**

20-24 May 2024

Salt Lake City, Utah (USA)

For information and registration visit: <https://www.culturalheritage.org/events/annual-meeting/current-meeting>**8th International Architectural Finishes Research Conference**

Past Forward, from Paint to Finishes

29 May-1 June 2024

Amsterdam

For more information visit [HERE](#).**IIC 2024 Lima Congress**

Sustainable solutions for conservation: new strategies for new times

Lima, Peru

23-26 September 2024

For more information visit: <https://www.iiconservation.org/content/call-proposals-iic-lima-congress-2024>**MUTEC 2024**

International Trade Fair for Museum and Exhibition Technology

7-9 November 2024

Leipzig Exhibition Centre, Germany

For more information visit: <https://www.mutec.de/>**COURSES, WORKSHOPS****Filling on the Blanks: The Genesis of the English Stationary Binding**

5 October 2023

The National Archives, Kew (UK)

For more information visit [HERE](#).**Treatment Strategies for Outdoor Painted Sculpture (Workshop)**

16-20 October 2023

Kröller-Müller Museum in Otterlo, the Netherlands

For information and application click [HERE](#).**Photographic Process Identification Workshop**

24-25 October 2023

Image Permanence Institute, Rochester, New York (USA)

For more information and registration visit [HERE](#).**Bronze Patination for Conservators Workshop**

24-26 October 2023

Getty Center, Los Angeles, California (USA)

Applications due 30 June 2023

For more information visit: <https://www.getty.edu/projects/outdoor-sculpture/bronze-patination-for-conservators-workshop/>**Microbiological contamination in cultural heritage settings: shared experiences for better approaches**

27 October 2023

Free Webinar (registration required)

Register [here](#)**Time-based Media Stewardship Workshop (VoCA)**

1-3 November 2023

Seattle Art Museum (USA)

For more information visit: <https://vocaadmin.wufoo.com/forms/voca-tbm-stewardship-workshop-2023/>**Alternative Courier Practices Workshop**

14 & 16 November 2023

Online

For registration and more information visit: <https://learning.culturalheritage.org/products/alternative-courier-practices>**Changing Climate Management Strategies:**

Sustainable Collection Environments and Monitoring Object Response Workshop

5-8 February 2024

London, UK

For more information visit [HERE](#) or contact:MCE@getty.edu**Tag der Restaurierung 2024**

11 March 2024

Universalmuseum Joanneum, Austria

More information [here](#).**Fusion 2: Asian-Pacific minimally invasive methods for the conservation of paintings' textile supports**

Workshop sessions between July 2024-January 2025

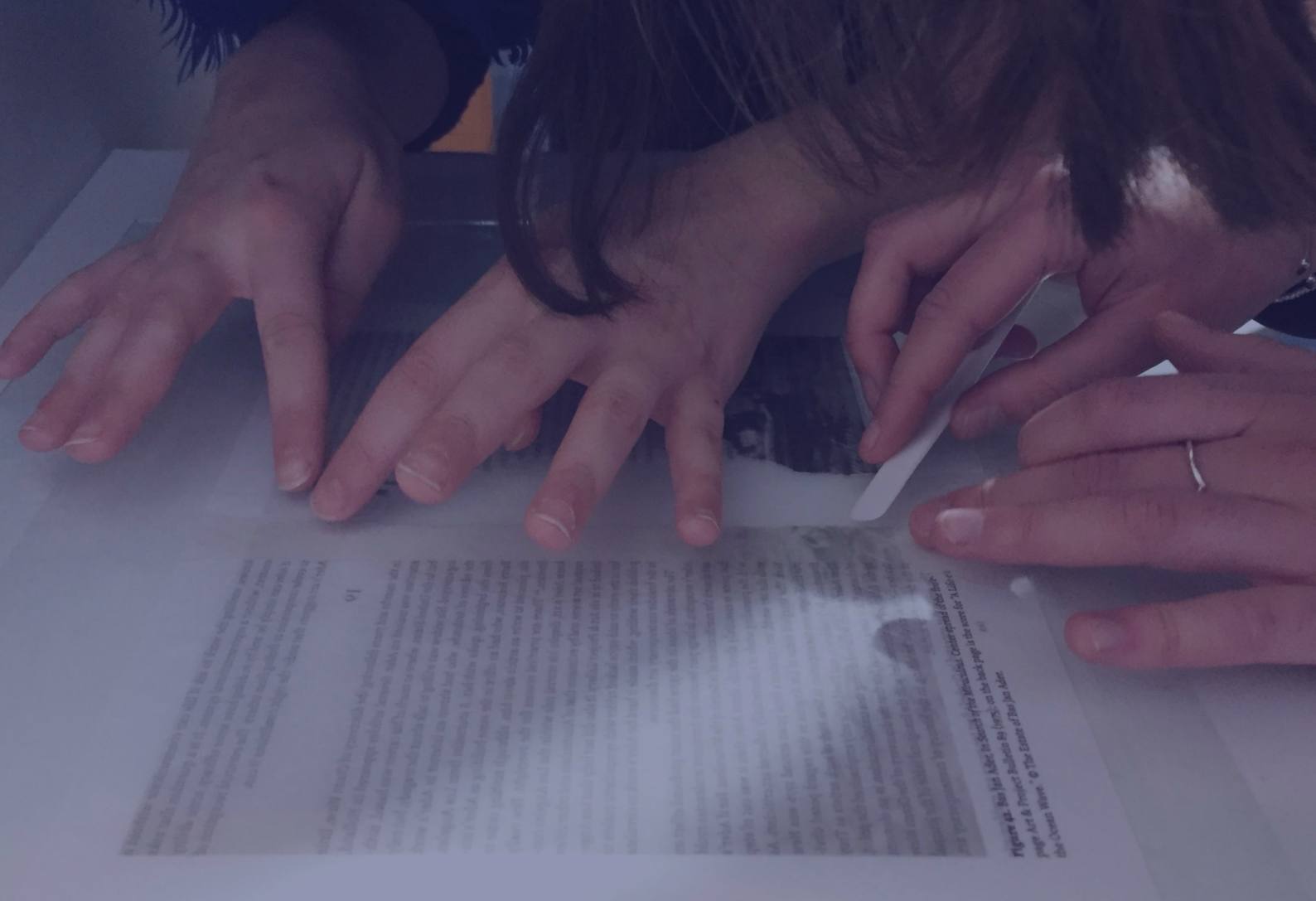
Online and at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia

For more information and application visit: <https://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/art/conserving-our-collection/fusion-2/>**Bridging to Chemistry for Conservation**

Rolling admissions (4-month course)

Online/South African Institute for Heritage Science & Conservation

For more details visit [HERE](#).



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