



Issue 90, JUNE-JULY 2022



NEWS IN CONSERVATION

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR CONSERVATION OF HISTORIC AND ARTISTIC WORKS



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The International Institution for Conservation (IIC) launched a new full-color conservation newspaper *News in Conservation (NiC)* in 2007 and transitioned into a completely digital e-magazine in 2011. Published six times a year, *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: Stone & mortar practical field work in built environment by conservators deployed by the Institute on a historic sandstone building known as Centre for the Book, located in Cape Town's city bowl. (©SAIHSC) (story on p. 54). **Inside cover image:** Measurement of radiation contamination of cultural properties at a temporary storehouse after rescue © Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties (story on p. 10).

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FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

2022, as an even year, means it must also be an IIC congress year. For those of us who have been in the profession as long as I have, even years have a particular nuance brought about by the location and theme of our biennial congress. Vienna 2012, London 2008 and Melbourne 2000 (in which I had a hand) all bring back memories of happy collaborative moments as a profession. Then there are those congresses which, for their content matter, can be seen as important milestones for the profession: Baltimore 2002 for paper, Los Angeles 2016 for contemporary art, and Ottawa 1994 and Turin 2018 for preventive conservation.



Our last (28th) congress was, of course, in Edinburgh in 2020. Whilst it sadly brought none of us together in person, it proved to be a highly successful conference and can already be seen as a milestone in our profession's development. Moving the format to an entirely online delivery due to Covid, with a mix of virtual presentations and live Q&As, allowed over 2,000 registrants from 89 countries to tune in and actively participate. This was four times as many delegates as IIC congresses normally draw and taught us that we must henceforth ensure accessibility and inclusion for our members at IIC congresses (and other IIC events) who, for whatever reason, are unable to get there physically.

Online conferences, as we have discovered, have many advantages. They save on travel time, costs and impact on the environment; they allow access to concurrent presentations that might otherwise have been missed; they can provide captioning in a variety of languages facilitating access to delegates when a paper is not presented in their preferred language. But they also have their disadvantages, with minimal interaction possible between speaker and audience and, critically, limited ability to socialize between delegates.

A hybrid event can help to bridge these pros and cons, and this year we head down under to Wellington, New Zealand for our 29th congress. This will be a hybrid event with a relatively small gathering in person and the whole conference available online. We are using the same media provider that looked after us so well in Edinburgh: Cadmore Media out of New York. We are delighted that, thanks to the support of key sponsors, [online registration](#) for IIC members will once again be free. And just as was achieved in Edinburgh, despite only a few of us meeting in person, the local organizing committee have ensured that the whole conference will have a strong local flavour. It will feature all the elements by which IIC congresses are delineated—an exceptionally strong selection of papers on a wide range of pertinent and contemporary issues under the conference theme of “Conservation and Change: Response, Adaptation and Leadership”; the Forbes Prize lecture by distinguished Māori conservator Vicki-Anne Heikell; the announcement of the Keck Award for contributing most towards promoting public understanding and appreciation of the accomplishments of the conservation profession, for which we have received a record number of entrants; and above all a distinctive and warm welcome whether online or in person from our generous New Zealand hosts.

[Registrations will shortly be open](#) and the full programme available. I hope very much that we will be able to see you in Wellington from 5-9 September 2022, either online or in person, for what promises to be another key event for IIC and the conservation profession.

With my best wishes,

Julian Bickersteth
IIC President

To read this message in CHINESE (Simplified and Traditional), FRENCH, GERMAN, HINDI, PORTUGUESE and SPANISH click this box.



Hear and watch Julian Bickersteth present his column. Click on the image above or follow the link [HERE](#).

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The first part of the year has been one of intensive planning for the IIC Congress team; further information about the hybrid format and registration can be found in this issue, and we're thrilled that [Vicki-Anne Heikell](#) is giving the Forbes Prize Lecture this year. We've also had a record number of Keck Award nominations and my sincere thanks must go to our IIC Regional Groups, including our emerging Regional Groups for Africa and Indonesia, in promoting the award through their partner networks as well.

We're also delighted to preview a new IIC Congress Scholars 2022-23 programme, called "Adapt: Leadership and Conservation in a Time of Change" kindly funded by The Getty Foundation, linked to the Wellington Congress topic and themes. The programme is designed to support 30 mid-career conservation professionals from IIC priority regions, including South America and Caribbean, Africa, South Asia, and South-East Asia. Further details on how to apply will be up on the IIC website from 13 June 2022, with applications to take part in the programme closing on 20 July 2022.

We have also been planning our involvement and coverage of the UN climate change conference COP27 in Egypt later this year. We have some exciting plans to ensure our global conservation community continues to be represented and heard this year. IIC's Marina Herriges alongside IIC member Cathy Ajiambo, will be working closely with our friends at the Climate Heritage Network to help put our words into action, and to make sure COP27 builds on the commitments made at [COP26 in Glasgow](#) last year. Details will be coming soon, but in the meantime, if you have ideas that you would like to see happen, let us know.

Sarah Stannage
IIC Executive Director

Want to see election and resolution results?
Read the 2022 Annual General Meeting
minutes [HERE](#).



EDITOR'S SOUNDING BOARD

While graduate training provided me with a strong base of technical skills, I have developed a new set of skills through my involvement and various roles in professional membership organizations, including IIC. My participation within these organizations has helped me navigate the isolation of being home with my young children, moving across the country, and pandemic induced lockdowns. These organizations showed me that I am a link in my global professional community, connecting my colleagues and their work to each other. I see my place in the timeline of conservation history, and I feel increasingly connected to our field as I learn more about its past.

In the last issue I hinted at a project I would present at the AIC Annual Meeting in May. I'd like to share a bit more about the project and give you the opportunity to explore it ahead of a longer article that will be in the August-September issue. Over the past few months, I have created an [interactive timeline of professional membership organizations worldwide](#). This timeline is an open access resource for conservation professionals around the globe to more easily identify organizations and resources that already exist, allowing us to find what we need and to connect. This timeline also shows where organizations do not yet exist, where our conservation network is still sparse and where we need to foster connection.

At IIC it is my job to make connections. It has taken me years to create my global network. But what if such a network was more accessible to everyone? What could we achieve as a global profession? Perhaps we can start with [this timeline](#).

Sharra Grow
IIC Editor in Chief, *News in Conservation*



NEWS IN BRIEF

ICOM 2022 INTERNATIONAL MUSEUM DAY: THE POWER OF MUSEUMS

Museums have the power to transform the world around us. As incomparable places of discovery, they teach us about our past and open our minds to new ideas—two essential steps in building a better future. On International Museum Day (IMD) 2022, which took place on May 18, museums around the world explored and celebrated their ability and potential to bring about positive change in their communities through sustainability, accessibility through digitalization, and community building through education.

At the **National Museum Deli, India**, visitors participated in jewelry making and miniature painting stations, and the **Indian Museum in Kolkata, India** celebrated with a pottery workshop.

Argentina's Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes invited their virtual community to join them on social media and on their website where visitors can explore over 2,700 works in their digital collection as well as other online resources such as publications, catalogues, past exhibition information, and the largest public library of visual arts in the country. Even more impressive, all this was possible on May 18 when the physical museum was closed due to the National Census.

MOMus, The Metropolitan Organisation of Museums of Visual Arts of Thessaloniki, was honored by the Greek Department of ICOM for its work, exemplifying this year's IMD theme "The Power of Museums". MoMus museums celebrated the day with workshops and festivities including clay pot throwing, music making, creative movement, group discussions, and tours through the galleries for all ages.

In the **UK**, the **Backburn Museum** "got their craft on" inviting children to participate in making small paper models of the museum itself.

The **Ivan Trush Art Memorial Museum in Lviv, Ukraine** found ways to celebrate even while their country is at war. The Museum shared many images of visitors participating in activities on site including a kindergarten class engaged in plein air painting, tours of the Museum's garden (including Trush's favorite flowers) and the history behind the villa's construction. Inside visitors watched a film about Ivan Trush and tasted treats from the garden.

There are increasing examples of how IMD has extended beyond traditional museums. **Philippi Village in Cape Town, South Africa** used to be a cement factory and remains an important part of the city's history. In recent years, the old factory was converted into a business hub of brightly colored freight containers as storefronts, encircling an open green space. In their social media post celebrating IMD on May 18, Philippi Village wrote that it is the history of the old factory "that makes the Philippi Village business hub such an amazing space that continues that legacy of housing individuals and business who aim to provide services that help to uplift our community. This is one of the many reasons why we choose to celebrate International Museum Day this year acknowledging the power of historical spaces."

IMD has become so popular, that even **Nintendo's Animal Crossing** has joined in, creating a special Stamp Rally which began May 18 and extended through the end of the month. As gamers know, the Animal Crossing world includes an actively collecting museum. To participate in the IMD Stamp Rally, players visited Blathers (the museum caretaker) and collected stamps hidden throughout the fish, fossil, bug, and art galleries.

Even Oh My Chicken, a popular Taiwanese restaurant in **Manila, Philippines** took part, encouraging museum-goers through Instagram. "Wasn't able to go around last International Museum Day? Habol tayo this weekend! Here's a list of





Left: International Museum Day 2021 Poster by International Council of Museums (ICOM) is licensed under CC BY-SA 4.0

Below: Image courtesy of IPERION HS



museums near OMC! Get a FREE MILKTEA with any purchase when you drop by our store! Just show any proof of museum visitation to claim.”

The great variety of participation in International Museum Day 2022 around the world shows that museums do indeed hold great power, and that this power can and should benefit everyone.

IPERION HS - INTEGRATING PLATFORMS FOR THE EUROPEAN RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE ON HERITAGE SCIENCE

EU Horizon 2020 funded project

IPERION HS is a consortium of 24 partners from 23 countries that contributes to establishing a pan-European research infrastructure on heritage science. The consortium offers training and access to a wide range of high-level scientific instruments, methodologies, data and tools for advancing knowledge and innovation in heritage science <https://www.iperionhs.eu/>.

The list of partners includes prestigious institutions from 19 European countries as well as The Getty Conservation Institute, The Smithsonian Institution – Museum Conservation Institute, the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México and the Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais (Brazil); the full list can be found here <https://www.iperionhs.eu/partners-list/>

IPERION HS is making a special effort to reach out to heritage professionals including conservators, curators, museum managers and curators, archivists and art historians who will certainly have specific research issues which can be addressed by working in such a multidisciplinary team. In addition, this approach will strengthen collaborative and interdisciplinary heritage science research and innovation, widening the audience to these important fields of heritage.

This is free-of-charge transnational access, available to more than 100 state-of-the-art scientific techniques and 14 archives, distributed in 16 of the participating countries. User groups not working in an EU—or associated—country can be awarded up to 20% of the total access provided by the grant.

Different platforms are available: Archlab, Fixlab and Molab, providing coherent access to expertise and services under a unified management structure:

- ARCHLAB allows access to largely unpublished datasets from archives of prestigious European museums, galleries and research institutions.
- FIXLAB provides access to key fixed research facilities including sophisticated state-of-the-art instrumentation for advanced diagnostics and archaeometry.
- MOLAB provides access to a set of mobile equipment and related competencies, for in-situ non-destructive

measurements of artworks, collections, monuments and sites. The full catalogue of services can be found here <https://www.iperionhs.eu/catalogue-of-services>. Proposals are submitted online through the application form, at any time, with two evaluation cut-off deadlines a year. For further information on how to access these facilities, and related expertise, please see: <https://www.iperionhs.eu> and <https://www.iperionhs.eu/iperion-hsaccess/>

UKRAINIAN SOLDIERS UNEARTH ANCIENT ARTIFACTS

On May 11, the 126th Brigade of Territorial Defense of Odessa's Facebook post quickly caught the world's attention. Ukrainian soldiers digging and fortifying trenches near Odessa found largely intact ancient Greco-Roman amphorae as well as some shards, estimated to be over 2,000 year old. These amphorae were likely used to hold and transport liquid when ancient settlements dotted the northern coast of the Black Sea. The Brigade was quick to report their finds and transfer the artifacts to the Odessa Archeological Museum.

The [Facebook post](#) showing images of the vessels reads, "In one of the brigade's structural units, during fortification work, soldiers found ancient amphorae dating back to about 4th-5th centuries AD. By the decision of the commander of the 126th Brigade, the ancient artifacts were handed over to the staff of the Odessa Archaeological Museum of the UN of Ukraine, who promised to add them to the large collection of the Museum."

A video recording created by the 126th Brigade [can be seen here](#).

Top: Museo de Arte Contemporáneo, Caracas, Venezuela. (2011) Marcin Wojcik/Flickr. Licensed under [CC BY-NC 2.0](#). [Original location](#).

Bottom: Image provided by ICCROM Library.

Odessa, still a key shipping port, is the third most populous city in Ukraine. It is currently under siege by Russia through missile strikes and blockades preventing food shipments from reaching Ukraine. While the preservation of these archeological finds offers a ray of light, it is sadly impossible for proper documentation of the site to be done while war still rages on in the area.

Russia's aggression has destroyed or damaged well over 100 important cultural and heritage sites, and thousands of artworks have been looted. Speaking about the amazing find, Kyiv journalist Yana Suporovska said, "Ukrainian soldiers dug trenches and found ancient amphorae. They have already been transferred to the museum... We are not Russians; we preserve our history."

ICCROM LIBRARY OPENS A CHILDREN'S SECTION

With the idea of helping to inspire the next generation to love cultural heritage from a young age, ICCROM is excited to announce the creation of a new special section in its library, which will contain the first children's collection. ICCROM decided to create a new collection of library





resources for children and youth to give them the opportunity to engage with the diversity and significance of cultural heritage through reading and storytelling.

ICCROM has the experience of over 50 years as a leading conservation library in the world, but we need your suggestions to fill the shelves! ICCROM Library is looking for multilingual and multicultural resources and possible titles for children and teens to enrich their collection. So if you have any suggestions, or want to donate relevant titles please send an e-mail to library@iccrom.org.

Find more on [ICCROM web news](#) and [YouTube](#). Stay in touch with us, follow us on social media: [Instagram](#) / [Facebook](#) / [Twitter](#) / [LinkedIn](#) / [YouTube](#)

VENEZUELA'S MACC: A MUSEUM IN LIMBO

Venezuela's Caracas Museum of Contemporary Art (MACC) contains one of Latin America's greatest collections of Modern masters from Pablo Picasso to Salvador Dali to Marc Chagall. Once held up by Venezuela's oil fortune, the Museum has been in decline in recent years due to the political unrest and subsequent economic collapse.

The Museum is located in el Parque Central, a community center in the heart of Caracas, built on 25 acres including luxury housing, schools, swimming pools, restaurants, offices spaces, and MACC. The complex was built during the oil boom of the early 1970s, which at the time symbolized Venezuela's modernity, but today el Parque Central is largely abandoned.

After being closed to the public for two years, the Museum has recently partially reopened with 86 of the collection's 4,500 artworks again on display in a few galleries which were repainted and refitted with working lights in preparation for the new exhibit.

While the reopening feels optimistic to many, some experts worry this only aims to hide bigger problems; the Museum needs significant funding and change in how state officials view cultural heritage collections in the country. Also, much of the Museum's technical staff has left due to the economic hardships which caused salaries and budgets to dramatically shrink due to uncontrolled inflation. "People can't work indefinitely just for the love of art," commented María Rengifo, a past director of Venezuela's Fine Arts Museum.

In an interview Venezuela's National Museums Foundation President, Clement Martinez reflected, "The collection of our museums is the heritage of all of Venezuelan people, and that's why it's so important that the spaces are in optimal condition for its preservation." Efforts to reopen other cultural centers within Caracas have recently begun, and private art galleries (largely funded by outside Western money) are now thriving. With these recent developments, there is perhaps hope MACC will have a brighter future.





DEALING WITH CULTURAL OBJECTS CONTAMINATED BY RADIONUCLIDES

By Chie Sano and Junko Akiyama

The recent invasion of Ukraine has caused us to consider the possible catastrophic outcomes, especially in awareness of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant. While nuclear power plants should not be attacked, even in times of war, it is wise to have emergency plans in place.

The Tokyo National Research Institute of Cultural Properties, Japan has decided to release an English version of the materials previously published in Japanese in 2014 on the Institute's website: <https://www.tobunken.go.jp/info/info220331/index-e.html>. This document, titled "Risk Management for Museums: Focusing on Dealing with Cultural Objects Contaminated by Radionuclides", is a summary of the procedures created to protect and treat cultural heritage and technicians against radioactive materials in museums, based on direct experience from the major accident on March 11, 2011 when a tsunami, following an earthquake in the Tohoku region, caused the release of harmful radioactive substances into the atmosphere at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant (International Nuclear Event Scale [INES] level 7).

At that time three researchers with national qualifications as radiation specialists were working at the Institute. However, two months passed before the museum staff asked questions, because they did not know that there were experts with national qualification as radiation specialists in our Institute. During that time, museum workers were in a state of anxiety, trying to respond quickly to urgent concerns, such as prohibiting the transfer of cultural property from overseas to Japan and returning any cultural property lent to Japan safely back home overseas. The first question asked was how the radiation would affect paintings—whether or not cultural property contaminated with radioactive materials could be exhibited and how to decontaminate objects exposed to radiation. It seemed that the crisis was worsened by our neglect to disseminate the information we had gathered on the pollution and its impact on cultural property. In July we held a meeting with museum staff and began to discuss what kind of problems

Decontamination test of cultural property in a damaged private house on site. Copyright: Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties.

were occurring due to the radiation as well as addressing what the museums wanted to know and how best to cooperate in this situation. In the end, those attending included institutes, national museums, museum associations in Japan, museums in Fukushima, the Cultural Property Department in Fukushima Prefecture, and the Agency for Cultural Affairs. Experts in radiation chemistry and radiochemistry also attended the meeting in order to better understand the conditions particular to cultural property and to dispel the concerns of those involved in the care of cultural property regarding the measures needed to improve the contamination situation.

The “Risk Management” document summarizes the emergency response protocol at the beginning of a nuclear accident, including an explanation of radioactive substances, radiation measurement methods, protective materials, decontamination of cultural properties, and domestic regulations which are summarized as an appendix. In the document, only countermeasures against radioactive iodine and radioactive cesium are covered. In a nuclear power plant accident, the damage varies greatly depending on whether or not the plant is operating. In the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant, at the time of the accident, the reactor was urgently shut down due to the earthquake. Then the tsunami rushed in and destroyed the electrical system. As a result, the reactor could not be cooled, and gases (along with other substances with a low boiling temperature which tend to become gas) were released and diffused into the atmosphere. These gasses included radioactive tritium, iodine-131, cesium-134, and cesium-137. The hydrogen explosion damaged the reactors, but the large rubble and the chemicals in a solid state remained on the premises of the nuclear power plant without scattering far.

Radiation was measured all over Japan for a time after the accident, but the radiation itself did not travel far from the place where the accident occurred. Rather, radiation was detected in the dust, contaminated with radioactive substances which were carried into the atmosphere and air currents. Some of the radioactive dust fell to the ground due to gravity (fallout) or by rain (washout), polluting the land. The radioactive cesium was easily absorbed into the clay ground, but fortunately, cesium has a relatively small chemical effect. Burial mounds could not be opened to the public until the radiation dose dropped to safe levels over time. Traditional gardens and buildings were decontaminated as part of house maintenance. The cultural objects inside museums were hardly contaminated except in cases when rain water leaked in through building cracks or glass panes damaged by the earthquake.

This is, of course, not the first time that radioactive substances have been released into the atmosphere from operating power plants. At the time of the Chernobyl accident in Ukraine (also INES level 7) in 1986, I, Sano, was still a college student, observing radioactive material orbiting the earth with a scintillation detector approximately once a week for about three weeks. When the first fallout arrived



Top left: Measurement of radiation contamination of cultural properties at a temporary storehouse after rescue.

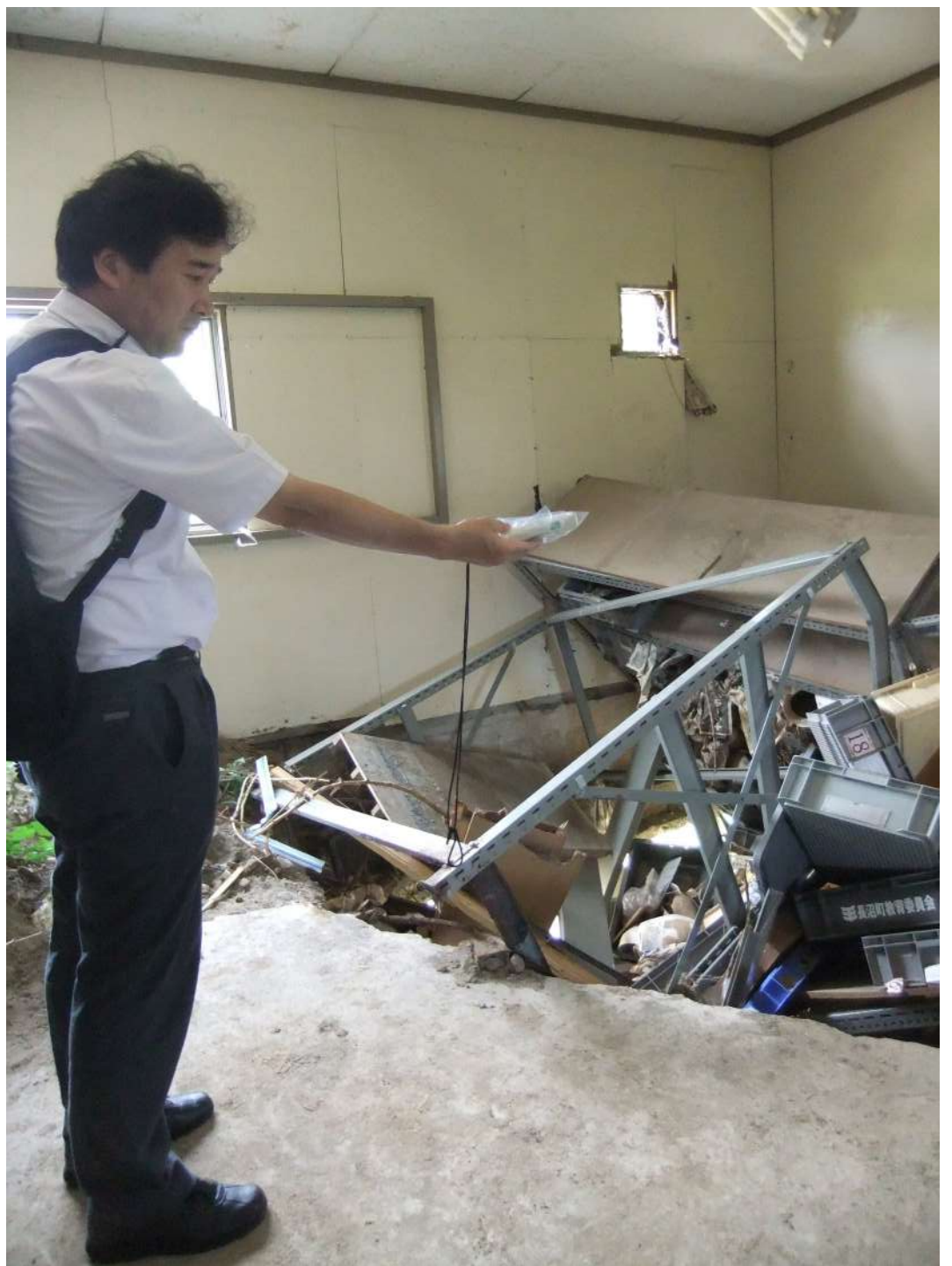
Top right: Radiation contamination measurement for rescue work of a stone monument collapsed by an earthquake in the restricted region of Fukushima Prefecture.

Bottom left: Decontamination test of cultural property in a damaged private house on site.

Bottom right: Radiation dose measurement in the cultural property storage destroyed by the collapse of the reservoir caused by the earthquake in Fukushima Prefecture.

All images copyright Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties.





in Japan, I was instructed to wear disposable rain ponchos, leaving them outside the front door before entering and throwing them away.

This document is most useful when, following a nuclear disaster, the government promptly discloses the status of radioactive contamination and dispatches necessary protective measures and specialized rescue teams. In the case of the 2011 Fukushima accident, information was not disclosed to us in Tokyo, but emergency assistance to radiation-exposed citizens began the next day. Medical teams with expertise in treatment of atomic bomb survivors were dispatched to Fukushima one after another from remote areas such as Hiroshima and Nagasaki, according to the national press release on March 16th. There was a large-scale air leak on March 14, and radiation measurements began to be released in each region on a national scale on March 15.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine at present has made it clear that, along with other emergency protocol during times of war and other crises, it is also necessary to consider risk management for radiation countermeasures. Other important considerations and measures to take as part of an emergency plan are fire prevention, anti-theft protection, measures against mice and insects, mold prevention, and avoiding dust accumulation in daily management, which will make for quicker collection evacuation at any time. It would also be helpful to locate radiation specialists ahead of time including contact information in case there is need of any consultation or measurements. Our hope is that this document will help others to better understand the risks within their collection and museum buildings, to prepare the necessary networks and systems in advance, and to evacuate safely while keeping cultural property safe during an emergency. We sincerely hope that this document will be useful to the conservation community around the world.

Click the box to download the guide, "Risk Management for Museums: Focusing on Dealing with Cultural Objects Contaminated by Radionuclides", made available by the Tokyo National Research Institute of Cultural Properties.



Chie Sano graduated in radiochemistry from the graduate school of the University of Tokyo in 1988. Since 1989 she has studied the problem of air pollution in the museum and is currently an honorary researcher of the Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties. From 2017 to 2020 she was the head of the Center for Conservation Science.

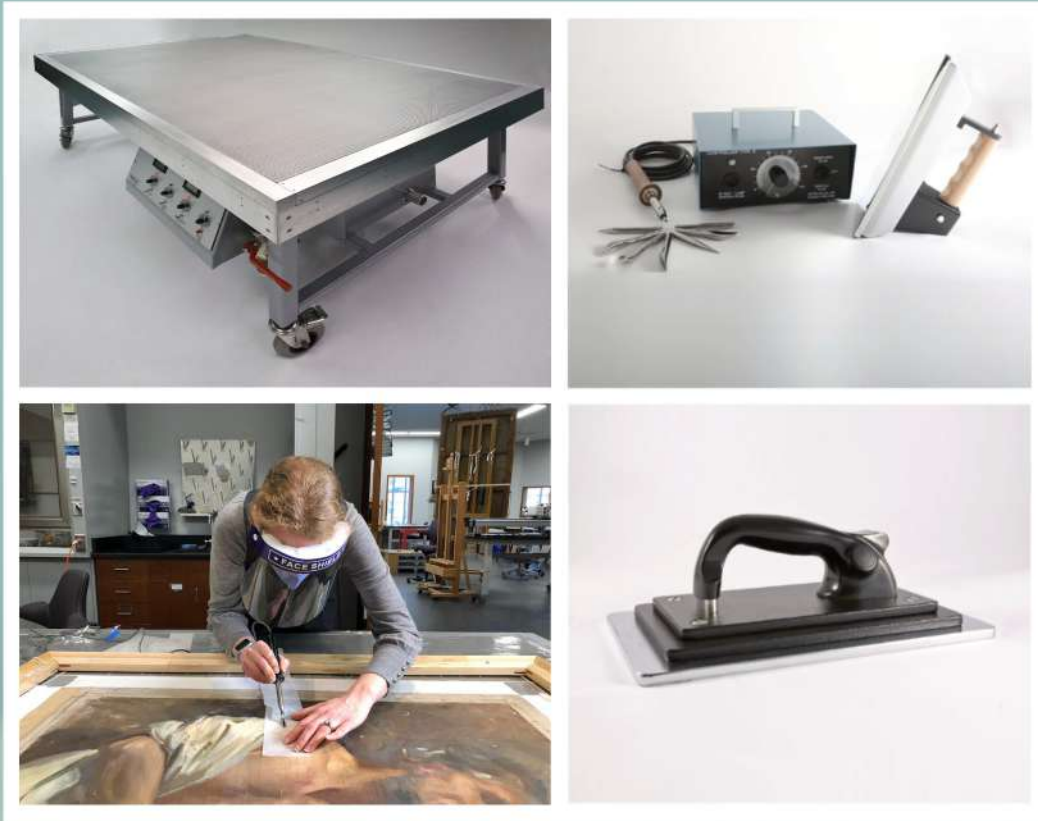


Junko Akiyama graduated in conservation science from the Graduate School of Conservation, Tokyo University of the Arts in 2000. She was involved in managing environmental conservation at the Kyushu National Museum from 2010 to 2020. In 2020 she started researching the preservation of cultural heritage at her current workplace. Since 2014 she has also participated in the Disaster Risk Management Project.



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CULTURE IN CRISIS

By Vernon Rapley

The Victoria & Albert Museum's Culture in Crisis programme is committed to protecting the world's cultural heritage and supporting communities that suffer cultural loss whether through conflict, criminal acts or natural disaster. The programme embraces a cross-disciplinary approach by providing a forum for sharing information, inspiring and supporting action and raising public awareness.

The Victoria & Albert Museum (V&A) is an international organisation with collections from around the globe. So, in early 2015, when we saw the terrible destruction of historic sites in Iraq, Yemen and Syria, we wanted to step up and do something about it. From the very beginning, it was essential for us to contribute in a way that was genuinely needed whilst also playing to our strengths. We recognised the amazing work of other museums, charities and organisations and needed to ensure that we neither competed for the limited funds available nor duplicated their work.

The Culture in Crisis programme was born when our former director, Dr Martin Roth, introduced me to Dr Stefan Simon, then director of the Yale University Institute for the Preservation of Cultural Heritage. Stefan is a conservation scientist, and I had been the head of the Art & Antiques Unit at New Scotland Yard before I joined the V&A in 2010. Our different experiences and connections created a solid foundation, but we needed to gain a better understanding and involve more people. Together we planned an inaugural conference at the V&A, held under the patronage of UNESCO in April 2015. We succeeded in bringing together delegates from around the world with a wealth of experience and knowledge. The conference ended with delegates signing a statement of intent known as The London Declaration.

The recommendations of the London Declaration have been the backbone of the V&A's Culture in Crisis Programme for the last seven years:

- We are committed to protecting the world's cultural heritage and supporting communities that suffer cultural loss, whether through conflict, criminal acts or natural disaster.
- We bring together those with a shared interest in protecting cultural heritage, providing a forum for, sharing information, inspiring and supporting action and raising public awareness.
- We strive to understand the impact of cultural heritage loss on communities and the contrasting positive role its preservation can have in rebuilding.
- We aim to encourage a cross-disciplinary approach, raising public awareness and working with organisations from a variety of backgrounds to take a holistic approach to the protection of heritage in all its forms.

If further impetus for the programme was needed, it sadly came soon after the first conference, with the appalling murder of Kaled-a-Asaad and the destruction of the Temple of Baalshamin, in Palmyra. The director general of UNESCO, Irina Bokova, said of Mr Asaad, "They killed him because he would not betray his deep commitment to Palmyra... his work will live on far beyond the reach of these extremists... They murdered a great man, but they will never silence history." His commitment and bravery have been an inspiration to the Culture in Crisis team.

Right: Vernon Rapley (Pakistan).
Image courtesy of Vernon Rapley.



Our London conference was followed by major international conferences in:

- New Haven (USA): under the patronage of UNESCO we hosted a satellite event to the UN Global Colloquium of University Presidents, held at Yale University. This conference focused on the ongoing destruction and loss of cultural heritage in North Africa and the Middle East. It also explored the impact of an exodus of people and talent from the region, potentially resulting in the loss of cultural knowledge as well as local arts and crafts.
- Kigali (Rwanda): exploring the benefits of both cultural heritage and wildlife conservation practices within the post-conflict recovery of a nation. Looking at the social and economic benefits of these activities, the output of this conference was the creation of a road map to recovery, which could be applied within more contemporaneous conflict zones.
- Pretoria (South Africa): we partnered with Yale's Global Cultural Heritage Initiatives and the Museum für Naturkunde in Berlin, to convene a major international conference in collaboration with University of Pretoria, South Africa. The event had a unique focus on the benefits of both wildlife and heritage conservation. The conference served to highlight the value of these two parallel branches of conservation, demonstrating that through their adoption, successful sustainable development on the national and international level can be achieved.

Accessibility and inclusion are vital to the success of the Culture in Crisis programme; we make every effort to remove barriers and encourage active participation from the widest possible audience. Our events are free of charge, and whenever possible they are recorded and made available on our website.

Our public programme really kicked off when we were joined in 2016 by Laura Searson (née Jones). She has been responsible for hosting dozens of events. Starting off with just a few people in a room, she has built a vast network spanning the globe. Hundreds of people now attend our events in real life and virtually, bringing with them a wealth of knowledge and opportunities to share with each other.

“Accessibility and inclusion are vital to the success of the Culture in Crisis programme; we make every effort to remove barriers and encourage active participation from the widest possible audience.”

We have created two podcast series. The first, [Preservation by Design](#), is an eight-part podcast exploring designed solutions to threats posed to our cultural heritage. It draws from a wide spectrum of different practitioners and the designed systems they are using. We look at the





Syrian oud player Rihab Azar performing at one of the last in-person CIC events before lockdown and the move online. Image courtesy of Vernon Rapley.



Laura Searson (Pakistan). Image courtesy of Vernon Rapley.



Vernon Rapley and Stefan Simon (South Africa). Image courtesy of Vernon Rapley.

broader ecosystem of preservation efforts which are taking place around the globe. From the architectural design of cities to the formation of military units specifically responsible for protecting heritage in conflict zones; from cutting edge technologies for tracing looted antiquities to projects merging ancient craft and modern design processes.

The second series, [Fighting the Illicit Trade](#), explores everything from the looting of archaeological sites to the auctioning of stolen antiquities and the long and complex chain of criminal activity which connects the illicit trade of cultural property as it stretches through many hands and numerous countries. It brings together international experts working to prevent the illegal trade of cultural goods, each person fighting a battle to rescue cultural heritage at a different stage of its underground journey. We look at the actions taken at the source, through transit and upon arrival at its destination.

In December 2019, we identified a genuine need for those engaged in cultural heritage preservation projects to understand more about what others were doing. In direct response, the V&A launched the Culture in Crisis Portal with the support of national and international partners. It has rapidly grown to become the world's largest and most accessible database of heritage protection projects. It is completely free to use and provides an invaluable insight into global efforts to protect and preserve endangered heritage around the world. The Portal is used to learn from one another, share experiences and work more collaboratively to protect the world's cultural heritage. It connects users from 189 countries, spanning six continents, with more than 500 organisations and 1,000 heritage protection projects. [The Portal is easily accessed here.](#)

During the height of the COVID pandemic, the Culture in Crisis programme sought ways to operate differently and explore the opportunities created by changes in the way people were working. One of the most successful projects during this period was a series of webinars held under the banner of Culture in Crisis Conversations. To deliver these the V&A's Culture in Crisis team partnered with The Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport and the British Council. The series examined how the experiences of recent years had encouraged cultural organisations across the globe to adapt and transform in the face of global challenges and how communities had embraced new opportunities and looked to build a future that was more sustainable, equitable and ecological.

The first series, held in 2020-2021, consisted of five sessions; each convened a panel to discuss strategic subjects including sustainability, development and the role of digital technologies. Throughout the series we invited our audience to join the discussion online and contribute questions, both beforehand and during the interactive sessions. The workshops developed organically, stimulated debate, forged new connections and identified recommendations for future activities.

The partnership succeeded in bringing a hugely diverse audience into the conversation, albeit virtually! Special effort was made to not only encourage young people to join the discussions but to actively participate, including in the role of youth panellist. Many of these young people have become regular attendees and contributors to the wider programme.

The success of the first series inspired the same partnership to create a second series, Global Heritage Perspectives, examining how the experiences of recent years have encouraged cultural organisations across the globe to adapt and transform in the face of global challenges and new opportunities. Global Heritage Perspectives explored innovative approaches to cultural heritage management and stewardship, to understand and reflect on how responses to crises have been shaped over the last year. In this series we discover novel strategies that respond to crisis at scale and explore the degree to which cultural heritage can be a route to addressing environmental, economic and social issues around the world. We hope to produce further Culture in Crisis Conversations. Both series are [available to watch on our website](#), together with the live drawings that were undertaken during each of the discussions.

We are immensely proud of what Culture in Crisis has achieved since 2015. We are inspired each day by the amazing people we meet and the resilient communities they serve, but our work is far from over!

If you would like to know more, please follow the links within this article, and join our mailing list which gives you advanced notice of events and conferences by emailing us at: cultureincrisis@vam.ac.uk



Laura Searson and Stefan Simon (Rwanda). Image courtesy of Vernon Rapley.



Vernon Rapley is the director of cultural heritage protection and security at the Victoria & Albert Museum. He is a fellow of the Society of Antiquaries in London, a special advisor for the Cultural Heritage Protection Fund, a board member of the ICOM International Council for Museum Security and a member of National Police Chiefs' Council, Heritage & Cultural Property Crime Working Group. (Photo by Peter Kelleher, V&A)



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CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION OF THANGKAS COLLECTED IN THE MENTAL CULTIVATION HALL (YANGXIN HALL)

By Xiaoji Fang, Conservation Department of The Palace Museum, Beijing, China

The conservation research project of the Mental Cultivation Hall of the Palace Museum in Beijing, China, is one of the major conservation and restoration projects undertaken by the Palace Museum in recent years. The comprehensive project includes a wide variety of cultural relics within the historical buildings and structures. The Buddhist Room in the West Chamber of the Mental Cultivation Hall houses many thangkas in their original state, which are masterpieces from the heyday of the art of thangkas in the Qing Dynasty (1644-1911 AD). This paper gives an overview of the on-going project.

OVERVIEW OF THE MENTAL CULTIVATION HALL

The construction of the Mental Cultivation Hall took place in the sixteenth year of Emperor Jiajing's reign (1537 AD) during the Ming Dynasty. Situated in the inner court of the Forbidden City, the Hall is located on the southwest side of the Qianqing Palace, outside the Yuehua Gate.

In the Qing Dynasty, Emperor Shunzhi (1638-1661 AD) lived and died in the Hall, and subsequently during the Kangxi period (1661-1722 AD), the Mental Cultivation Hall was used as an Imperial Factory. After Emperor Kangxi's death, Emperor Yongzheng lived in mourning in the Hall for 27 months. Since then the Mental Cultivation Hall has played an important role in history as the official living quarters for eight emperors and was the political center for 189 years during the Qing dynasty (1644-1911 AD). Emperor Qianlong succeeded to the throne, as the fourth son of Emperor Yongzheng, and lived in the Hall for 64 years from 1735 to 1799 during which time the Hall was renovated to meet his needs in relation to living, governing, and performing Buddhist rituals.

Left: Image showing the Yamantaka Thangka after conservation. Image by Palace Museum.

Right: Map of the Palace Museum. The Blue Rectangle is the position of Mental Cultivation Hall in the Palace Museum. (Image from [Palace Museum Website](#))





The Mental Cultivation Hall includes many rooms, halls and corridors with the main hall divided into three parts; the Middle Room, the East Chamber, and the West Chamber. The West Chamber is divided into front (south) and rear (north) parts. As a firm believer in Tibetan Buddhism, Emperor Qianlong built the Buddhist Room in the rear part of the West Chamber. The Buddhist Room contains cross-shaped wooden walls which divide the space, its east, south, and west walls adorned with thangkas and the north side equipped with large glass windows. Due to the importance of the Mental Cultivation Hall, the history of its interior decoration and furnishings are well documented. However, the documentation of the Buddhist Room has not been found. According to researcher Luo Wenhua, the lack of detailed descriptions in the archives may be due to the intentional downplaying of the emperor's religious beliefs. Therefore, the Buddhist Room has always been a solemn and mysterious presence.

THE RESEARCH PROJECT

The Palace Museum launched a comprehensive research-based conservation and restoration project on the Mental Cultivation Hall, including the ancient buildings and all cultural relics housed within them. The Mental Cultivation Hall includes 1,890 movable cultural relics including paintings and calligraphy, lacquer ware, thangkas, inlay, textiles, ancient clocks, wooden furniture, and more. After the initial evaluation, 33 sub-projects were approved, including the conservation and restoration of thangkas housed in the Hall.

This sub-project aims to identify the causes of damage to the thangkas, create a damage diagram, clarify the manufacturing materials and techniques of the thangkas, identify appropriate treatment methods, and establish a thangka conservation research record to guide future restoration practices. The original research period was to span four years but has been extended to the end of 2022 due to the pandemic.

BRIEF INTRODUCTION OF THE THANGKA COLLECTION

Thirty-five thangkas were originally displayed on the second floor of Buddhist Room and three were located in the niche on the first floor of Wujian Zhai (a small room). According to the records of the Qing Court, the painting of these thangkas was done by the Buddhist lamas of the Chanting Office of the Zhongzheng Palace, and were sent to the fur or tailor studios of the Imperial Factory; these thangkas were completely drawn and mounted in the Forbidden City.

Thirty-four of the thangkas are painted and four are classified as handwork thangkas (three are applique—Duiling—thangkas and one is embroidered). As for their mounting styles, 32 are done in the textile mounting with Tibetan style and six are wood framed. The base materials of these thangkas include 29 made of silk, five of paper, three of damask, and one is embroidered. Thirty-four of the painted thangkas use mostly mineral

Right: Map of the Buddhist Room of The Mental Cultivation Hall.
Drawn by Xiaoji Fang

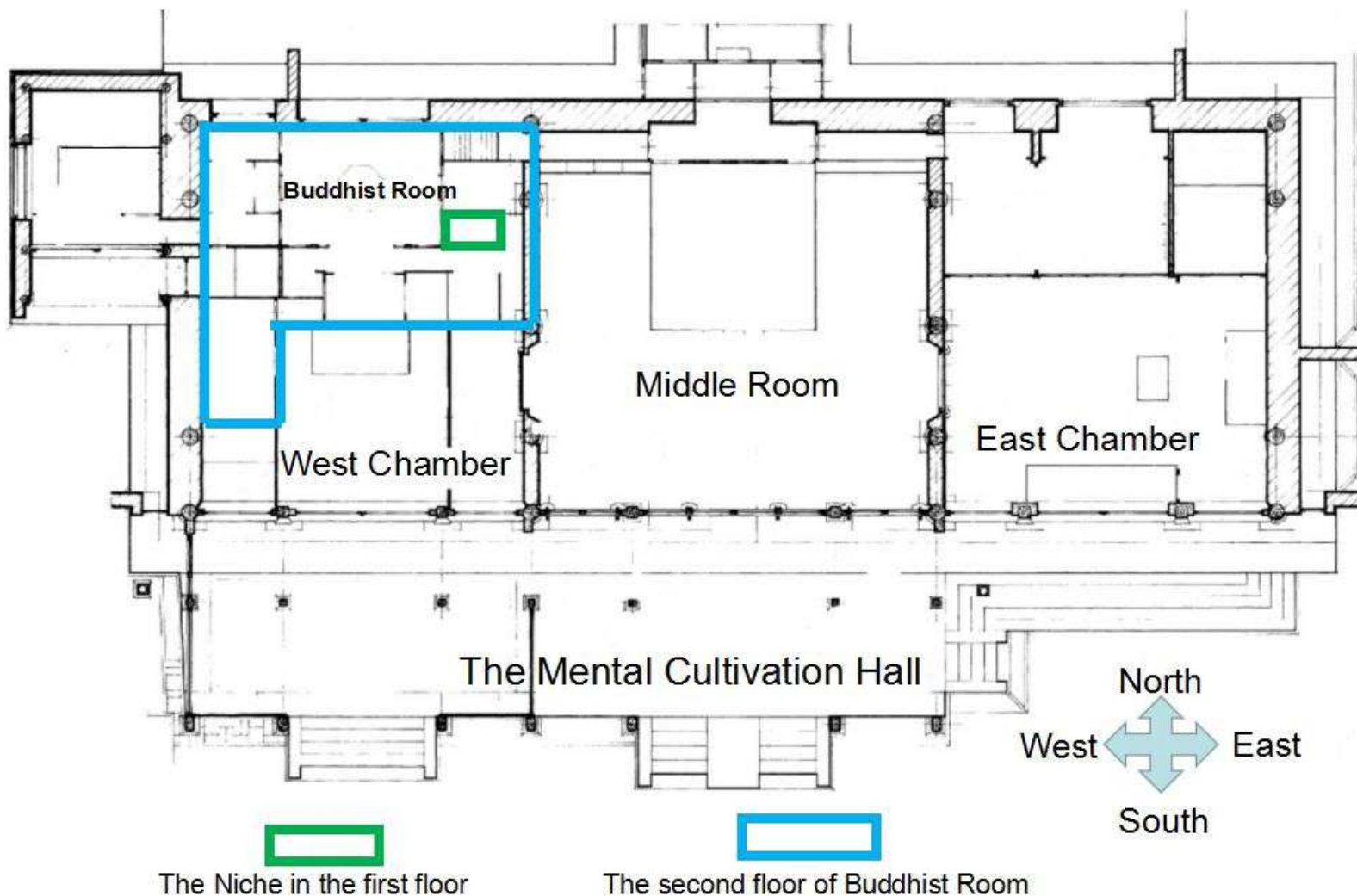
Left: Two images of the Mental Cultivation Hall (images from [Palace Museum website](#) and by Xiaoji Fang).

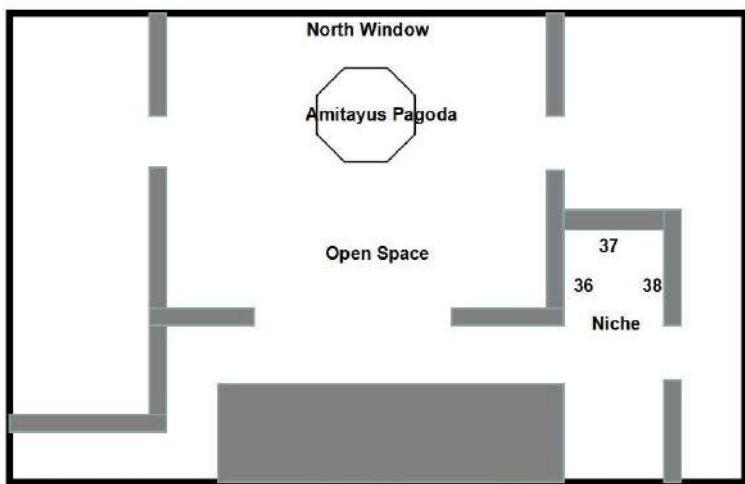
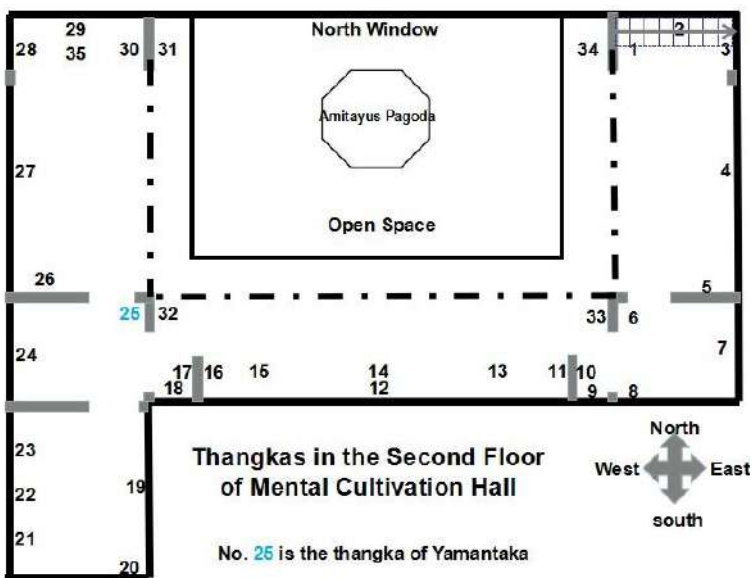
pigments, and a few use organic dyes with gelatin as the binder. Twenty-two of the thangkas are relatively well preserved and have a light degree of damage; 12 thangkas have detached linings and have a medium degree of damage; four thangkas have missing linings and pigment loss and are severely damaged.

CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION OF THE THANGKAS

Since the establishment of the project in 2016, we have completed the traceability and archival analysis of the thangkas, research on the drawing materials and techniques, and have identified agents of damage. Following the principles of minimal intervention, maintaining the authenticity of cultural relics, recognizability and reversibility, we have completed the conservation and restoration of six thangkas (namely Kurukulla, Yamantaka, Pelden Lhamo, Yamantaka of Applique, Guhyasamāja and Cakrasamvara), and are currently working on the conservation and restoration of Six-armed Yamari, Four Bodhisattvas, and two pieces of Dhṛtarāṣṭra. The technical process of the conservation and restoration work includes:

- value assessment (religious, artistic, historical and scientific)
- assessment of the current state of the thangkas
- historical intervention investigation
- study of the painting materials and techniques of the thangkas
- damage investigation
- the selection of conservation and restoration materials and techniques
- the implementation of treatments
- the assessment of conservation and restoration effects
- recommendations for continued preservation and regular maintenance





The First Floor of Buddhist Room in West Chamber of Mental Cultivation Hall

Above: Maps of the thangkas distribution in the Buddhist Room in the West Chamber of the Mental Cultivation Hall. The 2nd floor is pictured above and the first floor is pictured below, with each thangka designated by a number. Drawn by Xiaoji Fang

The following is an example of the conservation and restoration work we are performing, highlighting the Yamantaka thangka. The Yamantaka is a thangka in the original state collection of the Palace Museum, which has been preserved in the Buddhist Room of the West Chamber of the Mental Cultivation Hall and is a fine example from the Qianlong period (1736-1796 AD).

The value of this thangka is interpreted from the perspective of religion, art, and history. The Buddhist deity painted on it is known as Yamantaka in Sanskrit, which is one of the very important deities in Tibetan Buddhism. The Yamantaka thangka has been hung in its original state on the wooden wall of the Buddhist Room in the West Chamber of the Mental Cultivation Hall, which has no special environmental control and is affected by natural factors such as light, temperature and humidity, air, etc. After more than 200 years, this thangka has suffered from various damages, mainly dust and dirt, color fading, pigment peeling, folding, broken painting surface, fabric breakage, fabric color fading, stitch cracking, creasing, insect infestation, and losses. Our research divulged that the thangka has been hanging and enshrined since the Qianlong period (1736-1796 AD) and has not been restored before. It is composed of the painting, paneled borders, a lining, lintel rods, and a lanyard. Using various analytic techniques, it was found that the painting fabric of the Yamantaka thangka is made of silk, with a large amount of mineral pigments, and the fabric material of the lining is also silk. The metal thread of the gold brocade is round twisted gold thread, and while a large amount of gold foil is used, the gold content is not high. The material of the lining is yellow silk, the lintel rods are made of bamboo, and the lanyard is made of cotton.

Through cleaning, humidity, and reinforcement tests, as well as other experiments, we selected the suitable restoration materials and treatment methods. After reinforcement simulation tests, the reinforcement materials and adhesives were chosen. The thangka was then dusted, flattened and reinforced. After treatment, the Package Studio jointly developed the preservation box for the thangka, with exhibition and transportation needs in mind. The main body of the box is made of acid-free corrugated cardboard, padded inside with soft cotton and wrapped with acid-free fabric as the outer layer. The upper and lower parts of the box are carved out to fit the thangka's roll and lintel rods so that the surface of the thangka, including the borders and the painting, is kept on a level surface with the set edges. Six grooves were made around the box to insert ProSORB humidity control cassettes to help regulate humidity. The box allows the thangka to be isolated from the dust and pollutants in the air, to avoid light, and to benefit from micro-environmental control.



Before (left) and after (right) conservation of the Yamantaka thangka. Images courtesy of The Palace Museum.

The research project on the conservation and restoration of the thangkas in the Mental Cultivation Hall will be completed by the end of 2022. In the process of conservation and restoration over the past six years, we have gained a deeper understanding of the artistic value of the thangkas, the damage, the drawing materials and techniques, and have also been able to document treatment methods, which can provide useful reference for the future conservation and restoration of the collection.



Xiaoji Fang, senior conservator, is the head of the Thangkas Conservation Studio in the Conservation Department of the Palace Museum in Beijing, China. She received her PhD from the Chinese National Academy of Arts. Since 2008, she has worked in the Palace Museum. She has chaired four projects respectively from the National Social Science Foundation, China Postdoctoral Fund and the Palace Museum. She currently leads the project of research on thangkas collected in the Buddhist Room of the West Chamber of the Mental Cultivation Hall.



UKRAINE - RESOURCES ON CULTURAL HERITAGE

More than three months after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, there has been a huge effort of international support for its cultural workers and in defence of Ukraine's cultural artefacts.

Nevertheless, all the usual consequences of conflict have played out. By late April Ihor Poshyvailo, Director of the National Museum of Revolution of Dignity (Maidan Museum), estimated that 262 cultural locations had been damaged or destroyed including 94 places of worship, 12 museums, 16 libraries and four theatres. By late May, the Ukrainian Ministry of Culture said that number had risen to 367. (ref: [Museums Journal](#)), [Twitter](#),

This piece offers some signposting for those wanting to help and highlights some of the newer networks that have evolved. However, it would be impossible to be comprehensive. Instead we offer snapshots from the European and international press, and workers on the ground, on the many dimensions of the conflict with some work towards how to rebuild post-war.

GOOD SIGNPOSTING SITES

No site is completely comprehensive, but a browse of these gives a range of options.

Network of European Museum Organisations

The Network of European Museum Organisations (NEMO) has an online notice board covering support going into Ukraine, storage for Ukrainian cultural objects and some offers of housing for workers, jobs and learning opportunities, places to donate, and finally events and exhibitions which educate about Ukrainian culture.

You can read the [current list here](#), and email weber@ne-mo.org to add a resource.

IIC

IIC also created a list in early April noting some of the earlier cultural casualties of the war and also pointing to specific support funds and statements from international bodies: the eclectic and useful list is [here](#).

Icon UK

There is also a good list from Icon, including many of the organisations taking the lead, from Blue Shield International to Saving Ukraine Culture Online. [Icon](#).

SUPPLIES INTO UKRAINE

Museum and conservation supplies are going into Ukraine from a whole variety of countries – from Poland to the UK to Spain, often through local ICOM groups. In a [recent podcast for The Art Newspaper](#), hosts Ben Luke and Tom Seymour discuss the work to protect and often hide cultural artefacts and say that essential supplies are “*mostly protective materials. A lot of bubble wrap and a lot of wooden casing, because a lot of museums are making the decision to take everything down from the walls and put it in the basement, or they are taking it out of museums and hiding it in other spaces.*”

BE AWARE OF THE RED LIST

The International Council of Museums has been producing the “Red Lists” of endangered artefacts for 20 years. The objects listed on a red list are not necessarily stolen, but are representative of cultural artefacts that should be looked at with healthy suspicion if found circulating on the international market following a conflict in a particular region. Usually, red lists take years to compile—ICOM's Ukraine Red List has been produced in a matter of months. Talking to *The Art Newspaper*, ICOM's Sophie Delépierre captures the areas of ambiguity and risk where the Red List can act as a prompt: “*I don't say it's stolen, I say it's vulnerable. So open your eyes, double check the documents – because it's on the red list.*”

AFFORDING TO LIVE – THE MUSEUM CRISIS CENTER

“*We provide donations for basic things, like food, water, medicine. Many museum workers haven't received salaries, their expenses increased. Our goal is to ensure that these people can survive the war, [save teams that] will rebuild the destroyed museums. So our routine is to monitor needs, obtain funds, make humanitarian transfers.*” – Olha Honchar

In just three months of war, Ukraine has lost about half of its GDP. Even before the conflict, museums in the country were never lavishly funded—now museum workers remaining behind struggle with getting paid, making it even more difficult to stay.

AND NEWS E DURING CRISIS

Olha Honchar is Director of the '[Territory of Terror](#)' museum which is appropriately a memorial museum of totalitarian regimes. In March she first asked on Facebook whether there were funds supporting Ukrainian artists and museums in wartime. Then she took action herself in partnership with the team of NGO [Insha Osvita](#), and launched the [Museum Crisis Center](#), a grassroots group helping museum workers in the emergency regions and evacuating artworks. The Museum Crisis Center is in contact with the Ukrainian Government and culture ministry, but assists regional and smaller museums that it is powerless to help. There is a full interview with Olha in [Hyperallergic](#) [here](#).

LOOTING AND DELIBERATE DESTRUCTION AS A WAR CRIME – AND RISKS TO CULTURAL WORKERS

"There's a difference between heritage which is destroyed or looted as an effect of war, and heritage which is destroyed or looted as a sort of programmatic deliberate decision as part of war, because then you get into real war crimes territory." Ben Luke, *The Art Newspaper*

Since the earliest days of the war when the [Museum of Local History in Ivankiv](#) was burned down by Russian action, there has been the growing suspicion that damage to culture is a deliberate war tactic, not an accident. Speaking to [Der Spiegel](#), Polish Culture Minister Piotr Gliński asserted that the cultural damage is deliberate, and the damage to culture in targeted cities has been extensive. Kharkiv's Fine Arts Museum is windowless, and the city's leading architectural historian says damage across the city is extensive: *"our Kharkiv is a new Warsaw, a new Dresden, a new Rotterdam."* [Economist](#)

More recently, collections from Ukrainian museum collections have been looted by Russian forces in Mariupol and Melitopol, including a significant collection of Scythian gold. Using a slang reference to Russian troops, Melitopol's Mayor Ivan Fyodorov said *"the orcs have taken hold of our Scythian gold. This is one of the largest and most expensive collections in Ukraine, and today we don't know where they took it."*

[The Art Newspaper](#) reports that during the theft *"a Russian-speaking man in a white lab coat had tried to force a museum staffer by gunpoint to lead them to the museum's trove of Scythian gold, which had been hidden for safekeeping. She refused, but*

they found it nonetheless." The curator concerned was subsequently kidnapped, released and kidnapped again and was reported missing as of early May, underlining the risk to cultural workers as targets. Videos from the Russian official news agency later showed a man described as a 'senior researcher' showing off the collection. Meanwhile paintings, a sculpture and Christian icons have been taken from the art museum in Mariupol, a city now almost completely in ruins from Russian action.

SELECTED NEW NETWORKS

Blue Sky – the Ukrainian Conservation Forum

This new forum is based on a closed telegram channel. Its goal is to link Ukrainian conservators, educators, conservation students, and arts specialists with members of the English-speaking conservation community, enable conversations about the preservation of Ukraine's historic artifacts and, more generally, about conservation education. This is especially timely as no group of this kind currently exists in Ukraine.

ENCORE – the European Network for Conservation-Restoration Education

is among those endorsing the group on its [Facebook page](#). IIC holds details of how to join the group – drop us a line at iic@iiconservation.org for details.

The International Taskforce for Displaced Scholars

This group held its inaugural meeting in late February. It consists of scholars and students who hope to leverage their positions at academic institutions to mitigate some of the effects of displacement on our international colleagues, particularly in light of the conflict in Ukraine. The Task Force began forming among Slavic and Eurasian studies students and scholars based in the US and Europe, but its membership is not restricted by geography or discipline. The group now has a [home online here](#) - register to take part.

BASECAMP GROUPS ON HOW TO HELP

Three Basecamp groups have been organized to focus on these key topics: Material Aid, Sponsoring Refugees, and Guidance. The [Material Aid](#) group aims to coordinate and track supplies that have been sent to Ukraine to help with distribution of material support. The [Sponsoring Refugees](#) group is focused on supporting refugees and creating a network and community for them. The [Guidance](#) group is focused on gathering and translating resources on emergency response and salvage.



JOIN THE IIC SOCRATIC DIALOGUE SERIES

THE PHILOSOPHY BEHIND CONSERVATION CODES OF ETHICS

A series of events for 2022-23
Free and exclusive to IIC Individual and Fellow members

In this first of a series of workshops on the philosophy behind conservation codes of ethics, we will investigate the meaning of the notion of ethics in general and, then more specifically, how this notion applies to conservation practice. The workshop begins with an introductory lecture on the different meanings that the term ethics has in philosophical debates, both in a theoretical and in an applied sense. This will be followed by a so-called Socratic Dialogue for all participants to investigate what that concept means in conservation practice.

"The creation of a free space requires active participation and discipline - with the goal to listen to one another."

A Socratic dialogue is a structured form of dialogue in which all participants actively contribute. The purpose of the dialogue is not to find the answer or solution to a (controversial) topic. The Socratic method provides a safe, open environment for participants to investigate what the essence is behind their own points of view as well as those of others about the topic.

Each dialogue will be conducted in English. Depending on the particular format, the dialogues will last between three-and-a-half and four hours and will be conducted online. The starting times will depend on the geographic location of the international participants.

The first dialogue is scheduled for **Monday, 13 June, 2022**.

Course leaders: Dr Bill Wei and Lisa Giombini

The series is led by Dr Bill Wei, a senior conservation scientist (retired) in the Cultural Heritage Laboratory of the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands (RCE). Dr Wei has trained as a Socratic dialogue moderator and has organized over 50 dialogues over the past eleven years.

Dr. Lisa Giombini is currently research fellow in aesthetics at the University of Roma Tre, Department of Philosophy, Communication and Performing Arts, and visiting research fellow in philosophy within the framework of the 'Heritage Hub' of the School of Humanities, University of Hertfordshire, UK.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

Register alongside other Individual and Fellow IIC members. If you would like to participate in future dialogues, please direct any questions to Ellie Sweetnam: ellie.sweetnam@iiconservation.org.



OPPORTUNITIES FUND

IIC has radically revised its Opportunities Fund, expanding the funding available and opening it up to ALL members within two strands to respond to the challenges of our time offering practical as well as moral support to our members and helping germinate the new approaches that we will need, as conservation professionals and as members of society, in the years ahead.

Any IIC member can apply to the Opportunities Fund; this includes members who are displaced or seeking refuge from conflict and disaster. Potential applicants can join IIC to become eligible for the grant.

The Opportunities Fund offers **Need-Based and Learning-Focused IIC Stipends (up to £250)** and **Seed Funding Grants (up to £750)**. Learn how to apply and how to donate to the Fund [HERE](#).

Read about Opportunities Fund Recipient, Esther Knegt from Vancouver, BC:

I would like to express my appreciation for the generous learning-focused grant that the IIC provided me earlier this year during my internship at the Museum of Anthropology in Vancouver.

I applied for the grant as I was worried about some aspects of my professional development due to financial restraints and wanted to be able to participate in workshops, attend conferences, and purchase learning resources. The internship required relocating to British Columbia from Ontario and COVID had not allowed me to work prior to moving which added some stress. With the help of the learning-focused grant, I was able to supplement my internship training by attending the Canadian Conservation Institute's webinar on the "Care of Metal Objects", attending the Canadian Association of Conservation's annual conference this past spring, and being able to purchase a variety of books needed to promote my understanding of treatments during my internship. Additionally, I am a member of the CAC, IIC, AIC, and other groups which require member dues, and I was able to continue to pay for access to their resources, such as online journals, during my internship.

I found it extremely beneficial during the COVID-19 pandemic to stay connected with these organisations and to participate in online learning whenever I was able. Overall, my internship was an amazing learning experience, and this is in large part due to the various support I have received. I am grateful to the IIC for distributing the learning-focused grant and am eager to continue pursuing a career in conservation.



Esther Knegt, recipient of the Learning-focused IIC Stipend. Image courtesy of Esther Knegt.

29TH BIENNIAL CONGRESS CONSERVATION & CHANGE: RESPONSE, ADAPTATION AND LEADERSHIP



5 - 9 September 2022

#IICCongress

Headline Sponsor:



The role of conservation in shaping, saving and sharing our cultural heritage is sometimes represented as an opposition to change, tied to maintaining and reinforcing the status quo. This conference aims to challenge that pre-conception. As we live through an exceptionally turbulent period, our 29th Congress will explore how conservators respond to, adapt to or lead change.

IIC is delighted to be holding this Congress in partnership with New Zealand Conservators of Cultural Material: Pū Maanaki Kahurangi. Our in-person venue is the [Tiakiwai Conference Centre](#) at the [National Library of New Zealand](#) in Wellington – coupled with Regional Hubs online across the world.

FREE online attendance for IIC members
or preferential booking at £150 in-person
[Registration is now open HERE.](#)

HIGHLIGHTS OF OUR WELLINGTON CONGRESS:

High quality talks from speakers around the world, with topics ranging from collaborating with the Sami community in northern Europe; developing local conservation practices in Indonesia; caring for rock art of Kakadu National Park, Australia; decolonising a museum collection in Britain; implementing climate mitigations across the planet.

Regional Live Hub sessions in Europe, Asia-Pacific + India, Africa, North America, South America and Caribbean.

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The 2022 Forbes Prize Lecture delivered by [Vicki-Anne Heikell MNZM](#), New Zealand's leading Māori Paper Conservator and Field Conservator for the National Preservation Office, Alexander Turnbull Library.

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Access through the Congress platform to all posters and Congress proceedings for the next 12 months.

Affordable options for attending the Congress

As well as offering free online attendance to all IIC members, we are delighted that through support from Tru Vue, we can offer free attendance to some non-members from [Band 2–4 countries](#), as defined by UNESCO. You can find details of how to apply on our [registration](#) page

This Congress will be a moment to take stock, catch up with colleagues, make new connections and consider all that has happened in the past two years. We hope to see you there!



29th IIC Congress
2022 Forbes Prize
Lecturer
Vicki-Anne Heikell



Image Credit: Mark Beatty

VICKI-ANNE HEIKELL MNZM TO DELIVER THE FORBES PRIZE LECTURE AT IIC'S 2022 CONGRESS

We are delighted to announce IIC's Wellington Congress 2022, Conservation & Change: Response, Adaptation and Leadership, is taking place in person and online, in collaboration with New Zealand Conservators of Cultural Material: Pū Maanaki Kahurangi.

One of the highlights of the Congress will be the 2022 Forbes Prize Lecture, delivered by Vicki-Anne Heikell MNZM. She is New Zealand's leading Māori Paper Conservator, Field Conservator for the National Preservation Office, Alexander Turnbull Library, and formerly worked at the National Library of New Zealand and the National Museum of New Zealand, Te Papa Tongarewa.

The prize is named after Edward Waldo Forbes (1873–1969) who was Director of the Fogg Art Museum at Harvard University from 1909 to 1944 and the first Honorary Fellow of IIC in 1958. The Forbes Prize Lecture was established in 1958 and is the highest award that the IIC offers internationally. We look forward to hearing Vicki-Anne's insights as this year's Forbes Prize Lecturer.

Full information on the Forbes Prize Lecture can be found [HERE](#) and you can [register for the Congress here](#).



KECK AWARD 2022 NOMINEES

This year has brought a record number of nominations for the IIC Keck Award with a diverse pool of projects from all over the globe. While the winner will be announced at the IIC Congress in Wellington this September, we want to celebrate all the nominated projects and teams below (more details to come in the next issue of *NiC*):

Trash to Treasure, Judith Maduhu

Open Clock Club, Matthew Read (United Kingdom)

Revive and Thrive! Digital Collaboration Across Continents, Kofo Adeleke (Nigeria)

Indigo: Collections, Conservation, Chemistry, Jenny Williamson (United Kingdom)

ConservArte, Anupam Sah (India)

In the Time of Pandemic: The Community Participation of Daily Inspection of Heritage in Changping District, Beijing, China, 2018-2022, Wang Yibo (China)

Endangered Heritage, Louis Abasta (Australia)

Thirteen Monuments, Alfredo Ortega-Ordaz (Mexico)

Gazi Husrev-bey Library, Madžida Smajkić (Bosnia and Herzegovina)

The Conservation of Tuskegee University's Dioramas: A window to history, Cynthia Schwarz (United States)

Unveiling the Mural Painting Art of Almada Negreiros (1938-1956), Milene Gil (Portugal)

Preserving Chicana/o/x Art: Conversations on Conservation, Leticia Gomez Franco (United States)

Game Jam for Conservation. Playing, we learn to conserve cultural heritage, Maria Del Carmen Castro Barrera (Mexico)

What do we lose when our cultural heritage is stolen?, Maria Del Carmen Castro Barrera (Mexico)

Agents of Deterioration with NBM Conservator Dee Stubbs-Lee, Dee Stubbs-Lee (Canada)

People's History Museum, Beth Gillions (United Kingdom)

Community Outreach Engagement Programs, Makame Juma Mtwana (Zanzibar)

Andrew W. Mellon Opportunity for Diversity in Conservation, Ellen Pearlstein (United States)

Bali Art and Heritage Conservation Internship Program, Saiful Bakhri (Indonesia)

CERPA, Ana Lucía González Muñoz (Guatemala)

Pictórica Taller, Cristina Gutiérrez (Mexico)

CAPuS Digital repository, Sagita Mirjam Sunara (Croatia)

Khufu's First boat: Transportation from Giza Plateau to the Grand Egyptian Museum, NagmEdleen Hamza (Egypt)

Representing the under-represented heritage—restoring the unattended monuments, Amar Tuladhar (Nepal)



JOIN IIC OR RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

SIGN UP NOW FOR IIC MEMBERSHIP RUNNING TO 1 JULY 2023

Our new membership year is beginning, and we warmly invite existing members to rejoin – and invite readers who have not joined yet to step on board. Every year, we offer IIC members excellent value for money with training, bursaries and professional recognition and advancement. This year, due to generous sponsors of our IIC Wellington Congress, we can offer even greater benefits.

Free and discounted access to all 2022 IIC Congress events and material

Our hybrid Congress in Wellington, New Zealand takes place from 5-9 September. We are going beyond the online format of our 2020 Edinburgh Congress to offer you the chance to watch live in Wellington, enjoy presentations and Q&As programmed for your own time zone and take part in online Regional Hubs in your own locality. There will also be virtual tours and networking by career stage and interest. We'll also be offering 12 months of access to filmed presentations and other materials and watch parties and networking post-event. All of this is FREE for IIC 2022-23 members for the virtual option – or £150 if you join us live in New Zealand.

Year-round benefits:

- Uninterrupted access to Studies in Conservation – including a digital archive extending back to the 1950s. (Print copies for all early career, individual and Fellow members unless you choose to opt out).
- Free access to the IIC Community platform with virtual reading room, online learning resources including library of professional development webinars.
- Opportunities to apply to our Leadership Mentoring programme, which is running three rounds over the next membership year.
- Grants from our Opportunities Fund, which offers up to £250 for training for early career and individual members, and £750 in seed funding for Fellows and institutions.
- *New* certificates of membership – available to print from your account from 1 July.

Your chance to give back and shape the future of conservation

In addition, membership means an opportunity to give back to the profession and shape what it will become. We share our members concerns on the climate emergency and conflicts where cultural heritage and heritage professionals are at risk. We are also committed to making membership available across more world regions, with discounted memberships and special programmes.

More broadly, we believe that together we can change perceptions and attitudes about the relevance and vital importance of cultural heritage as a progressive force for good. We need people like you to drive the change we need to see in coming years and decades – we do hope you will want to be part of IIC for this coming year.

“From my young days as a student, IIC has opened my eyes and ambitions about what conservation can be. Through an interesting career, it still does— only more so.”

Velson Horie, FIIC

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“The more I learned about IIC, its networks and how membership develops skills and knowledge within conservation, the more I realized this truly was an exceptional community of cultural heritage professionals.”

*Meaghan Monaghan
IIC Member*

GRAHAM MORGAN ACR MARCH 1944 – JULY 2021

By Helen Ganiaris

We had the sad news this summer that IIC Fellow Dr Graham Morgan died after illness following a stroke in 2017. Graham will be remembered as one of the generation of archaeological conservators at the start of the profession who forged new techniques and ideas and could put his talents and skills to a wide variety of materials and situations.

Most of his career was at the University of Leicester as chief conservator for the archaeology service. He also trained many conservators and archaeologists and developed an expertise in materials analysis. He served as treasurer of the Icon Archaeology Group in its early years and up until his death was chair of the Rugby Archaeological Society.

Gathering tributes from friends and colleagues, what has struck me is not only the range of finds he conserved and his areas of research but also his generosity in sharing his knowledge and skills with students and colleagues. Graham was a strong student in a range of subjects, excelling in natural sciences, and his interest in all things mechanical lasted his entire lifetime. After gaining the Diploma in Conservation at the Institute of Archaeology in London in the early 1960s, he joined the Ministry of Public Buildings and Works working on iconic sites such as Mucking, Rudston Villa and others abroad. He then worked in the conservation lab at the National Museum of Wales before moving on to Leicester in 1974.

During his time there until his retirement in 2009, he conserved finds from local excavations, often of great national importance and complexity. These included lead curse tablets from Vine Street, the Bosworth Boar, the Hallaton hoard and a group of Iron Age cauldrons.

He also had a particular talent for moulding and casting, taking on projects most conservators would find daunting. Right up until his stroke in 2017, he continued conserving finds, some of which will be going on display at the Jewry Wall in Leicester and the British Museum.

In addition, he carried out decades of analysis on Roman mortar and wall plaster. He was persuaded to turn this into a PhD, awarded in 1992, an achievement he was immensely proud of. His thesis and samples comprise the national archive for recipes and materials used in constructing Romano-British buildings.

In 2007, he published *A Guide to the Identification and Analysis of Archaeological Artefactual Material*. This was beautifully illustrated with photographs, usefully compiling this information in one reference point.

His character and generosity are captured by the following tributes:

“They don’t make conservators like Graham anymore; he had a huge range of practical skills combined with a deep understanding of the materials he was working with. Working with him was a joy. He loved mending things; he could make broken lab kit work again, setting to and making new components if needed. His grandchildren knew he would



Graham Morgan taking a cast of the writing face on the Tripontium Milestone at the Warwickshire Museum (c.1995) Image taken by Jack Lucas, published courtesy of Irene Glendinning.

fix their toys; one of his many projects was a ride-on train set for them in his back garden after he retired.” Theo Sturge ACR

“In the late 1970s-80s, Graham was the go-to person for those puzzled about the chemical aspects of conservation. He could always explain the strange phenomenon and advise on what to do. I remember very well how he would calmly provide the vital information with a friendly satisfied smile and a slow blink of his eyes!” Suzanne Keene, retired conservator

“Graham was in his dream job! He could continue myriad conservation projects, including mending anything that didn't work, while also teaching students, in his kind and gentle way, everything from metal-working and wall plaster analysis to the conservation of leather and the identification of charcoal. When teaching small groups, he was in his element and many of us benefited from his knowledge and wisdom over decades. When I finally had to close the Archaeology Certificate Course in 2014, it was Graham who was the longest-serving tutor at nearly forty years!” Nick Cooper, University of Leicester

Graham's wife sadly died of cancer in 1996; he is survived by two daughters—both of whom have followed careers in heritage, Amy as a master embroiderer and Elspeth as a stone conservator—and his five grandsons.

Helen Ganiaris, IIC Fellow, Chair, Icon Archaeology Group

This obituary first appeared in the December 2021 issue of Icon News p. 13, published by the Institute of Conservation.



IIC COMMUNITY: CONSERVATION PLAYLISTS

We've all been there, getting mentally prepared to finish the retouching, writing a condition report, getting in the mood to work under the microscope, and yet something is missing... How are we going to set the tone in the work space? Whose music are we listening to today? Or will some radio and news help us focus?

Finding the perfect playlist isn't always easy. With endless streaming music possibilities at our fingertips, it can be hard to nail down just the right tunes to get the wheels turning. Check out the playlists already gathered on the IIC Community and share what audio gets you inspired and going.

IIC Members
click to discover
and share your
favorite work
playlists.



FELLOWSHIP CORNER

António João Cruz received a PhD degree in analytical chemistry from the University of Lisbon, Portugal in 1993. Since then he has been interested in the scientific study of works of art, ancient art technological sources, and the issues raised in the conservation and restoration of works of art, in particular those related to other areas of knowledge. His publications are available on his personal page (<http://www.ciarte.pt>). Between 1992 and 1997, he collaborated with the Portuguese Institute of Conservation and Restoration. He has been teaching in several undergraduate, master and doctoral courses related to conservation. Currently, he is assistant professor at Polytechnic Institute of Tomar. In 2005 he was a founder of the journal *Conservar Património* (indexed in Scopus and Web of Science) and its editor-in-chief until 2019. Lately António has been engaged in the promotion of conservation, making regular use of various media (e.g. national newspapers and social media networks).



António João Cruz, FIIC, founded the journal *Conservar Património*. Image courtesy of António João Cruz.

Paintings conservator **Patricia O'Regan** has been a member of IIC for many years. She received her bachelors' degree from the University of California at Davis, a post-graduate diploma in the U.K. in art history, and her M.S. in conservation from the Winterthur/University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation. Before joining the conservation department at The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco (FAMSF), she worked at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. Patricia has been a reviewer for the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) and has been active in developing and expanding the conservation division at FAMSF. A fellow of the American Institute for Conservation (AIC), she has held the post of program chair in the Paintings Specialty Group and is currently on the AIC Membership Committee. She held the office of president of the Western Association for Art Conservation in 2020. She is both thrilled and honored to be an IIC Fellow.



IIC Fellow Patricia O'Regan is a paintings conservator at The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco. Image courtesy of Patricia O'Regan.

MEET OUR TRUSTEES

Amber Kerr is head conservator and senior paintings conservator at the Smithsonian American Art Museum's Lunder Conservation Center. The center is designed with floor to ceiling glass walls so the public may observe the conservation staff caring for the collections when the museum is open. Amber received her master of science degree from the Winterthur/University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation in 2008 and is a dedicated advocate for raising professional and public awareness in conservation, preservation, and technical art history. She is a fellow with the International Institute of Conservation (IIC), where she currently serves as director of communications and co-chair for the IIC Dialogue Series. Amber is also a professional associate in the American Institute for Conservation, professional member in the paintings group of the International Council of Museum Conservation Committee for Conservation (ICOM-CC), and a member of the Washington Conservation Guild.

Amber has been a member of the IIC for nearly twenty years, and a fellow since 2014. In 2008, she was nominated by then IIC President Jerry Podany to establish a student poster session and review committee with a graduate colleague from Jordan, Mariam N'aes. Together they served as co-chairs for the inaugural student poster session at the 2010 IIC Istanbul Congress. Amber continued as chair of the IIC Student poster committee for the 2012 Vienna and 2014 Hong Kong student poster sessions before co-chairing and mentoring the current chair, Meaghan Monaghan for the 2016 Los Angeles Congress. Amber launched the IIC's social media sites for Facebook and Twitter communities in 2010 and has served on the communications team since it was created. In 2019 she was elected to her current position as director of communications after serving as an elected member to Council from 2010 to 2016, and vice president from 2016 to 2019. Amber has served as co-chair for the IIC Point of the Matter Dialogues series since 2016 with IIC fellow Rebecca Rushfield.

In addition to her work with the IIC, Amber has been as a guest lecturer on public outreach for the University of Delaware Graduate Department in Arts and Sciences and has had the honor to serve on the board of trustees for the Society of Winterthur Fellows. In 2012, she was awarded the University of Delaware outstanding Alumni Award in recognition of her work in public outreach and advocacy in the field of conservation. Amber has served on the board of directors and as a past officer for the Washington Conservation Guild, and as a founding organizer and past officer of education and outreach for the AIC Emerging Conservation Professionals Network (ECPN).

Her publications included research on the artistic techniques of American artists such as Henry Ossawa Tanner and Alma Thomas as well as self-taught and folk artists from SAAM's collection and research related to wax-resin linings at SAAM as part of the 2019 Conserving Canvas conference at Yale University. Her recent work includes raising awareness to climate action in cultural heritage. She was the lead organizer for the 2020 international symposium, *Stemming the Tide: Global Strategies for Mitigating Climate Change in Culture Heritage*, which was hosted at the Smithsonian American Art Museum and coordinated with representatives from the Smithsonian National Collection Program, IIC, ICOMOS, and AIC and includes an open-source publication available through the Smithsonian Scholarly Press (SISP).

When asked what she enjoys most about being a member of IIC she stated, "I've always felt proud of my work within the IIC, as we are an internationally diverse and strategically nimble organization that provides opportunities for members to be actively involved in ways that actually make a difference in the field of cultural heritage. It is rewarding to be part of an organization that listens to its membership, and through the years, I couldn't ask for a more dedicated group of colleagues to work alongside with and to learn from."



Amber Kerr working on a collection painting. Image courtesy of Amber Kerr

DISRUPTIVE CONSERVATION

A CONVERSATION WITH ELLIE AND JANE

Interview by Sharra Grow

“Why don’t I make this fill in hot pink?” As a conservation professional, chances are this question will stop you in your tracks and initiate a negative knee-jerk reaction. But what if we took a moment to actually think through this possibility? Then-student Ellie Sweetnam and professor Jane Henderson’s paper in Studies in Conservation “takes the position that our current practice of infilling with a neutral, rather than matched, colour is deceptive to the viewer and that such deliberate mediation through the act of conservation can deny the viewer an authentic understanding of the heritage object.” Ellie and Jane coined the term “disruptive conservation” for the act of challenging the status quo of our usual treatment approaches and perspectives, enabling “conservators to account for the object’s journey in how their intervention is portrayed.” Below is my interview with the authors, discussing some key concepts in their paper, which I hope will entice you to read the full paper and have your own discussions.

Sharra: I wonder if we might ease into this discussion a bit and begin with how the idea for writing this paper came about.

Jane: Ellie asked me a question when I was supervising some lab teaching that made me catch my breath: she asked me if she could make her gap fill a bright colour. I had to summon all my inner pedagogy to respond in a way that encouraged her to develop her thinking behind the question.

Sharra: In the paper you clarify that disruptive conservation is not a proposed conservation technique or system and is not meant to specify techniques that are right or wrong. “It is not about the visible mend itself but is an expression of the need to reject our biases and to break away from the façade of neutrality that is presented in a context that is often far from neutral... it asks conservators to push against obvious and traditional narratives...” What are you hoping conservators will do in response to your paper?

Ellie: I can understand how the paper may make for an uncomfortable read as the subject nature challenges how we perceive our role and potentially the power dynamics that follow. I must acknowledge that there are many professionals in this sector who are inciting change and are considering these concepts; with that I do hope that it is taken seriously and not dismissed as the trivial matter of painting a gap fill hot pink. It is also nice to consider that this paper could also be an initial kernel or resource in the re-examination of our working processes, instigating conservators to consider the core of their thinking and to constantly ask themselves why they may think in a particular way.

Jane: I fear that as conservators we can become complacent, and that sometimes feeds into practice that becomes habitual. Sitting behind such non-reflective practise is the possibility that we don’t think fully about the consequences of our work for the tangible and intangible aspects of the conservation challenge. If we seriously include an extreme option in our decision making this helps us to rethink. I feel that there is so much around




Image above and background: Reconstructed ceramic bowl in pink, next to an untreated broken bowl. Treatment undertaken by Sweetnam, E. Image courtesy of Ellie Sweetnam.



culture and heritage that has gone without comment, particularly issues of why collections are where they are and for whom collections have meaning. I fear that in the past some conservation practise has served to further separate people from the meaning of their objects.

Sharra: I love your idea of the “shy elephant in the room” that we as conservators frequently decide how an object is interpreted and presented, yet we often do so without detection or recognition. In my mind, there is another elephant in the room. Could the “urge to avoid visually disturbing fills” actually say more about the ego of the conservator than about the authenticity of the object? I think there is general fear that visible treatment could be perceived as unskilled work, which could harm the conservator's reputation and livelihood.

Ellie: From my own experience, conservation is not a very well-known profession despite our touch being on every object and the very environment within the museum. I agree that being perceived as ‘unskilled’ may be one of the reasons for shying away from a visible treatment. It may be that it could be seen as putting too much of ourselves and our expression (the ego) within the object when the conversation is not ours to be a part of. But as soon as we make any decision regarding the object, we become part of it. An object is never fixed – it moves through time and spaces, and we become part of its many spheres. There are circumstances when a visual mend would be the wrong decision and so obviously should not be undertaken. This circles back to disruptive conservation being more of a thought-process than a colour palette. Consequence and professional reputation are also important aspects to consider.



Jane: I imagine many of us have reversed past repairs or treatments that have us questioning the skills of our predecessors, and of course we take pride in our ability to beautifully integrate a fill using whichever technique we have deemed appropriate. We can be brilliant technicians, but to be a professional, we need to acknowledge all the factors in our decisions and integrate these into an accountable and high quality result. We are no more immune from ego or vanity than anyone else in the world, but as professionals, we can and should build in a process of review and correction throughout our practise that we make available for others to scrutinise. I wonder if, on some occasions, our intervention should be stark in order to attract a discussion, but we will never choose that option if we believe our practise can only be successful if it delivers from a narrow range of options.

Sharra: The most powerful concept, to me, that you present in this paper is that conservation has the ability not only to hide physical damage and decay, but that in so doing, we may also erase important histories and truths that are tied to those damages. Of our treatments you say, “they belie the process by which the lacunae were created... History includes powerful stories of destruction, oppression and looting, captured and embodied in the collections encased in the galleries of the universal museums.” As you suggest, we tend to “slide” collection objects in and out of points in history, which negates their continued journey on that timeline, and suggests that we can put aside whatever eras or parts of their history that don’t serve the museum’s goals or intent. This is a hard truth to accept. How can we as conservators accept this and work toward conservation efforts that do not erase the stories from an object?

Ellie: It is always easier to write about how to navigate these scenarios than it is to realistically put them into action, especially when you are aware of the issues that heritage professionals face: barely-there budgets and lack of resources, support and time. It is also a daunting experience when it seems a fight against ingrained institutional thinking. Before attempting to initiate any form of change or challenge, conservators need to have a concrete foundation on how they think—their ideals and their ethics. It is from there that you can be clear on the aim of your work. Your conservation efforts and decision-making are



Left: Shy (2007) by Brian Burger/ Flickr. Attribution 2.0 Generic ([CC BY 2.0](#)). Original location [here](#).

Right: Hiking socks darned with a hot-pink mend. Image courtesy of Ellie Sweetnam.



you own, and never without bias, but if you understand the type of power you hold, you can begin to at least know how you wish to direct your efforts.

Jane: I suppose all of us instinctively see our present as the natural conclusion of all that's gone before. We are trained to offer the best possible care to our objects, and this can so easily slip into the concept of stopping an object in time, for all of future history, to experience it as we leave it in the now. This makes no sense when we look back at the history of our objects and see the way that they have changed in meaning and offer different stories to different users, but the present day bias is strong. To question our own part in the story and to think how that might be represented in what we do is what we are asking.

Sharra: Our work on collections is, whether or not intentional, a political act.... This is included almost as a conclusion, but it could actually be a whole paper of its own. Can you talk about why you came to this at the end of your paper? Could you have left this out? Is it too tangential (or too big) to just be mentioned at the end without further discussion?

Jane: I think we have so much more to say. I started to talk about politics in my paper "[Beyond lifetimes](#)" and have been very lucky I have been allowed to talk in conferences while expanding on my thoughts. I completely understand where people don't wish to express any politics in their conservation, but for that to be a genuine ambition, you must first examine the options for neutrality in any situation. The concept of disruptive conservation is just that: a disruption created to jolt yourself out of complacency and to rethink before any assumptions are made. I'm aware that there are many conservators who want to raise political issues but are not quite sure how to do this appropriately and constructively.

Ellie: Everything in itself is a political act, and because of the immensity and, frankly, intensity of that, it cannot be touched upon lightly. And so, it was natural to end on that

note and to tie all the different aspects of the paper together. If I am allowed to say this, we do have another paper in the works which is a lot more political in its nature.

Read the full paper in [Studies in Conservation](#), free to IIC members [HERE](#).



Ellie Sweetnam originally studied graphic design at Camberwell College of Arts, London and then transferred her visual eye and thought processes into her work and research in conservation. Her work investigates the conceptual nature of objects and museum spaces and how changes in these spaces can alter the perception and interpretation of the work. She now works as fellowship and membership programme manager for the IIC.



Jane Henderson, BSc, MSc, PACR, FIIC, is a professor of conservation and the secretary-general of the IIC. Jane serves on the editorial panel of the *Journal of the Institute for Conservation* and is on the trustee board of the Welsh Federation of Museum and Art Galleries. She serves on the European standards body concerned with the conservation of tangible cultural heritage, and was delighted and honoured to win the Plowden medal in 2021.

REFRAMING CONSERVATION THROUGH SUSTAINABILITY

By Marina Herriges

The United Nations acknowledges that communities are crucial to driving change and mobilizing efforts to combat climate change, which we can do by moving out of our comfort zones in pursuing new ways of collective action. The UN also recognises that sustained and inclusive economic growth can drive progress and improve living standards.

Community and economy are two very important matters to be considered alongside the environment; they are part of the pillars of sustainability. These three topics should be equally considered for sustainable development; but in my view, perhaps community is a bit more significant; by considering collective changes, we can make changes in the environment and the economy.

This is why we have decided to change this column's name. In different ways, all previous articles spoke about communities or financial adaptation. After a year of publication, I feel the need for a change to accommodate a broader reflection on the subject. So this space will now be "Reframing Conservation Through Sustainability". I hope this change will make this space more diverse and enable us to have conversations on how conservation can make a positive impact on climate change and sustainable development.

With this in mind, I would like to introduce Natalya Swanson who has been doing a brilliant job of reflecting and encouraging change on what she calls intersectional sustainability. Natalya identifies herself as a heritage conservator, community organizer and educator. She co-hosted two seasons of the podcast *Conservators Combating Climate Change*—where she discussed what it means to do inclusive, compassionate and empathetic sustainability work—and will soon launch a new podcast, *The Ethics of Caring*, which explores heritage work through the lens of social justice values and feminist philosophy. Natalya is based in the United States and acknowledges the need to give voice to communities outside of our Eurocentric world as well as the power of compassion-oriented communities which, for her, is the answer to whatever the question is.

Natalya has developed a platform called WhatIsConservation.com (which I strongly recommend checking out). She is working in partnership with Joelle D.J. Wickens who is assistant professor of preventive conservation in the Department of Art Conservation at the University of Delaware, and associate director of the Winterthur/University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation.



Natalya spoke a little bit about her work within the platform: "This [platform] is an ongoing, and in constant development, collaboration between me and Joelle. We aim to have a safe space for heritage professionals to securely talk about different things without being judged. It is interactive; we want conservators to participate. We created a glossary, and our discussions are intended to foster dialogue." They are also keen on hearing from professionals who intersect with our field, creating more space for conversation. As a result, they are starting a podcast for discussion and hoping to initiate a pathway to create a community.

Left: Image of, and provided by, Natalya Swanson

Right: poster created by Marina Herriges.

**‘Communities are crucial
to driving change and
mobilizing efforts to
combat climate change’***



*The United Nations

She spoke about the current situation in the US, in which the conservation field has been discussing different terms for the profession, who gets to use the term conservator, who gets to participate and at what level. For her, this is a strong disconnect, and through the platform, she and Joelle want to emphasise that they do not agree with this movement and that there are many other ways to include other people. Natalya sees it as a problematic moment, but it can actually be a great opportunity to put ourselves out there to re-evaluate our profession and become more relevant and resilient.

Alongside her work with the platform, Natalya is working to understand the values on which she wants to base her life and professional development. Her values at the moment are transparency, identity statements, stating bias, increasing accessibility and sharing information. However, she sees these values in constant development as her priorities and interests have shifted many times throughout her life, and she hopes they keep changing as she meets more people and experiences more things.

Natalya stated that these values are present in “my practice and the ways I find to communicate and demonstrate my values. I created a matrix for value basis decision-making to centre my values in my practices. A very systematic way was important to me to get away from an object orientate practice to a more value orientate practice, to establish a habit, considering intangible values.”

In our conversation, we came to a conclusion that this behaviour and changes regarding her values were probably boosted by the current situation that the world has experienced in the last two years. “We don’t have time to continue accepting exclusion, continue promoting best practices that are not achievable and best practices that came from a place that doesn’t value sustainability. We need to find out ways that we can get through them. Our current situation enhanced the democratization of content which provided a digital space that makes some people more comfortable. It is a new form of communication that the in-person does not allow.”

We have the opportunity to develop our actions and positive impact on the climate crisis. “Climate change to me is not really the problem per se, it is a product of unsustainable systems that are principles of extraction... We are gaining for a few instead of the collective well-being. So, if we want to address climate change, we need to deemphasise the individual and emphasise the collective well-being, and that is the emphasis on community. This applies to conservation; instead of thinking about one object-based work we can think about a collection-based work.” In this sense, it is an opportunity for being more inclusive. Our field is a product of museums and academia; our practices and our standards are biased in a way that we have not totally explored the potential of in our communities.

Thinking about the conservation field tackling climate change, Natalya understands this can be challenging, but she also suggests another way to see the problem. "It can be conceptually challenging to think about these ideas so broadly: What does inclusivity mean? Such a big idea. What is climate change? Such a big problem. If we are going to be more practical about these, we can consider how we—as individuals and small communities—can affect change. How do we become more inclusive and centre accessibility in our decision-making? Our position of authority and privileges can change with whomever we are talking to within our institutions. I always have some agency in the way I communicate. I can always exercise my right to be silent, to create more space for other people. I can always express my gratitude and show appreciation for someone who feels not included. I can recognise my own bias. Everyone, regardless of their position, they have agency to promote change."

Natalya and I agreed on how problematic the argument is that "conservation is a small field, and it has minimal impact on the environment". This argument has led us to escape our responsibility for climate change. Natalya states, "this is problematic on so many levels: we are trying to rationalise problematic behaviour - this is illogic. The way that I try to navigate is by defining my values and letting them guide my decisions, in the hope that I can get a positive change."

To end our conversation, I suggested a dialogue to address a challenging question that perhaps does not have a straightforward answer: What is the relationship between conservation, climate change and colonialization? I think the way Natalya considered these three concepts was interesting and definitely thought-provoking: "Colonialization is a means of control. It is based on extraction and exploitation. Climate change is a product of extractive systems, the product of a colonial mentality. What is conservation? Conservation is a product of colonial and imperialist and institutional culture, it carries the bias of colonizing mentalities and values, which are embedded in our communities. There are certain discussions of conservators controlling the narrative, controlling the object within their institutions, but there have been fewer discussions connecting these systems and their associated values with our behaviours and practices."

I largely agree with her consideration. Recently, I have been thinking about how I can change my practice to advocate for one that is more relevant and meaningful and which addresses our worldwide issues. How can I give more voice to other conservators from other locations that have not been heard? How can I learn from them? I am trying to understand why we keep repeating values that we already know no longer fit. I believe these reflections can bring a more empathic perspective and dismantle my bias.

Consequently, we both agreed that we should encourage dialogue, and by being vulnerable, we can recognise that we do not have all the answers. However, we, as a conservation community, should join forces to understand together how we can do better through the lens of equality. The question of "how do we create more space for people to have this discussion?" was also one of the outcomes of this conversation. Having now read this column, if you have some thoughts, let us know your ideas.



Marina Herriges is an object and textile conservator based in Bristol, UK. Marina is a guest visiting lecturer and research assistant at University of Glasgow. She researches embedding sustainability for active learning and student engagement in conservation. Marina has a particular interest in sustainable practices in conservation and ethics as well as conservation education. Marina has worked in a range of different heritage and conservation organizations in Brazil, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom.

SUSTAINABILITY PROJECT AT TEXTILE CONSERVATION LTD, BRISTOL

By Caitlin Hartmann

My name is Caitlin Hartmann, I have recently begun working with Alison Lister and Marina Herriges at Textile Conservation Ltd in Bristol, UK, supporting their conservation practice as a studio assistant. My background is in textile design with a specialisation in weave, and I have recently graduated with a degree in this area whereupon I began my research into textile heritage, sustainable textile practices and slow design.

We are currently working on making the studio as sustainable and environmentally friendly as possible to do our part in caring for the planet whilst also trying to become involved with the local community. We have found ourselves often inundated with scrap materials and resources left over at the end of a project and feel we could be doing more to make the most of these materials by considering them through the lens of the four R's: reduce, reuse, recycle, and repurpose (see more on our Instagram page [@tex_cons_ltd](#)).

We are currently working on analysing the materials most used in the studio and their possible lifecycle expansion; sourcing eco-conscious suppliers; discovering and implementing recycling schemes; and contacting local schools and businesses in the area for collaboration opportunities. We were particularly inspired by recent experiments for turning calico scraps into paper, facilitated by the [Paper Foundation](#), which we hope to become involved with after successful trials.

We would love to hear from other studios and conservators on creating a greener work environment. Please contact me via email at studio@textileconservation.co.uk if you would like to hear more about what we are doing, discuss your own sustainable practice or suggest ideas.



Top: Caitlin Hartmann

Left: An Instagram post on sustainable practices from Textile Conservation Ltd.

Images courtesy of Caitlin Hartmann

THE PERPETUATION OF SITE-SPECIFIC INSTALLATION ARTWORKS IN MUSEUMS

Review by Hélia Marçal

*The Perpetuation of Site-Specific Installation Artworks in Museums:
Staging Contemporary Art*

By Tatja Scholte

Amsterdam University Press (2022)

268 pages / Hardcover / € 109.00

[E-book available for free](#)

ISBN: 9789463723763

Installation art has been the topic of conservation projects, books, and articles in conservation literature since the turn of the millennium. This contribution sheds light on important, ever-complex, and particularly challenging types of installations—those that are crucially (and intentionally) linked to specific sites.

Site, as the author explains, is much more than a place, a space, or a location. Indeed, the site in “site-specific” exists at the confluence of time, location, space, relations, and affects. It is an intra-agential manifestation that is intrinsically and inexorably connected with a certain time and place, certain people, materials, and emotions. And yet despite and because of these characteristics, site-specific installations have been collected, documented, reinterpreted, and restaged in various circumstances and with varying degrees of success. This is the context from which this book emerges.

1. The biographical approach to understanding the social lives of things has been proposed by [Igor Kopytoff in 1986](#). It was introduced in the conservation field by [Renée van de Vall, Hanna B. Hölling, Sanneke Stigter, and Tatja Scholte in 2011](#).

2. Actor-Network Theory, or ANT, is a theoretical framework stemming from the field of science and technology studies (STS), and from the work of scholars such as [Callon, Akrich, Latour](#), and [Law](#) among others.

The Perpetuation of Site-Specific Installation Artworks in Museums is divided into seven chapters. Drawing on a wealth of examples and relevant literature, the first two chapters explore the idiosyncrasies of site-specific installations from both art historical and conservation perspectives, while grounding the argument for the development of a novel conceptual model for the analysis (and care) of these cultural manifestations. Chapter three presents this model, which is brought together through the entanglement of three frameworks: (1) a biographical approach to the understanding of the lifespan of artworks,¹ (2) Actor-Network Theory,² and (3) Henry Lefebvre’s [theory on space and spatiality](#). Overarching this model is the understanding of artworks as events or performances, which facilitates the discussion around iterations, scripting, and un-scripting of site-specific installations. The three chapters that follow are case studies, to which the author applies the conceptual model designed and described in the previous chapter. These case studies are Ernesto Neto’s *Célula Nave*, Jason Rhoades’s *SLOTO*, and the project *Drifting Producers*.

The selected structure demonstrates a commitment to juxtaposing theory and practice. The development of this ambitious conceptual model does not overshadow the complexity of the practice of conserving, documenting, and maintaining (albeit, through change) site-specific installations. Moreover, the book is particularly concerned with acts of staging that are as much forms of materially constructing these artworks as performing their identities. This is of special relevance, as the author discusses in chapter three, as these acts of staging often take place in the museum, which is a site in itself, contested and heterotopic. Indeed, if the museum is a site where the actual and virtual coincide, as proposed by [Foucault](#) (or, in other words, where possibilities and individual and collective

THE PERPETUATION OF SITE-SPECIFIC INSTALLATION ARTWORKS IN MUSEUMS

Staging Contemporary Art

Tatja Scholte

Amsterdam
University
Press

Book cover courtesy of Amsterdam University Press.

professional, researcher, or student who wants to know more about the conservation of contemporary art. Additionally, it could be of interest to conservators working with other objects that are equally site-specific: objects and other cultural manifestations that are crucial agents in certain practices that have an intrinsic relation to a place or that are part of efforts in place making.

imaginings can walk hand in hand with what is perceived to be the actual, real world—where embodiments of time and space can dilate and/or contract even within the same timeframe and location), it could also be the site where site-specificity is (or can be) continuously negotiated.

Bringing together these theoretical frameworks with the case-based analysis and the very specific site that is the museum, the proposed conceptual model is helpful in (1) detailing the contingencies in assigning values to various constructions of space and spatiality—from the representational to the relational; (2) mapping the ways in which design and scripting participate in the making of those constructions; (3) identifying modes of social production that go beyond the moment of creation and accommodate the visitor's experience, perpetuation, and care; (4) and recognising how these relationships are established through the entanglements with various agents (human and nonhuman) that inevitably intersect in time.

The various scenarios provided in the case study chapters (four through six) further clarify how decision-making is contingent and co-constitutive of artworks and their potential futures. Neto's *Célula Nave* is particularly striking in this regard with its three proposed scenarios—restoration, refabrication (similar trajectory or closer to the original) and refabrication (more durable version)—leading to different paths in the artwork's biography. Reading this case study, I was reminded of Renée van de Vall's seminal text *Painful Decisions*. Here we see another instance in which a choice (even that of doing nothing) will lead to a loss of values and ways of doing or staging artworks. This, of course, is a feeling (or, perhaps, a reality) that is arguably common to all acts of conserving artworks and objects.

In general, this book is the answer to a knowledge gap in conservation literature and is valuable for any museum pro-



Dr Hélia Marçal is lecturer in history of art, materials and technology at University College London (2020-), a researcher at the Contemporary History Institute (NOVA/FCSH, Lisbon) (2021-), and the coordinator of the Working Group on Theory, History and Ethics of Conservation of the Committee for Conservation of the International Council of Museums (ICOM-CC) (2016-). She was the fellow in contemporary art conservation and research for the project *Reshaping the Collectible: When Artworks Live in the Museum*, at Tate, London (2018-2020).

COLORES PARA PINTORES: COMERCIO DE MATERIALES PICTÓRICOS DURANTE LA EDAD MODERNA, MUSEO

Review by Guillermo Torres Llopis and M^a Camino Robles

Documentation sources of artist technologies interest art historians and conservators, both because of the need to deepen academic knowledge and because of the need to increase our proximity to historical techniques, materials and procedures with an eye toward strategies and methods of conservation respectful of the work from both conceptual and physical points of view. The result of this need for knowledge are the two seminars led by Rocío Bruquetas Galán: "Painting techniques and materials in Spain: sources for their study" (2018) and "Pacheco's art of painting: theory, materials and procedure" (2019), culminating in a third symposium: "Colors for painters: Trade in pictorial materials in Europe and America during the Modern Age" (November 2021), which



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looks back at the post-medieval art world overseas, highlighting its writers, its peculiarities, technical contributions, and its creativity and supply needs.

This seminar trilogy of art technology in the Modern Age within the Iberian sphere closed with an unavoidable call for attention to the artistic trade between Europe and America during this period. The list of speakers who have participated in the third symposium is made up of professionals from different disciplines: biology, history, philosophy, economics, and conservation-restoration, all of them experts in academic or international research, which offered a broad overview of the exchange of artist materials and aesthetic ideas.



"The Bacino, Venice, with the Dogana and a Distant View of the Isola di San Giorgio" by Luca Carlevaris, oil on canvas, ca. 1709. Open Access image from the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Original image [here](#).



Entrance to a Dutch Port, by Willem van de Velde II, ca 1665. oil on canvas. Open Access image from the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Original image [here](#).

During the Symposium, Zahira Veliz exposed the complexity of, and the need to broaden, the interpretation of original texts including the semantic confusion of technical terminology. Filip Vermeylen and Louisa C. Matthew offered us a dynamic historical vision of trade in the two most important ports of that moment in time, Antwerp and Venice—one in full development and the other in decline. Artist materials were an important commercial category, coming from the most remote places through trade routes old and new, opened by the maritime expansion of the European powers. Stefanos Kroustallis focused his presentation on the evolution of trade between East and West and its relationship with such interesting aspects as the socio-cultural transformations in Europe and the political and ideological changes in the Near and Far East.

Juan Carlos Bermeo focused his presentation on the figures and links in the trade of pigments and artistic materials with the West Indies, some of which reached the mainland from the East after crossing the Pacific Ocean. Georges Roque, expanding on this topic, focused on the significant case of cochineal lacquer, one of the most appreciated and widely used dyes, and on the little explored relationships between the world of fabric dyers and painters, including their aesthetic and plastic concerns. Sandra van Ginhoven's paper focused on the exchange of works of art, books, and textiles for pigments, exotic materials, and precious metals from the Americas, essential for the production of art in Europe, with the example of the merchant Guiliam Forchondt. Support materials, such as wood and fabric, take on special relevance when the demand for qualities or special characteristics is great on the part of the artists; Maite Jover de Celis revealed to us the special case of woods from the North and those from the American coasts, and Laura Alba Carcelén presented desired qualities in canvases for painting. We also saw interesting cases of autarchic production centers such as the Jesuit missions, presented by Corinna Gramatke. The development of international trade, thriving in eighteenth-century London, allowed for a regular supply of artist materials, advertising, and supply strategies that anticipate those of today. The seminar ended with a presentation by Rocío Bruquetas Galán on the production of painting materials in Spain in the eighteenth century.

As a whole the seminar was enormously satisfying, as were the two previous symposia, leaving attendees with a special sensation not unlike vertigo in reaction to the realization that this area of expertise is still being developed, including the intercontinental exchanges of artistic materials in the Modern Age; the contributions of East and West to European visual culture; and the high value of artistic materials, essential as tools for a relevant part of the act of intercultural communication. This is an area that requires special attention and intense interdisciplinary research and interpretation.

We must thank the researchers and speakers and the director of the seminar for the important efforts made to create a sense of connection between each other; we applaud the participants' ability to create a truly interdisciplinary panorama of information in which each presentation in some way colored the rest of the content.

It is to be hoped that this seminar will give rise to others that abound on the subject and with a similar exhibition dynamic.

Learn more about the symposium here:

<https://www.museodelprado.es/recurso/colores-para-pintores-comercio-de-materiales/e4083510-8705-219c-5194-a389d48fd5bd>

Click to read the review in Spanish on the IIC Community platform.

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Puede leer la reseña en español en la plataforma IIC Community.



Mª Camino Roberto Amieva has a PhD in fine arts and a degree in fine arts in the specialty of conservation and restoration. She is a professor in the specialty of painting at the Higher School of Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Heritage of Aragon (ESCYRA) and a member of ICOM-CC, IIC, GE-IIC, ACRE and the European Group of Polychromy in Relief (GEPR). Her field of research and interests focus mainly on polychrome decorations and coloring materials in relation to the sources of artistic technology.



Guillermo Torres Llopis has a BA in medieval history and a degree in conservation-restoration. He teaches the practical subjects of panel painting and mural painting conservation at ESCYRA, and is head of the restoration department. During his professional life he has participated in significant interventions, such as the Mudejar ceiling of the Teruel cathedral and the polychrome coatings of San Baudelio de Berlanga (Soria).

TEACHING CONSERVATION IN A NEW WORLD

By Adriaan Botha and Dr Christian Dreyer

Anyone teaching today is teaching in an altered world. That part is clear.

What is less clear is precisely how student bodies, and the pursuit of learning more generally, will ultimately reconstitute itself when the world recovers from the swirling wake of 2020-22. Currently, students of higher education still perceive a precarious world and act with reserve. Less tentative are the cultural shifts, which continue to drive the "work-from-anywhere" trend. This groundswell is rapidly re-shaping a generation's relation to place and geography. While the corporate world in particular has been quick to appropriate it, we should recognize that the same aspirations which animate the working generation are just as keenly embraced by the student cohort coming up on the heels of today's newly and innovatively employed.

The implication is that studying at a particular locale—or from a particular locale—is becoming increasingly anachronistic. Are postgraduate conservation programmes responding to this?

But first, a bit more about our institution and its postgraduate training programme. You can find The South African Institute for Heritage Science and Conservation in the countryside town of Twee Riviere (Two Rivers) in the Southern Cape region of South Africa—a mountainous, fruit-growing region known as the Langkloof (Long Valley). The Institute was founded in 1994 and, during its nationwide short course dispensation, gained a reputation for high technical attainment at the conservation bench. When the Institute entered into the postgraduate education domain during the most recent decade, a distinctive focus on technical skills and critical assessment remained prominent hallmarks of its one-year resident postgraduate diploma programme. No less than 1,400 hours of laboratory-based contact learning continued to form the programme's backbone in delivering the requisite hand-skills and discernment. Teachers and students of comparable laboratory-based conservation programmes, similarly based in the physical sciences, will recognize this as an extraordinary number. Accordingly, over the years, a great many conservation students and interns (largely from Europe and North-America) found their way to this remote South African town, seeking to avail themselves of this exceptional opportunity for hands-on, in-depth conservation bench training.

Let us take the wider view for a moment. As an essentially inter-disciplinary vocation, conservation practice finds its application at that rich, liminal intersection of the physical sciences and the humanities. Because of this essentially hybrid character, conservation training programmes can differ markedly in their respective emphases. Sponsored programmes in particular will often bear the imprint or priorities of their patron entity. As a consequence, many conservation training programmes have come to variously assume a museum flavour, or an archaeological flavour, even a liberal arts character or perhaps something of a research/academia flavour – all with different impetuses and to differing results. But if conservation practice should be left to establish value quite directly, on its own terms and in an environment constituted by itself, what would that environment be like? In other words, what happens if conservation practice successfully fends off the reflexive, and even opportunistic, attempts to compel it towards ends and purposes and institutional habitats conceived for it by parallel disciplines and domains, and chooses a





Top: The Langkloof valley - Twee Riviere's setting (SAIHSC).



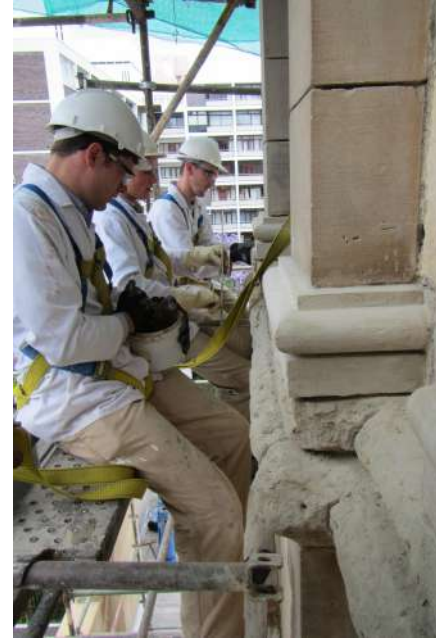
Left: Conservation student gilding a Japanese lacquered candle stick (SAIHSC).

direction by and for itself? Outside of these, what would the conservation profession legitimately and authentically encompass or begin to constitute?

Setting aside all hackneyed presumptions, one might very reasonably propose that conservation practice is a vocation that, in simplest terms—most often by leveraging exquisite critical assessment and technical skill—reinstates value where it had been lost. And if this is so, the present times compel us to ask anew: what, if anything, compels this profession to be constituted of anything more than a practitioner, a client and an object? Perhaps drawing, in part, on its own character as a self-funded enterprise, the Institute favours the view that there is fundamental merit to the simplicity of this equation. But does merit require active defence?

It is not difficult to grow high-minded about conservation, and this soon yields to forced abstractions and self-defeating positions—these often developed and imposed from outside of the conservation domain itself. Conservation is vulnerable to being besieged in this way when otherwise distinct domains become conflated with it, obscuring fundamental distinctions. The Institute takes the view that a cleanly diffracted sighting, taken through the prism of heritage science, reinstates proper calibration (this term, as advanced by UK Parliament's House of Lords in their [2006 report](#)). Peering through the spectacles of heritage science, our institution finds both clarity and utility in distinguishing three primary vocational lanes: conservation, interpretation and management. The latter two arise from the humanities, while conservation stands founded in the physical sciences. Therein lies the fundamental distinction between conservation and professions which primarily concern themselves with values and significance, culture, arts, social history, governance, funding, policy development etc. Of course, none of this diminishes the lively collaboration which exists between conservators and curators or private custodians.

While we acknowledge the early ground broken for conservation from within museums—particularly in the age of Rathgen, Forbes and Plenderleith—we cannot help but wonder what remains the possible justification today for conceptualizing conservation departments as built-in extensions of a museum (apart from logistical concerns and prestige). And why do so many conservation programmes still produce students habituated to the idea that museums, galleries and archives are conservation's naturally given and self-evident habitat? The mere fact that so many conservators are still prevalently embedded into curatorial institutions of the humanities does not help us to evaluate the desirability or practicality of this unequal and counter-intuitive arrangement. A clear-eyed re-assessment is needed. Certainly, these respective vocations are not birds of a feather, and conservation, without question, becomes pinned in the arrangement, being managed and steered from without, made subject to exigencies and objectives foreign to its own discipline and practice. Even if the match is considered successful from an institutional perspective,



conservation must inevitably grow moribund under the cradle-to-grave patronage of the humanities. Incessant scholarships, funded chairs, funded research and twinning with such institutions inevitably produce conservators in the image of the humanities. In those halls, conservation is not only denied affirmation of its own distinct discipline, but also its crucial and innate capacity for generating its own resources, being prevented from directly earning its keep. The reality is that private custodians (as well as public and corporate entities) very readily recognize, engage and remunerate skilled conservation services. There exists, therefore, no benevolent cause for museums (or similar) to take conservators into cloistered occupation nor justification for training programmes to differentially accustom budding conservators to such a narrowed expectation.

No doubt there are admirable conservation training programmes that cannot be fairly characterized in this way, and whose students—upon graduation—possess sufficient certainty of their vocational identity and the fundamental nature of their academic discipline to cast their vision also well beyond employment in museums, galleries and other curatorial-minded expressions of the humanities. Stating such a preference is not uncharitable, at least no more than conceding that it would be an equally glum scene if all students of architecture (let's say) should meekly transform themselves into in-house functionaries of property development corporations. A profession should be permitted to breathe the air of its own discipline if it is to flourish.

Returning to the broader theme, how might a practically minded form of conservation be taught in a rapidly changing world?

We had started by saying that anyone teaching today finds themselves teaching in an altered world—a world of shifting societal expectations and the call of new technological possibilities. Held as we are in the wake of complex currents, what adaptations do the cultural shifts of work-from-anywhere, study-from-anywhere demand from conservation study programmes? And how will the intense demands of technically oriented, hand-skill-focused education be accomplished and integrated with such a world?

Over the course of the last three years, the Institute had developed a multi-year, blended learning mode of presentation, combining distance learning with intensely technical, on-campus block sessions: find the [2022/23 academic calendar here](#). To arrive at this result, the curriculum development team drew on 25 years of full-time, contact teaching experience to establish a blended learning programme focused on express technical attainment, critical assessment and the capacity for private practice deployment. The cumulative hours of application are no less than before, though these are now distributed (along with tuition fees) over a minimum of two years as opposed to a single academic year. Students undertake 59 weeks of tech-supported distance learning, interspersed with a minimum of three on-campus block sessions, cumulatively adding an additional 11 weeks of resident contact

Left: Entrance to the campus grounds—autumn scene (SAIHSC)

Center: Stone & mortar practical field work in built environment. The image is of conservators deployed by the Institute on a historic sandstone building known as Centre for the Book, located in Cape Town's city bowl. (SAIHSC)

Right: Postgraduate programme Graduation Ceremony—Programme Director congratulates (SAIHSC).

“If indeed it ever was, it is certainly no longer defensible or reasonable for conservation programmes to equip conservation candidates with manifest skill while leaving them unprepared to deploy their expertise in the marketplace.”



learning. For programme students, completion of these 70 weeks ring in the dissertation phase, while occasional part-time (non-programme) students are permitted a more elective route from the outset. Purposeful and strategic integration of the virtual elements—driving proficiency in the uptake of the technical components prior to the contact sessions—lies at the heart of this exciting new format.

The programme declines to merely prepare conservation practitioners for salaried, stipend-based or internship positions without also simultaneously vesting them with the sensibilities required for commerce-ready, high street practitionership—whether private or salaried. If indeed it ever was, it is certainly no longer defensible or reasonable for

conservation programmes to equip conservation candidates with manifest skill while leaving them unprepared to deploy their expertise in the marketplace. Instead, the conservator's appreciation of her/his/their vocational authority and role, within both the broader and the more immediate world, increasingly seems a self-evident requirement today. Certainly, this is more in keeping with expectations of equitability in the world of work and with the defensible hopes of a new generation.

The Institute believes that the advantages of a highly technical, materials-based approach to conservation training needs no defence. We are similarly persuaded that the prospects of private commercial practice should be embedded into vocationally oriented conservation training programmes. It is therefore our intent that this programme—in its innovative new format—will retain both of those distinctive characteristics, even as the mode of presentation swivels into alignment with a quick-paced, ever-changing world.

Wish us well!



Adriaan Botha is chairman of the executive board and institutional co-founder. Over the course of the last 28 years, Adriaan has directed a life-long affection for academic environments, future reflection and value creation, into synergy with personal passions for landscaping, architecture and tree collecting. From this fertile combination grew a campus habitat optimized both for productive learning and high attainment in deployment.



Dr Christian Dreyer has been programme director to the postgraduate programme of The S.A. Institute for Heritage Science since 2014. Christian was formerly a physics lecturer of the University of Stellenbosch. Both in his capacity as programme director and as study leader, facilitating candidates' satisfaction of certain chemistry entry prerequisites, Christian draws particular pleasure from introducing programme candidates to the world of the physical sciences.

THE DRESS AND THE POWER OF REDRESS

By Jane Henderson

Yes, I was surprised by the decision to allow the Munroe “naked” dress to be worn to the Met Gala last month. Others have offered a more detailed critique of this situation, but what followed was a very public debate on historic costumes, conservation, museums and the power of artefacts to inspire. I was therefore sad to see the ICOM Costume Committee’s rather stark response to the situation that stated, “historic garments should not be worn by anybody”.

A mature profession must be able to offer nuance, to hear, consider and integrate context into its practice. Ethical codes should offer us principles rather than rule books, and to have global application, they must be tested internationally. Although the ICOM Costume Committee offered this as a statement, it was set in the context of the ICOM code of ethics. There are questions to ask to unpack the statement. First a simple one: what is a historic garment? Many families carry clothing between generations, whether it is a christening gown, a piece of lace from one wedding dress to another or—in my family’s case—a child’s kilt passed between family members according to fit. Private people have the right to share, wear and adapt their things. Some things should be in a museum.

The act of placing objects in a recognised museum formalises a decision that the thing has a social or cultural value—that it speaks to and from people. Preserving that value requires people to identify what makes the item significant and then work to carry that forward to a display, to a researcher, to a descendent or to a curious stranger. A museum might collect a historic garment to represent a culture, an industry, a horrific moment, or the height of technical and artistic expression. The use society makes of that garment is located both now and in an unknown future; we cannot know how the future will respond to these things. Conservators attempt to preserve the fabric as well as we can to maximise the possibilities of a relationship with it.

As has been pointed out by Puawai Cains of Te Papa in New Zealand, keeping garments unworn is not always appropriate. Some garments are held in museums with agreement from donors that they can be used for events, others have been recognised as having been separated from their communities by colonial collecting. Wearing garments can be part of a preservation strategy if this maintains and enhances significance. Unfortunately, conservation practice in the past has been associated with stifling an object. We have treated costumes with toxic chemicals, we have labelled and pinned objects to fix an offensive ideology to them. We should invest our ethics in preserving the meaning of a thing. Sometimes this will be in a glass case and sometimes it will be through engagement with other senses—including touch—to reveal composition, form or motion or to connect the tangible to living practices. Conservators work to prevent tears, strain and fading, but this practice can and should sit beside human connection, which might necessitate touch or another sensation. Our ethical challenge is to find words that speak to a consistent and rigorous practice which also adapts to context.

“Conservators work to prevent tears, strain and fading, but this practice can and should sit beside human connection, which might necessitate touch or another sensation.”





U.S. President John F. Kennedy (with his back to the camera), U.S. Attorney General Robert Kennedy (far left), and actress Marilyn Monroe, on the occasion of President Kennedy's 45th birthday celebrations at Madison Square Garden in New York City. Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr. is at the far right. Facing the camera in the rear appears singer Harry Belafonte. 19 May 1962. Cecil W. Stoughton, official White House photographer. This image is in the public domain. Image location on [Wikimedia Commons](#).

When we insist on "cotton glove" conservation, we are creating a ritual performance, a ritual that speaks of control. Some museum representatives have insisted that however an object was acquired, whatever the context or violence or violation, their act of "caring" cleanses that history and provides absolution. It does not. For some garments cotton gloves can pose a threat to their tangible elements. This is common conservation knowledge, making such language a continuation of practices of power, control and exclusion.

Conservators must be very clear what respect looks like. Respect requires us to draw up ethical principles that have a validity across cultures and peoples. It requires us to understand the meaning of objects and to know this can change and originate from many people. Respect requires us to learn and attend to expert knowledge about the intangible and tangible aspects of a thing. Respect requires listening and sharing; it requires humility and revision. When we make statements about how conservation should be done, we must start from a baseline of considering whose voices are being heard.



Jane Henderson, BSc, MSc, PACR, FIIC, is a professor of conservation and the secretary-general of the IIC. Jane serves on the editorial panel of the *Journal of the Institute for Conservation*, is on the trustee board of the Welsh Federation of Museum and Art Galleries. She serves on the European standards body concerned with the conservation of tangible cultural heritage, and was delighted and honoured to win the Plowden medal in 2021.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Due to the rapidly evolving situation regarding Covid-19, many event details are changing. We are trying to update these listings as much as we can, but readers should contact event organizers directly for the most up-to-date information on specific events, conferences, workshops, etc. Thank you, from the IIC Communications Team.

CALLS FOR PAPERS

Silk Road Textiles Under the Microscope (IASSRT)

20-21 October 2022

Online (Zoom)

Abstract submission deadline: 15 June 2022

For more information visit: http://iasrt.iidos.cn/detail/iasrt_news/237.html

EAS: Eastern Analytical Symposium

14-16 November 2022

New Jersey, USA

Poster abstract submission deadline: 5 September 2022

For more information visit: https://eas.org/2022/?page_id=2348

Photomechanical Prints: History, Technology, Aesthetics, and Use

30 October-3 November 2023

Washington DC (USA)

Paper submissions will be due October 2022

For more information visit [HERE](#).

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Terra 2021 13th World Congress on Earthen

Architectural Heritage

7-10 June 2022

Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA

For more information visit: <https://na.eventscloud.com/website/8033/>

Inaugural Conference of Conservation Science Education Online (CSEO)

14-16 June 2022

Virtual

For more information visit [HERE](#).

SBMK-dag: Contemporary Art: Who Shares?

16 June 2022

De Pont, Tilburg, Netherlands

For more information visit: <https://www.sbmkn.nl/nl/nl/activiteiten/SBMKdag-CAWS>

The Morgan Library & Museum: Virtual Study Day A Comparative Technical Analysis of Tarocchi Cards

21 June 2022

New York City/Virtual

For more information visit [HERE](#).

5th International Conference on Innovation in Art Research and Technology (InArt 2022)

28 June-1 July 2022

Paris

Further information found [HERE](#).

26th ICOM General Conference

20-28 August 2022

Prague

For more information visit: <https://prague2022.icom.museum/>

28th EAA Annual Meeting

31 August-3 September 2022

Budapest, Hungary

For more information visit: <https://www.e-a-a.org/ea2022>

IIC Wellington Congress 2022

5-9 September 2022

Wellington, Aotearoa New Zealand (and Online)

For more information visit [HERE](#).

Metal 2022

5-9 September 2022

Helsinki, Finland

For more information visit [this site](#) or contact: admin.metal2022@paper-flow.com

2nd Colour Photography and Film Conference

15-16 September 2022

Florence, Italy

For more information visit [HERE](#).

Woodworking Tools & Techniques-Past, Present & Future

16-19 September 2022

Stockholm, Sweden

For more information [visit this site](#).

15th ICOM-CC Wet Organic Archaeological Materials Conference (WOAM)

19-23 September 2022

Kazan, Republic of Tatarstan

For more information visit [HERE](#).

The Needle's I: Stitching Identity: A Winterthur Conference

6-7 October 2022

Winterthur, Delaware, USA

More information [HERE](#).

**2022 ICOM-CC Glass & Ceramics Interim Meeting
Recent Advances in Glass and Ceramics Conservation**
9-11 November 2022
Lisbon, Portugal / Online
For more information visit: https://eventos.fct.unl.pt/icomcc_gc_2022

**MUtec: International Trade Fair for Museums and
Exhibition Technology**
24-26 November 2022
Leipzig, Germany
For more information visit [HERE](#).

**Semi-synthetic and Synthetic Textile Materials in
Fashion, Design and Art" (ICOM-CC Textiles and
Modern Material and Contemporary Art Working
Groups Joint Interim Meeting)**
January 2023
Virtual
For more information visit (call for papers coming soon):
<https://www.facebook.com/icomccmodernmaterialscontemporaryart/>

**CFP: Objects, Pathways, and Afterlives: Tracing
Material Cultures in Early America**
20-22 April 2023
The Huntington, San Marino, CA (USA)
For more information email: objectspathwaysafterlives@huntington.org

13th Baltic States Restorers' Triennial meeting
16-19 May 2023
Riga, Latvia
For more information visit [HERE](#).

**ICOM-CC 20th Triennial Conference
Working towards a Sustainable Past**
18-22 September 2023
Valencia, Spain
For more information visit: <https://www.icom-cc2023.org/>

**Photochemical Prints: History, Technology, Aesthetics,
and Use (FAIC)**
30 October-4 November 2023
Washington DC, USA
For more info contact: learning@culturalheritage.org

COURSES, WORKSHOPS

Metal and Composite Threads in Textiles Workshop
8-10 June 2022
Cleveland, Ohio (USA)
For more information [visit this website](#).

**Environment: Effective monitoring and management
West Dean One-Day CPD Courses**
London, UK
9 June 2022
For more information visit: <https://www.westdean.org.uk/>

**IAEA Workshop on Innovative Approaches of
Accelerator Science and Technology for Sustainable
Heritage Management**
13-16 June 2022
IAEA Headquarters, Vienna, Austria
For more information visit [HERE](#).

**20|21 CONSERVAÇÃO E RESTAURO 22nd Masterclass
High viscosity PVA-Borax gels. A versatile tool for
cleaning sensitive surfaces**
16&17 June 2022
Porto, Portugal
For more information visit: <http://2021.pt/en/20-21/>

**Digitisation: planning & processes
West Dean One-Day CPD Courses**
London, UK
30 June, 2022
For more information visit: <https://www.westdean.org.uk/>

**Digitisation: planning & processes
West Dean One-Day CPD Courses**
London, UK
1 July, 2022
For more information visit: <https://www.westdean.org.uk/>

**Disaster response and salvage training
West Dean One-Day CPD Courses**
London, UK
22 September, 2022
For more information visit: <https://www.westdean.org.uk/>

**10th MaSC Workshop and Meeting
Mass Spectrometry and Chromatography**
Bordeaux, France
26-30 September 2022
For more information contact: MaSCUB2022@gmail.com

**Damaged books and bound archives: practical first
steps (West Dean One-Day CPD Courses)**
London, UK
3 October, 2022
For more information visit: <https://www.westdean.org.uk/>

**Dust and dirt: strategies for prevention and
Management (West Dean One-Day CPD Courses)**
London, UK
3 November, 2022
For more information visit: <https://www.westdean.org.uk/>

**Writing and using a preservation policy
West Dean One-Day CPD Courses**
London, UK
21 November, 2022
For more information visit: <https://www.westdean.org.uk/>

**Workshop on Asian Papers and Their Applications in
Paper Conservation**
2022 (tentative)
The British Library, London, UK
For more information [visit this website](#).



NEWS IN CONSERVATION

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR CONSERVATION OF HISTORIC AND ARTISTIC WORKS



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