



# NEWS IN CONSERVATION

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR CONSERVATION OF HISTORIC AND ARTISTIC WORKS



Lipstick + NASA = Conservation | Augmented reality for conservators | Black Art Conservators panel



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

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**Cover image:** Phumrapee Kongrit (left) guiding Leon Sim (right), Assistant Objects Conservator, on the Lai Rod Nam technique. Image courtesy of Jingyi Zhang (story on p. 60). **Inside cover image:** Morigan Kelley (left) wears augmented reality goggles to transmit images of a painting in the Rockwood Museum, while Margalit Schindler examines other details of the museum. Image by Evan Krape / University of Delaware (story on p. 20).

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3 Birdcage Walk  
London SW1H 3JJ  
Tel: +44 (0)20 7799 5500  
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### **NiC Contributing Staff**

**Sharra Grow**, Editor in Chief  
[news@iiconservation.org](mailto:news@iiconservation.org)

**Ellie Sweetnam**, Fellowship and Membership Programme Manager  
[Ellie.Sweetnam@iiconservation.org](mailto:Ellie.Sweetnam@iiconservation.org)

**Alexandra Taylor**, Book Reviews Coordinator  
[alexandra.taylor2@outlook.com](mailto:alexandra.taylor2@outlook.com)

**Marina Herriges**, Associate Editor for Reframing Conservation Through Sustainability  
[marina.herriges@gmail.com](mailto:marina.herriges@gmail.com)

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## FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

It could be said that conservators deal with the past. Two of my favourite quotations are about the past: William Faulkner's "The past is never dead. It's not even past" and LP Hartley's "The past is a foreign country. They do things differently there". Both require interpretation. Faulkner is commenting on how we are individually and collectively the result of our heredity and environment and all the right and wrong turns that have been taken in that process. Hartley is commenting on the problems of history and memory and how these can be half remembered and misrepresented.



In reality conservators not only deal with the past but also the present and the future; we deal frequently with the issues raised by both Faulkner and Hartley because, as conservators, we cannot separate the material evidence of the past from the context in which it exists and existed. Indeed our role could be seen as pivotal in helping to unlock the material past in all its complexities to assist in interpreting and informing the future.

I keenly watch what the future may hold for our sector. A useful benchmark is the annual Trendswatch report that the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) has published over the last 10 years. This year the report is particularly interesting as the sector moves beyond COVID. Some of the trends inevitably focus on the American museum situation, but others have a global relevance. Three that I comment on below are the repatriation of cultural objects, digital revolution and evolution including the massive advances in AI, and the changing climate risk.

Repatriation of cultural material is gaining momentum, with such well publicised cases as the Benin bronzes. But in reality, it has only just begun. AAM estimates that 90% of cultural heritage from sub-Saharan Africa reside in Western collections. There are both ethical and legal matters at play. In providing professional advice on these matters, conservators cannot be neutral but are going to find themselves having to take a stand, particularly on what is best for the long-term preservation of the material.

The pandemic accelerated existing trends in the adoption and deployment of digital technologies, taking the museum sector from proto-digital to digital proficiency at turbo-charged speed, reshaping the way we work and, indeed, where we work. What we are finding at IIC however, representing as we do the global conservation community, is that although the proficiency may be there, access to high-speed internet is far from universal which is hampering our ability to provide training courses. This is one factor of the evolving digital world. Another is the use of AI which is more a revolution than an evolution given the pace it is moving. Recently a Switzerland-based AI company claimed its software identified, with 96% probability, that a previously unknown painting was by Italian artist Raphael, also identifying a Titian work held in a Zurich museum as a probable fake. AI is only as good as the data with which it has been programmed which is directly the domain of conservators, whether it is analysis of composition, materials or varying conditions of damage. Our role in this is, as yet, unclear but may have significant consequences for how we compile and use our data.

And talking of data, we are entering an era where past data about climate is no longer an accurate predictor of future risk. As conservators we are used to analysing risk, and it is clear that we now need to continuously monitor, and if necessary reassess, those risks as to how extremes of heat and cold, floods and storms are likely to impact collections and historic sites.

Sobering thoughts perhaps, but this is the reality of the world in which we live and operate. IIC will continue to provide support and appropriate relevant training for the conservation community as we work together to link the past with the present and help prepare for the future.

With my best wishes,

Julian Bickersteth  
*IIC President*

Click the image to watch  
Julian Bickersteth's presentation,  
or click [HERE](#).



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# MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

A great risk for any leader is to be pulled into short-termism, neglecting to provide a long term roadmap to the organisation and membership for what can be achieved in the future. This is something I became acutely aware of when speaking with student and early-career members following the Wellington Congress last year; many were already worried about their future in the profession; they, and all our membership, were the inspiration for [IIC's new Strategy 2030](#). This is a strategy that faces the future.



Acting for the long term is in our DNA as conservation professionals. We are often natural problem solvers managing environments, change, risk and complexity, and we are scientifically and socially aware. The challenges posed by the pandemic were unprecedented in urgency, impact and global scope, but we all saw science and open knowledge make a difference. Many are already articulating these parallels in our response to climate change. Our global predicament in relation to climate change seems to resemble that of the proverbial boiling frog, content in its slowly warming tank until it is too late to save itself. At IIC we recognize that it is our role to help conservation professionals make change happen at the pace and scale needed. We also recognize that our strength is in our members; IIC's Strategy 2030 will require all our collective resolve, knowledge, talents and energy to prioritise action, establishing sustainability measures within our sector and setting science-based targets that make a difference.

To keep up with the needed solutions in our ever-changing profession and fast-paced world, learning must become a lifelong process that is inclusive and flexible, where access to knowledge is promoted for all and not restricted to a privileged few. This is why learning and professional development are a core commitment in our new strategy. We are designing initiatives for professionals at every stage of their career and extending our reach globally with sustainability in mind. You can read about some of these initiatives, already being put into place, in this issue of *NiC*. These include changes to membership categories and rates (p. 30), IIC's forthcoming [Student and Emerging Conservator Conference in Amsterdam 2023](#) (p. 44), a training course with Centro Conservazione e Restauro La Venaria, [Emerging Skills for Heritage Conservation](#), and the [Adapt: Conservation and Leadership in a Time of Change](#) programme for IIC Congress Scholars who are early to mid-career professionals working and living in priority regions.

Sarah Stannage  
IIC Executive Director

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## EDITOR'S SOUNDING BOARD

This issue features several stories highlighting state-of-the-art technologies as components of artworks and advancements within conservation, including the use of atomic oxygen to remove lipstick from a painted surface (p. 7) and augmented reality headgear allowing visual access to spaces once restricted by distance or physical limitation (p. 20).



The nimbleness of our field never ceases to amaze me. One need only look back on our profession's history to see the great advances that have developed making the once impossible possible. I often wonder about future conservators discovering my "old" treatments and lamenting how much easier (and better) it could have been if I'd had the advantage of their "future" knowledge. I imagine most conservators have had the experience of holding off on a treatment in the hope that advancements in our profession would soon catch up to the issue at hand, in the meantime choosing to exercise patience. This, I think, is a valuable skill in our work and one that, though not always easy, I imagine will be much appreciated by our future colleagues and even our future selves.

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

# NEWS IN BRIEF

## TÜRKIYE EARTHQUAKE: REPORT ON THE EMERGENCY ACTIONS FOR CULTURAL HERITAGE IN THE DISASTER ZONE

Eleven cities in southeast Türkiye were struck by two extreme earthquakes (magnitudes of 7.8 and 7.7 respectively) on 6 February 2023. Kahramanmaraş, Kilis, Diyarbakır, Adana, Osmaniye, Gaziantep, Şanlıurfa, Adıyaman, Malatya, Hatay and Elbistan are in ruin including thousands of fatalities and injured, with even more people having lost their homes and jobs. The 7.8-magnitude earthquake was the strongest to occur in Türkiye since the 1939 Erzincan earthquake of the same magnitude. In addition to causing severe destruction in northwest Syria, the earthquake was felt as far away as Egypt, Israel, Palestine, Lebanon, Cyprus and the Black Sea coast of Türkiye. Aftershocks continue in the affected region.

Over 40,000 deaths in Türkiye have been confirmed as of the beginning of March 2023. Human lives are the most crucial to focus on after natural disasters. Many national and international government bodies, rescue teams and several NGOs joined forces to save lives and to support the earthquake survivors in the coming days, months and possibly years.

Following the first days of the disaster, the General Directorate of Cultural Properties and Museums formed emergency management teams for evaluating and reporting the damage on various cultural heritage items in the region (movable/immovable/public/non-public). Turkish media and expert reports indicated that a wide range of historical buildings and structures such as Gaziantep and Diyarbakır castles/fortresses, a number of old and new mosques and churches in Antakya, and the renowned column at Karakuş Tumulus (with the relief of the King of Commagene Mithridates II (36-20 BCE) and his sister Laodice) were damaged as well as several artefacts in museum collections. The Minister of Culture and Tourism, Mehmet Nuri Ersoy explained that the earthquakes caused several roads to crack open, restricting access to the areas where cultural heritage is in danger. The work is in progress to repair and open those roads in a controlled manner and to save any materials that can be re-used for future reconstruction and restoration of historical and archaeological heritage.

As efforts to save human lives and human history continue, the Ministry also agreed to form a professional excavation team for the earthquake zone to document and remove any heavy heritage found in damaged historic buildings (carved inscriptions, decorated stones, mosaics). These items will be moved to the state museums for future protection. While the documentation process is underway, a scientific committee has been set up to work towards the future protection of cultural heritage in the region.

In addition to immovable heritage, movable artefacts and museum buildings were also victim to numerous levels of damage due to the earthquakes. Whilst regional object conservation teams immediately attended to the restoration of small artefacts in Hatay and Urfa archaeological museums, special support was provided for the Hatay Museum in order to strengthen the damaged areas in the building

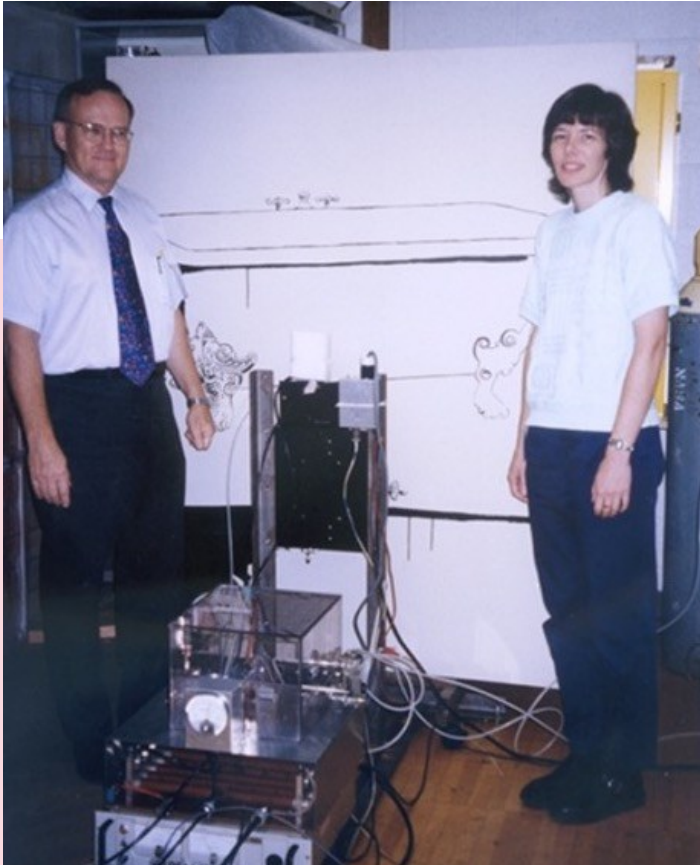
Facade view of the Greek Orthodox Church in the center of Hatay, Isken-  
derun, took heavy damage in the  
great earthquake in Turkey on Feb-  
ruary 22, 2023. A 7.8 magnitude  
earthquake hit near Kahramanma-  
ras. Image by [tolga ildun/](#)  
Shutterstock Photo ID: 2267677251





structure as well as secure important statues such as the famous Neo-Hittite statue of King Suppiluliuma. Solar powered security cameras were also installed in the building after electricity cuts in the region.

Top: NASA scientists Bruce Banks and Sharon Miller during A. Warhol's "Bathtub" treatment. Bottom: MOXTY Project logo. Images courtesy of Tomas Markevicius.



Türkiye in general has been subjected to many earthquakes due to its geological location. It is clear that earthquakes severely affect people, their livelihoods, social structures and cultural heritage when and where they occur. It is now the time to take earthquakes very seriously and plan for the future of cultural heritage in Türkiye.

if individuals would like to send general donations to support the region, one well-regarded charity for the region is: [www.ahbap.org](http://www.ahbap.org)

Dr Duygu Çamurcuoğlu ACR, FIIC  
Senior Objects Conservator, British Museum

### A NEW LOOK INTO NASA'S PIONEERING ATOMIC OXYGEN TREATMENT REMOVING LIPSTICK DEFACEMENT FROM ANDY WARHOL'S *BATHTUB*

NASA's contribution to multiple game-changing technologies which have become essential to society is difficult to underestimate: from LASIK eye-tracking technology in eye surgery, to ACTIS from the Apollo mission which made CAT scans possible, to polycrystalline alumina used in invisible dental braces, to insulin pumps, scratch-resistant lenses and many others. Atomic oxygen (AO) may become a game-changing NASA contribution to cultural heritage; it has unique potential for non-contact and solvent-free cleaning of otherwise problematic, porous and fragile materials that cannot tolerate mechanical wet or dry cleaning.

AO technology, currently developed by the [MOXY Horizon Europe project](#) (2022-2026), in the context of green technologies for cultural heritage, has its origins in a serendipitous invention, as it started with a defacing lipstick kiss on Andy Warhol's painting *Bathtub* (1961) at The Andy Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh.

Lipstick is designed for porous substrates, such as human skin, and may be extremely difficult to safely remove from porous art substrates such as the acrylic paints used by Andy Warhol. In fact, in a [1980 interview](#), Andy Warhol deliberated with Paloma Picasso: "I never understand how the lipstick business goes on because lipstick lasts forever". When a lipstick-wearing visitor kissed the *Bathtub* at an event in 1997, the prospects of the damage lasting forever seemed dreadfully true, as the lipstick could not be removed. Ellen Baxter, the former chief conservator in charge of the treatment, noted that "Of all the paintings there for her to put her lips to, that was the worst one... I couldn't use typical conservation methods to clean it... It was like trying to take a lipstick stain out of a piece of Kleenex"[1].

Conservators turned to NASA where Bruce Banks and Sharon Miller were investigating AO erosion on spacecraft materials and had already tested AO treatment under low pressure for fire-damaged paintings. *Bathtub* required a targeted treatment without placing the painting in a low-pressure chamber, and Banks and Miller pioneered an atmospheric AO apparatus which was moved to the museum and used to remove the lipstick without physically touching the surface [2].



Green Atmospheric Plasma Generated  
Monoatomic Oxygen Technology for  
Restoration of the Works of Art

Funded by the European Union – Horizon Europe



## REFERENCES

[1] Halford, B. (2005) Oxygen Gives New Life To Art in Chemical & Engineering News ISSN 0009-23470

[2] Banks, B., Rutledge, S., Karla, M., Norris, M., Real, W., Haytas, C. 1999. Use of an Atmospheric Atomic Oxygen Beam for Restoration of Defaced Paintings, in Proceedings of the 12th ICOM-CC Meeting, 1999, NASA/TM-1999-20941

[3] Banks, B., Markevičius, T., Olsson, N., 2017, Monoatomic oxygen system for non-contact nanoscale cleaning of vandalized 20th c. modern and contemporary artworks, CeRoArt pp.1-10

The treatment made headlines in the 1990s but was never repeated until recently when MOXY researchers in collaboration with the European Space Agency (ESA) began experimenting with AO on typical cultural heritage materials using their low Earth orbit oxygen environment simulator, LEOX. The scope of testing included lipstick, which has been repeatedly used for art vandalism [3]. In the ongoing study, two lipsticks were applied on titanium white acrylic paint and exposed to AO under low-pressure conditions. AO treatment made the lipstick appear lighter but did not remove it. Samples were investigated using 3D microscopy (HIROX), SEM, FTIR-ATR and XPS. Testing revealed that the lipstick contained red iron oxides, which are not affected by AO. However, the AO role was essential, as it converted organic compounds in the lipstick into harmless volatile byproducts ( $\text{CO}$ ,  $\text{CO}_2$ ,  $\text{H}_2\text{O}$ ), leaving a dry powdery residuum on the surface. This enabled dry-removal of the residual powder using soft natural rubber in a second step, repeating NASA's methodology in consultation with Banks and Miller, which was also a two-step process: AO, followed by dry cleaning with a soft rubber eraser.

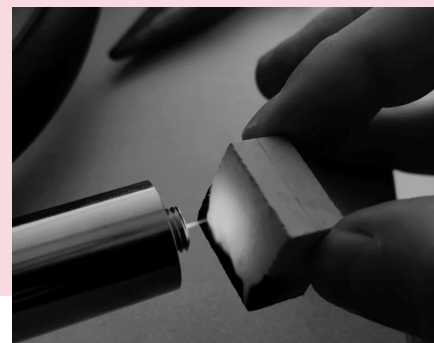
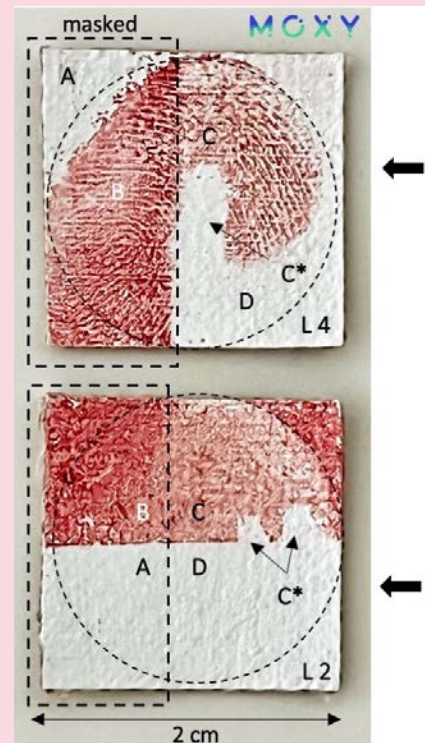
Currently the MOXY team continues to design its own atmospheric AO generator which will be tested on problematic soiling and typical art materials.

Preliminary findings indicate that AO is effective on soot and reacts incrementally with diverse organic compounds at different rates which may allow the formulation of selective and non-contact cleaning treatments. MOXY researchers are considering the promising AO treatment of fire-damaged objects, indoor soiling, biological contamination and sebum (fingerprint) soils. Other applications for AO include improving hydrogel performance by temporary activation of hydrophobic soils on plastics; fostering the decolonization of collections by enabling conservators to remove organic pesticides from wood, textiles and other porous objects (for which currently there is no effective treatment meaning the objects cannot be returned to communities because of health concerns); and treating indigenous collections and other sensitive materials, for which man-made chemicals are deemed inappropriate by their communities.

*Tomas Markevicius, Senior Researcher and Nina Olsson, Senior Researcher at ICOMOS Lithuania, ICOMOS National Committee.*

## WILLARD CONSERVATION LAUNCHES INTERNATIONAL WEBSITE SHOWCASING GLOBAL PROJECTS

Having worked on tool and equipment projects for conservators the world over for the last 50 years, Willard Conservation Equipment Engineers have now launched a



Top: 1997 lipstick, treated at NASA with two cleaning spots. Center: MOXY samples masked with aluminum foil, and recon... cleaned with AO, C\*: dry cleaned D: acrylic p... Research Unit for Plasma Technologies RUPT... mospheric AO generator testing in progress... samples 2x2 cm of yellow ochre gouache pai... (right). Images provided by Research Unit fo... versity.



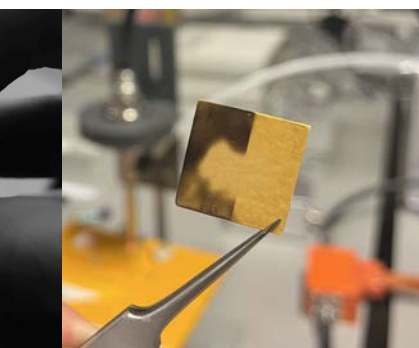
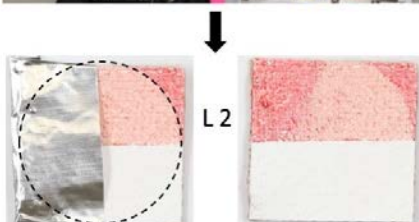
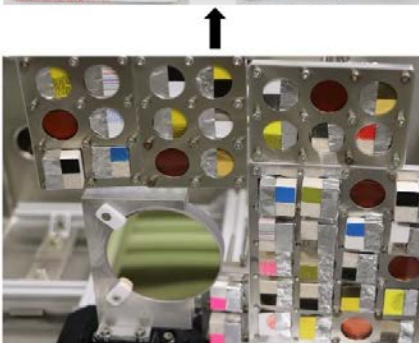
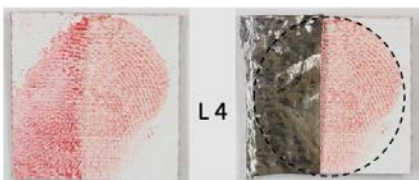


stand-alone website to present their growing portfolio of global projects.

The Willard team pride themselves on exceptional customer service and have an innate understanding of the industry, making them the go-to name for the best in conservation tool and equipment solutions. Known for innovative product development, Willard's engineers regularly develop custom solutions for customers, including individual tools and full studio fit outs. Working with overseas brands can seem daunting for conservators, but Willard always aims to meet and exceed expectations.

For this website, Willard worked closely with conservators to develop authentic translations in Spanish, French, German, Mandarin and Arabic, in a bid to share our projects with even more of the world. Simply click on the language selector and enjoy the website in the language of your choice.

New website homepage. Image courtesy of Heather Page © Willard



AO  
 mounted in LEOX sample holder. lipstick sam-  
 struction tests: A: pristine, B: lipstick, C:  
 paint treated with AO. Images by NASA and  
 at Ghent University. **Bottom:** MOXY at-  
 : removing soot from limestone (left) and  
 int on paper with soot soil, half cleaned  
 r Plasma Technologies RUPT at Ghent Uni-



Take a look at our new website here,  
[www.willardconservation.com](http://www.willardconservation.com)

Paul Willard, CEO at Willard Conservation said, "The Willard team take great pride in delivering such unique projects to our global customers. Showcasing just some of these projects on a global platform shows conservators & specifiers that there are no limits to the service we can offer, which is a fantastic achievement and a credit to the whole team."

[www.willardconservation.com](http://www.willardconservation.com)  
[paul@willard.co.uk](mailto:paul@willard.co.uk)

## NOMINATIONS FOR THE 2023 PLOWDEN MEDAL CONSERVATION AWARD

Nominations for the 2023 Plowden Medal Conservation Award are open until Friday 19 May 2023. If you know of any talented conservators who deserve recognition for their work, please consider nominating them and sharing the details with your network.

Established in 1999 to commemorate the life and work of the late Hon. Anna Plowden CBE (1938 – 1997), this medal was endowed by the Royal Warrant Holders Association, of which she was Vice-President. It is awarded annually to an individual who has made a significant contribution to the advancement of the conservation profession and whose nomination would be widely welcomed within the conservation community. The award covers all aspects of conservation be they practical, theoretical or managerial and is open to those working in private practice or institutions.

The deadline for nominations is Friday 19th May 2023 and the medal will be presented to the winner in the Autumn.

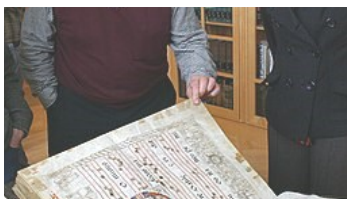
The nomination form and details can be found here: <https://www.royalwarrant.org/members/plowden-nomination>



Image of the Plowden Medal. Courtesy of the Royal Warrant Holders Association.



Click to read more about these stories below on the IIC Community



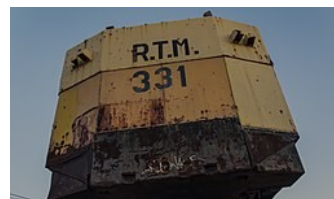
### GLOVES OFF

"The best way to handle a rare book," said Mark Dimunation, at the Library of Congress, "is with clean hands and caution." Gloveless hands have some library lovers up in arms, but this New York Times article sheds light on the truth of how to best handle rare books. (Image: detail of [special collections](#), Oregon State University. [CC BY-SA 2.0](#).)



### JOSEPH LOST & FOUND

At the convent of the Discalced Carmelites in Malta, two centuries-old paintings of the holy family, originally located in the church's barrel-vaulted ceiling, were recently rediscovered. Read about the informative historical and technical research that informed the subsequent conservation treatments. (Image: [AdobeStock\\_86136078](#))



### RIO TINTO & HERITAGE

Rio Tinto, the world's largest iron ore mining group, pledged to review and change their practices after destroying a rock shelter heritage site in Western Australia. The results from their independent audit shows what they're now getting right and what they still need to improve on. (Image: [Riotinto](#) by Jose Losada/Flickr. [CC BY 2.0](#))



### A PEALE IN PARIS

The mysterious history of a George Washington portrait brought experts to Paris, piecing together the painting's provenance (including theft at sea!) with analytical research by Longevity Art Preservation to determine the painting's true artist. (Image: detail of *George Washington* by Charles Peale. [Public Domain](#)/Metropolitan Museum of Art)



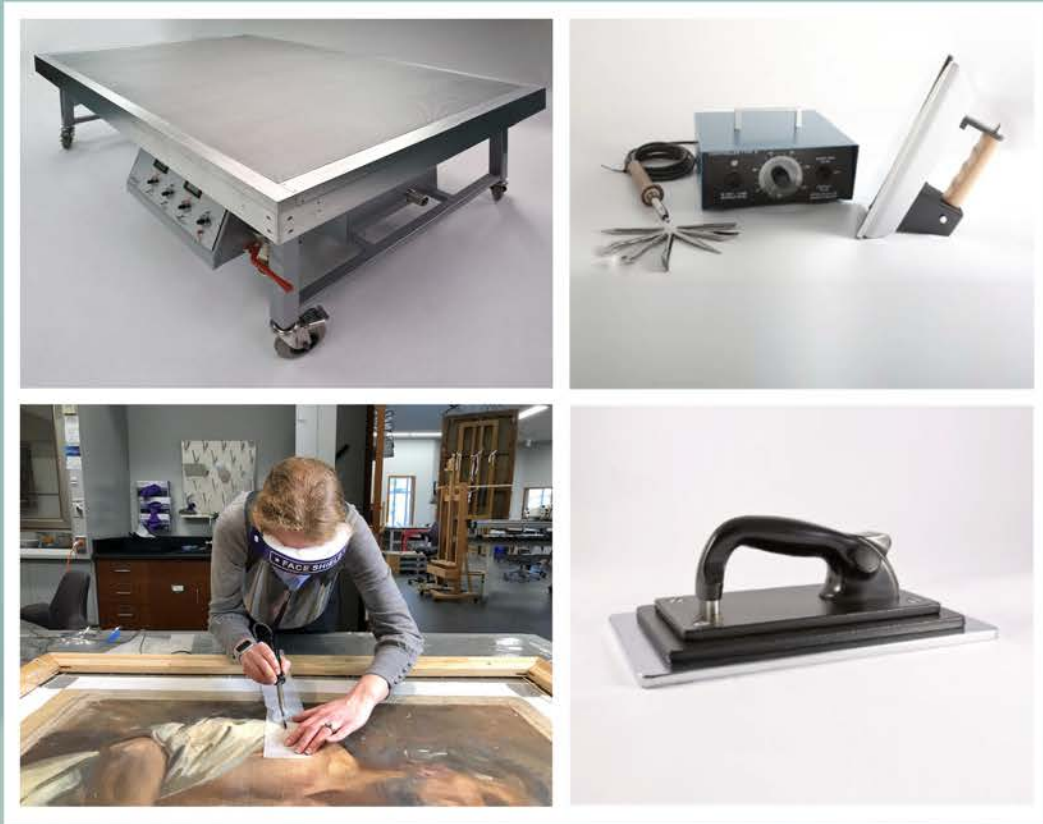


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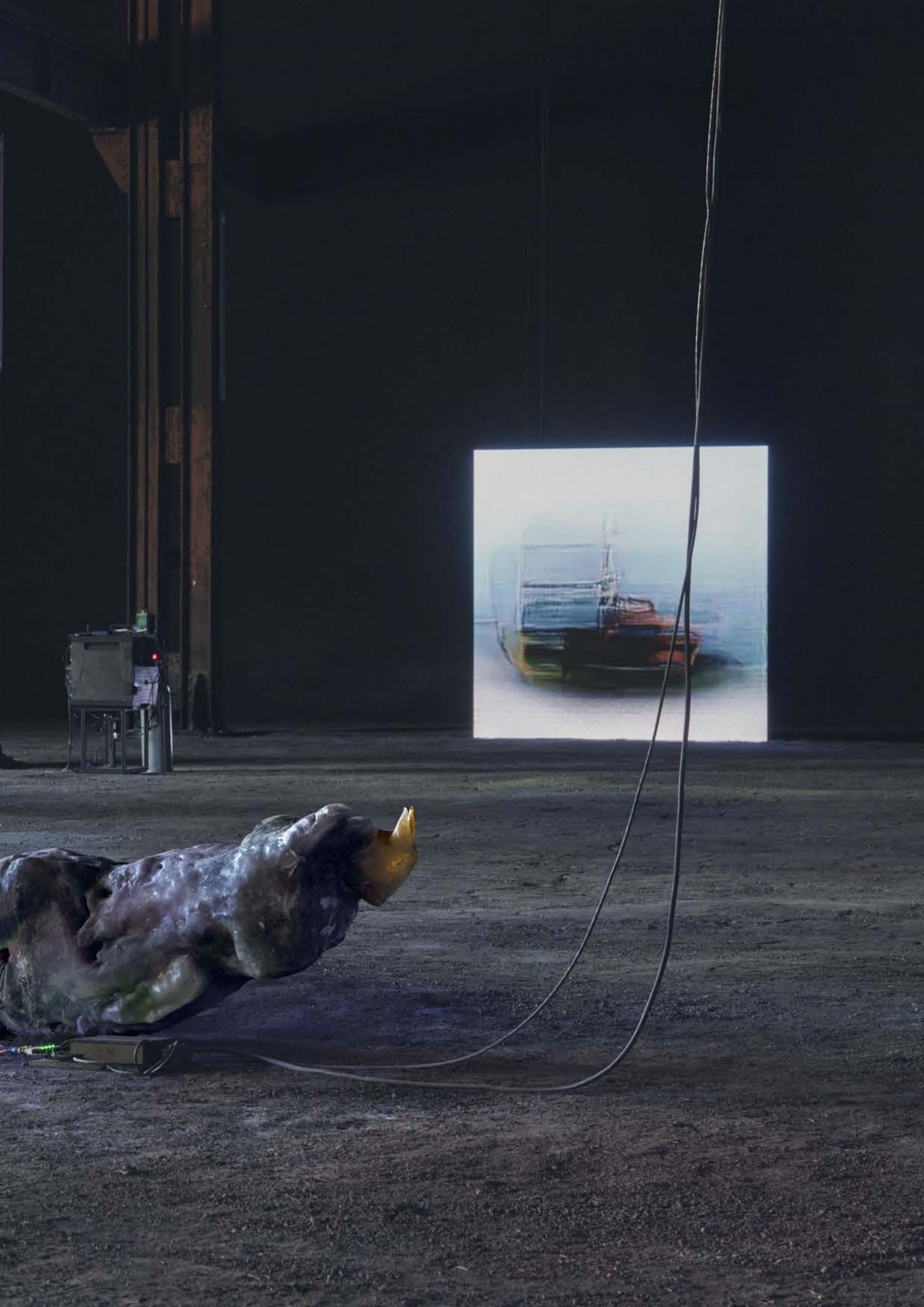


# CONSERVING AN EXHIBITION

## NEW ROLES AND EMERGING ISSUES FOR THE CONSERVATOR OF CONTEMPORARY ART

By Shubhankar Pr Bharti





*Looking back over the past several decades in the art world, the form of the exhibition has gone through several stages of experimentation since the 1960s, changing its conception and configuration, which led to exploring a new format: the exhibition as a medium. The artists belonging to land art, minimal art and conceptual art were all involved in the reformulation of exhibition-making and the way it is represented. Contemporary artists have increasingly explored unconventional formats and mediums, challenging the concept and values of fine art conservation.*

In this article I will focus on the complexities, challenges and opportunities in the role of an art conservator using the case study of the exhibition *After UUmwelt* by Pierre Huyghe, commissioned by LUMA Arles, France from 26 June 2021 to 10 January 2022.

Born in 1962, Pierre Huyghe is one of the most important figures in contemporary art from the 1990s, belonging to a generation of artists such as Philippe Parreno and Dominique Gonzalez-Foster. His art practice blurs the boundaries between the living and the inanimate, fiction and reality, nature, the human and technology (Le Comte, 2022).

#### AFTER UUMWELT: AN EXPERIENCE

Pierre Huyghe constructs *After UUmwelt* as an interplay of his previous and newly commissioned technological, biological and ephemeral artworks creating a self-regulated environment.

Entering the exhibition hall, one finds oneself in a dark space, struck by illuminated LED screens flashing “mental images”. In total, five large LED screens, connected to a main server with various sensors and scent diffusers, constitute the art installation *UUmwelt* (2018). The diffused images are the result of an artificial intelligence translating data from a human mind into visual forms through f-MRI in collaboration with Kamitani Lab, Kyoto University.

Moving towards the centre of the hall, one notices three sculptural objects, also called *Mind’s Eye*, which are 3D translations of the “mental images” visible on the screens. They are made of organic materials such as sugar, agar-agar, salt and bacterial elements. Further, we notice an incubator called *Living Cancer Variator* (2016) with a microscope that hosts HeLa cancer cells. The rate of division of cancer cells acts as a biological clock for the visual feed.



*Living Cancer Variator*, 2016. Incubator and human cancer cells (HeLa). At Grand Hall, LUMA Arles, France. Photo credit: Shubhankar Pr. Bharti © Pierre Huyghe





The living elements include two ant colonies (*Tapinoma Magnum*) and ant hills. Three beehives with Italian-Caucasian bees are also suspended in the exhibition space at around three metres of height. Each element, including the presence of the visitors, generates data through various sensors which are sent to the *Umwelt* server, influencing the image feed in real time.

The *in situ* soil installation was created on a surface of 1860 m<sup>2</sup> to simulate the experience of walking on the natural ground of Camargue (southern France). A biweekly spraying of six organic colours on the soil surface gives an impression of 'leakage of the element', as if the colours present in other elements such as monitors, sculptural objects, etc., melted and dissolved on the soil surface.

#### SITE-SPECIFIC INSTALLATION / AN EXHIBITION/ AN ECOSYSTEM

*After Umwelt* is much more than a site-specific installation, which the artist refers to as "situated artworks". Pierre Huyghe's exhibition "is rooted, situated, but remains a structural entity that could take place somewhere else in a changed form" (Hantelmann, 2016).

The artist's concept of exhibition as a medium explores how the exhibition, as a tool, can influence the viewer's experience and how the experience can unfold over time. During *After Umwelt* the viewer's experience, as well as the artworks and the exhibition itself, changed over time forming a self-regulated environment.

Right: Documentation of the network in *After UUmwelt*. © Shubhankar Pr. Bharti

It goes beyond the categorisation of conventional terms; Pierre Huyghe himself observes that he finds it less precise to use terms such as “work” or “exhibition” (Rafael, 2013).

### APPROACHING *AFTER UUMWELT* AS AN ART CONSERVATOR

As the exhibition was open to the public for six months, maintaining the integrity of artistic intent was essential requiring regular intervention. Considering the complexity, some of the strategies, theories and practices employed in conserving traditional artworks became problematic (Scholte & Wharton, 2011).

In this process, I was approached by Barbara Blanc, head of conservation at LUMA Arles, with the aim of preserving the exhibition and the artist's intention during its display, while testing and adapting the conservation methodology. Subsequently, we examined the practical solutions used to



Ants (*Tapinoma Magnum*), clearing mycelium to create path inside anthills. At Grand Hall, LUMA Arles, France. Photo credit: Shubhankar Pr. Bharti © Pierre Huyghe

address the challenges and issues here. We looked at documentation, collaboration and decision-making as keys to a successful conservation strategy, also borrowing a distinction from R. Van de Vall, who states that rather than preserving objects conservators roles today are about managing change (Van de Vall et al., 2011).

### DOCUMENTATION: AN ACTIVE CONSERVATION TOOL

The method of documentation here had the most significant impact on the trajectory and decision-making.



An acarid arthropod through microscope. A massive colony of acarid insect was discovered around anthills and sensors. At Grand Hall, LUMA Arles, France. Photo credit: Shubhankar Pr. Bharti, © Pierre Huyghe





Following the notion of "trajectory of the artwork", it is possible to affirm that only an adapted documentation can define the limits of acceptability for future changes. In this line, a comprehensive, multi-level documentation methodology was adopted. Two different approaches were applied: one focusing on the artworks as individual entities and the other focusing on the exhibition as a single entity and locating its phases and trajectories.

### DOCUMENTING ARTWORKS OF AFTER UUMWELT

Needless to say, it was not possible to adopt a single format and method for complete condition assessment. I have therefore chosen to categorise the artworks as such:

**Time-based media:** A three-step documentation process was established with the conservator Zoë Renaudie. Firstly, an identity report was produced, listing all the components of the installation. For this I also referred to the research and report by the Guggenheim conservators as part of the Conserving Computer-Based Art (CCBA) initiative. Secondly, a functionality report was created in collaboration with engineers and IT specialists to verify the functional status of all the listed components in the entire installation. Thirdly, I relied on the report developed by Matters in Media Art which explores the software issues, warranties, imminent risks and other vulnerabilities to the artwork.

**Ephemeral objects:** A periodic condition report was produced to document all changes in the work on a biweekly basis. The aim was not to reverse the impact of the passage of time, but to identify unintended impacts on the artworks such as fingerprint marks, cracks and broken elements due to vandalism or staff error.

**Living Matter:** An appropriate methodology of documenting living elements in conservation literature is almost

inexistent. I decided to create a document similar to an identity sheet used by biologists and added a logbook to record the conditions and interventions related to care.

**Ecosystem:** The existence of the exhibition ecosystem is based on the specific configuration of tangible artworks and their interrelation. I created a diagram, along with the written documents, to identify how the artworks are related to one another.

### DOCUMENTING AFTER UUMWELT AS AN EXHIBITION: A BIOGRAPHICAL APPROACH

In order to document the important trajectories of *After Uumwelt*, I referred to the concept of artwork having a biography (Kopytoff, 1986; Appadurai, 1988). By looking at an artwork through its biographical approach, I was able to identify important phases and moments of transition which proved essential during the decision-making process.

The biographical information was completed in three stages: first, daily reports (notes, visuals and regular interventions); second, bi-weekly and monthly reports (major developments, updating protocol, etc.); third, a work dossier completed at the end of the exhibition (all the technical and conceptual details, production stages, major interventions, modifications and changes in the works).

### DECISION-MAKING AS A CONSERVATION STRATEGY

This extensive documentation became an essential tool to identify the variability of the artworks and the limits of acceptable future changes. With this information I created a framework of important decisions in collaboration with the artist and his representatives, owners, art historians, conservation team, registrar and technical consultants.

To answer questions related to the viability of the work, collaboration with technical teams proved to be an important asset to better understand the technical aspects and to enable more accurate documentation and decision-making. Working side by side with exhibition registrar Nicolas Pêne and closely with IT specialists, oncologists, beekeepers, myrmecologists as well as biologists proved the collaboration to be an active conservation methodology.

The protocol of intervention became the main source of reference documents. Every decision had been carefully analysed because every action taken or withheld directly influenced the presentation of the work to the public. To avoid a stagnant care procedure when faced with the changing impact of time on the exhibition, the protocol was regularly reviewed and updated with the relevant stakeholders.

Following this line of thought, it is possible to consider that the role of conservators is similar to the role of the modern dramaturge in the theatre arts (Phillips & Laan, 2022). Like a dramaturge, conservators today guide the artist by asking questions, listening to their answers, and then negotiating with all stakeholders to authentically realize their work and ensure its representation to a larger public.

## CONCLUSION

Conservation research within exhibition as a medium is constantly evolving and remains a challenge in its application in museums and cultural institutions. The purpose of this article is to introduce the outcomes of my research while working as an art conservator in *After UUmwelt*. It could also be seen as an attempt to test the limits of the role as conservator in the context of an exhibition and to provide an example of an adapted conservation methodology in practice. Following this line of thought, it is possible to consider that the key to conserving complex artworks of contemporary art lies in exhaustive documentation, technical research, collaboration and critical decision-making.

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**Shubhankar Pr Bharti** is an art conservator and artist. Currently head registrar at 193 Gallery, Paris, he has previously worked at the Collection LAMBERT, Avignon, LUMA Arles in France and at INTACH-CKP, Bengaluru India. Specialised in contemporary art, he holds a degree in art conservation from the Ecole Supérieure d'Art d'Avignon (ESAA).



MARCH 2023



# RATE CARD

## NEWS IN CONSERVATION

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# NEW TECHNOLOGY FOR CONSERVATORS

## TESTS OF AUGMENTED REALITY DEVICE SHOW PROMISE FOR PROFESSIONALS & STUDENTS

By Ann Manser







*Joelle Wickens was on the ground floor of a local museum, watching as two recent University of Delaware (UD) graduates worked on a project to assess the conservation needs of the historic building and its collections.*

The two, both former students in UD's Department of Art Conservation, were three stories above Wickens, using an innovative type of technology called augmented reality to show her the signs of water damage in the attic. From the wheelchair she uses for mobility outside her home, the assistant professor of art conservation was intently studying a laptop computer screen as she explored various features of the technology and spoke with the students through their devices.

"I was so focused on testing out the device that I didn't immediately think about what I was actually seeing," Wickens said. "Then, I suddenly realized that, even though I've worked with this museum for a long time, I was seeing the attic for the first time. It was an amazing experience for me."

It's an experience that she thinks has a wide range of applications—not only for people with mobility issues or other disabilities and not only in the field of art conservation—that could benefit professionals, students, and educators.

Wickens and her team use a Microsoft device called HoloLens 2 in which a user wears a headset with a visor to access augmented or mixed reality. Augmented reality (AR) is something like the virtual reality often used in games and other entertainment, but it offers additional features and ways of interacting with the real world including electronic screens arranged in front of the wearer's eyes.

"Augmented reality means you overlay the virtual world," said Eric Cantrell, director of college computing operations for the College of Arts and Sciences Information Technologies group. "The technology is interactive, and it's a clean, immersive interface."

In their tests of the technology, former students Margalit Schindler and Morigan Kelley wore HoloLens 2 headsets as they explored Rockwood Museum—in Wilmington, Delaware (USA)—whose director, Ryan Grover, has been

**Left:** Morigan Kelley (left) wears augmented reality goggles to transmit images of a painting in the Rockwood Museum, while Margalit Schindler examines other details of the Museum. Image by Evan Krape / University of Delaware

**Above:** Margalit Schindler holds a magnifier up to a painting so that Morigan Kelley, wearing the augmented reality device, can transmit details for Joelle Wickens to see on her laptop. Image by Evan Krape / University of Delaware

working with UD to develop a conservation plan for the building and its contents. Schindler and Kelley were able to show both overviews of rooms (such as the attic) and close-up images of water damage to its wooden ceiling. They were also thrilled to discover that the lens can accommodate the addition of a magnifier, which allowed Wickens to distinguish between a 3mm piece of dust and a carpet beetle, an essential task in this kind of assessment.

A specialist in preventive conservation, Wickens says the augmented reality technology offers benefits beyond other types of remote access such as viewing still photos or video from a handheld tablet or phone. “When somebody is wearing one of these, you see exactly what they’re seeing, and in clear detail,” she said. “If I see something I want to investigate further, I can immediately direct the wearer to move to what I want to see next.”

Wickens and the technology specialists at UD, who are working with her to test and fine-tune the technology, have brainstormed numerous possible academic uses including more remote teaching and learning opportunities for prospective conservators or the ability for a chemistry student in self-quarantine due to COVID exposure to participate in an on-campus lab from home.

The COVID pandemic and the lockdowns it brought about first sparked Wickens’ awareness of the technology. A conservation scientist friend told her how the British National Health Service had used headsets that allowed a single medical professional to don protective clothing and an AR device to visit a patient while colleagues participated in the care and assessment from outside the hospital room.

“The pandemic made us all think about doing things differently—doing much more virtually—and this seemed like it could be very useful,” Wickens said. Her first thoughts were of the time, money and environmental impact that could be saved by sending a headset, rather than a museum professional, along with a collection loan to survey and document the condition of the pieces when they arrived at the host institution.

Her next thought was of the ways the technology could streamline her own work. “My students and I have worked in many historic, multistory buildings with no handicap-accessible elevators, and I’ve used various work-arounds,” she said. “But I realized that this technology could solve an immediate need for me.”

Wickens ordered a HoloLens 2 device and conferred with Eric Cantrell, director of college computing operations for the College of Arts and Sciences Information Technologies group. Cantrell had been interested in the technology for some time and thought it had educational possibilities.

“I’m really happy that Joelle saw the potential and jumped right in,” he said. “There are so many uses, beyond any mobility issues.”

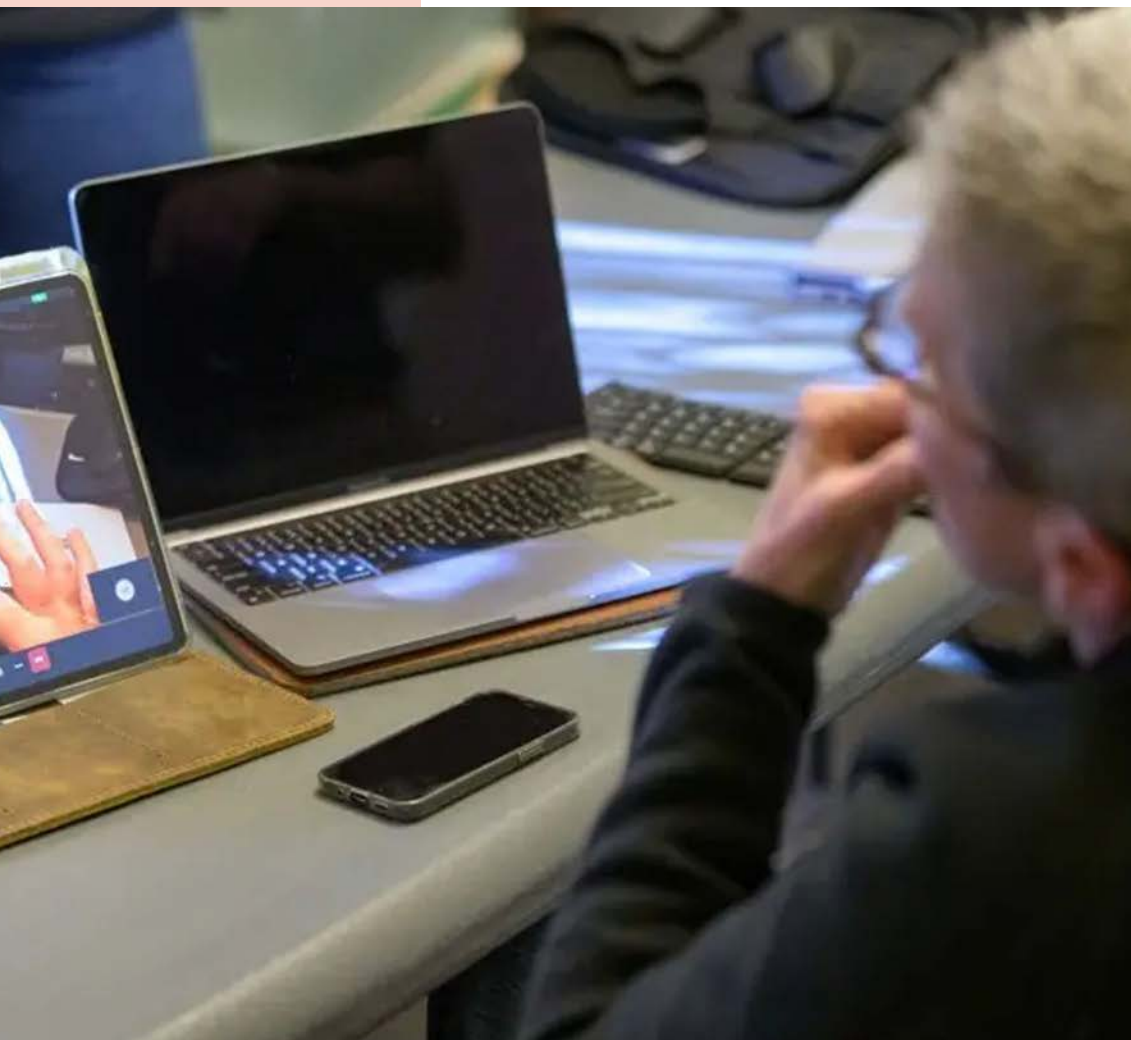






Above: In the museum's attic, team members (from left) Margalit Schindler, Morigan Kelley and Tim Leefeldt check out the condition of some wooden beams. Image by Evan Krape / University of Delaware

Below: Joelle Wickens uses her laptop to view real-time images transmitted by the augmented reality headset as she and her team test out the technology and explore its potential uses. Image by Evan Krape / University of Delaware



Wickens, who acknowledges that technology “is not my first love,” said the support and enthusiasm from Cantrell and Tim Leefeldt, also of the College’s Information Technologies group, has been invaluable.

Wearing the headset “takes some getting used to,” said Schindler, a 2022 graduate of the Winterthur/University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation who is now principal conservator with Pearl Preservation. The device works best, the trial run demonstrated, when the wearer learns to move their head slowly and smoothly and adjusts their gaze to line up objects with the camera on the visor rather than their eyes. But with those adjustments, “It’s amazing to use,” Schindler said.

Going forward, plans are to collaborate with Microsoft to see if certain features—like specialized lighting that would be particularly useful in art conservation work—could be incorporated into the technology.

Also interested in the project is Karen Latimer, an assistive technology specialist with the Delaware Assistive Technology Initiative housed in UD’s Center for Disabilities Studies. Latimer is investigating the potential for adding an augmented reality device to the statewide library of technology that can be borrowed and used by people with disabilities.



Margalit Schindler (left), wearing the HoloLens 2 augmented reality headset, speaks with Joelle Wickens about the technology and its usefulness in the Rockwood Museum project to develop a conservation plan for the historic building and its collections. Image by Evan Krape / University of Delaware





Setting up the technology for a test at Rockwood Museum are UD team members (foreground, from left) Margalit Schindler, Tim Leefeldt, Eric Cantrell and Joelle Wickens; behind them (from left) museum director Ryan Grover speaks with Morrigan Kelley. Image by Evan Krape / University of Delaware

## ABOUT JOELLE WICKENS AND THE PROJECT

Joelle D.J. Wickens is assistant professor of preventive conservation and associate director of the graduate [Winterthur/UD Program in Art Conservation](#). Preventive conservators work to protect cultural heritage, such as historic buildings and museum collections, from environmental damage. They often conduct assessments to help develop conservation and emergency preparedness plans. Wickens' current work focuses on evolving the practice of the specialty to place social, economic and environmental sustainability at its core and to help broaden and diversify the field.

[Rockwood Park and Museum](#) in Wilmington, Delaware (USA) is a 72-acre site owned and operated by New Castle County, Delaware. The Museum is housed in a 19<sup>th</sup>-century Rural Gothic Revival mansion that is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Find and read the original article here: <https://www.udel.edu/udaily/2023/january/augmented-reality-technology-art-conservation-education/>



**Ann Manser** is a University of Delaware graduate who spent much of her career as a newspaper journalist and then worked as a writer and editor for the University and its College of Arts and Sciences. Now retired, she continues to do freelance reporting and writing.



# Sustainable Solutions for Conservation: New Strategies for New Times

## IIC Lima Congress 2024

## IIC LIMA CONGRESS 2024: CALL FOR PROPOSALS

*The International Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (IIC) and the Research Center for Heritage Conservation at the Universidad de Ingeniería & Tecnología (UTEC) in Lima, are pleased to issue a call for proposals for the 30th biennial IIC Congress 2024 to be hosted in person and online in Lima, Peru, with hybrid Regional Live Hubs in Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay.*

The Congress theme is *Sustainable solutions for conservation: new strategies for new times*. The field of conservation has undoubtedly developed unequally and inequitably around the world, and it is not uncommon for countries with some of the richest heritage to be amongst the least developed. These discrepancies are widely recognized to have become more extreme with climate change and during the recent global pandemic, where limited resources are restricted even further. Sustainable conservation strategies are desperately needed to create safe and more affordable approaches that will increase protection for the world's heritage and provide greater resilience to future world events and crises.

By proposing South America as the host for the 2024 IIC Congress and Lima as the main venue, our starting point will be the challenges associated with conserving Peru's rich cultural heritage, but we'll also look outwards to the similar challenges facing many other countries around the world. We would like this Congress to act as a catalyst to improve the IIC's visibility and relevance to the region, as well as creating a lasting legacy of connecting professionals and training programmes globally.

We are looking for new, original, unpublished work, relevant to the Congress theme and to the conservation profession, exploring the shift to sustainable, accessible, and environmentally friendly solutions in conservation. Sub-themes of particular interest include:

- Sustainable approaches for both moveable and built heritage, including the concepts of adaptation and 'managed loss'
- Re-evaluation of traditional methods and techniques for preventive and remedial conservation that offer more sustainable solutions.
- Reducing consumption, avoiding single use and hazardous materials, and sourcing local, natural materials
- Innovative ways of reducing energy consumption
- Models of collaborative international and interdisciplinary work that increase professional interaction among communities.
- The effective use of virtual networks and online tools for conservation.
- The rising role and involvement of communities and different social entities as active caretakers of their heritage.
- The creation and maintenance of programmes offering professional training in conservation.

**Deadline for Submissions:**  
31 May 2023 (midnight BST)

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# 2030 STRATEGY

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR CONSERVATION OF HISTORIC AND ARTISTIC WORKS



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Strategy



# ANNUAL REVIEW 2021-2022

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR CONSERVATION OF HISTORIC AND ARTISTIC WORKS



Read the IIC  
Annual Review  
2021-2022



# ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2023

## MINUTES

*The seventy-third Annual General Meeting of the International Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works took place at 6:00 pm (GMT) on Monday 30<sup>th</sup> January 2023 at The Courtauld Institute of Art, Vernon Square Campus, Penton Rise, London which was the address given on the notice for attendance with online participation for attendees via Zoom teleconference.*

**Council Members Present:** Julian Bickersteth (President, in the Chair), Jane Henderson (Secretary-General), Amber Kerr (Director of Communications), Juergen Vervoort (Director of Awards and Grants), Joyce Townsend (Director of Publications), Lori Wong, Eleonora Nagy, Helen Griffiths and Sarah Staniforth (President Emeritus).

**In attendance:** Sarah Stannage (Executive Director) Ellie Sweetnam (Fellowship and Membership Engagement Manager) and Marina Herriges (Regional Programmes Manager)

*A full list of Fellows and members in attendance will be included in the minutes available on the IIC website.*

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Julian Bickersteth, President, in the Chair, extended a welcome to all those present, and called the meeting to order at **6.05 pm** noting that the 73<sup>rd</sup> Annual General Meeting was by videoconference convened by proper notice to IIC members circulated on the 21 December 2022 with all reports including the annual accounts available to view on IIC's website and with this the attendance requirements of Article 11 have been met. There were no direct or indirect conflicts of interest declared in the proposed business to be transacted at the meeting.

- Thanks were given and recorded to Lori Wong and Eleonora Nagy as Ordinary Members of Council who have come to the end of their first and second terms respectively. They were thanked by the president for their contribution and dedication to supporting IIC Council.
- The Executive Director, Sarah Stannage, Fellowship and Member Engagement Manager, Ellie Sweetnam and Regional Programme Manager, Marina Herriges were declared as the tellers to record votes at the meeting.
- The minutes of the last Annual General Meeting on 26 May 2022 were published on the IIC web-site and circulated to members electronically. The minutes were confirmed by members as read and a true and correct record by show of hands and were digitally signed by the president.
- The Notice calling the present Annual General Meeting was published on the IIC website on 21 December 2022 and sent to all eligible members by e-mail. The Notice was declared as read by a show of hands.
- The Reports and Financial Statements were sent by e-mail to members, in December 2022 and published in the IIC website. Members agreed by show of hands that the Reports and Financial Statements could be taken as read.

The president provided an overview to the year under review, which demonstrated that IIC was able to be resilient during volatile events including the global pandemic. We delivered our IIC S&ECC 2021 student and emerging conservator conference online from Lisbon, Portugal, offering connection to students and early career conservators in five regions globally extending to 52 countries - making networking and learning affordable for a new tranche of first-time attendees during a challenging period for education globally. We also worked collaboratively with other conservation and culture sector organisations, taking part in a major



international climate conference hosted by the UN COP26 at Glasgow following the release of our Joint Commitment for Climate Action with ICOM-CC and ICCROM. We delivered new and innovative development for our members, such as training to take part in a global Edit-a-Thon. We continued to spread good practice including through our major journal *Studies in Conservation* and sector magazine *News in Conservation*, and we continued to build on the work from this sometimes challenging but ultimately innovative year - extending our membership geographically and offering opportunities and support to all members of IIC.

IIC's accounts have been audited by Sayer Vincent LLP and a technical review of IIC's financial reports and accounts was undertaken and signed by the auditors, showing that IIC made a deficit at the year-end which was caused by the volatility in global markets negatively affecting IIC's investments.

No questions or queries were raised by members at the AGM.

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*In respect to the Ordinary Resolutions included in the notice to members, these were taken together. The votes online in advance and at the meeting were combined. Members resolved to approve by 61 votes (For), 0 (against) with no abstentions recorded, the following resolutions:*

**Resolution 1:** To receive and consider the Reports of the Council and the Auditors and the Financial Statements for the year ended 30 June 2022

**Resolution 2:** To appoint Sayer Vincent as Auditors to The Institute and to authorise the Council to fix their remuneration for the ensuing year.

On the basis of this, resolutions 1 and 2 were duly adopted.

It was confirmed that the following individuals were standing for election as Ordinary Members of Council for the first time: Caitlin Breare, Duygu Çamurcuoglu, Nyssa Mildwaters, Thomas Roby, Rehan Scharenquivel and Luiz Souza. In the new role of Director, Chair of Fellowships there was one candidate standing for election, David Saunders, and in the new role of Director, Chair of Professional Development and Standards, there was also one candidate standing for election, Rachel Rivenc.

The President made members aware at the AGM, that the election statements for each candidate have been checked and reviewed by the Talent and Participation Committee and were published on the IIC website.

There were no proxy votes to consider.

**Resolution 3:** *To elect two ordinary members of Council*

On the basis of the total votes, Luiz Sousa and Duygu Camurcuoglu were duly elected as ordinary members of Council for a three-year term.

**Resolution 4:** *To elect a Director, Chair of Fellowships*

David Saunders was standing for election in this new role. On the basis of the total vote, David Saunders was duly elected as Director, Chair of Fellowships for a three-year term.

**Resolution 5:** *To elect a Director, Chair of Professional Development and Standards*

Rachel Rivenc was standing for election in this new role. On the basis of the total vote, Rachel Rivenc was duly elected as Director, Chair of Professional Development and Standards.

**Resolution 6:** *To transact any ordinary business*

Julian Bickersteth, noting that there was no further business, declared the annual general meeting closed at 6.35 p.m. (GMT).





# CHANGES TO MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION RATES

In January 2023 Council adopted the [new IIC Strategy 2030](#) and agreed to seed the strategy through its investment funds and through changes to its membership subscription rates.

Membership subscription rates were reviewed by the Finance Committee looking at the barriers to becoming a member, evolving changes in subscription models globally as well as the discounts in rates offered by IIC across different regions and affiliated groups—all this against the background that IIC rates have been maintained at the same level for over five years. The objective of the review was to establish new rates and categories that will enable global growth for our membership network and to ensure these rates are keeping pace with a changing world while remaining fair and affordable for all.

To help IIC achieve change at scale and at pace, the following rates, discounts and incentives will now apply for the 2023 – 24 membership year, starting on 1 July 2023. (It is important to note that voting rights, [as outlined in IIC's Article of Association](#), are unchanged.)

To reduce our environmental impact and the production of printed publications, IIC will also introduce an Essentials membership package promoting digital access to publications only and Professionals and Organisations membership packages, enabling digital access to publications with a print option for *Studies in Conservation* where digital access is problematic or print is preferred.

A summary of the changes to incentives and discounts include:

- 10% increase to some membership rates, although institutions and retired Fellows will be maintained at the same rate as 2022-23, and banded discounts will now apply to institutions.
- Introduction of increased discounts for Band 4 countries (by a further 25%)
- Removal of 10% multi-member discounts, although the 10% discount will be retained for members of [IIC Regional Groups](#) + affiliated organisations who have a signed Memorandum of Understanding with IIC, such as NZCCM and AICCM.
- Introduction of 10% member loyalty discount for renewing members
- Introduction of new membership categories (Individual-Pathway and Studios/Small Enterprise)

Membership Categories	
Essentials	Students
	Early Career
	Retired Individuals
Professionals + Organisations	Individuals -
	** New**
	Individuals -
	Fellows
	Institutions and organisations
	** New **
Studios and Small Enterprise (up to 4 employees)	



\* Discount bands for different countries can be viewed online [here](#).

\*\* Rates will be set at the same level for individuals on the Pathway to Fellowship and for elected Fellows who are living and working in band 3 and 4 regions.

Category	Band 1*	Band 2*	Band 3*	Band 4*
	Discount Rate Applied			
	0%	25%	50%	75%
	£27	£20.25	£13.50	£6.75
	£55	£41.25	£27.50	£13.75
Individuals and Retired Fellows	£55	£41.25	£27.50	£13.75
Ordinary	£70	£52.50	£35	£17.50
Pathway to Fellowship	£77	£57.75	£38.50**	£19.25**
	£110	£82.50	£38.50**	£19.25**
Small and medium/ large organisations (more than 5 employees)	£360	£270	£180	£90
Small organisations (5 employees)	£110	£82.50	£55	£27.50



# PLANNING YOUR PATH TO FELLOWSHIP

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR CONSERVATION OF HISTORIC AND ARTISTIC WORKS

By nurturing skills, talent, and leadership capacity we ground our words in action. Our investment in our Fellows is demonstrated through IIC's enrichment programmes, grants, international prizes and awards.

## WHY BECOME A FELLOW? – SHARING VALUES, MAKING A GLOBAL IMPACT

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

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

IIC is unique in being the only global learned society and fellowship organisation for conservators and conservation professionals.

“OUR AMBITION IS TO BUILD AN OPEN AND INCLUSIVE NETWORK OF FELLOWS IN EVERY REGION OF THE WORLD. OUR GOAL IS TO EMPOWER CHANGE AND BECOME A CATALYST FOR DISCOVERY AND PIONEERING PRACTICE GLOBALLY”.

Julian Bickersteth FIIC,  
President IIC

## Demystifying the process

However, we realise that it can seem daunting to apply for IIC Fellow status, especially if you don't see others taking this path in your workplace, country or region. Meanwhile some of the language around election to Fellowship first originated in the 1950s and can be off-putting and seem inaccessible. This is something we are determined to change, for the benefit of all.

Therefore, this guide sits alongside the [more process-based advice here](#), to talk you through becoming a Fellow as a practical, achievable career goal. There are three points of entry:

- [Individual Member](#)
- [Regional Group Member](#)
- [Non-member](#)

Whatever your route, our Fellows are at the heart of IIC and we welcome a diversity of experience, from working in institutions and private practice to universities and commercial suppliers.

Nominations are received and reviewed by the Fellowship Committee and IIC Council before going to ballot three times a year. Deadlines for nominations are as follows:

31 March

31 July

30 November

## When should I start thinking about becoming a Fellow?

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

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



## Take opportunities to connect and continue learning

IIC offers numerous ways to continue professional development, network and meet colleagues internationally.

Currently you might:

- Choose one of IIC's leadership programme options.

Our ten-month interactive [Adapt course](#) with leadership masterclasses is free to conservators in emerging economies.

[International Leadership Mentoring Programme](#) runs three times a year for IIC members.

- Come to [Congresses](#) and participate in the Fellows' and Members' networking events – in person or online and at international hub events across numerous time zones. This is a great way to meet colleagues, members and existing IIC Fellows.

As well as building your CV and confidence, these programmes and events will help you get to know others in the profession.

## Who will support my nomination as a Fellow?

IIC's model for nominating Fellows has historically been based around existing Fellows nominating and voting for new entries. However, this can be a block if you don't know or work with IIC Fellows personally. Becoming more involved, via some of the routes described above, is one option.

We are also rolling out other new ways to encourage Fellow applications this year – from short one to one chats with existing newer Fellows – and half hour events on the detail, where you can ask questions. If you are already a member of IIC you can [watch one of our recent half hour events with Q&As here](#).

## Taking the final step

Our aim is that at the point your name goes on the ballot paper, it should be with a solid, informed confidence that you have the necessary skills, to be affirmed by the voting process.

If you need any further information please get in touch with IIC's Fellowship and Member Engagement Manager, Ellie Sweetnam on [ellie.sweetnam@iiconservation.org](mailto:ellie.sweetnam@iiconservation.org) or visit the IIC website: [www.iiconservation.org](http://www.iiconservation.org)



Peer election, recognition, respect and integrity



Trusted - sets a high standard for excellence and expertise



Being part of a growing and inclusive network with an open generosity to share knowledge and learning



International fellowship acknowledges the impact you've made, your contribution, influence and vision





## FELLOW NOMINATION DEADLINES AND FELLOW MEETINGS

### Fellow Meeting Dates:

30 March 2023 (6pm, BST)  
31st August 2023 (6pm, BST)  
16th November 2023 (6pm, GMT)

### Deadlines for Fellowship Nominations:

31 March 2023  
31 July 2023  
30 November 2023

## DE-MYSTIFYING THE FELLOWSHIP PATHWAY 1-1 Q&A SESSIONS

We are currently striving to make our Fellowship process more accessible for nominations and are aware that there are still barriers to Fellowship. Therefore, we have organised 1-1 sessions for our Individual and Fellow members, Regional Group members or any non-members interested in either nominating or becoming a Fellow.

Book a half-hour slot to ask any questions you may have regarding the Fellowship Pathway. In these sessions you can gain more information on the Pathway to Fellowship and what that entails, assistance with our Member Directory, your CV and statement of support.

Our next sessions will be held at the end of June, and if you are interested in booking a slot, please contact Ellie Sweetnam at [ellie.sweetnam@iiconservation.org](mailto:ellie.sweetnam@iiconservation.org).



# WELCOME ONBOARD TO THE EMERGING PROFESSIONALS COMMITTEE!

The Emerging Professionals Committee aims to increase the inclusion of students and emerging professionals from diverse backgrounds and nationalities, to inspire and empower them through dedicated activities such as Student and Emerging Conservator Conference. The committee is keen in developing programmes and resources to impart skills internationally to students and early career conservation professionals. It aims to provide platforms for emerging professionals to meet and interact with their peers from different parts of the world and to leverage support from experts in the field. The Emerging Professionals Committee members come from diverse nationalities converging for the larger goal to provide support at different stages of their career, to introduce standards and practices in conservation and further the vision of IIC.



**Aditya Kanth,  
Chair**

Professor Aditya Kanth is the Director, Chair of the IIC Emerging Professionals Committee. He is an art conservator and an assistant professor at Centre for Heritage Management at the Ahmedabad University. His area of research is the scientific characterization of art and archaeological objects and the development of conservation methodologies.



**Katelynn Cunningham,  
Member**

Katelynn Cunningham is a heritage professional from California (US). After earning her B.A. in history in Italy, she moved to Germany where she is completing her M.A. in heritage conservation and site management. Katelynn has participated in conservation projects in Kosovo, Albania, North Macedonia, and Egypt.



**Simran Sangal,  
Member**

Simran is a conservation assistant at Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, New Delhi, India, and is currently working on the biggest re-organisation project in India. Initially trained as a historian, Simran has a diploma in preventive conservation and a master's in museology and conservation from India.

**Ogechukwu Elizabeth  
Okpalanozie, Member**

Ogechukwu Elizabeth Okpalanozie is a conservator at National Museum, Lagos, Nigeria. She has a master's degree in heritage and interpretation from University of Leicester, UK, and a Ph.D. in cultural heritage microbiology from University of Lagos, Nigeria.



**Héctor J. Berdecía-  
Hernández, Member**

Héctor is a conservator-restorer specializing in architecture and the founding director-general of the Centro de Conservación y Restauración de Puerto Rico. He is also an adjunct professor at the Polytechnic University of Puerto Rico.



**Phedra Komodromoupe,  
Member**

Phedra is Greek and Cypriot, raised in Belgium, and has also lived in the UK, USA, Malta, Greece and Cyprus. She recently completed her MSc studies in conservation at Cardiff University and has just started a new position as an archaeological conservator for the Swiss School of Archaeology in Greece.



**Mohamed Waheed Ali  
Elmorsi, Member**

Mohamed Waheed is the executive manager of the Conservation Centre, conservator, head of The Receiving Artifacts Unit and The First Aid Labs at the National Museum of the Egyptian Civilization (NMEC) Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities in Egypt.



# RESILIENCE

How we adapt heritage-preservation to future challenges

Copenhagen, October 2024 – [www.nkf-dk.dk/congress2024](http://www.nkf-dk.dk/congress2024)

## Background

In 2024 Denmark is hosting the 23rd triennial NKF Congress. The congress host rotates between the member countries of NKF (Nordic Association of Conservators, IIC Nordic Group): Denmark, Iceland, Finland, Norway and Sweden. It marks the end of each country's three-year presidency of the association.

Since 2021 the Danish organization under NKF has been working on finding the right theme and scope of the 2024 congress, and measuring the resources needed to succeed. The decision has been made for a two-day congress in Copenhagen in October 2024.

## Congress theme

The title of the congress will be *Resilience*, with the subtitle *How we adapt heritage-preservation to future challenges*. With *Resilience* as title, we will focus on preservation in a changing world. We would like to create a space to discuss the resiliency of the conservation field and how it should adapt to changes in climate and biodiversity, international political structures, colonial dynamics and much more. How can heritage-preservation contribute to a change of conduct amongst people, institutions and society?

The congress has four main sessions, each focused on a different theme:

**Resources & sustainability.** Subjects to be discussed: Volunteering, interdisciplinarity, sustainable architecture and building, climate and environment, underwater archeology, rewilding etc.

**Co-creation & collaboration.** Subjects to be discussed: Activism, ownership, responsibility, volunteering, interdisciplinarity, representation, inclusion etc.

**Conflict & care.** Subjects to be discussed: Repatriation and representation, anti-colonization, digitization, armed conflict, recovery, activism, inclusion etc.

**Change & persistence.** Subjects to be discussed: Education, heritage skills, legislation, heritage communities and organisations (ECCO, ICOMOS, ICOM etc.), digitization, climate change etc.

We would like to invite speakers and attendees from all over the world coming from a conservation or another heritage profession background. We invite themes with both a theoretical and practical view, and contributions will be peer-reviewed.

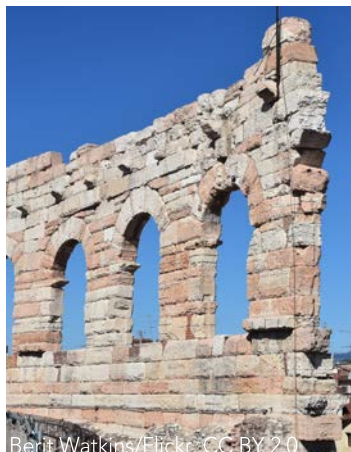
NKF XXIII Congress will show the newest research in heritage preservation from the IIC-Nordic Group and invite international researchers to bring their knowledge to northern Europe. We believe in the importance of knowledge sharing and new perspectives to open our eyes and dare look into the sore subjects of a changing future.

Get the latest news of the conference and calls by subscribing to our newsletter at [www.nkf-dk.dk/congress2024](http://www.nkf-dk.dk/congress2024)



# IGIIC

GRUPPO ITALIANO  
INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE  
FOR CONSERVATION



Berit Watkins/Flickr. CC BY 2.0

## IG-IIC: The State of the Art 21

19-21 October 2023, Verona

This year's IIC Italian Group congress theme is "Cultural heritage in public collections: conservation issues and problems from archaeological finds to polychrome artifacts"

Thematic Areas:

- Public and private art collection
- Restoration and project
- Diagnostics, research and applied studies
- Preventive Conservation
- Ethics and Sustainability in Conservation of the Cultural Heritage

[more info](#)



Hrag Vartanian/Flickr. CC BY-ND 2.0

## Linee di Energia

June 2023 (final date and location TBD)

Beyond photography. The photographic image between production, creation and conservation

Topics:

- The nature of the photographic work in its conception of authenticity and originality
- Technical problems and intervention methodologies for the conservation and restoration of photography
- From analogue to digital (and vice versa): the transition from the photographic object to the immaterial image as an aesthetic process and as a form of conservation/documentation.
- The relationship between time and photography, both in the sense of recording and documenting a temporary phenomenon, and in the vocation of preserving and transmitting the image to the future.

[more info](#)



Public Domain/The MET

## Workshop: The Er: YAG Laser for restoration

21-23 June 2023, Pisa (registration deadline 15 May 2023)

The workshop is divided into three days with a first part which includes a theoretical introduction and occupational safety, and a second part dedicated exclusively to the practical use of Er:YAG laser technology.

[more info](#)



## 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. We aim to open two rounds per year.

The Fund is now open for applications, closing on **30 April 2023**. The Fund currently awards Needs-Based Learning-Focused Bursaries (up to £250) and Seed Funding Grants (up to £750). Find more information [HERE](#).

### *Read about one of our recent Opportunities Fund recipients:*

I want to express my gratitude to the International Institute for Conservation for the grant awarded to me at a time when my economic situation was unfavorable and also to let you know how the money you kindly provided to me was used and helped me with my private work. The money was used for two things:

Part of the money was used for buying a fine set of Flexicut gouges which have very been useful for wooden sculpture conservation projects. In addition, as a linocut engraver, it also allowed me to improve the quality of my designs. In fact, it was during the quarantine that I started selling my designs and printing them on shirts.

The rest of the money was used to buy materials for a warehouse risk management project including a digital datalogger and some packaging materials, such as bubble wrap and silicone-coated paper. As a result, a collection of six easel paintings was correctly packed and stored, and a condition report of the storage place was delivered to the client.

Finally, I just want to reiterate my gratitude to the IIC for the support you have given to me and to many other conservators.

Sincerely yours,  
Alfredo Ortega-Ordaz





## FEATURED JOB LISTINGS

We offer [listings of jobs](#) in heritage conservation worldwide, useful whether you are seeking a post in a particular city or region or are planning an international career. IIC seeks to foster recognition of the responsibility held within the conservation profession for preserving cultural heritage around the world. The level of skill and knowledge required for such roles should be recognised in status and salary levels.

It is free for everyone to post a job at our standard tier and get noticed by thousands of conservators and cultural heritage professionals who visit the IIC site. [Click here for further information on featured listings.](#) Job listings and general announcements are made available for informational purposes; posting of items does not imply endorsement by IIC.

.....

### [Storage Coordinator \(Conservation\)](#)

Employer: The British Museum, London

Salary: 34,936 (GBP)

Deadline: 9 April 2023

**Description:** The postholder will lead in the care of the collection through preventive conservation measures and to lead in the coordination of conservation related activities concerning collection storage. This role delivers through representation, planning, and cross-museum collaboration in support of the museum's operating plan, and to proactively engage with public outreach activities of the Department of Conservation. (click link above for more information)

### [Assistant/Associate Professorship in the Field of Graphic Conservation](#)

Employer: Royal Danish Academy, Copenhagen

Salary: 352,938-499,156 (DKK)

Deadline: 10 April 2023

**Description:** The Royal Danish Academy – Architecture, Design, Conservation invites applications for a permanent, full-time assistant/associate professorship with a particular focus on conservation of paper and related graphic materials. The position commences 1 August 2023 or as soon as possible thereafter. (click link above for more information)

### [Assistant/Associate Professorship in the Field of Photographic Techniques](#)

Employer: Royal Danish Academy, Copenhagen

Salary: 352,938-499,156 (DKK)

Deadline: 4 May 2023

**Description:** The Royal Danish Academy – Architecture, Design, Conservation, invites applications for a permanent, full-time assistant/associate professorship in the field of photographic techniques, with a particular focus on conservation of photographic materials. The position commences 1 September 2023 or as soon as possible thereafter. (click link above for more information)

### [Assistant/Associate Professorship in the Field of Leather Conservation](#)

Employer: Royal Danish Academy, Copenhagen

Salary: 352,938-499,156 (DKK)

Deadline: 4 June 2023

**Description:** The Royal Danish Academy – Architecture, Design, Conservation invites applications for a permanent, full-time assistant/associate professorship with a particular focus on the conservation of leather, skins, hides, parchment, and furs. The position commences 1 October 2023 or as soon as possible thereafter. (click link above for more information)

## FELLOWSHIP CORNER

**Lisa Young** is currently a supervisory conservator at the National Air and Space Museum (USA). She has conducted primary research on the degradation and preservation of spacesuits for over two decades, including serving as conservation lead to the “Saving Threatened Artifacts from the Apollo Era” project and the Smithsonian’s first Kickstarter project to digitize, conserve, and display Neil Armstrong’s spacesuit for the 50th anniversary of the moon landing in 2019. She has presented on this topic both nationally and internationally and published articles on the display and preservation of space materials. Lisa is an AIC Fellow (2016) and is presently a PhD candidate at Durham University in the UK. She serves on the editorial committee for the IIC Journal, *Studies in Conservation*.



Lisa Young (FIIC) is a supervisory conservator at the National Air and Space Museum (USA). Image courtesy of Lisa Young.

**Maninder Singh Gill** is an art conservator and archaeological scientist based in India. He studied for an MA in art conservation at the National Museum Institute, New Delhi, and later attained a PhD in archaeological science from University College London (UCL). He also interned and trained at the Stichting Restauratie Atelier Limburg, The Netherlands, and at the Institute of Archaeology, UCL. He has been working in the field of conservation in India for over two decades and is professionally associated with the firm Art Conservation Solutions.

Maninder has a particular interest in the scientific studies of architectural embellishments and has conducted and published his research on a variety of art/archaeological materials on buildings from the medieval to early modern period including architectural glazed tiles, wall paintings, polychrome wood and decorative stone. He has lectured on his work at various forums and educational institutions and is an active member of organisations working towards the promotion of art and heritage conservation in India.



IIC Fellow Maninder Gill is an art conservator and archaeological scientist based in India. Image courtesy of Maninder Gill.



# MEET OUR TRUSTEES

## Meet IIC Vice President Sandra Smith

Since February 2019 I have been the head of collection care at the British Museum, responsible for the conservation, preservation, storage, documentation, photography and public access to the museum collection. Accepting this role brought me back to the British Museum where I had formerly worked for 17 years from 1985 to 2002, initially as a ceramics and glass conservator and then progressing to management roles: head of ceramics and glass section, head of inorganics conservation and, for a brief period, head of conservation.

Between 2002 and 2019, I was head of conservation and technical services at the Victoria & Albert (V&A), with an overview for the long-term care of the V&A collection.

Throughout my career I have actively engaged with the development of the conservation profession through the following roles: co-ordinator of the ceramics and glass working group of ICOM-CC, participating in working groups within Icon to develop career opportunities and education strategies in conservation and acting as examiner on conservation courses such as West Dean College, UCL and the former RCA/V&A conservation course. I have also acted as senior judge of the Nigel Williams Award, treasurer of IIC and Icon, and have provided advice and comment to research organisations (AHRC) and to the Museum's Association. I am currently a trustee of both the Gabo Trust and The Creative Dimensions Trust and Vice President of IIC (2019 ongoing).

I am an Icon accredited conservator (ACR) and Fellow of both the International Institute of Conservation (FIIC) and the Society of Antiquaries (FSA). I was awarded Honorary Fellow by the City and Guilds Art School in July 2019 for my work supporting the conservation courses.

As Vice President of IIC I have been responsible (2020-2023) for leading a working group of IIC Trustees to review applications for the Opportunities Fund. This grant makes funding available to IIC 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. Need-based and learning-focussed stipends were an invaluable source of support to IIC members during the Covid pandemic, providing financial support particularly for colleagues in countries where there was no central salary support available. This fund has recently been expanded to include members who are displaced or seeking refuge from conflict and disaster. The second strand, seed funding grants, provides support for projects and initiatives that promote sustainability, resilience or adaptation, welcoming applications that meet immediate practical needs as well as more experimental work.

Working within the IIC is a stimulating and grounding experience, providing the opportunity to see from a strategic and international perspective the challenges that face the conservation profession and its individual members today. Its work increasingly enables colleagues from countries beyond Europe and America to join in the global debate and feel supported. With this engagement and forward thinking, IIC is becoming a stronger and more confident advocate for those who protect the world's heritage.



Portrait of IIC Vice President Sandra Smith. Image courtesy of Sandra Smith.

# IN MEMORIAM MEL HOUSTON

By Isobel Griffin

*Mel Houston died on 1 January 2023, having established a career as one of the UK's leading preventive conservators. Friends and colleagues have helped to put together a record of Mel's career and achievements.*

Like many conservators, Mel didn't come directly to conservation. Her first degree was in biochemistry after which she worked as a lab technician for four years while completing a post-graduate Diploma in Biomedical Sciences. She then undertook a Diploma in Photography and Art at Edinburgh College of Art and subsequently a First-Class Honours Degree in Photography at Napier University. Following this she worked for several years as a photographer, most memorably at the Edinburgh Dungeon visitor attraction where her duties included feeding human blood to the leeches!

In the early 2000s Mel moved to Glasgow and became a visitor assistant at the National Trust for Scotland's (NTS) Glasgow Tenement House. She discovered the world of conservation, and while working for NTS she completed, with distinction, Northumbria University's MA in preventive conservation. Mel then secured an Icon/Heritage Lottery Fund internship at NTS, followed by various roles including project conservator for the new Robert Burns Birthplace Museum and several years as NTS's national preventive conservator. In this role Mel worked alongside three conservators (forming the Collections Conservation Service) supporting over 50 properties in the care and conservation of historic interiors and collections.

Mel's achievements at NTS were many and magnificent: installing and upgrading environmental monitoring systems; assimilating heritage science research outcomes into NTS preventive conservation practice; delivering high quality training to property staff; supervising and mentoring a host of grateful interns; and implementing a comprehensive programme of Integrated Pest Management. As well

as major capital projects, Mel was involved in complex collections care projects at some of NTS's most remote and challenging historic properties such as Canna House. Her work with the property's Lepidoptera (butterflies and moths) collection involved developing a significance-based collections review assessment to inform conservation and curatorial decisions and dealing with bottles of cyanide on open display.

In 2020 Mel joined the National Library of Scotland as their first preventive conservator and set about raising standards and developing new initiatives in her usual quiet but determined fashion. She had obtained her professional accreditation from the Institute of Conservation (Icon) in 2013 and served for six years as an Icon Trustee, chairing the Professional Standards and Development committee. She was also a key member of the Technical Committee for the IIC Wellington Congress 2022 where her extensive knowledge and ability to cut to the chase were greatly valued.

Integrated Pest Management was a particular passion for Mel throughout her conservation career, and she developed a national and international reputation for her work. She published in the 2011 proceedings of *A Pest Odyssey, 10 Years Later* (on the NTS's slimline and pragmatic approach) and served on the organising committee for the 2021 conference *A Pest Odyssey, The Next Generation* whose proceedings were published in 2022 by Archetype (eds Suzanne Ryder and Amy Crossman). She had further publications in the proceedings of the 2013 and 2019 IPM conferences alongside reports in the media about various insect pest projects. She was a member of the Royal Entomological Society, the Invertebrate Conservation Trust and





Image of Mel Houston. Courtesy of  
Clare Meredith



Bat Conservation Trust, and she also held the niche qualification of a bat survey licence!

Outside work Mel was a woman of many interests and adventures. Despite having lived in cities for much of her life, she enjoyed being outside amongst nature and spent many holidays farm-sitting for friends in Dunoon. In 2018 she and her partner realised a lifetime's dream when they bought a large cottage in the Scottish borders, not far from Melrose. The cottage came with several acres of land, much of which had been concreted over for a dog kennels business, but they saw its potential and developed a garden from scratch with a pond, orchard, vegetables and huge greenhouse. Cats and chickens took up residence followed by ducks and geese, and Mel also planned to introduce beehives.

If Mel wasn't outside, she was likely to be reading in the greenhouse or working on her home brews in the kitchen. In addition to making her own wine, she produced cassis, limoncello and flavoured vodka, which were often given to friends as presents. When she wasn't at home, she was off travelling the world; she was drawn to far flung and remote places (when choosing a holiday once, she narrowed down her choices to Sutherland, in the far north of Scotland, and Zanzibar off the east coast of Africa).

With the news of Mel's death, tributes poured in with several common themes. Firstly, Mel's kindness and patience, as she helped newly graduated conservators navigate through internships and first jobs and mentored conservators preparing for professional accreditation. One colleague recalled that 'she was so generous with her

knowledge and time and helped colleagues to develop their own practice. She was an incredible leader within the Scottish conservation community.' Connected to this were Mel's abilities as a trainer; she could make the complex simple and the mundane exciting, and she famously used fortune-telling fish to explain the concept of relative humidity to NTS property staff! She also had impressive analytical and strategic abilities; she could see the big picture while not ignoring the details, she analysed problems objectively and she could identify practical ways of moving forward. Last, but definitely not least, she was funny: she had a dry wit and, as one friend described it, a 'colossal sense of the absurd'.

But despite her many talents and impressive intellect, Mel was extremely unassuming, and always keen to stress the smallness of her knowledge in relation to the magnitude of things still to be learned. She would be astonished and slightly embarrassed by the outpouring of grief and affection that her death has prompted and much more comfortable in a quiet corner of the greenhouse with a cat on her lap and a glass of whisky on hand.

Charities to which donations can be given on Mel's behalf:

[Scottish Charity Air Ambulance](#)

[Bat Conservation Trust](#)

# Testing the Waters



## Registration

The registration will be done through the website, which we hope will be open by the end of April.

Time frame	Prospective dates (To be confirmed)	Registration type
Late April/Early May – Early July	May 1 <sup>st</sup> – July 1 <sup>st</sup>	Early bird registration
Early July – Mid October	July 2 <sup>nd</sup> – October 15 <sup>th</sup>	General registration
Late April/Early May – 18 November	May 1 <sup>st</sup> – November 18 <sup>th</sup>	Online Registration

## Session Descriptions

### *Session 1 “Surface tension: starting a career”.*

As conservators in training enter the field, they become aware of the dynamics and established practices present within the profession. However, it is important to remember that sectors are shaped by all participating members, including the newest ones. Among emerging conservators there is a growing interest in reshaping the field of conservation in fundamental ways. This includes pushing for more diversity and sustainability initiatives, addressing problems such as accessibility (how programs and internships are designed for people that have resources and can sustain themselves over long periods of time), and how to secure funding through fundraising to begin or maintain projects.

The focus of the first session is on an assortment of issues that many conservators will face when starting a career. Sustainability, accessibility, and diversity are some of the challenges that we will discuss. Furthermore, we will debate with the speakers how they have changed the field and how each of us can shift it as individuals.

### *Session 2 “Uncharted waters: ethics in difficult times”*

While studying, conservators are trained to follow high standards, but once we go out into the world, we can find ourselves in difficult times. How do we approach conservation while we are surrounded by difficulties? How can we make the most out of the resources that we have and how and to whom can we call for help? How do we apply ethics to practice?



In this session, we will explore ethical questions, raising the subject of how we can reconcile idealistic scenarios and the reality of the working world. As well, a look at conservation during conflicts will be examined.

*Session 3 "One droplet after another, building community".*

Conservation is a small field that has historically borrowed from other sectors. Furthermore, in day-to-day practice, conservators work with other professions, in some cases closely related and in others with a further distance. How do we make connections and build community with the public, other institutions, colleagues and other fields that are connected with conservation?

During the third session of the conference the emphasis will be on collaboration between conservators and other fields and how to make the most out of it.

*Session 4 "Still waters run deep: Conservation and communication."*

Historically, conservation has been a back of house job, quietly hiding behind closed doors. But with time, conservation has made itself more visible, both in terms of treatments (making obvious what is an addition or original) and taking a more observable role in institutions. Conservators often work alone, but how can we make the field accessible to the public? How much are we expected to share and how can we do it? What challenges do we find in our way?

The final session is divided into two parts. The first is focused on communication in general terms, the second part is a round table about social media as it has become more and more important in recent years. Older generations may remember a time where it was not as instrumental as it is now, but for younger generations it is harder to grasp that concept. The cultural sector has used many platforms to its advantage, especially during the pandemic. For many institutions, it was a way to reach to the public and share heritage in times where it was not possible to visit locations in person. But how much can we share in the quest to make our profession and material heritage more accessible? Where do we draw the line?

## Time frame of the conference

Day	Day 1 Thursday 16 <sup>th</sup>	Day 2 Friday 17 <sup>th</sup>	Day 3 Saturday 18 <sup>th</sup>
Morning	Registration First round of visits (Visits to institutions)	Session 2	Second round of visits (mostly to private studios in Amsterdam) Demonstrations of tools and sponsored products *Turtleco box *Micro NIR Analytic tool
Lunch	Break or lunch event?	Break or lunch event?	Break or lunch event?
Afternoon	Session 1	Session 3	Session 4, final remarks.
Evening	Dinner/drinks event?	Dinner/drinks event?	Final event or no event?

# IIC SOCRATIC DIALOGUES

## AN EXPERIMENT IN HOW WE COMMUNICATE AND THINK

27 April 2023, 12.00pm (BST)

The third in a series of interactive events, on 27 April 2023, this dialogue is free and exclusively for our IIC Student and Early Career members.

Led by IIC Fellow, Dr. Bill Wei, the purpose of the dialogue is not to solve controversies in conservation ethics, but to investigate and understand each other's experience, opinions and concerns. The series will allow you to investigate what the essence is behind issues, to understand your own points of view as well as those of others and use that understanding to inform conservation decisions in the future.

The third dialogue on conservation treatments is scheduled for Thursday, April 27, 2023 and is currently scheduled for 12.00pm BST (London). The final scheduled time will depend on the geographic location of the participants. You do not have to have participated in the previous Dialogues to take part.

To register, please fill out the form [here](#).

If you have any issues with the form, please contact Ellie Sweetnam at: [ellie.sweetnam@iiconservation.org](mailto:ellie.sweetnam@iiconservation.org).

*Socrates*, image by Allan Henderson/Flickr (2016). Licensed under CC BY 2.0. Original location [here](#).





# YOUNG PROFESSIONALS FORUM 2023



CENTRO  
CONSERVAZIONE  
RESTAURO  
LA VENARIA REALE



## EMERGING SKILLS FOR HERITAGE CONSERVATION

Online and in presence activities  
from April 5 to June 30, 2023

HOW LEADERSHIP, STRATEGY AND NETWORKING OPERATE ON **PREVENTIVE CONSERVATION** is the leitmotiv of this new edition: from risk management to contextual analysis, from creating awareness to documentation and communication activities.

6 interactive workshops, expert meetings and the opportunity to live a unique experience with the Centro Conservazione e Restauro "La Venaria Reale" in one of the majestic Savoy Royal Residences.

### WHO IS IT FOR

The Forum is addressed to students and young professionals of cultural heritage and related disciplines.

### REGISTRATION

Open from March 28, 2023 with the possibility to apply for scholarships.

Full price: 120 euros. Reduced price: students, early bird 28/03/23 - 11/04/23, ICOM, IIC, ICOMOS, IGIIIC members

### SCHOLARSHIP

IIC sponsored places will be open to students engaged in a university or learning programme for conservation, as well as early career practicing conservators currently engaged in either a public or a private capacity located in emerging economies. Applications will be particularly welcome from individuals who are studying or working in the following regional group areas: South America and the Caribbean, Africa and South-East Asia.

### CONTACT

CENTRO CONSERVAZIONE E RESTAURO  
"LA VENARIA REALE"

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# WE'VE LOST THE RIGHT TO BE PESSIMISTIC

## THE TIME TO ACT IS NOW

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

*I normally open the newspaper for a quick glance while I have my breakfast. One recent morning a particular headline drew my attention: "We've lost the right to be pessimistic." This article discussed a well-known outdoor brand and the founder's perspective on the fast-approaching climate crisis, its impacts and how important and overdue our individual and societal answers to this issue are.*

Energy efficiency and sustainability are major issues in today's economically challenged climate. They are particularly relevant to our energy-hungry museum and gallery sector. It is interesting to see how the global majority is changing its perception by adjusting museum environments in relation to their local climate, therefore tackling climate change.







[David Saunders](#), during the [2022 AGM Talk](#), gave a brief overview of the historic changes in the preventive conservation of collections and museum environments going from guidelines-based decision making to sustainability-based decision making—a shift which we are now experiencing as heritage workers. David highlighted how important it is today to keep sustainability at the centre of our thinking, giving as an example how museums in less temperate climates are shifting environmental requirements to follow their local climate, promoting a more passive and energy efficient system.

One year ago the Victoria & Albert Museum (UK) published its [sustainability plan](#), which includes an action plan to “adapt our buildings so they are fit for future climate scenarios, safeguarding appropriate environments for people and objects”. The museum has an environmental monitoring system to understand the climate across the buildings and enable the Museum to study the temperature shifts through the seasons each year (which can vary from 10 degrees Celsius in winter to nearly 30 in summertime). This system is expensive and energy consuming, but it enables the Museum to understand the mitigation measures that need to be done for the near future.

The [Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen](#) in Germany revised the climate standards for its own collection last year. Following the [IIC and ICOM-CC Joint Declaration on Environmental Guidelines](#), and based on the idea that there are seasonal periods in which cooler conditions and relative humidity are more economical and sustainable to produce, the new moisture band control allows a seasonal drift of the relative humidity. Their results showed a reduction of 15% humidification in the Henkel Gallery, which resulted in 1,000 euros of yearly savings. The Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen is also adapting its own standards for outgoing loan contracts enabling project partners to implement similar measures.

The [Museum of Tomorrow in Rio de Janeiro](#), Brazil, is an award-winning museum that demonstrates the use of local resources to decrease energy levels and improve efficiency. In 2017 the museum was awarded Best Innovative Green Building for its innovations in capturing solar energy and use of water from Guanabara Bay for the air conditioning system and its water mirror. This is possible because the Museum was built for purpose with a sustainable approach.

The [Zeitz Museum of Contemporary Art in Cape Town](#), South Africa, adopted principles of efficient energy use by re-using materials and by using natural light and natural ventilation. The climate control system for the gallery spaces makes use of a ventilation system that harnesses a seawater cooling plant which serves the entire commercial and leisure district along Cape Town’s waterfront. This system uses cool water from the ocean to assist in climate control, improving efficiency and reducing the environmental impact of the museum.

These are a few examples of how cultural institutions have been leading the change towards a more environmentally friendly world. However, it is important to acknowledge

**Right:** Santiago Calatrava’s Museum of Tomorrow. Photo by [alec boreham/Flickr](#) (2016). Licensed under [CC BY-NC-ND 2.0](#).

**Far right:** Portrait of (and courtesy of) Ogechukwu Elizabeth Okpalanzie

**Below:** Panorama of museum Kunstsammlung Nordrhein Westfalen. Photo by [Otomodachi/Flickr](#) (2011) Licensed under [CC BY 2.0](#)



that some of these implementations require significant financial investment which is not always available.

I spoke with Ogechukwu Elizabeth Okpalanzie, a researcher and art conservator at the [National Commission for Museums and Monuments, Nigeria \(NCMM\)](#). Oge, as she likes to be called, explained to me that NCMM uses a passive method of climate control, and by deciding to change their approach, shifting away from European perspectives, they now take into consideration Nigeria’s seasonal patterns and have a holistic approach to climate control. In her view, by following the local climate, and knowing that the majority of the collection objects have been in the museums at least 50 years, they can relax their environmental measures and still maintain long-term preservation of the objects. This decision has allowed them to reduce their carbon footprint, improve their energy efficiency and save financial resources to be invested in other areas.

I had a similar experience working on a museum project in Brazil where the temperature and humidity levels in the storage room were very difficult to regulate. The museum with which I was working is based in Rio de Janeiro; it is located on the beach and has only a small budget allocated for equipment. At that time, the museum was trying to track the average environmental levels and establish an





equilibrium the museum could sustainably hold. It was far beyond the Western standards. However, for that museum it worked very well, despite concerns about pest infestation.

In relation to my work in Brazil, my initial curiosity in talking with Oge was about pest infestation, as I expected this to be a shared concern in her similar tropical climate. To my



surprise, Oge explained that pests are not as problematic for museums in Nigeria as might be expected. They work on a holistic integrated pest management approach, in which all museum staff are allies and work together to mitigate this issue. The Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen also acknowledges that close cooperation across departments has a positive contribution to the protection of the museum environment.

We should all embrace a collaborative approach in our work tackling climate action. There is a statement from the [American Alliance of Museums](#) which emphasises that “We [museum workers] design the commitments; we decide how to highlight the value of cultural institutions in this important work [addressing the climate crisis].” With this in mind, there is no reason why we should not all be moving beyond potential to action right now.



**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 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.

# PROPERTIES OF PLASTICS: A GUIDE FOR CONSERVATORS

Reviewed by Dr Joyce H Townsend

*Properties of Plastics: A Guide for Conservators*

By Thea B. van Oosten

The Getty Conservation Institute, 2022

320 pages / \$70 Getty Store / £56.41 Amazon

Paperback / PDF / Kindle edition / eBook

ISBN: 978-1-60606-693-5 paperback

This book, written by a conservation scientist with great experience in the subject, including teaching, is intended to bring together a great deal of material relevant to the conservation and preservation of plastics-based objects. It succeeds admirably. While it is a dense read—if the whole book is read in one go—great efforts have been made to tabulate information such as the dates of introduction of different types of plastic (with their commercial names), and it is very comprehensive. It's usually necessary to maintain a large bank of recent conservation and scientific literature in order to find one such fact, so the clear and logical presentation should not only save readers a lot of time, but will also likely present facts which are new even to a regular reader of such literature.

The book begins with a very thorough chapter on the chemistry of polymers and definitions of associated terminology in scientific literature. Again, this material has not been presented before in so digestible a form for the conservation community. The book should become invaluable for conservation educators as well as students. It goes on to describe the history of polymers and their uses in different types of objects; first to imitate natural materials (themselves polymers) that were growing scarce, and then to take advantage of the plastic properties of such materials for consumer goods and decorative objects. The physical properties of polymers are covered next, followed by an excellent chapter on processing plastics with some of the best schematic diagrams that I have ever seen. There follow six chapters, each presenting a case study of treatment and/or preservation policy: these are not the widely-publicised cases of dramatic deterioration that often feature in basic lectures on plastics, but new studies presenting novel solutions to challenging problems.

It has taken a generation for the field to move on from the early conferences such as *Saving the Twentieth Century: the Conservation of Modern Materials* held at the Canadian Conservation Institute in 1991, where each paper gave the message, "We have a big looming problem in this area", to the present time when treatments are being devised, tested with mock-up materials and successfully applied to a wide variety of plastics-based artworks and objects.



Plastics

A GUIDE FOR CONSERVATORS

Image of *Properties of Plastics* book cover. Courtesy of The Getty Conservation Institute.





# PROPERTIES OF Plastics

CONSERVATORS THEA B. VAN OOSTEN

Almost half of the book is given over to fact sheets on all the polymers and elastomers likely to be encountered by conservators, ranging from the early polymers made from natural materials like horn, through the semi-synthetics (such as cellulose nitrate and cellulose acetate), to PMMA (Perspex, Plexiglas) and the post-World War II explosion in plastics manufacture, then to the most current synthetic polymers used in additive manufacture (known just a few years back as 3D printing and before that as direct writing). This tabulation is unique and valuable, providing hard-to-find values such as solvent resistance, refractive index and the like, which are necessary to know before trials for a conservation treatment proposal can even be planned. Simply reading and comparing the fact sheets for related polymers can give the reader many insights.

There are four useful appendices, two with tabulated information and an excellent glossary, followed by an index. One appendix gives the translations of plastics-relevant terminologies from English into Dutch, French, German, Italian, Spanish and Portuguese. The index is thorough. It includes the standard polymer abbreviations as well as their names (CA for cellulose acetate for example), and the artists and topics discussed. Every good index does this, but I wish it included object types and terms in the glossary too. I hope this book will run to a second edition in five or ten years, covering even more of the rapidly changing world of additive manufacturing materials including more of the bio-based polymers that will find their way into museum collections, replacing some of those made from petrochemicals. I'd like to see an additional or extended index in a later edition, because although this book is better at giving examples within the text of which polymers are used for what kinds of objects than any I have seen, it's not readily searchable for specific queries such as what polymer a pair of spectacle frames might be made of, leading to information on how best to preserve them.



Dr Joyce Townsend is IIC's director of publications and senior conservation scientist at Tate, London, UK, where she specialises in technical studies of artists of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, deterioration of materials used by artists and microfading studies of mainly 20<sup>th</sup>-century works. Plastics are a long-standing interest for Joyce, who has recently co-supervised doctoral research in the now-concluded COMPLEX research project on systems dynamics applied to the conservation of plastics at University College London, and carried out other projects involving Tate's collection of constructivist sculptures by Naum Gabo and Antoine Pevsner.

# A SYNOPSIS OF THE BLACK ART CONSERVATORS PANEL DISCUSSION AT THE WASHINGTON CONSERVATION GUILD

By LaStarsha McGarity

*The Black Art Conservators (BAC) were invited to participate in a virtual panel at the Washington Conservation Guild's February meeting to share more information about the group and their experiences in cultural heritage. The invited panel included four members of BAC: Nylah Byrd, Valinda Carroll, Anya Dani, and Ariana Makau. The moderators from the Washington Conservation Guild were WCG Director Nick Pedemonti and Adrián Hernández, WCG IDEA (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access) Action Committee member. Nick posed questions for the panel to respond to, and Adrián monitored the chat and virtual Q&A.*





The panel opened with a brief history and status update on the Black Art Conservators. Our group was founded in 2020 with our statement in response to the #BlackLivesMatter movement, the persistent lack of diversity in conservation, and the collective need to incorporate racial justice into preservation work. BAC began with a dozen members and has expanded to fourteen members from the United States, Canada, Norway, and South Africa. Our members vary widely across experience levels from pre-program students to seasoned professionals and across almost all specialties. Before the formation of our collective, we met informally at conferences, through email, and via word-of-mouth. Due to the small number of Black conservators in the US, networking among ourselves has been a manageable task. In the most recent demographic survey of the American Institute for Conservation (AIC) membership, 0.9% of the conservators identify as Black/African American almost double from the last demographic survey (AWP Research and Foundation for Advancement in Conservation, 2022, pg.17).

Nylah, Valinda, Anya, and Ariana discussed the role that BAC has played as an opportunity to form connections with other Black conservators and nurture a sense of community. Our regular virtual meetings give us the space and dedicated time to assist each other in navigating issues within the field. These issues include micro- and macro-aggressions, racially triggering collection items and terminology, and exploitative volunteerism. We also discuss and enact collaborative actions or projects with other caretakers of Black material culture. Each of the panelists is involved in public advocacy and outreach programs, forging connections between conservation and historically excluded communities as well as advancing inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility within conservation. This critical work is often undertaken on a volunteer basis with limited to no compensation, limiting the capacity in which BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) conservators, who are more likely to enter the profession with fewer privileges than their White peers, can maintain the sustained volunteer involvement often required for career advancement. Anya mentioned that short-term solutions could



**LaStarsha McGarity**  
Preventive Conservator  
Tuskegee University  
Tuskegee, Alabama &  
Ph.D. Student in  
Preservation Studies  
Winterthur/University of  
Delaware Program in Art  
Conservation

Image credit: LaStarsha McGarity



**Ariana Makau**  
President &  
Principal Conservator  
Nzilani Glass Conservation

Image credit: Ariana Makau



**Nylah Byrd**  
Objects, Library, and  
Archives Conservator &  
Book Fellow  
The Conservation Center  
for Art & Historic Artifacts  
(CCAHA)

Image credit: Andy Pinkham



**Anya Dani**  
Objects Conservator &  
Director of Community  
Engagement and Inclusive  
Practice & Lecturer  
UCLA/Getty  
Interdepartmental Program  
in the Conservation of  
Cultural Heritage

Image credit: Mirijam Neve



Pictured above: the logo for the Black Art Conservators. Image courtesy of LaStarsha McGarity/BAC



involve alternative compensation such as free memberships, training, or reduced conference fees in conjunction with volunteer term limits that more evenly distribute the workload. All agree that long-term, sustaining IDEA work must include more robust funding to justly compensate participants for their labor.

Following this discussion, Valinda broached the topic of the efficacy of pipeline programs aimed to create pathways for underrepresented students, including those at Historically Black Colleges or Universities (HBCUs) and minority-serving institutions (MSIs), into art conservation. These programs provide the crucial first conservation internship but often lack the resources to follow students through the oft-noted barriers to the field. Nylah critiqued the pipeline's current exclusion of BIPOC students at predominantly White institutions (PWIs), where more BIPOC students are enrolled.

Ariana also pointed to the importance of engaging students before college to show them the numerous ways they can work in our field. To that, Anya discussed the importance of creating equitable work environments for BIPOC conservators including fair wages and an institutional commitment to anti-racism—including staff IDEA training that is not a burden on BIPOC—to ensure

that the field is a safe, welcoming space for these future conservators to enter and thrive. Although the panel discussion was intended to be made accessible after the event, a technical glitch meant that it was not properly recorded and is unavailable. BAC is currently determining the most appropriate follow-up to this panel and will promote that response on our website and social media when available.

The Black Art Conservators have compiled resources for learning about our organization and IDEA on our website: [www.blackartconservators.com](http://www.blackartconservators.com). Please read our [statement](#) for actionable items to bring into your cultural heritage

practice at any career level. For the latest on the Black Art Conservators, please follow us on Instagram and Twitter [@blkconservators](#). We welcome Black preservation specialists from every level, geography, and specialty to join our collective.

#### SOURCES

AWP Research, and Foundation for Advancement in Conservation. "2022 AIC/FAIC Conservation Compensation Research." *American*

*Institute for Conservation*, 2022, [https://www.culturalheritage.org/docs/default-source/publications/reports/survey-reports/2022-faic-compensation-survey.pdf?sfvrsn=75c01720\\_3](https://www.culturalheritage.org/docs/default-source/publications/reports/survey-reports/2022-faic-compensation-survey.pdf?sfvrsn=75c01720_3). Accessed 20 February 2023. pg. 17.


***This critical work is often undertaken on a volunteer basis with limited to no compensation, limiting the capacity in which BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) conservators, who are more likely to enter the profession with fewer privileges than their White peers, can maintain the sustained volunteer involvement often required for career advancement.***



**LaStarsha McGarity** (she/they) is a founding member of the Black Art Conservators and the current social media manager. She is a preventive conservator at Tuskegee University in Tuskegee, Alabama, and a 2nd-year Ph.D. student in Preservation Studies at the Winterthur/University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation. Contact BAC at <https://blackartconservators.com/contact/>.







# IMMERSION INTO THAI LACQUERWARE MATERIALS AND TECHNIQUES

Main Authors: Jingyi Zhang, Lynn Chua

Contributing Authors: Birte Koehler, Melanie Barrett,  
Leon Sim, Phumrapee Kongrit, and Christel Pesme

*Thai lacquer art builds on a rich history that is not often well documented or accessible to other parts of the world due to language and geographic barriers. Hence in November 2022, the Heritage Conservation Centre (HCC), Singapore, held a workshop on Thai lacquerware decorative techniques. Initiated and organised by Birte Koehler, head of the objects conservation section at HCC, the workshop was led by Phumrapee Kongrit, lacquer artist and lecturer at Chiang Mai University, Thailand. This paper focuses on presenting the workshop's content. The description of the decisions made at HCC to prepare and organize the workshop, and to optimize knowledge sharing and its dissemination with consideration of sustainability, will be presented in a future News in Conservation article.*

Phumrapee Kongrit (left) guiding  
Leon Sim (right), Assistant Objects  
Conservator, on the Lai Rod Nam  
technique. Image courtesy of Jingyi  
Zhang.

Over five days, and through a combination of lectures, demonstrations and practical sessions, Phumrapee introduced us to his world of lacquer and taught us the history, technique and significance of lacquered objects in Thailand and Asia. Inspired by exchanges over the digital sphere during the Covid-19 pandemic, the event was also livestreamed to an international audience—recordings of the lectures and demonstrations will be made available by the end of this year.

## ART HISTORY

Lacquer as a protective and decorative coating has been widely used throughout Thailand's long history. From the ancient Siamese Kingdoms of Lanna, Sukhothai, Ayutthaya, and Rattanakosin, lacquer has been applied in various ways on utilitarian, religious and ceremonial objects, as well as architectural surfaces. Different periods and regions have their own distinctive styles, and decorative motifs are often inspired by local folklore, religion and flora and fauna.

## LACQUER SAP AND GOLD LEAF

Most of the materials used in decorating lacquerware are made locally. For example, raw lacquer and gold leaf are produced in rural areas and by small communities.

In Thailand lacquer is obtained from the sap of the *Gluta usitata* tree commonly found in the northern highlands. The quality and properties of the extracted sap are influenced by several factors including geography, season, time and method of tapping. After extraction the raw sap is filtered to remove any impurities and to reduce its water content.

Gold leaf in Thailand is painstakingly beaten by hand, forged over several hours until the required thickness of 2.5 microns is achieved. The delicately thin foil is then cut using bamboo sticks, transferred using buffalo horn, and packed between paper wrappers.

## DECORATIVE TECHNIQUES

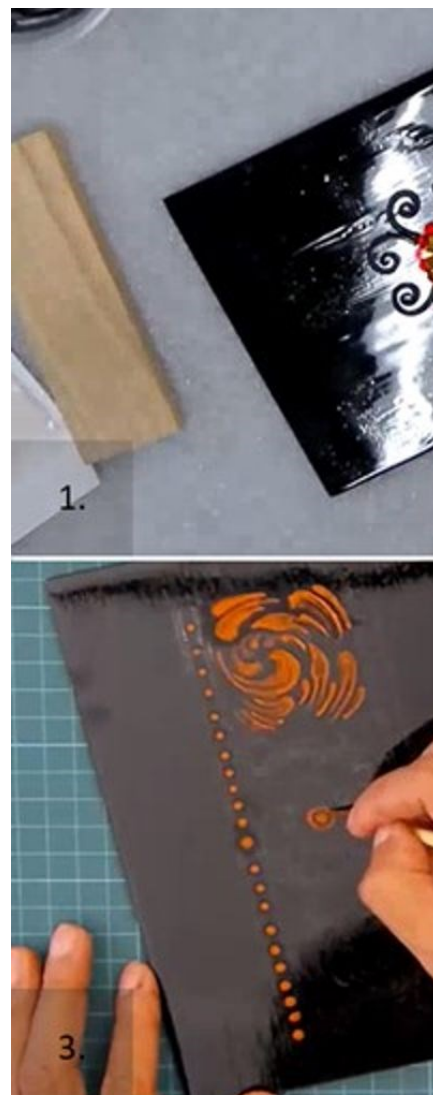
During the workshop, Phumrapee demonstrated four techniques for decorating Thai lacquerware:

**Samook Rak:** A modelling technique where lacquer sap mixed with clay or ash powder is hand rolled to create thin coils (or "black noodles" as we preferred to call them!). The coils are then shaped following the outlines of the design, adhered to the substrate using a thin layer of lacquer and embellished with lacquer coloured with pigments such as cinnabar and orange Thai powder (identified as red lead), gold leaf or coloured glass pieces.

**Laikham Lanna:** A stencilling technique used in Northern Thailand for creating repetitive patterns. Traditionally, cow hide would be used as a stencil. However, a plastic sheet is used in contemporary practice to cut out the design. Once in place, lacquer is applied through the stencil as an adhesive for the gold leaf – it is important to keep the lacquer layer extremely thin to reveal the gold's lustre.

**Lai Tam Hang:** Compared to the other techniques, this was the easiest and most straightforward for us as it is comparable to painting with a brush. First, the outline of the design is traced onto the substrate using clay powder. This is then painted with a mixture of fresh lacquer, pigments and resin oil (identified as triterpenoid varnish).

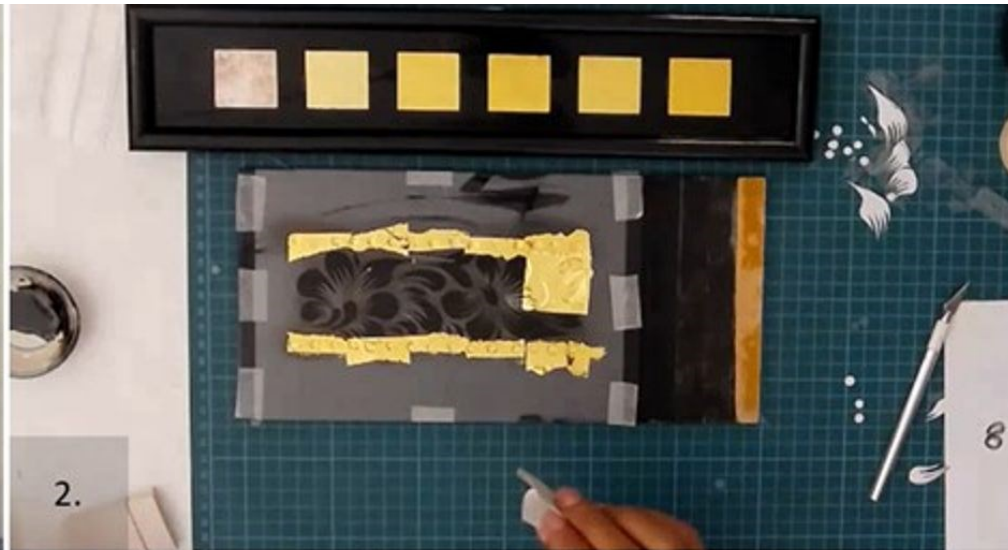
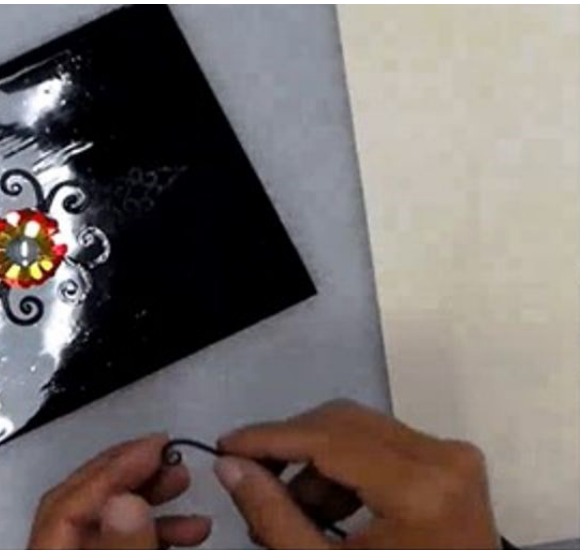
**Lai Rod Nam:** This technique produces the most intricate and exquisite gold designs, requiring an incredibly steady hand which proved challenging to workshop participants. After transferring our design to the substrate with clay powder, a resist layer of yellow paste made from orpiment, gum arabic, acacia concinna, and water was painted on the areas that would not be gilded. A thin layer of lacquer was then rubbed onto the surface and gold leaf applied by hand. The resist layer was soaked with moistened paper and then placed under running water, removing the yellow paste and any excess gold foil. The moment of reveal of the beautiful gold design was both exciting and magical.





Right: The demonstrations were live streamed to online audiences using an overhead camera. This provided a birds-eye and magnified view of the demonstrations, and also facilitated the experience for in-person attendees. Image courtesy of Jingyi Zhang.

Below: Excerpts from live demonstration of Thai lacquerware decorative techniques (1. Samook Rak, 2. Laikham Lanna, 3. Lai Tam Hang, and 4. Lai Rod Nam) by Phumrapee Kongrit. Image courtesy of Leon Sim.







On the last day, Phumrapee shared a form of traditional repair for damaged lacquer objects. Minor breaks and losses on lacquered surfaces are mended and filled using a putty made from lacquer and clay or ash powder. Where further reinforcements are required, a fabric gauze is laid over the joint and the lacquer putty is applied over the area. Once cured, excess filler material is removed, and the surface is smoothed with varying grades of sandpaper. The surface of the repaired area is then coated with refined lacquer and polished to the same level of gloss as the original surface.

As a highlight, on-site participants had the rare chance to try out all the techniques during the hands-on sessions in the afternoons. The practical experience was fun, insightful and, unsurprisingly, challenging. With practice, patience and lots of guidance, everyone left the workshop with beautifully decorated lacquered panels and a deep appreciation for the craft.

## THE LABOUR BEHIND THE ART

Behind the beauty of these lacquered crafts lies the blood, sweat and tears of many. The production of gold leaf is backbreaking and deafening work—Phumrapee shared that he could barely hear after visiting the factory! Some of the materials used are hazardous in nature; raw lacquer sap may cause skin irritation, and prolonged inhalation of the produced fumes can cause respiratory illnesses. Cinnabar and orpiment, which contain mercury and arsenic respectively, are toxic but continue to be used due to their attractive properties. Lastly, it takes extensive time, effort and skill to produce something that is durable and of high quality. From building up the many layers of lacquer required—with each layer needing to properly cure and be refined before the application of the next layer—to the decoration of the surface with fine detail and gold leaf, a small object can take weeks and months to produce, with larger objects taking years.





In-person attendees with their completed lacquered panels, with Phumrapee Kongrit (in the middle, in a blue shirt). Image courtesy of Lynn Chua.

## CONCLUSION

In the present day, this traditional art form is a dying trade in many Southeast Asian countries. With globalization and modernization, aesthetically similar objects are being mass produced using less durable materials at a reduced cost. While national efforts have taken place in Thailand to cultivate interest and develop local capabilities to preserve the industry, the differing values of a younger generation are proving to be a challenge.

Through this collaborative workshop with Phumrapee Kongrit, the HCC hopes to deepen and share knowledge on the production of Southeast Asian lacquered objects and encourage exchange between regional artisans, educators, scientists and conservators.

The collaboration also highlights the value of engagement with modern source communities. Local contemporary artisans possess a wealth of knowledge and skills that are vital to our understanding of cultural objects found in museums across the world.



**Jingyi Zhang** has an MSc in conservation practice from Cardiff University and a degree in archaeology from Durham University. She has completed conservation internships at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Asian Art (USA), Bolton Museum and Art Gallery (UK) and currently works as an assistant objects conservator at the Heritage Conservation Centre (Singapore).



**Lynn Chua** is currently a conservation scientist at the Heritage Conservation Centre (HCC). She conducts instrumental analysis of the national collections, including Asian lacquerware. Her MSc in research at the University of Technology Sydney centres on the micro-characterisation of painted artworks in collaboration with the Art Gallery of New South Wales and the Indianapolis Museum of Art.

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## CALLS FOR PAPERS

Should it stay or should it go? Repatriation and decolonization in conservation (Student Conference) 25-27 June 2023

West Dean College, Chichester (UK)

Paper submissions due: 17 April 2023

For more information contact: [s21cy@westdean.ac.uk](mailto:s21cy@westdean.ac.uk)

Symposium of Palaeontological Preparation and Conservation

6 September 2023

University of Lincoln (UK)

Abstracts due: 15 June 2023

For more information visit: <https://www.svpca.org/>

ISCUA'23 Conservation

International Symposium of Conservation for Underwater Archaeology

29 September-1 October 2023

Formentera, Spain

Abstracts due: 14 April 2023

For more information visit: [https://iscua.org/?fbclid=IwAR0bg0yxPNFtqYCM PGdCyMD7Y\\_RdZVLYI3\\_n3CRYAvbCaW2twxY4e6Kz2E4](https://iscua.org/?fbclid=IwAR0bg0yxPNFtqYCM PGdCyMD7Y_RdZVLYI3_n3CRYAvbCaW2twxY4e6Kz2E4)

7<sup>th</sup> Edition of International Meeting on Retouching of Cultural Heritage (RECH7-2023)

12-13 October 2023

University of Lisbon, Portugal

Submissions due: 31 May 2023

For more information visit: <https://sites.google.com/view/rechgroup/home?authuser=0&pli=1>

Environments, Materials and Futures in the 8<sup>th</sup> Century Historians of Eighteenth-Century Art & Architecture (HECAA)

12-14 October 2023

Boston, Cambridge and Providence (USA)

Participation deadline: 1 April 2023

For more information visit: <https://sites.google.com/umb.edu/hecaa30>

Future Talks 023: Materials Matter—cold and current cases in the conservation of the modern

8-10 November 2023

Munich, Germany

Abstracts due: 30 April 2023

For more information visit [HERE](#).

Eastern Analytical Symposium

13-15 November 2023

Plainsboro, New Jersey (USA)

Oral abstracts due: 1 May 2023 Poster abstracts due 4 September 2023

For more information visit: [https://eas.org/?page\\_id=2348](https://eas.org/?page_id=2348)

AICCM 50+/-50 National Conference 2023

15-17 November 2023

National Gallery of Australia, Canberra

Paper submissions due: 30 April 2023

For more information visit: <https://aiccm.org.au/>

Bridging the gap: synergies between art history and conservation

23-24 November 2023

Oslo Norway

Abstract and poster deadlines: 15 April 2023

For more information visit: <https://www.nasjonalmuseet.no/en/about-the-national-museum/research-and-development/bridging-the-gap-synergies-between-art-history-and-conservation/>

## CONFERENCES, SYMPOSIUMS

Identity War in Ukraine. The Power of Cultural Resistance (Webinar)

7 April 2023

Online

For more information visit [HERE](#).

Lacquer in the Americas

13-14 April 2023

Hybrid/V&A (London)

For more in-person information visit [HERE](#) and for online registration visit [HERE](#).

Sinner to Saint: research & treatment of an 18<sup>th</sup>-century painting from Peru (Icon Paintings Group)

18 April 2023

Online

For more information visit: <https://www.icon.org.uk/events/paintings-group-sinner-to-saint-research.html>

Findings of research questionnaire on vibratory impacts of music and transport on museum collections (Webinar)

18 April and 25 April (same program each time)

Online

For more information visit [HERE](#).

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](mailto:objectspathwaysafterlives@huntington.org)

Isokon Symposium

21 April 2023

Online (Yale Center for British Art)

For more information visit: <https://britishart.yale.edu/exhibitions-programs/isokon-symposium>



**5<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Green Conservation of Cultural Heritage**

4-5 May 2023

National Museum of Art, Timisoara, Romania

For more information visit: [https://](https://www.greenconservationconference.com/)[www.greenconservationconference.com/](https://www.greenconservationconference.com/)**TECHNART 2023****International Conference on Analytical Techniques in Art and Cultural Heritage**

7-12 May 2023

Lisbon, Portugal

For more information visit: <https://technart2023.com/>**27<sup>th</sup> SEAPAVAA Conference and General Assembly Sustainable AV Archives for the Community**

8-13 May 2023

Pattaya, Thailand

For more information visit: [https://](https://seapavaaconference.com/)[seapavaaconference.com/](https://seapavaaconference.com/)**Performance Conservation: Artists Speak (lecture)**

16 May 2023

HBK Auditorium/Online

For more information visit: <https://incca.org/events/performance-conservation-artists-speak-tuesday-may-16-2023-1200-1900-cest-hybrid-hkb>**13<sup>th</sup> Baltic States Restorers' Triennial meeting**

16-19 May 2023

Riga, Latvia

For more information visit: <https://www.iiconservation.org/content/13th-baltic-states-restorers-triennial-meeting-changes-challenges-achievements>**AIC Annual Meeting**

18-20 May 2023

Jacksonville, Florida (USA)

For more information visit: [https://](https://www.culturalheritage.org/events/annual-meeting/current-meeting)[www.culturalheritage.org/events/annual-meeting/current-meeting](https://www.culturalheritage.org/events/annual-meeting/current-meeting)**American Alliance of Museums: Annual Meeting & MuseumExpo**

19-22 May 2023

Denver, Colorado (USA)

For more information visit [HERE](https://www.aam.org/annual-meeting).**Parchment: raw material, from the herd to the manuscript**

23 May 2023

Institut National d'Histoire de l'Art (Paris)

For more information visit: [https://forms.gle/](https://forms.gle/vbjrRWDDYzdiftE7A)[vbjrRWDDYzdiftE7A](https://forms.gle/vbjrRWDDYzdiftE7A)**BAPCR Conference (British Association of Paintings Conservator-Restorers)**

16 June 2023

National Maritime Museum, London (UK)/Online

For more information write to BAPCR secretary Gemma Collins: [bapcrsecretary@gmail.com](mailto:bapcrsecretary@gmail.com)**Archiving 2023**

19-23 June 2023

Oslo, Norway

For more information visit [HERE](https://www.archiving2023.no/).**Asia Pacific Tropical Climate Conservation Art Research Network (APTCCARN 6)**

3-5 July 2023

Bali, Indonesia

For more information visit: <https://www.aptcarn.com/aptcarn6>**Archives and Records Association (ARA) Conference "Communities"**

30 August-1 September 2023

Belfast, Ireland

For more information visit: <https://www.archives.org.uk/>**29<sup>th</sup> European Association of Archaeologists (EAA)**

30 August-2 September 2023

Belfast, Ireland

For more information visit: <https://www.e-a-a.org/EAA2023/Home/EAA2023/Home>**54<sup>th</sup> IASA Conference & 4<sup>th</sup> ICTM Forum "Collaborating to preserve and safeguard audiovisual and related heritage"**

11-15 September 2023

Istanbul University in Istanbul, Türkiye

For more information visit [HERE](https://www.iasa-conf.org/).**ICOM-CC 20<sup>th</sup> Triennial Conference Working Towards a Sustainable Past**

18-22 September 2023

Valencia, Spain

For more information visit: <https://www.icom-cc2023.org/>**42<sup>nd</sup> Scientific Instrument Symposium: Through Ages, Cultures, Concepts: Instruments in Collections, Books, Archives**

18-22 September 2023

Palermo, Italy

For more information visit: <https://wissenschaftliche-sammlungen.de/de/nachrichten/aktuelles/neue-seite-5070>**IRUG15 Conference & Workshop**

25-29 September 2023

Tokyo, Japan

For more information visit: <http://www.irug.org/> and contact: [IRUG15@ma.geidai.ac.jp](mailto:IRUG15@ma.geidai.ac.jp)**IADA 2023: XV International IADA Congress**

16-20 October 2023

Leipzig, Germany

For more information write to: [congress@iada-home.org](mailto:congress@iada-home.org)**The State of the Art 21 (IG-IIC)**

19-21 October 2023

Verona, Italy

For more information visit: <http://www.igiic.org/?p=9027>

**Wood Science and Technology III: methods to examine panel paintings and their preventive and remedial conservation**

19-21 October 2023

Maastricht, the Netherlands

For more information please contact: [education@sral.nl](mailto:education@sral.nl)

**Photomechanical Prints: History, Technology, Aesthetics, and Use**

31 October-2 November 2023

Washington DC (USA)

For more information visit [HERE](#).

**8<sup>th</sup> International Architectural Finishes Research Conference: Past Forward, from Paint to Finishes**

29 May-1 June 2024

Amsterdam

For more information visit [HERE](#).

**MUTEC 2024**

**International Trade Fair for Museum and Exhibition Technology**

7-9 November 2024

Leipzig Exhibition Centre, Germany

For more information visit: <https://www.mutec.de/>

## COURSES, WORKSHOPS

**Federal Contracting for Conservators (Washington Conservation Guild-USA)**

17 April 2023

Virtual Webinar

For more information visit [HERE](#).

**Masonry Cleaning (West Dean College of Arts and Conservation)**

17-19 April 2023

Chichester, UK

For more information visit: <https://www.westdean.org.uk/study/short-courses/courses/b2d12105-masonry-cleaning>

**Conservation of Leather**

**West Dean College Short Courses**

17-20 April 2023

UK

For more information visit: <https://www.westdean.org.uk/study/short-courses/courses/m3d12120-conservation-of-leather>

**Laser operator for cultural heritage cleaning (SKR)**

17-22 April 2023

Switzerland

For more information visit [HERE](#).

**Conservation of Architectural Ironwork (CPD course)**

20-21 April 2023

Bath (UK)

For more information visit: <https://nhig.org.uk/events/event/conservation-of-architectural-ironwork-2-day-cpd/>

**Housekeeping and Dust**

**West Dean College Short Courses**

27 April 2023

UK

For more information visit [HERE](#).

**Writing Heritage Impact Assessments (CPD Webinar)**

27 April 2023

Online

For more information visit: <https://nhig.org.uk/events/event/cpd-webinar-writing-heritage-impact-assessments/>

**Conservation of Glass Objects (IAP)**

1-5 May 2023

Seattle Art Museum, Seattle (USA)

For more information visit: <https://academicprojects.co.uk/courses/conservation-of-glass-objects-seattle-art-museum-usa-2/>

**Artist Interview workshop (in Spanish) organized by Colección Patricia Phelps de Cisneros (CPPC) and the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), VoCA**

8-10 May 2023

Online

For more information visit: <https://vocaadmin.wufoo.com/forms/pb4h0kk1eyzox9/> and contact: [assistent@voca.network](mailto:assistent@voca.network)

**Conservation of Transport and Industrial Collections**  
**West Dean College Short Courses**

8-12 May 2023

UK

For more information visit [HERE](#).

**Structural Repair of Historic Buildings (West Dean College of Arts and Conservation)**

15-18 May 2023

Chichester, UK

For more information visit [HERE](#).

**Conservation and Repair of Tile Roofing (West Dean College of Arts and Conservation)**

22-25 May 2023

Chichester, UK

For more information visit: <https://www.westdean.org.uk/study/short-courses/courses/b3d12107-conservation-and-repair-of-tile-roofing>

**Workshop: Modern Resins for Varnishing and Retouching**

24-26 May 2023

SRAL, Maastricht (NL)

For more information visit: <https://sral.nl/nl/nieuws/workshop/>

**Asian Papers and their Applications in Paper Conservation (Minah Song)**

30 May-1 June 2023

Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze, Italy

For more details and registration visit: <https://www.minahsong.com/workshop>



**Archaeological Leather and its Conservation**

12 June 2023

Northampton (UK)

For more information contact Cyd Clift at:

[info@leatherconservation.org](mailto:info@leatherconservation.org)**6-Week Internship Program (Alliance of HBCU Museums and Galleries in partnership with the University of Delaware)**

18 June-3 August 2023

Winterthur Museum, Delaware (USA)

For more information visit: [https://](https://allianceofhbcumuseums.com/sip-c-2023/)[allianceofhbcumuseums.com/sip-c-2023/](https://allianceofhbcumuseums.com/sip-c-2023/)**IG-IIC Workshop: the Er:YAG Laser for Restoration**

21-23 June 2023

Opera Primaziale Pisana in Campaldo, Pisa (Italy)

For more information visit: <http://www.igiic.org/?p=9074>**Identification of Prints (IADA)**

26-27 June 2023

Berlin, Germany

More information at: <https://iada-home.org/events/identification-of-prints-2/>**Treatment of canvas paintings supports: current practices**

26 June-7 July 2023

Valencia, Spain

For more information visit: <https://na.eventscloud.com/website/50158/>**Identification of Photomechanical Prints (IADA)**

29-30 June 2023

Berlin, Germany

More information at: <https://iada-home.org/events/identification-of-photomechanical-prints/>**Artist Interview workshop (in Spanish) organized by Colección Patricia Phelps de Cisneros (CPPC) and the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), VoCA**

10-12 July 2023

Online

For more information visit: <https://vocaadmin.wufoo.com/forms/pb4h0kk1eyzox9/> and contact: [assistent@voca.network](mailto:assistent@voca.network)**Conservation of Historic Concrete (West Dean College of Arts and Conservation)**

17-20 July 2023

Chichester, UK

For more information visit: <https://www.westdean.org.uk/study/short-courses/courses/b3d12296-conservation-of-historic-concrete>**Montefiascone Programme 2023**

17 July-11 August 2023

Montefiascone, Italy

For more details contact Cheryl Porter: [chezza-porter@yahoo.com](mailto:chezza-porter@yahoo.com)**Managing Storage Environments, Part 1: Understanding How Environmental Conditions Influence the Preservation of Collections (Image Permanence Institute)**

20 July 2023

Webinar (online)

For more information and registration visit [HERE](#).**Managing Storage Environments, Part II: Implementing Environmental Monitoring Programs (Image Permanence Institute)**

10 August 2023

Webinar (online)

For more information and registration visit [HERE](#).**Metallography and Microstructure: A Sumer School Course in Ancient and Historic Metals**

21-25 August 2023

Hastings, East Sussex, UK

For booking up the course in 2023 please send an e-mail to: [dascott@ucla.edu](mailto:dascott@ucla.edu)**Managing Storage Environments, Part III: Administering a Sustainable Environmental Management Program (Image Permanence Institute)**

31 August 2023

Webinar (online)

For more information and registration visit [HERE](#).**Conservation and Repair of Brick and Flint Masonry (West Dean College of Arts and Conservation)**

4-7 September 2023

Chichester, UK

For more information visit: <https://www.westdean.org.uk/study/short-courses/courses/b3d12127>**Introduction to Bioarchaeology**

4-8 September 2023

Malcolm H. Wiener Laboratory for Archaeological Science Applications due: 8 May 2023

For more information visit: <https://ascsa.submittable.com/submit/213813/introduction-to-bioarchaeology-course-application>**Time-based Media Stewardship Workshop (VoCA)**

13-15 September 2023

Denver Art Museum (USA)

For more information visit: <https://vocaadmin.wufoo.com/forms/voca-tbm-stewardship-workshop-2023/>**Time-based Media Stewardship Workshop (VoCA)**

1-3 November 2023

Seattle Art Museum (USA)

For more information visit: <https://vocaadmin.wufoo.com/forms/voca-tbm-stewardship-workshop-2023/>**Bridging to Chemistry for Conservation**

Rolling admissions (4-month course)

Online/South African Institute for Heritage Science &amp; Conservation

For more details visit [HERE](#).



# NEWS IN CONSERVATION

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR CONSERVATION OF HISTORIC AND ARTISTIC WORKS



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**IIC, 3 Birdcage Walk, Westminster, London SW1H 9JJ. Email: [iic@iiconservation.org](mailto:iic@iiconservation.org) [www.iiconservation.org](http://www.iiconservation.org)**

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