49th Annual Meeting

The Museum of Fine Arts Houston
The Menil Collection
November 6-8, 2023
Thank you to our generous 2023 sponsors!

MFA
The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

TRU VUE
Space Center Houston

RH
FH Conservation Tech

HiROX
Conserv

Museum Services Corporation
The Menil Collection

Gamblin
Hiromi Paper Inc.
Small Corp

Whitten & Proctor
GOLDEN
Artist Colors

 Getty
Table of Contents

Meeting at a Glance .................................................................2
Schedule ..............................................................................3
Abstracts ...........................................................................10
Events ..............................................................................37
Map of the Menil Collection.............................................40
Welcome to Los Angeles..................................................41

Addenda:
List of attendees
Google Map: Houston Arts & Eats:

WAAC Board:
President: Jan Burandt
Vice President: Sophie Hunter
Members at Large: Rae Beaubien, Adam Fah, Natasha Cochran, Steve Pine
Treasurer, Membership Secretary: Chris Stavroudis
Assistant Treasurer: Jini Rasmussen
Newsletter Editor: Carolyn Tallent
Secretary: Rachel Mochon
## Meeting at a Glance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sunday November 5</th>
<th>Monday November 6</th>
<th>Tuesday November 7</th>
<th>Wednesday November 8</th>
<th>Thursday November 9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Early Morning</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Walk/Run Hermann Park</td>
<td>Walk/Run Hermann Park</td>
<td>Walk/Run Hermann Park</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Morning</strong></td>
<td>Outreach: Space Center Houston</td>
<td>Conference Program</td>
<td>Conference Program</td>
<td>Conference Program</td>
<td>Tour: Space Center Houston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Workshop: Watercolor Art Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lunch</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Boxed lunches MFAH</td>
<td>Boxed lunches MFAH</td>
<td>Tour: MFAH Conservation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tour: Visionary Art</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Afternoon</strong></td>
<td>Welcome reception hosted buffet at Hungry’s Upstairs</td>
<td>Conference Program</td>
<td>Conference Program</td>
<td>Tours: MFAH Conservation Menil Collection Conservation Menil Drawing Institute</td>
<td>Workshop: Genealogy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tours: MFAH Conservation Latin American Art Galleries</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evening</strong></td>
<td>Board Meeting</td>
<td>James Turrell Twilight Epiphany Banquet at PICOS</td>
<td>Hosted Reception at 93’ Til</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Schedule

### Sunday, November 5, 2023

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 8:30 AM – 4:00 PM | Space Center Houston Community Outreach Project  
Meet Steve Pine in Hotel ZaZa lobby |
| 11:00 - 5:30 PM | Our Beloved Tropical Junkyard: A Visionary Art Tour of Houston  
TOUR - Meet Larry Harris and Jan Burandt in Hotel ZaZa lobby |
| 6:00 - 9:00 PM | Welcome reception - hosted buffet and bar  
*Upstairs* Treehouse room at Hungry’s in Rice Village  
2356 Rice Boulevard, 2nd floor |

### Monday, November 6, 2023 | Museum of Fine Arts, Houston  
Enter MFAH Law Building via Main Street entrance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 6:30 - 7:30 AM | Morning Run / Walk in Hermann Park  
Meet Rachel Mochon in Hotel ZaZa lobby |
| 8:00 AM       | Exhibitors & Monday Speakers arrival & setup |
| 8:30 AM       | Attendee Check-in | Registration | Exhibits | Coffee¹  
Tru Vue | FH Conservation Tech | RH Conservation Engineering  
Conserv | Hirox |
| 9:15 AM       | Welcome remarks in Brown Auditorium  
Jan Burandt, WAAC President  
Per Knutås, Director of Conservation, MFAH  
Gary Tinterow, Director of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston |
| 9:40 AM       | The Sensate Gaze  
Karen L. Schiff |
| 10:00 AM      | Complexity of Vision, Consistency of Intent:  
The Art of Jay DeFeo  
Karen Zukor |

¹ Early morning coffee will be in the Lower Law Conference room with the exhibits
10:30 AM  Coffee BREAK  |  Exhibits  |  Silent Auction

11:00 AM  Treatment of Mink Stole’s Iconic Glasses from Pink Flamingos
Sophie Hunter

11:30 AM  Conservation Considerations for Cast Ductile Iron Sculpture -
Beverly Pepper’s Moline Markers
Abigail Rodriguez

12:00 PM  Substituting Esters for Aromatics in Varnish Solutions
Robert Proctor

12:30 - 1:30 PM  LUNCH BREAK

1:30 PM  Climate Readiness for Libraries and Archives: Exploring
Modular Storage at the University of Texas
Sarah Norris

2:00 PM  Another Take on the Spray Booth (Portable and Not)
Cristiana Acerbi Ginatta

2:10 PM  Paper Hinges for Heavy Lifting: a float frame solution
Courtney Books and Brian Koelz

2:20 PM  Message in a bottle: questions and realizations at the
beginning, middle, and end? of a career in conservation
Olivia Primanis

3:00 - 4:30 PM  Coffee BREAK  |  Exhibits  |  Silent Auction

3:30 - 4:30 PM  Tour: Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation Center for
Conservation
Per Knutås

Tour: Latin American Art Galleries
Mari Carmen Ramírez and Arden Decker

---

2 Coffee Break will be in the Kinder Building Lower Arrivals Hall, surrounded by El Anatsui Visitation

3 Box lunches will be available in Café Leonelli located on the ground floor - Nancy and Rich Kinder Building
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6:30 - 7:30 AM</td>
<td>Morning Run / Walk in Hermann Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meet Rachel Mochon in Hotel ZaZa lobby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:00 AM</td>
<td>Tuesday Speakers arrival &amp; Exhibitors setup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:30 AM</td>
<td>Attendee Check-in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:00 AM</td>
<td>Morning Welcome - Natasha Cochran - moderator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:05 AM</td>
<td>Using Felts for Localized Drying Treatments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Abby Schleicher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:15 AM</td>
<td>Two Strategies for Botanical Albums at New York Public Library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Emma Guerard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:30 AM</td>
<td>Treatment of an Ethiopic Manuscript: How the Inaccessible Becomes Accessible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kaeley Ferguson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00 AM</td>
<td>Breaking the Toxic Addiction- Sustainable Research at the MFAH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Soraya Alcala, Silvia Russo and Per Knutås</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30 AM</td>
<td>Coffee BREAK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00 AM</td>
<td>Paid Conservation Internships Programs, from High School to Graduate School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jodie Utter, Ellen Cunningham-Kruppa and Sarah Melching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:30 - 2:30 PM</td>
<td>LUNCH BREAK [first access to those on MFAH lab tour]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00 - 2:15 PM</td>
<td>Tour: Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation Center for Conservation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:30 - 2:30 PM</td>
<td>Exhibits</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tuesday, November 7, 2023 | Museum of Fine Arts, Houston
Enter MFAH Law Building via Main Street entrance
2:30 PM  Afternoon Welcome - Adam Fah – moderator

Mapping the Crossroads: The Conservation of Varnished County Wall Maps from Indiana
Seth Irwin

3:00PM  Making a Pair of Microclimate Cases for a Vittore Carpaccio Painting on wood in two pieces
Jane Berman

3:30PM  Managing the logistics of removing a large-scale contemporary canvas painting from a blind strainer
Linnaea Saunders and Leslie Vilicich

4:00 PM  Coffee BREAK | Exhibits | Silent Auction

4:30 PM  Bus to James Turrell’s Twilight Epiphany

5:20 PM  Sunset light sequence at the Skyspace

6:30 PM  Bus to Banquet @ PICOS

7:00 – 9:30ish PM  Banquet at PICOS, 3601 Kirby Drive

9:30 - 10:00ish  Bus to Hotel ZaZa

Wednesday, November 8, 2023 | Museum of Fine Arts, Houston
Enter MFAH Law Building via Main Street entrance

6:30 - 7:30 AM  Morning Run / Walk in Hermann Park
Meet Rachel Mochon in Hotel ZaZa lobby

8:30 AM  Check-in | Registration | Exhibits | Coffee

9:00 AM  Morning Welcome - Steve Pine - moderator

APOLLO MISSION CONTROL CENTER RESTORATION NASA
Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center, Houston, Texas
David Bucek, Jordan Shelton and Delaney Harris-Finch
9:40 AM     WAAC Business Meeting

10:30 AM    Coffee BREAK  |  Exhibits

11:00 AM    Final Session Welcome - Sophie Hunter - moderator

    Mechanisms of Decay: Rapid Weathering of Outdoor Basalt Sculptures
    Jane Gillies, Bavan Rajan, Kirston Siebach, and Gelu Costin

11:30 AM    Color Management of Digital Imaging for Conservation
    James Craven

12:00 Noon  Announcements
            End of Meeting

    Free admission to Museum of Fine Arts, Houston galleries for meeting attendees. Please visit the Hirsch Library!

12:30-1:45 PM    Tour: Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation Center for Conservation meet Per Knutås outside of Brown Auditorium
    Advanced registration required

2:00 | 3:00 | 4:00    Tours: Menil Collection main conservation studios
    meet Cory Rogge in the foyer of the Menil Collection
    1533 Sul Ross Advanced registration required

2:00 | 3:00 | 4:00    Tours: Menil Drawing Institute
    meet Jan Burandt in the Menil Drawing Institute
    1412 West Main St.
    Advanced registration required

Admission is free to all Menil Collection buildings. The Menil Collection bookstore is offering a 20% discount to WAAC meeting attendees. Visit arts organizations near the Menil campus: Houston Center for Photography  |  Rothko Chapel  | The Transart Foundation  | Sicardi

5:00 - 7:00 PM    Closing reception - hosted bar and hors d'oeuvres
    93’Til, 1601 W. Main St. (corner of Mandell and W. Main)
Thursday, November 9, 2023

Tour: Johnson Space Center and Space Center Houston
9:00 AM - 2:30 PM  Meet Steve Pine in Hotel Zaza lobby, bus tour
Advanced registration required.

Workshop: Watercolor Materials and Techniques Workshop
9:30 AM - 1:00 PM  Meet Abby Schleicher and Carla Gauthier at Watercolor Art
Society 1601 W. Alabama St. (at intersection of Mandell)
1:00 - 2:00 PM  Hosted lunch, Lua Viet, 1540 W. Alabama St.
2:00 - 4:00 PM  Menil Drawing Institute, Janie C. Lee Drawing Room
Advanced registration required. Space available.

Workshop: Introductory Genealogy Workshop
12:00 - 1:30 PM  Meet Natasha Cochran and Melissa Hayes at the venue
Houston Public Library | Family History Research Center at the
Clayton Library Campus
5300 Caroline St., Houston, TX 77004
(short walk from Hotel ZaZa)
The library is open until 7pm for continued research and consultation.
Advanced registration required. Space available.
Abstracts
The Sensate Gaze

Karen L. Schiff

I began making Laid Line Drawings in the summer of 2006, partly in response to the gorgeous papers I had seen less than a year before in the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s exhibition “Vincent van Gogh: The Drawings” (October 18 - December 31, 2005). But the project emerged just as much in response to a cheap pad of paper I came across in a Wyoming Wal-Mart. This brief talk will focus on the ways that I use drawing to articulate the material qualities of manufactured laid papers, first by Aquabee and later by Fabriano, with the goal of discovering more about them, while along the way creating visual and conceptual intrigue. Looking sensitively at these papers is the first step toward perceiving and drawing out (so to speak) the quiddity of a thing, the tidbits of wonder lurking in even in mass-produced, everyday materials.

Light/Dark Map (2008), drawing ink on laid Fabriano paper, 9 x 12 inches
Karen L. Schiff (K. Lisa / KLS) is an artist and wordsmith who has worked as a professor (M.F.A., SMFA/Tufts; Ph.D., UPenn) and an occasional curator, and currently works as a Library Assistant in Collections at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. Artist’s residencies include Yaddo, Anderson Ranch, and the Edward F. Albee Foundation, and drawings are held in the collections of institutions such as the Museum of the Art Institute of Chicago, The Brooklyn Museum, Yale University Art Gallery, and the MCS Collection of Contemporary Drawing in Funchal, Portugal. Art criticism has appeared in journals including *Art Journal, The Brooklyn Rail, Hyperallergic Weekend, Art in Print, Switch (on Paper), Art in America, and Tate Etc.*

I was admitted to the International Association of Art Critics in 2013, thanks to publications about artist Agnes Martin. I could say that my entire career in art refers back to the touchstone of seeing her work. Though I have always been drawn to both the visual and the verbal arts, for the past several years I have been concentrating unexpectedly on research and writing. (In 2016, while in a lecture hall at RISD, I perceived a startling new way to view Picasso’s 1907 breakthrough painting, Les Demoiselles d’Avignon, and in preparing to write it up, I encountered many other perceptions about that painting which led to various spin-off research and writing projects, as well as to a two-year Core fellowship in criticism here at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. My most recent essay on that painting, “Gender Complexity in Picasso’s Les Demoiselles d’Avignon: The Precedent of the Sleeping Hermaphroditus Sculpture,” will be published this year in Boletín de Arte in Málaga, Spain, in a special Picasso-themed issue to honor the 50th anniversary of Picasso’s death.) Though I could talk about my Laid Line drawing project through a textual lens, in relation to handwriting, bookshelves, and illuminated manuscripts, today I am focusing on this project’s dimensions that relate more directly to conservation.
Complexity of Vision, Consistency of Intent: The Art of Jay DeFeo

Karen Zukor

As a contemporary artist (1929-1989), Jay DeFeo was a singular figure in the San Francisco Bay Area. Her use of materials was wildly inventive and is evident in her drawing, painting, sculpture, collage, & jewelry. But 60 to 90 years later, her work presents a conundrum as to what was her intent and what is the result of neglect and poor storage. Conserving her work is a challenge - what did DeFeo intend and how does her work (literally) hold up?

Karen Zukor has been a paper conservator in private practice for 42 years, specializing in all manner of art on paper and archives. Her studio has addressed prints, drawings, watercolors, pastels, antique maps, rare books and historic currency. Karen has trained both pre and post program conservators and lectures widely to the community on preservation and safe storage.
Treatment of Mink Stole’s Iconic Glasses from Pink Flamingos

Sophie Hunter and Dr. Rebecca Ploeger

In John Waters’ 1972 black comedy film Pink Flamingos, the actor Mink Stole plays the antagonist Connie Marble, who battles Divine for the title of “filthiest person alive!” Her character is perhaps most recognizable by her glasses, a pair of 1970s cat-eye frames, decorated in sparkling silver rhinestones. The glasses were also one of the few remaining objects still in existence from this iconic cult film, and thus deemed critical to include in the current exhibition, “John Waters: Pope of Trash” by the curatorial team.

Unfortunately, the glasses, with their mainly cellulose acetate frames, were in very poor condition, having reached advanced stages of plastic degradation. The eyeglass frames were broken into several pieces and brittle and cracked throughout; their entire surface covered in a thick layer of leached plasticizer, which was hardened and blanched; their shape deformed from shrinkage; and the lenses had fallen out. The glasses could not be handled, as even the slightest amount of pressure would cause them to break anew. Mink Stole, who agreed to loan them to the Museum, described them to the curators as “dust.”

This presentation will discuss the analysis and treatment of the glasses, including the use of cyclododecane to make them stable enough to handle, the cleaning and consolidation methods used, and the restoration of the lost areas. With the help of a supportive mount, the glasses are currently on display at the Academy where visitors can now recognize them as the movie prop that helped to create the Mink Stole character we know and love. Mink Stole has since generously donated the glasses to the Academy Museum due to the extensive conservation work that was carried out.

Sophie Hunter is the Senior Objects Conservator at the Academy Museum of Motion Pictures in Los Angeles. She previously worked in conservation at museums nationwide, including the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, Mount Vernon Estate, the Autry - Southwest Museum of the American Indian, and the New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs Museums in Santa Fe. Her international art conservation work includes projects in Guadalajara, Mexico and Luxor, Egypt. Sophie studied sculpture and drawing at Bellas Artes in Guanajuato, Mexico, has a BA in History from the University of Chicago and a Masters and Certificate of Advanced Study in Art Conservation from Buffalo State University.

Dr. Rebecca Ploeger is an Associate Professor of Conservation Science at the Garman Art Conservation Department at SUNY Buffalo State, and is responsible for the organic chemistry and preventive conservation parts of the curriculum.
Conservation Considerations for Cast Ductile Iron Sculpture - Beverly Pepper's Moline Markers

Abigail Rodriguez

In the early 1980s, American sculptor Beverly Pepper became the first known artist to work with ductile cast iron. This groundbreaking work was completed in collaboration with the John Deere Foundry in East Moline, Illinois, and the Davenport Art Gallery of Davenport, Iowa. The sculptures created during this period are collectively referred to as the “Moline Markers” and include thirteen distinct vertical forms ranging in height from 9 ½ to 24 feet.

Three of these sculptures are in The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco (FAMSF) collections, on display in the Barbro Osher Sculpture Garden at the de Young Museum. Two of the three sculptures exhibit structural condition issues and all three have heavy wear and alteration to their patinas. The structural issues include slight deformation of the vertical elements and subsequent failure of a spot weld.

This research is multi-pronged, aiming to develop treatment protocols for both the structural condition issues and restoration of the patina on the FAMSF sculptures. As Pepper was known for pushing the limitations of sculptural materials, the development of a structural treatment plan for these works will include consultation with foundries, metallurgists, and structural engineers. Foundational work on this project will also include the assessment of several other “Moline Markers” across the United States, compiling past treatment methodologies to inform conservation considerations for monumental cast ductile iron sculpture. Colorimetry and spectrophotometry will be used to capture information about Pepper’s intended patina.

Abigail Rodriguez is a cultural heritage conservator based in the Bay Area of California. She works as a Mellon Fellow in Objects Conservation at the Fine Arts Museums in San Francisco (FAMSF).

Her training includes a Master of Science in Art Conservation from Winterthur/University of Delaware where she focused on the preservation of modern and industrial objects and textiles.

She has worked for institutions and in private practice across the United States. Her previous placements include positions at the Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens, the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum, the Smithsonian American Art Museum, and the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden. She also completed work with private practice conservators Donna Williams in Hollywood, California, and Adam Jenkins in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
In addition to hands-on treatment, Rodriguez has a passion for research and community engagement. She is actively working with community members in Del Rey, California to designate the site of the first Chicano mural a historic landmark. In her free time, Rodriguez enjoys baking, listening to murder mystery podcasts, and thrift shopping.
Substituting Esters for Aromatics in Varnish Solutions

Robert Proctor

Aromatics are both revered and detested by conservators. Revered for their unique ability to dissolve a range of resins and detested because of the environmental and health hazards they pose. The desire to find safer and effective replacements for aromatics may soon become a necessity as regulations get tougher. There are already some countries where it is almost impossible for conservators to obtain solvents like xylene, toluene and Shellsol A 100®. This paper will propose several potential replacements for aromatics focusing on two esters that the author has been using successfully in varnish formulations. How these solvents were chosen, tested and how they both compare and differ from aromatics will be discussed.

Robert Proctor is Co-Director and Paintings Conservator at Whitten & Proctor Fine Art Conservation. He and his partner Jill Whitten have headed a private studio in Houston, Texas for 25 years and presently employ five conservators and one administrator. In addition to working for a broad range of museums, public institutions and private collections, he and Jill have been teaching workshops on varnishes for conservators internationally for 30 years. He has also been involved as a teacher and expert panel member for several Getty Conserving Canvas projects including The Straus Center at Harvard, The Marc Museum in Rosario, Argentina, The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, The Dallas Museum of Art and The Museum of Fine Art, Houston.
Climate Readiness for Libraries and Archives: Exploring Modular Storage at the University of Texas

Sarah Norris

At the University of Texas School of Information, preservation students address climate readiness as part of disaster planning. Within their disaster planning coursework, students undertake climate risk mapping projects to highlight how Texas collecting institutions are likely to be impacted by changes in storm patterns and flooding, especially in the Gulf Coast and Central Texas regions. These mapping projects often start discussions about the necessity of preventive action, as the extreme nature of water events continues to increase.

From these discussions, a collaborative project has grown to explore the idea of modular storage. With contributions from preservation students in the School of Information and design students in the School of Architecture, this project explores whether collections storage might be compartmentalized for quick removal as dangerous storms approach. This strategy would minimize resource-intensive flood response for damaged materials. It would also enable collections to remain permanently located in their home communities, even when those communities face increasing flood risk. Where climate-endangered communities are also historically under-resourced, this project can also support equity, by preserving the connection between communities and their culture.

Sarah Norris is Assistant Professor of Practice in Library and Archives Conservation and Preservation at the University of Texas School of Information. Previously, she was conservator at the Texas State Library and Archives Commission, where she established the conservation lab. She is a Fellow in the American Institute for Conservation, and a member of the International Institute for Conservation and the Society of American Archivists. Current projects focus on climate resilience and disaster preparedness for cultural heritage collections. Her research has been published in the Journal of the American Institute for Conservation and the Association of Recorded Sound Collections Journal. She’s also online at conservation.ischool.utexas.edu.
Another Take on the Spray Booth (Portable and Not)

*Cristiana Acerbi Ginatta*

The challenge in the newly built conservation studio was to find a way to partition the open floor plan and extract solvent fumes when spray varnishing and using solvents.

The partition needed to be easy to install and easy to reverse, should not block the light coming from the windows on one side of the space, and the fume extractor had to be adequately dimensioned, solvent-proof and for outdoor installation.

The presentation will show 2 solutions that were explored and the final implementation and will include the budget for both solutions.

*Cristiana Acerbi Ginatta* is a paintings conservator in private practice in Dallas, Arte Viva LLC. In October 2022 she completed construction of her new studio. She holds a Master’s degree in the conservation of paintings from Palazzo Spinelli in Florence, Italy, and she is a Professional Associate with the American Institute for Conservation. In her free time, Cristiana volunteers with TX-CERA to assist cultural institutions in Texas in disaster planning, response and recovery.
Paper Hinges for Heavy Lifting: a float frame solution

Courtney Books and Brian Koelz

In 2019 The Saint Louis Art Museum (SLAM) acquired an oil painting on Masonite by Esphyr Slobodkina titled Levitator Abstraction, c 1950. Unframing the painting revealed that any depth of frame rebate interrupted the artist’s design and inspired the curator to purchase a new float frame.

In lieu of conventional solutions like clips or heavily applied adhesives, SLAM’s paintings conservation and framing labs devised an alternate framing system that would satisfy the following goals: 1) be visually unobtrusive 2) avoid blind adhesion 3) be readily re-treatable 4) be strong enough to suspend the support’s weight 5) be secure enough to withstand seismic shock. The adapted treatment was designed to suspend a hardboard panel within a float frame from a network of paper hinges and a rigid lattice support. Small mock-ups were tested for adhesive performances and a full-scale (1:1) mock-up was tested for extensive sheer/peel strength performances.

The resulting treatment successfully resolved common challenges found in float-framing a rigid support by maintaining accessibility to the reverse and re-treatability. The painting was installed in the galleries of the Saint Louis Art Museum in November of 2020. Three years later, the support’s hinges show no sign of strain, lending confidence to the weight-lifting performance of the hybridized design.

of note: a manuscript version of this topic is currently with Carolyn Tallent for review for WAAC newsletter - submitting here as a “happy to present this, if needed” tip (often helpful to see treatments in both presentation and printed format)

Courtney June Books is associate painting conservator at the Saint Louis Art Museum and serves on the editorial board of Materia: Journal of Technical Art History. Courtney maintains a strong interest in bio-art, mural and large-format paintings, and paintings on atypical substrates.
Message in a bottle: questions and realizations at the beginning, middle, and end? of a career in conservation

Olivia Primanis

This presentation is envisioned as an interactive discussion by WAAC meeting attendees. Throughout our careers in the conservation and preservation of art and library materials, we encounter many challenges, choices, opportunities, and goals. What are they? How did you manage them? Are you searching for some specific information now? Looking back, is there information that, had you known it then, would have influenced the course of your career? To add to the mix of choices and detours for all of us, please think of sharing your career questions and/or thoughts on how events in your work either resolved themselves or how you achieved your goal.

Olivia Primanis is an independent book conservator in Austin, Texas. She received her training through an apprenticeship in hand book binding and book conservation beginning in 1974 with Jean Gunner at Hunt Botanical Library, Carnegie Mellon University, in Pittsburgh, Pa, U.S.A. In 1975 she founded and was the sole proprietor of "The Bookbinder" that offered artists' supplies, classes in hand book binding, and hand bookbinding for area institutions including the University of Pittsburgh Rare Book Collections. In 1984 she moved to Los Angeles, CA, U.S.A. where she taught book conservation and consulted for area institutions, including The Clark Library (UCLA); Scripps College (Claremont) and the Getty Center and Museum. Following the L.A. Public Library fire, she consulted with Solex Inc on the drying of 160,000 books. From 1990 until January 2019, she held the position of Head of the Book Lab (Senior Conservator since 1991) at the Ransom Center, University of Texas, Austin, U.S.A. where she performed conservation treatments, trained staff and interns, lectured, and participated in the administration of the Conservation Department. At this time, she is consulting on library preservation, performing book conservation treatments in her private practice and, as a founding member, taking an active role in the activities of Texas Collections Emergency Resource Alliance (TX-CERA).
Using Felts for Localized Drying Treatments

Abby Schleicher

Drying paper is a critical conservation treatment, employed to manage dimensional changes in paper following exposure to aqueous treatment including humidification, mending with adhesive, or bathing. While standard methods for localized treatment often involve small mending stacks comprising a 10 pt blotter weight, hollytex, a glass plate, and a weight, it is important to reflect on how often we should adapt our methods based on the unique characteristics of the paper, media, and materials being treated. The ease and familiarity of established techniques should be balanced with the need for customized solutions and sustainability.

There are a multitude of variables and methods for drying to consider, and choosing the right approach can have a profound impact on the outcome. Different restraint drying methods have been suggested for specific purposes and types of paper. To gain a comprehensive understanding of the mechanical and chemical changes that occur when paper becomes wet and subsequently dries, “Paper and Water” by Irene Bruckle serves as an invaluable resource. It explains various methods to control and optimize the drying process for a wide range of applications specifically the overall flattening of paper in large pressing stacks.

Blotter stack drying versus felt-based techniques, or a combination of materials like matboard and felt, can be tailored to create distinct effects, each optimized for specific conservation needs. In the case of fine photogravures on delicate substrates like thin Asian tissue (e.g., gampi) or water-sensitive transparent architecture paper, adopting a local hard-soft mending stack may be the key to effectively managing dimensional changes. This tip will explore the role of localized drying treatments in paper conservation and the importance of adapting methods to suit the unique characteristics of the materials being treated.

Abby Schleicher is currently the Andrew W. Mellon Fellow in Paper Conservation at the Menil Collection. She previously held positions at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, the Clyfford Still Museum, The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art and Heugh-Edmonson Conservation, LLC in Kansas City. Abby holds a MA and CAS in Art Conservation from the SUNY Buffalo State and a BFA in Painting from Kansas State University.
Two Strategies for Botanical Albums at New York Public Library

Emma Guerard

The decision to change the presentation of a library item has major impacts on the general impression of that object, but may be a necessary one to preserve its overall content. In the case of two nineteenth century botanical albums in the New York Public Library’s Photography Collection, Ferns and Mosses (1865) and Tiroler Alpen Flora (est. mid 19th century), comprising brittle dried botanical samples and paper supports, the items were deemed too fragile to handle for digitization or access. To ensure the continued availability of these items, a strategy of changing their presentation for safe handling was elected.

Two different approaches were taken to reflect differences in the items’ primary formats. Ferns and Mosses consisted of botanical samples adhered to the recto of bound paper leaves in decorative and pictorial motifs. Ferns and Mosses was disbound; detached botanical elements were adhered to the paper supports, and the individual pages mounted in window mats. The samples in Tiroler Alpen Flora were originally stored loosely in unbound paper folders with manuscript identification cards; the samples, cards, and their paper folders were encapsulated in polyethylene sleeves separately to reflect this unbound, non-adhesive portfolio structure.

The final outcome of these treatments are items that reflect their original content in a manner that can be safely accessed by library staff and patrons, but that are also vastly different from the primary form of the scrapbooks. This talk discusses decisions made throughout these two treatments and the implications of reformatting unstable albums as a strategy for their preservation.

Emma Guerard (she/her) is the Post Graduate Paper Conservator in New York Public Library’s Barbara Goldsmith Conservation Lab. She received an M.A./C.A.S. in Art Conservation from SUNY Buffalo State College in 2022 after completing a 12-month internship at the University of Iowa Libraries. Prior to graduate studies, she worked and interned in the Los Angeles area, including with the Los Angeles County Art Museum’s Watts Towers project and at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences’ Margaret Herrick Library.
Treatment of an Ethiopic Manuscript: How the Inaccessible Becomes Accessible

Kaeley Ferguson

The Harry Ransom Center is known for its rich collections full of unique items that are available to researchers across the globe. A small subset of Ethiopic Manuscripts in the Ransom Center’s Collection that are of increasing interest for research and classroom instruction have remained inaccessible due to challenges in condition and cataloging. The Miracles of Mary is a manuscript within this collection that includes beautiful illuminations and text dating from the 16th to the 18th centuries. In order to support the Ransom Center’s desire to promote access to more diverse non-European and American collections, this manuscript underwent an interventive treatment. This talk will discuss the treatment process, which includes media consolidation, parchment repairs, and resewing, as well as the decision making behind each of these steps. This treatment involved collaboration with conservators, curators, bookbinders, and scientists in order to make the most informed treatment decisions and learn about Ethiopic Manuscripts.

Kaeley Ferguson is the Paper and Book Conservator for the Campus Conservation Initiative at the Harry Ransom Center and the University of Texas at Austin. While getting her bachelor’s degree in Chemistry at Boston University, she discovered art conservation and was eager to learn more. Prior to graduate school, she held positions at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Historic New England, the Northeast Document Conservation Center, and the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum. Kaeley specialized in Library and Archives Conservation at the Winterthur/University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation (WUDPAC) and held graduate-level internships at the Conservation Center for Art and Historic Artifacts, the Bodleian Libraries, and the Harry Ransom Center. Kaeley loves talking about the accessibility of library collections and her golden retriever, Rex.
Breaking the Toxic Addiction- Sustainable Research at the MFAH

Soraya Alcala, Silvia Russo, and Per Knutås

Don't you know that you're toxic?
And I love what you do
Don't you know that you're toxic?

From Britney Spears, Toxic, 2003

Like Britney Spears, we acknowledge that some of our habits are grounded in routine and can be harmful to our health and the environment. Acknowledging the need to improve conservation practices for our health and the environment, the Sarah Campbell Blaffer Center for Conservation at the MFAH is dedicated to rethinking the preservation strategies of our extensive collection of 5000 years of human creativity. One of our initiatives highlighted in this presentation is our inclusion as a committed partner in the European-founded GREENART project (GREen ENdeavor in Art ResToration).

GREENART unites 28 global partners in an ambitious initiative to explore and develop innovative solutions for conservation treatment and preventive conservation using low-impact materials derived from renewable natural sources or recycled waste.

As a participating partner, the MFAH is actively testing and implementing novel cleaning methodologies, coatings, and consolidants on various case studies. These case studies involve diverse materials and challenges, such as cleaning an oxidized and stained Morris Louis painting and removal of wax and applying a coating on a Giacometti sculpture.

The overall research focuses on two primary aspects: firstly, exploring new cleaning solutions, such as gels and nanostructured fluids, by replacing existing polymers, solvents, and surfactants with fully sustainable biological, natural, or low-impact materials, and secondly, reevaluating traditional consolidants, coatings, and packaging materials using plant proteins and polysaccharides sourced from renewable resources.

This presentation will highlight the current state of the multidisciplinary research at the MFAH, addressing the challenges encountered and the significant advancements made in the pursuit of sustainable conservation practices. By embracing eco-friendly alternatives, the MFAH aims to contribute to a greener, healthier future for art preservation.

Soraya Alcala is a paintings conservator currently working at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston as a head of the paintings conservation lab. Previously, she worked as a conservator at the American Museum of Natural History, New York; Opera della Primaziale Pisana, Italy; the National Museum of Art of...
Soraya obtained her B.A. in Conservation of Cultural Heritage at the University of Barcelona, Spain, and an MSc in Materials and Diagnostic Techniques of Cultural Heritage at the Department of Chemistry and Industrial Chemistry at the University of Pisa, Italy. Soraya’s research focuses on the invention of innovative cleaning techniques.

She organizes workshops teaching cleaning sensitive materials and gels systems to mid-careers conservators. She consulted and carried out cleaning treatments for different institutions and private practices.

Silvia Russo received a BSc Degree in Chemistry at Sapienza University of Rome (2015, Italy), an MSc Degree in Science and Technologies for the Conservation and the Restoration of Cultural Heritage as part of the European Master Programme in Archaeological Material Science (2018), and a Ph.D. in Chemistry at the University of Neuchatel /Haute Ecole Arc CR in Switzerland (2022) as a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellow of the ITN-CHANGE Programme. Passionate about conservation science, she trained in several analytical and imaging techniques, chemometrics, and developed skills in the study of heritage objects and their degradation processes in multiple European Institutions (e.g., the Soprintendenza Archeologia, Belle Arti e Paesaggio delle Marche (Italy, 2016), The British Museum (UK, 2017), The Rijksmuseum (The Netherlands, 2020) and the C2RMF (France, 2021)). In 2019, she participated in the development of nanoscaled treatments for the conservation of metal and stone objects at the University of L’Aquila (Italy). Silvia is currently an Andrew W. Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow At the Museum of Fine Arts Houston and The Menil Collection.

Per Knutås is Head of Conservation at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. Prior to this, he served as Chief Conservator at the Cleveland Museum of Art (CMA), establishing the June and Simon K.C. Li Center for Chinese Paintings Conservation, which is the first post-graduate training center for the discipline. He also served as Chief Conservator for the Cincinnati Art Museum from 2009 to 2012. He has a Paintings Conservation degree from the School of Conservation at the Royal Danish Academy of Art in Copenhagen, with a focus on modern and contemporary paintings. He received his MSc in Positive Organizational Development and Change from Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, OH, focusing on strength-based leadership. Knutås has also worked at the Moderna Museet and the Swedish National Heritage Board, both in Stockholm, and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum and Museum of Modern Art, NY.
Paid Conservation Internships Programs, from High School to Graduate School

Jodie Utter, Ellen Kruppa-Cunningham and Sarah Melching

Largely, as a result of poor outreach, racism, and classism, art conservation is a relatively homogeneous profession that historically has not reflected the diversity of the general population. In our field, there has been an expectation that applicants’ self-fund unpaid internships and extensive academic requirements before being considered for admission into one of a handful of conservation graduate programs. The featured speakers have acted as host sites, providing opportunities for a variety of people from differing backgrounds and interests to gain practical hands-on experience in art conservation. These programs aim to educate both future conservators and individuals who will become educated advocates for the field of art conservation. The panel will discuss their internship programs and partnerships with a focus on the evolution of the programs and emphasis on successes and lessons learned, as well as attracting applicants from non-traditional backgrounds.

Jodie Utter, Senior Conservator of Works on Paper, Amon Carter Museum of American Art, will discuss the creation of the Carter’s paid internship program, the goals and mission of the program as well as measures of success. The program actively seeks high school, undergraduate and conservation graduate students to work together as interns for various periods throughout the year. In addition, future goals and objectives will be discussed for collaboration between institutions locally and nationally.

Ellen Cunningham-Kruppa, Harry Ransom Center, UT Austin, will discuss the HRC’s long-term collaboration with The Winterthur/University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation and the HBCU Library Alliance. For the past six years, the HRC has served as a host site for undergraduates who attend Historically Black Colleges and Universities. The program teaches basic skills, introduces the foundations of preservation and conservation, and takes field trips to expose interns to other cultural heritage institutions and conservators. The program is fully funded, allowing students to participate without undo financial burden. Over the course of six weeks, interns participate in Zoom cohort learning sessions coordinated and hosted by Winterthur/University of Delaware. Interns spend 4 weeks on-site at their host institutions, supplementing the virtual classroom experience with hands-on training.

Sarah Melching, Silber Director of Conservation, Denver Art Museum, will discuss the Museum Pathways Exploration Internship program. The program draws from undergraduate students and early career professionals who are considered historically excluded in the arts, including people who identify as Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), women, immigrants, LGBTQIA+, those who have been involved in the criminal justice system for nonviolent offenses, and fostered youth. The program teaches the intern new
skills necessary to pursue a career in the arts and cultural field and exposes the participants to the many different career pathways within a museum. In addition, she is exploring partnerships with private foundations in hopes of creating funding opportunities with an eye on equity, diversity, inclusivity, and accessibility. With her counterparts at local museums, she is exploring partnership opportunities for hands on experience.

**Jodie Utter**, Senior Conservator of Works on Paper for the Amon Carter Museum of American Art has worked as a contract conservator, sole proprietor, and staff conservator in private practice and in a variety of institutions. Utter holds a graduate degree from the Art Conservation Program at Winterthur/University of Delaware. She has taught numerous classes and workshops and given lectures on conservation, preservation, and artists’ pigments. She has conducted extensive research on the watercolor materials and techniques of Charles M. Russell, resulting in numerous lectures and publications, including a technical study published in a definitive book entitled Charles M. Russell, Watercolors 1887-1926. She is a fellow of the International Institute for Conservation (IIC) and the American Institute for Conservation (AIC) and is a member of Western Association for Art Conservation (WAAC), Midwest Regional Conservation Guild (MRCG), and the American Society of Trace Evidence Examiners (ASTEE). She has served in numerous positions in AIC, and MRCG, as well as boards and committees nationally and locally.

**Ellen Cunningham-Kruppa** is Associate Director for Preservation and Conservation at the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center at UT Austin. She has been a practitioner, educator, and consultant in the field of cultural record preservation for 35 years. In 2016, Ellen was awarded the American Library Association’s Paul Banks and Carolyn Harris Award in Preservation for her contributions to educating conservation professionals, and in 2022 she received the Publication Award from the American Institute for Conservation for her book Mooring a Field: Paul N. Banks and the Education of Library and Archives Conservators. She holds the Ph.D. in American Studies and an M.L.I.S. from UT Austin, and is an affiliated assistant professor with the University of Delaware/Winterthur Program in Art Conservation. She received an Endorsement of Specialization in Administration of Preservation Programs from Columbia University’s School of Library Service.

**Sarah Melching** is Silber Director of Conservation, Denver Art Museum. She is a passionate art conservation professional with a broad range of experience, focusing on the preservation and access of cultural heritage. She earned her Master’s in Art Conservation (M.A.C.) from Queen’s University. Her experience includes conserving collections at the Library of Congress, National Gallery of Canada, Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, the Clyfford Still Museum, and the Denver Art Museum, as well as in private practice. Throughout her career, Sarah has aspired to teach and train students, aspiring and emerging professionals, graduate fellows and peers, as well as allied professionals,
locally, nationally, and internationally. She has served on the AIC Board of Directors and in various specialty group roles.
Mapping the Crossroads: The Conservation of Varnished County Wall Maps from Indiana

Seth Irwin

In 2023, the Indiana State Library embarked on a six month grant funded project to treat the most condition critical varnished county wall maps in the collection. This project was funded by a grant from the Indiana based Nicholas Noyes Foundation and carried out by project paper conservator Valinda Carroll in the conservation lab of the Indiana State Library. In all, twenty varnished wall maps were treated, digitized, and rehoused. For most of these maps the condition was in such a state that even the act of handling them would cause pieces to fall off and they could not be digitized or exhibited or used in any manner. Most of the maps selected for this project were the last existing copy. As these were county maps, they contained information not found anywhere else, such as property owners, business, and regional population information. 19th century wall maps present a difficult problem for paper collections as they are often very large and a very complex mix of materials. This talk will focus on the conservation issues of varnished maps and the project conducted at the Indiana State Library.

Seth Irwin is the Conservator for the Indiana State Library in Indianapolis. He also has a private practice that he has had since 2010. Seth holds a Master’s in Art Conservation, specializing in paper conservation, from Queen’s University. He also holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree in Photography from Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, New York. Previously, Seth was the first full time Paper Conservator for the University of Hawaii Library, a position held until mid-2016 when he moved the Boston area to devote all his time to his private practice. In 2019, he moved to Indianapolis to work as the Conservator for the Indiana State Library. In 2011 and 2012, he worked on a fourteen-month project with eleven museums throughout the State of Alaska. At the beginning of 2017 he returned to Alaska for three months to work on a project with the Alaska State Museum in Juneau, treating Treaty of Cession documents for an exhibit commemorating the Alaska State Museum’s Sesquicentennial. Seth served as the former President for the Midwest Regional Conservation Guild from 2019-2021. He also holds a A.C.R. accreditation status with the Institute for Conservation.
Making a Pair of Microclimate Cases for a Vittore Carpaccio Painting on wood in two pieces

Jane Berman

Designing and executing micro-climate cases for paintings is always challenging, each one requiring a slightly different approach but with the same goal of maintaining a consistent relative humidity as well as protecting the object from “wear and tear” from travelling beyond its home environment.

The Getty Museum owns the top half of a Vittore Carpaccio double-sided painting on wood dated @ 1492-4 titled “Fishing and Fowling on the Lagoon” and the bottom half, titled “Two Women on a Balcony” is owned by the Museo Correr in Venice, Italy. These two paintings had been reunited in a single micro-climate case in 1999 but was deemed too cumbersome to use again.

This presentation will give a brief overview of the journey it took to make cases so these two paintings could come together for a second time in order to travel to the NGA in D.C. and Palazzo Ducale in Venice, Italy this past year.

Jane Berman owns and operates a small frame shop, The Ota House, founded in 1978, in Marina del Rey, CA. She has built a strong relationship in the art conservation community because the two disciplines are dependent on each other’s expertise. She works with many local museums including LACMA, MOCA, The Hammer, Broad and Getty.
Managing the logistics of removing a large-scale contemporary canvas painting from a blind strainer

Linnaea Saunders and Leslie Vilicich

A large-scale contemporary canvas painting (2022) sustained a small sharp dent that required treatment to address the deformation and accretions present. The canvas had been meticulously stretched over a blind strainer comprised of a wood strainer fitted with a thick hardboard. This prevented access to the reverse of the canvas; therefore, the canvas needed to be removed from the strainer for treatment. As this was a brand-new painting, we felt it needed to be lifted from the strainer (not rolled) and sought a method for looming the painting that would not alter surface gloss of the gessoed foldover edges. Aware of the system described by conservators at the Yale University Art Gallery in a treatment presented at the Conserving Canvas conference in 2019, we modified their approach to accommodate the needs of this project. We also used this project as an opportunity to purchase and experiment with the Precision Mat. This paper will outline the nuances of how we worked through the testing, planning, and logistics to successfully handle this large format canvas.

Linnaea Saunders is a Conservator of Paintings in private practice in Los Angeles, owner of The Conservator’s Easel LLC. Following her training at the Courtauld Institute of Art, Linnaea completed internships, fellowships, and contract positions at the Cleveland Museum of Art, The Mauritshuis, and Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Linnaea established The Conservator’s Easel, LLC in 2007. She provides conservation service to museums, galleries, and individual collectors. She has experience treating paintings from old master to contemporary with a range of conservation concerns. Linnaea regularly hosts pre-program and graduate level interns in her studio.

Leslie Vilicich is a Conservation Technician at The Conservators Easel, LLC.
APOLLO MISSION CONTROL CENTER RESTORATION NASA Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center, Houston, Texas

David Bucek, Jordan Shelton and Delaney Harris-Finch

September 1961, NASA announced Houston would be the site for the new Manned Spaceflight Center. A demanding four-year design and construction schedule necessitated a modular design developed by master plan architects, Charles Luckman Associates. Kaiser Engineers of California were selected to design Building 30, Mission Control Center (MCC).

Houston MCC took over all manned flight control operations in June 1965. Gemini, Apollo, and Shuttle missions were monitored from the third floor Mission Operations Control Room, (MOCR2). The MCC was modified to accommodate each program, including renovations in 1976-1982 when MOCR2 was stripped and reconfigured for Shuttle. The final mission occurred in 1992. The room was decommissioned and opened for tours with minimal alterations.

The Apollo MCC was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1985 for association with the U.S. manned spacecraft program, with emphasis on the Apollo 11 mission. The extant Apollo MCC includes MOCR2, Visitors Viewing Area, Summary Display Projection Room, and Simulation Control Room.

The Apollo MCC fell into disrepair due to heavy, unrestricted visitor traffic; lack of adequate resources for maintenance; and competing stakeholder priorities. In 2013, restoration efforts were initiated. A grant from the National Park Service facilitated a Historic Furnishings Report and Visitor Experience Plan. This 2015 document provided Apollo-era specific restoration recommendations.

The Apollo MCC was designated as “Threatened” by the NPS in 2015. The National Trust for Historic Preservation highlighted Apollo MCC preservation efforts during its 2016 national conference. This prompted the Houston Chronicle article, Money, access complicate effort to restore Mission Control. Following, Gene Kranz issued a letter to the NPS, ACHP, Senators, and NASA Administration firmly stating the importance of the site and urgency to complete restoration by the 2019 Apollo 11 50th anniversary.

Restoration consultation began in 2017, led by JSC with the NPS, ACHP, NTHP, Texas Historical Commission (SHPO), Space Center Houston, retired Apollo flight controllers, and restoration project management and design team. An expert team was tasked to restore the interiors of Apollo MCC, to Apollo 11 conditions. Apollo flight controllers were interviewed; 1960s plans, photographs and film were scrutinized; and on-site architectural forensics performed. Hundreds of narratives and drawings were issued to the SHPO for review. The final record drawing package includes over 150 drawing sheets documenting historic, pre-work, and restoration conditions.

The consoles were restored to Apollo-era configurations; retrofitted with LED displays and energy-conserving projection technology was utilized in the
SDPR. Electrical systems were upgraded and a new programmable lighting system was installed and historic fixtures LED retrofitted.

All interior elements and finishes (carpet, tile, wallpaper, paint, ceiling tiles, light fixtures, a/c grilles, and handrails) were restored. New wallpaper was rolled from original pattern drums found in storage. When re-manufacture was unfeasible, creative reproduction techniques were implemented; new ceiling tiles were hand-stamped to match the original pattern, and fabric was hand-woven to reupholster vintage office chairs.

An audio-video visitor experience was produced. Projected displays of maps, data, and video on the projection screens, console monitors, and televisions were meticulously reproduced and synched with historic audio recordings.

Photo: Paul Hester & Lisa Hardaway

David Bucek, FAIA, LEED AP BD+C is a principal with Stern and Bucek Architects. David specializes in new construction, adaptive reuse, renovation, and historic preservation. David holds a B. Arch from the University of Houston and an M. Arch from Harvard University's Graduate School of Design. He has taught architectural design at the University of Houston and the University of Texas at Austin.

David is the Chair of the City of Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission (HAHC) and President of the Architecture Center Houston Foundation. He also serves on the boards of Houston Mod, Wharton County Heritage Partnership and the Wharton County Courthouse Restoration/Preservation. He formerly served on the boards of Preservation Texas, Texas Architecture Foundation and AIA Houston, where he served as 2016 AIA Houston President. His work has garnered awards from the National Trust for Historic Preservation, DOCOMOMO US, Texas Society of Architects, Texas Historical Commission, Preservation Texas, Preservation Houston and AIA Houston. David is the 2020 recipient for the Texas Society of Architects Community Service Award in Honor of James D. Pfluger FAIA.
Mechanisms of Decay: Rapid Weathering of Outdoor Basalt Sculptures

Jane Gillies, Bavan Rajan, Kirston Siebach, and Gelu Costin

Three basalt sculptures by the South Korean Artist Byong Hoon Choi called “Scholar’s Way” were installed in a pool of water, outside the new Kinder building for Modern and Contemporary art, at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston in 2020. The sculptures are carved from naturally occurring columns of basalt sourced from Indonesia, with most of the surface being highly polished to a black mirror-like finish. Parts of the sculptures around the bases and at projecting elbows of the abstract forms retain a weathering crust.

Before the installation, conservation had concerns about what effect the surrounding environment and the addition of chemicals, to control the water quality, would have on the sculptures. In a short time, the polished surface had dulled and granules of the crust were falling off. Although the artist has worked with this material for 40 years, only a few of his sculptures are installed outside in water. Despite his assurance about the material durability we obviously had a problem whose mechanisms needed to be more fully understood. Conservation collaborated with students and faculty at Rice University to determine the geochemistry of the basalt and weathering crust, as well as to analyze the water quality and its chemical composition.

Surface measurements of the columns with near infra-red, energy dispersive spectroscopy (EDS) and electron probe microanalysis (EPMA) showed that the base rock that was used was already in a highly altered condition before installation. The degree of alteration on the surface was accelerated by weathering in humid conditions. The weathering crust is largely made up of clay and some remnant basaltic igneous minerals. The EPMA showed that the basalt contains orthopyroxene, Ti-augite, plagioclase, and Ti-magnetite and is thus an iron-titanium basalt. Secondary minerals are widespread and make up more than 90% of the crust. These minerals are mainly clays such as ferripyrophyllite, ferrisepiolite, and kaolinite. The presence of these minerals proves that the rock was altered by hydrothermal processes prior to human intervention.

The effect of weathering in humid conditions affects the surface of the rock. The porous clay aggregate readily absorbs water and the other remnant minerals are somewhat soluble in the chemically treated water. The civil ordinance governing water features which had been used to justify the use of harsh chloride containing bleach and acid in the water was deemed inapplicable to this non-interactive feature. The clay minerals occur over the entire surface of the sculpture including previously polished portions, consistent with recent weathering in addition to the original weathering crust.

This study is ongoing. A protective wax has been applied to the polished areas. We have not decided on whether a consolidation treatment can be applied to the weathering crust as this may cause greater damage. We are
removing the additive acid/alkali mix from the water and are investigating replacement with a copper salt to prevent algae growth.

Jane Gillies has been the Senior Conservator of Objects and Sculpture at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, since 2005, and was previously in private practice in New York and London. She received a B.Sc. in Architecture from the University of Edinburgh and a Post-graduate Diploma in the Conservation of Ceramics, Glass and Related materials from West Dean College.

Bavan Rajan recently graduated from Rice University with a B.S. in Earth, Environmental, and Planetary Science. He hopes to pursue a Ph.D. in geochemistry, focusing on quantifying and modeling elemental fluxes that result from chemical weathering. His senior thesis for Distinction in Research and Creative Work from Rice University involved Infrared and Electron Dispersive Spectroscopy of “Scholar’s Way,” as well as studying the aqueous geochemistry of its water feature. His other research experiences involve studying the passivation of chemical reactions relevant to geologic carbon sequestration with experimental geochemistry. At present, he is working as a geochemistry intern at Ormat Technologies, Inc., and will continue his work on experimental geochemistry at the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory this fall. bavan.p.rajan@gmail.com

Kirsten Siebach, Ph.D., is an assistant professor in the Rice University Department of Earth, Environmental and Planetary Sciences and calls herself a Martian geologist. She seeks to interpret the history of water and surface environments on Mars and early Earth using sedimentology, geochemistry, and mineralogy. She is currently a member of the science and operations teams for the Mars 2020 rover Perseverance and the Mars Science Laboratory rover Curiosity, and previously worked on the Phoenix lander and the two Mars Exploration Rovers. Dr. Siebach completed her Ph.D. in geology at Caltech and conducted postdoctoral research in geochemistry of Martian sediments at Stony Brook University. She is actively engaged in promoting education and outreach related to Earth and planetary science. ksiebach@rice.edu

Gelu Costin is a Research Scientist and EPMA lab manager at Rice University. He completed a Ph.D. in geology and petrology at the University of Bucharest and also in earth science and geochemistry at Jean Monnet University of Saint Etienne. He conducted postdoctoral research in mineralogy and EPMA at the University of Arizona. His research includes work in mineralogy, petrology, ore deposits, and material science. He is involved in a NASA project called Mars-2020 (P.I. Kirsten Siebach) designing decision tree algorithms for identifying mineral phases out of geochemical data sent by the Perseverance rover. Other NASA collaborations involve testing and analysis of Apollo 15 and 17 samples with EDS, EPMA, and Raman techniques. gcostin@rice.edu
Color Management of Digital Imaging for Conservation

James Craven

Imaging is an essential part of conservation documentation, and the imaging systems available are numerous and varied. This presentation will outline some essential capture parameters and color management practices that can satisfy requirements for accuracy and longevity of image data. Those topics include lighting quality and geometry, camera settings, color profiling, and archival file generation. The Menil Collection’s imaging studio will be presented as an example, but applications for these practices apply to any chosen hardware and at any scale. Links to resources provided in the talk can be found using the code below:

James Craven is the Conservation Imaging Specialist at the Menil Collection. He joined The Menil Collection December 2020 as the Conservation Imaging Technician. He is responsible for condition and treatment photography, advanced visualizations, and image analysis of art for the conservation team. Building on a long career in photographic science he brings an important technical approach to conservation documentation, concentrating on detail and accuracy through imaging. James is the lead for the x-radiography topic of the Imaging Working Group. Part of the American Institute for Conservation, the IWG is a multi-national and multi-institutional endeavor building a resource for cultural heritage imaging professionals.
Events

Sunday November 5

Our Beloved Tropical Junkyard: A Visionary Art Tour of Houston

It is no secret that Houston can be a challenge to visitors; the never-ending humidity and visual chaos is not for the faint of heart. In the words of local architectural historian Stephen Fox, “Houston is a mess. It is and always has been. That is its scandal and its charm.” For an introduction to the scandalous, charming mess of Houston, WAAC members will be spending Sunday afternoon on a guided bus tour focusing on perhaps the city’s most unique treasure - the work of self-taught artists and visionary art environments. Ranging from the Orange Show (a hand built amusement park dedicated to the power of a vitamin C) to the self-explanatory Beer Can House, the tour will also include a museum dedicated to Houston’s world-famous Art Car phenomena and a tour of a phenomenal private collection of visionary art. There is more...

Tour Leader: Larry Harris is an architect, photographer, art collector, and native Houstonian. His website www.narrowlarry.com is dedicated to the documentation / awareness of both visionary art environments as well as modern architecture throughout the United States.

Community Outreach Project: Space Center Houston SKYLAB

WAAC will partner with Space Center Houston staff to do a condition survey of Skylab Training Module storage compartment contents of experiments, food, medical supplies and general supplies necessary for living in space for long periods of time. Created out of the final stage of a Saturn V rocket, this habitable spacecraft trained all astronauts that took part in Skylab missions. The trainer was decommissioned and the museum gallery built around the spacecraft without removing training materials used by the astronauts. The contents of over 70 storage compartments will be opened, recorded and assessed for condition. Two teams of 4-6 conservators each will work with SCH staff. We are looking for a maximum of 12 volunteers. All disciplines are encouraged to take part. Transportation and lunch will be provided by SCH.

Welcome reception - hosted buffet and bar 6-9 PM
Upstairs Treehouse room at Hungry’s in Rice Village,
2356 Rice Boulevard, 2nd floor

Welcome to Houston! Plan to spend the evening catching up with familiar colleagues and friends and meeting new ones. Drink tickets will be provided and a buffet will be served at 7:00. The venue is a short distance from the hotel and you can ask their shuttle for a ride over.
**Monday November 6**

**Morning Walk / Jogg in Hermann Park 6:30-7:30 AM**
Join fellow WAAC members for a morning jaunt through the park. Hotel Zaza is directly across the street from Houston’s historic Hermann Park. WAAC Secretary and native Houstonian Rachel Mochon will lead the way. Meet in the lobby.

**Tour: Latin American Art Galleries of the MFAH**
Mari Carmen Ramírez, Wortham Curator of Latin American Art at the MFAH and founding director of the International Center for the Arts of the Americas (ICAA) and Arden Decker, Associate Director will lead a tour through the current installation. Advanced registration required.

**Tour: Museum of Fine Arts Houston Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation Center for Conservation**
Per Knutås will lead a tour of the conservation center, featuring Paintings, Frames, Textiles and Objects & Sculpture studios. Advanced registration required.

---

**Tuesday November 7**

**Morning Walk / Jogg in Hermann Park 6:30-7:30 AM**
Join fellow WAAC members for a morning jaunt through the park. Hotel Zaza is directly across the street from Houston’s historic Hermann Park. WAAC Secretary and native Houstonian Rachel Mochon will lead the way. Meet in the lobby.

**Tour: Museum of Fine Arts Houston Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation Center for Conservation**
Per Knutås will lead a tour of the conservation center, featuring Paintings, Frames, Textiles and Objects & Sculpture studios. This tour will take place during a portion of the lunch break. Advanced registration required.

**James Turrell’s Twilight Epiphany Skyspace 4:30-6:30 PM**
Get on the bus to Rice University to experience the beautiful and transformative light sequence. Everyone is welcome to join us on the bus, it will continue afterwards to the banquet. Anyone not attending the banquet will need to provide their own transportation.

**Banquet at PICOS, 3601 Kirby Drive 7:00 - 9:30ish**
Advanced ticketing required.

---

**Wednesday November 8**

**Morning Walk / Jogg in Hermann Park 6:30-7:30 AM**
Join fellow WAAC members for a morning jaunt through the park. Hotel Zaza is directly across the street from Houston’s historic Hermann Park. WAAC Secretary and native Houstonian Rachel Mochon will lead the way. Meet in the lobby.
Tour: Museum of Fine Arts Houston Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation Center for Conservation
Per Knutås will lead a tour of the conservation center, featuring Paintings, Frames, Textiles and Objects & Sculpture studios. This tour will take place during a portion of the lunch break. Advanced registration required.

Museum of Fine Arts Houston is offering free admission. Please visit the Hirsch Library.

Tours: Menil Collection main conservation studios 2:00 | 3:00 | 4:00
Meet Cory Rogge in the foyer of the Menil Collection, 1533 Sul Ross.
Advanced registration required

Tours: Menil Drawing Institute 2:00 | 3:00 | 4:00
Meet Jan Burandt in the Menil Drawing Institute, 1412 West Main St.
Advanced registration required.

Menil Neighborhood
Admission is free to all Menil Collection buildings. The Menil Collection bookstore is offering a 20% discount to WAAC meeting attendees - located in a bungalow across the street from the main museum entrance. Visit arts organizations near the Menil campus:
Houston Center for Photography | Rothko Chapel | The Transart Foundation | Sicardi

Closing reception - hosted bar and hors d'oeuvres 5:00 - 7:00 PM
93’Til, 1601 W. Main St. (corner of Mandell and W. Main near the Menil Drawing Institute)

Thursday November 9

Tour: Johnson Space Center and Space Center Houston
9:00 AM - 2:30 PM  Meet Steve Pine in Hotel Zaza lobby, bus tour
Advanced registration required. Tour is full.

Workshop: Watercolor Materials and Techniques Workshop
9:30 AM - 1:00 PM  Meet Abby Schleicher and Carla Gauthier at Watercolor Art Society
1601 W. Alabama St. (at intersection of Mandell)
1:00 - 2:00 PM  Hosted lunch, Lua Viet, 1540 W. Alabama St.
2:00 - 4:00 PM  Menil Drawing Institute Study Room
Advanced registration required. Space available.

Workshop: Introductory Genealogy Workshop
12:00 - 1:30 PM  Meet Natasha Cochran and Melissa Hayes at the venue
Houston Public Library | Family History Research Center at the Clayton Library Campus
5300 Caroline St., Houston, TX 77004 (short walk from Hotel ZaZa)
The library is open until 7pm for continued research and consultation.
Advanced registration required. Space available.
Closing reception - hosted bar and hors d’oeuvres 5:00 - 7:00 PM Wednesday
93'Til, 1601 W. Main St. (corner of Mandell and W. Main near the Menil Drawing Institute)
The 50th annual meeting for the Western Association for Art Conservation will be held in October 2024 at the Academy Museum of Motion Pictures in Los Angeles, CA. The Academy is thrilled to be hosting this 50th anniversary!

The Academy Museum of Motion Pictures celebrates the artistry and craftsmanship of filmmaking. It is the first film museum of its kind in the city, exhibiting a wide panorama of technological and historical items related to the art and science of film. It is located on Museum Row in the Miracle Mile district of LA, in the historic May Company Department Store building. It contains four floors of state-of-the art galleries and two movie theatres. In addition to the museum’s Debbie Reynold’s Conservation Studio for objects, the Academy also houses the Margaret Herrick Library Conservation Studio for paper.

The WAAC annual meeting will be held in the Ted Man Theatre, an elegant and intimate setting with 277 comfortable bright green seats and a large screen. There will be exciting workshops, tours, and social events planned, and most of all, the fun, informative and valuable array of presentations we so look forward to every year.

Stay tuned for the exact dates to be announced, but please mark your calendars for October 2024 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the WAAC Annual Meeting!