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## Articles You May Have Missed

*Susanne Friend*  
column editor

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### **“Rare Roman mosaic, Featuring Toga-Wearing Figures, Discovered in Israel,”** *Fox News*, 02/08/2018

Archaeologists in Israel have uncovered a rare multicolored Roman mosaic featuring three toga-wearing figures during excavations in the ancient city of Caesarea. The mosaic, which dates back to the 2nd or 3rd-century A.D., measures around 11.5 feet by 26 feet.

“It features three figures, multicolored geometric patterns and a long inscription in Greek,” explained Dr. Peter Gendelman and Dr. Uzi ‘Ad, excavation directors for the Israel Antiquities Authority, in a statement. “The figures, all males, wear togas and apparently belonged to the upper class.

The mosaic has been damaged by a building that was constructed on top of it during the Byzantine period about 1,500 years ago. The dig, which is receiving financial support from the Edmond de Rothschild Foundation and the Caesarea Development Corporation, is part of the largest conservation and construction project ever undertaken in Israel.

This involves reconstruction work on the Crusader-era entrance bridge to Caesarea and the construction of a promenade from the nearby town of Jisr a-Zarqa to Caesarea National Park.

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As part of the project, archaeologists have also unearthed a large, opulent building that dates back to the Byzantine period. The Roman mosaic was discovered beneath the building.

### **“Boston’s Museum of Fine Arts Hires Puppy to Sniff Out Art-Munching Bugs,”** *Mental Floss*, 01/12/2018

Some dogs are qualified to work at hospitals, fire departments, and airports, but one place you don’t normally see a pooch is in the halls of a fine art museum.

The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston is changing that: As *The Boston Globe* reports, a young Weimaraner named Riley is the institution’s newest volunteer. His job is to sniff out the wood- and canvas-munching pests lurking in the museum’s collection. During the next few months, Riley will be trained to identify the scents of bugs that pose the biggest threat to the museum’s paintings and other artifacts. (Moths, termites, and beetles are some of the worst offenders.)

Riley is just one additional resource for the MFA’s existing pest control program. As far as the museum knows, it’s rare for institutions facing similar problems to hire canine help. If the experiment is successful, bug-sniffing dogs may become a common sight in art museums around the world.

### **“Graffiti Artists Awarded \$6.7 Million for Destroyed 5Pointz Murals,”** *New York Times*, 02/12/2018

Ruling that graffiti — a typically transient form of art — was of sufficient stature to be protected by the law, a federal judge in Brooklyn awarded a judgment of \$6.7 million on Monday to 21 graffiti artists whose works were destroyed in 2013 at the 5Pointz complex in Long Island City, Queens.

In November, a landmark trial came to a close in Federal District Court in Brooklyn when a civil jury decided that Jerry Wolkoff, a real estate developer who owned 5Pointz, broke the law when he whitewashed dozens of swirling murals at the complex, obliterating what a lawyer for the artists had called “the world’s largest open-air aerosol museum.”

Though Mr. Wolkoff’s lawyers had argued that the buildings were his

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to treat as he pleased, the jury found he violated the Visual Artists Rights Act, or V.A.R.A., which has been used to protect public art of “recognized stature” created on someone’s else property.

### **“They’re back! Restored Tapestries Return to the Frick Museum,”** *Pittsburgh Tribune*, 02/23/2018

The Frick Museum in the residential neighborhood of Point Breeze in Pittsburgh is again fully festooned. All four tapestries purchased by Helen Clay Frick for the museum’s rotunda are once again on display.

Three were removed in early 2017 for conservation treatment. All tapestries in the Frick’s collection date to around 1510 and reflect the advanced skills of artists creating complex pictorial weavings at a time when fine tapestries were more valuable than paintings – due to the cost of materials and the months of labor required for their production.

Over time, gaps begin to form between colors and their own weight pulls on the fibers, causing breakage. Staining and fading can also be issues, as can earlier repairs that age or discolor differently than the original weaving.

The conservation treatment was completed by textile conservator Julia Dippold, who has worked with the Frick’s tapestry collection for nearly 20 years.

### **“Delaware Man’s Thumb Prank Fractures U.S.-China Relations,”** *The News Journal*, 02/27/2018

No one really knows what 24-year-old Michael Rohana, of Bear, was thinking when he decided it would be good move to sidestep the rope blocking the entrance to the Franklin Institute’s ancient terracotta warriors exhibit last December and pocket a 2,200-year-old thumb.

According to an FBI affidavit, Rohana, allegedly snuck around the Philadelphia exhibit wielding a cell phone flashlight. Stepping up to the platform, he draped one arm over a \$4.5 million cavalryman, snapped a selfie, and broke off the statue’s left thumb as a souvenir.

It took more than two weeks for museum security to notice the missing digit and report it to the FBI’s Art Crime

Team. Investigators tracked the thumb to a desk drawer in Rohana’s home.

Local art experts say the theft highlights a real tension between in-your-face, immersive art experiences and exhibitions that are best appreciated from afar. “It’s always this battle because you want to attract people and make art accessible,” said Lara Kaplan, a Baltimore objects conservator and a graduate of the Winterthur/University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation. “You have to weigh that against the risk and the cost of damaging important artworks.”

Chinese authorities, meanwhile, are livid that no one was guarding the 10 life-size soldiers, which are on loan through Sunday. Part of a platoon of thousands, they were commissioned by Emperor Qin Shi Huang in the 3rd century B.C. to protect him in the afterlife. The cultural relics authority of China’s Shaanxi Province has called on the United States to “severely punish” the thumb thief and will soon dispatch two experts to repair the warrior.

### **“Bierstadt Painting Takes a Vacation in Florida,”** *Seven Days*, 03/09/2018

Last October, Albert Bierstadt’s massive 1867 painting “The Domes of the Yosemite” left its permanent home at the St. Johnsburys Athenaeum for restoration.

It was carefully rolled around cardboard tubing and driven to Miami, Fla., where conservationists at the ArtCare Conservation Studio repaired the weakened canvas, removed a synthetic varnish applied in the 1950s, and performed some minor inpainting.

The 10-by-15-foot painting, commissioned by a Connecticut financier in 1867 and sold at auction to a member of the Fairbanks family shortly after, has resided at the Athenaeum since 1873. But before it returns home, it’s making

a pit stop at the Charles Hosmer Morse Museum of American Art in Winter Park, Fla., about three hours north of the conservation studio.

This is the first time since its installation at the Athenaeum that Bierstadt’s painting has been shown outside of St. Johnsburys. A recent press release from the Athenaeum explains that the Morse Museum has a connection to Horace Fairbanks, the founder of the Athenaeum, and to St. Johnsburys.

### **“How Refugees are Conserving Iraq and Syria’s Extraordinary Monumental Heritage,”** *The Art Newspaper*, 03/13/2018

Thirty men and women have entered the World Monument Fund’s (WMF’s) new training centre in Mafrqa, Jordan. Four months in to a conservation stonemasonry training programme, they can carve arabesques for Zakhrafa jambs, prepare rectangular billet mouldings or work an ovolo return.

Not yet perfect, but astonishing progress, made more remarkable given this is happening 12 miles from the Syrian border, and that most students are refugees who have fled from the neighbouring conflict.

With the backing of the UK government’s Cultural Protection Fund, a £30m initiative to protect heritage in conflict-affected areas of the Middle East and North Africa, the centre’s aim is simplicity itself—take three problems and turn them into a solution. The problems: how to conserve extraordinary monumental heritage in Iraq and Syria, such as the ancient souk of Aleppo or al-Hadba’ minaret in Mosul, damaged by Islamic State or caught in the crossfire of opposing armies.

The issue is exacerbated by the depletion of skilled craftspeople; once the dust of conflict settles, there will be few able to carry out restoration. At the same time, thousands sit in refugee camps, lives on hold, seeking a future.

The solution: train refugees to become the craftspeople and conservators of the future. Give them a skill to help restore their nation’s heritage. Over the coming year, the centre will train more than 35 people, with the support of the British Council, which co-ordinates the protection fund, and a local partner, the Petra National Trust.

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*Random Horoscope #1*  
(from the *LA Times*)

Beware of what looks cool but can’t deliver on its promise.

If it doesn’t work, it doesn’t work.

**“These Ancient Mosaics were Buried on the Lawn of the Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg,”** *Tampa Bay Times*, 03/16/2018

Why were the mosaics buried on the lawn in the first place? That was a mystery. But there they were at the Museum of Fine Arts, St. Petersburg, two ancient pieces dating from the years 100 to 300, sitting beneath the grass on the east lawn for nearly 30 years.

The discovery on the lawn led to an excavation last week. Now, conservationists are working to preserve the mosaics, a process museum guests will be able to witness.

The mosaics have been in the museum’s hands for many years. The art was discovered in the 1930s when a team from Princeton University excavated a site on the ancient city of Antioch, on the border of modern-day Turkey and Syria. The museum acquired five mosaics from the excavation in the mid-1960s as one of its first acquisitions. One was embedded in a fountain in the sculpture garden. One went on display in the Membership Garden. One was stowed under the stage of the Marly Room.

Someone buried the remaining two in the lawn outside the gates of the sculpture garden sometime in 1989. Executive director Kristen Shepherd has had a longtime affection for the mosaic on display in the Membership Garden, under which she would sit and do her homework when she visited the museum as a high school student.

Shepherd hired art and architecture conservation firm Rosa Lowinger and Associates to perform the excavation and the restoration. From the small hole that revealed a piece of the mosaic, the conservator was able to determine the depth of the hole and the condition of the piece and put a plan into action. The months-long conservation process is happening at an outdoor lab on the east lawn, and museum visitors will be able to watch.

**“Piero’s Icon Restoration Completed,”** *ANSA*, 03/26/2018

After a three-year-long restoration, Renaissance master Piero della Francesca’s Resurrection can once again be admired in its original glory at the civic museum of Sansepolcro, the

little Tuscan town where the artist was born sometime around 1420.

The fresco described by Giorgio Vasari, the father of modern art history, as the Renaissance pioneer’s “most beautiful” artwork and hailed by British novelist Aldous Huxley in 1925 in the essay “The most beautiful painting in the world”, is a symbol of Sansepolcro.

Indeed, gunnery officer Anthony Clarke in 1944 famously decided at the last minute not to bombard the town because he remembered about the masterpiece he would otherwise have risked destroying.

The long restoration work was carried out by Florence’s Opificio delle Pietre Dure, one of Italy’s most well-known restoration laboratories. The restoration saved the fresco from damage caused, among other things, by earthquakes, an exhaust pipe, and 40 previous minor restorations including one in the 19th century in which sodium hydroxide was used to “clean” the painting.

It also unveiled new details of the fresco’s history. Cecilia Frosinini, director of the Opificio’s department for the restoration of painted murals, said that, following the work, “we can affirm with certainty what has been said for a long time: the painting was moved here from somewhere else, perhaps even from an external wall of the building.”

“It is one of the oldest and most monumental” relocations of a fresco in the history of art, Frosinini said, adding that moving it to its current location where the town meetings were held was an “identity choice”. The restoration also shed new light on the artist’s technique and color choices.

**“Historic Tbilisi Academy of Arts Building Being Brought Back to Life,”** *Georgia Today*, 04/19/2018

The Tbilisi Academy of Arts is one of those hidden jewels of the capital of Georgia. The old building of the academy, constructed in the 1850s, was the first Art Academy in the Caucasus and the cultural hub of the region.

The building, decorated with intricate stained-glass windows and lined with enamel and mirror mosaics, represents a unique example of a historic and cultural landmark. The building

has endured more than a century, experiencing many hardships, including Soviet terror, to survive to today. Yet over the last decades, the crumbling building has been on the verge of destruction, alarming both the academy’s personnel and art enthusiasts who know its value.

In 2015, the Apolon Kutateladze Academy of Arts was selected for a rehabilitation project by the Ministry of Culture and Sport of Georgia. The long-awaited restoration and maintenance works were launched the same year, with the professors and students of the academy and graduates getting readily involved.

The renovation works are ongoing and are expected to be finished by the end of 2018. The main features of the Academy are the halls adorned with mirrors, designed by specially invited Khanjar artisans from Iran when the building was originally constructed. Art experts compare these halls to the interiors of eastern-style palaces of Iran or the famous Golestan Palace, one of the oldest historic monuments in the city of Tehran, and of world heritage status.

Built over 200 years of Qajar rulership, between 1925 and 1945 a large portion of the buildings of the Golstan Palace complex were destroyed on the orders of Reza Shah. As such, Georgia’s Academy of Arts possesses precious examples of royal decoration that no longer exist

**“King Tut gets a Remodel: How Conservators are Trying to Protect the Tomb from Tourists,”** *Los Angeles Times*, 03/27/2018

With a new King Tut exhibition packing in the crowds in Los Angeles, the Getty Conservation Institute announced Tuesday that it has nearly finished a multiyear project focused on conserving the tomb of Tutankhamun and protecting it from the tourist hordes in Egypt.

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*Random Horoscope #2*

Because learning comes with its own payoff, it can be seductive to stay in the education bubble.

Step out and apply it.

The Getty Conservation Institute carried out the work in collaboration with Egypt's Ministry of Antiquities. It included the conservation of wall paintings, improvements to the tomb's infrastructure and environmental systems, and the training of stewards for the site.

Researchers conducted an intensive study to understand the tomb's condition, assess the causes of deterioration and decide how best to address them, said Neville Agnew, the GCI senior principal project specialist who oversaw the project.

One of the most intriguing aspects of the Tut project, Agnew said, was the evaluation of mysterious brown spots that marred the wall paintings. Egyptian authorities wondered if new visitors were causing those brown spots to grow.

DNA and chemical analysis confirmed that the spots were created by microbiological organisms that were dead and therefore not capable of spreading. The spots were left alone because they are embedded in the paint and because they reflect the history of the site.

"It tells us something archaeologically about the tomb," Agnew said. "It tells us that the tomb was certainly sealed when it was wet. Tutankhamun was 19 when he died. He wasn't expected to die. They hastily overhauled a smaller tomb, hastily entombed him, and sealed it up. Not only was there wet plaster in the walls, there was lots of organic material — wood and flower offerings, all of which contain moisture and promote microbiological growth."

**"The Met Resurrects Italian Old Master's Entombment,"** *The Art Newspaper*, 04/03/2018

Michael Gallagher has just been appointed the deputy director for conservation at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

But soon after he joined the New York institution 13 years ago, he says, a particular Italian Renaissance work caught his eye. He felt that *The Entombment* (1554) by Moretto da Brescia "was one of the saddest-looking

pictures in the collection—in terms of its condition and appearance—yet I always felt it was just a truly great painting".

Only recently has he had the chance to work on it: after more than a year in the studio, the restored painting will be back on view later this month, as the collection undergoes a substantial rehang while the museum renovates its skylights.

"What I found fascinating was that we have people on my department's Visiting Committee, who love pictures like this, but on seeing it after cleaning asked, 'is this a new acquisition or was it in store?' And yet it has never been off view since 1912."

Gallagher has taken away earlier retouches, removed and replaced the glue lining that no longer held down the seams of the different parts of the canvas, "so the picture almost looked bisected", and retouched areas that had "quite a few losses".

Moretto's painting could have ended up in the collection of the National Gallery in London were it not for a typically 19th-century sense of propriety on the part of its director between 1855 and 1865, Charles Lock Eastlake.

He went to look at the painting at least twice, according to the Metropolitan Museum of Art's European paintings curator Andrea Bayer, and "realised it was the late masterpiece by the artist". But there was a problem. "He was disturbed by the fact that the Virgin is holding up the dead Christ and has her hand directly on his stomach and it is right in the middle of the picture. And he just found it indecorous," Bayer says.

**"One of Pope's Favourite Paintings is Looking Refreshed after Restoration,"** *The Art Newspaper*, 04/17/2018

Visitors to Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome may notice that the *Salus Populi Romani* (Salvation of the

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*Random Horoscope #3*

Playfulness is function without purpose. What you do in the moment that doesn't matter will train you for the moment that does.

Roman People), one of the church's most beloved works of art—and a favourite of Pope Francis—is looking refreshed these days.

This is thanks to the efforts of conservators from the Vatican Museums, who spent months working to restore the Byzantine-style icon of the Madonna and Child to its original splendour by bringing back its original colours and removing later additions.

It was the Marian icon's first major intervention since 1931. In July 2017, conservators noticed that the piece required immediate treatment to "fix and consolidate the areas most at risk", the director of the Vatican Museums, Barbara Jatta, wrote recently in the Vatican newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano*. The project involved cleaning the icon to remove old layers of varnish and oxidised glue.

Conservators were able to recover the original colours of the faces, and clothing worn by the Madonna and Child. According to Jatta, "the general condition of the icon appeared to be relatively satisfactory" in spite of the damage caused long ago, when golden crowns and jewels such as amethysts and aquamarines were attached to the piece. These additions were removed in the late 1980s.

**"Conservation Exhibition to Reveal the Mysteries of 'Blue Boy',"** *ArtFix Daily*, 05/03/2018

The exhibition "Project Blue Boy" will open at The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens on Sept. 22, 2018, offering visitors a glimpse into the technical processes of a senior conservator working on the famous painting as well as background on its history, mysteries, and artistic virtues.

One of the most iconic paintings in British and American history, *The Blue Boy*, made around 1770 by English painter Thomas Gainsborough (1727-1788), is undergoing its first major conservation treatment.

Home to the work since its acquisition by founder Henry E. Huntington in 1921, The Huntington will conduct some of the project in public view, as part of a year-long educational exhibition that runs through Sept. 30, 2019.

The Blue Boy requires conservation to address both structural and visual concerns. “Earlier conservation treatments mainly have involved adding new layers of varnish as temporary solutions to keep it on view as much as possible,” said Christina O’Connell, The Huntington’s senior paintings conservator working on the painting and co-curator of the exhibition.

“The original colors now appear hazy and dull, and many of the details are obscured.” According to O’Connell, there are also several areas where the paint is beginning to lift and flake, making the work vulnerable to paint loss and permanent damage; and the adhesion between the painting and its lining is separating, meaning it does not have adequate support for long-term display.

For the first three to four months during the year-long exhibition, The Blue Boy will be on public view in a special satellite conservation studio set up in the west end of the Thornton Portrait Gallery, where O’Connell will work on the painting to continue examination and analysis, as well as begin paint stabilization, surface cleaning, and removal of non-original varnish and overpaint.

It then will go off view for another three to four months while she performs structural work on the canvas and applies varnish with equipment that can’t be moved to the gallery space.

Once structural work is complete, The Blue Boy will return to the gallery where visitors can witness the inpainting process until the close of the exhibition.

**“A New Technique for Removing Tape from Artworks May Have Led to the Discovery of a Michelangelo Drawing,”** *ArtNet News*, 05/22/2018

This week, a group of researchers at the University of Florence published a study through the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences detailing an innovative new technique for removing tape from prints and drawings.

The method employs a water-retentive hydrogel with nano-sized droplets of organic solvents to remove old pieces of pressure-sensitive tape

(known as PSTs) without damaging the substrate underneath. The emulsion slowly penetrates the surface and softens the adhesive underneath without touching the paper.

Simply apply the gel to the top of tape, trim it down to size, then peel both off. The development is bigger than it sounds. Tape, it turns out, is a nightmare for restorers. For one, it’s used for a wide variety of purposes, including matting, temporary conservation, or simply to adhere or fasten the work to another object. It’s also nearly impossible to remove without compromising the integrity of the paper underneath—a problem that only gets worse with age.

This is why a non-invasive removal method is a game-changer. So far, the scientists have restored tape-damaged drawings by Maria Helena Vieira da Silva, Stanley William Hayter, and Lucio Fontana, among others. But their biggest coup came when they were successfully able to remove a piece of tape on a 16th-century drawing from the Sistine Chapel. Underneath, they discovered the inscription, “di mano di Michelangelo” (“from Michelangelo’s hand”).

**“It’s About Time! Building a New Discipline: Time-Based Media Art Conservation,”** *NYU News*, 05/15/2018

Time-Based Media (TBM) art conservation has been identified as a priority by many leading cultural organizations worldwide due to ever-increasing TBM collections and their rapid deterioration and obsolescence.

In order to address the diverse challenges of media art conservation, a new generation of media conservators will need to cross the disciplinary boundaries of computer science, material science, media technology, engineering, art history, and conservation.

The Institute of Fine Arts, NYU, will host its first ever TBM symposium on May 20-22, 2018 at the Institute of Fine Arts and at the Courant Institute of Mathematical Sciences. The symposium will promote education and training opportunities for TBM as a new specialization within art conservation and will provide a forum for educators, artists, art historians, museum curators and directors, collectors, gallerists,

engineers, computer scientists, and conservators to foster TBM art conservation as a discipline on an international level.

The symposium will conclude the project Time-Based Media Art Conservation Curriculum Development at the Conservation Center of the Institute of Fine Arts, NYU. The curriculum uses a multi-disciplinary approach and is embedded in the conceptual framework of contemporary art conservation, already a strength of the Institute’s program.

**“Neil Armstrong’s Dyna-Soar Abort Training Aircraft Being Restored for Moon Landing Anniversary,”** *Spaceflight Insider*, 05/20/2018

A piece of Neil Armstrong’s pre-astronaut space history is being restored in preparation for next July’s 50-year anniversary of the Apollo 11 Moon landing.

The Armstrong Air and Space Museum in the astronaut’s hometown of Wapakoneta, Ohio, is restoring the Douglas F5D Skylancer aircraft that he flew as part of his training for the Dyna-Soar project, which was cancelled in December of 1963.

The Skylancer has been on outdoor display in front of the museum since its opening in 1972. Naturally, the years and the elements have caught up with the aircraft, which has been repainted only twice in the 46 years it has been on display.

Restoration is being performed by the Intermuseum Conservation Association (ICA), a regional art conservation center based in Cleveland, Ohio. The project is being carried out in two parts, with the aircraft’s exterior being restored by Thomarios in Copley, Ohio, while the aircraft’s cockpit is restored by ICA’s Mark Erdmann, a specialist in restoring fine metalwork.

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*Random Horoscope #4*

George Burns once suggested, “Happiness is having a large, loving, caring, close-knit family in another city.” Your support system can take many forms.

Thomarios has a history of restoration work on vintage aircraft and spacecraft, including the restoration of the giant Saturn V rocket that is on display at the Apollo/Saturn V Center at Kennedy Space Center in Florida.

The restoration on the aircraft is expected to be completed sometime by Summer 2018. The more detailed and intricate restoration of the cockpit will take much longer, but is expected to be ready for incorporation into its new display in time for the 50-year anniversary in July 2019.

**“Ivan the Terrible Painting ‘Seriously Damaged’ in Pole Attack,”** *The Guardian*, 05/26/2018

One of Russia’s most famous and controversial paintings, which depicts Ivan the Terrible cradling his dying son, has been badly damaged after a man attacked it with a metal pole in a Moscow gallery.

The canvas – Ivan the Terrible and His Son Ivan on November 16, 1581 – was completed by the Russian realist Ilya Repin in 1885 and portrays a grief-stricken tsar holding his son in his arms after dealing him a mortal blow, a historical incident the veracity of which some Russian nationalists dispute.

In a video released by the interior ministry, the unnamed suspect appears to confess, saying he went to see the painting before drinking vodka and becoming “overwhelmed by something”.

Ivan the Terrible is regarded as one of the cruelest rulers in Russia’s long history: a bloodthirsty and paranoid tyrant who killed his own son. But the figure of the 16th-century tsar has recently had undergone something of a rehabilitation, with some nationalists arguing that the painting in question was actually part of a foreign smear campaign.

The State Tretyakov gallery in central Moscow said the man attacked the canvas just before closing time on Friday. It said he got past a group of gallery staff, picked up one of the metal security poles used to keep the public away from the painting and struck its protective glass covering several times. “As a result of the blows the thick glass ... was smashed,” the gallery said. “Serious damage was done to the painting.

The canvas was pierced in three places in the central part of the work which depicts the figure of the tsarevich.” Olga Temerina, the deputy head of the Grabar Art Conservation Centre in Moscow, told RIA Novosti that the canvas may need to be replaced, but that the centre still had Repin’s notes from the previous restoration effort to help.

**“Conservators Consult Forbes Pigment Collection to Solve Artwork Mysteries,”** *Chemical & Engineering News*, 06/04/2018

Susan Costello is a conservator of objects and sculpture at the Straus Center for Conservation & Technical Studies, part of the Harvard Art Museums. Costello painstakingly restores ancient objects by painting over cracks and other defects. Typically, her paint job matches the original so closely that museum visitors can’t tell her handiwork from that of the ancient artisans.

When a paint she’d used to fill in the head and chest of a figure on a 2,400-year-old ancient Greek vessel began transforming from terra-cotta to an unsightly gray hue without explanation, panic set in. The ceramic that Costello had trouble with is known as the “Bell Krater: Torch Race.” Costello had spent more than 100 hours restoring this volleyball-sized vessel from around 420 BCE that was once used to mix water and wine.

The object had spent thousands of years buried in the ground. The fired ceramic surface had worn away in places. White lines revealed where bits of the object had been glued back together. The ominous gray blotch appeared about a year after Costello’s first restoration effort.

Costello turned for help to the Forbes Pigment Collection, an array of more than 2,500 pigment samples. Conservation scientists had previously analyzed the ceramic and found that it contained chloride salts. “We thought maybe these chloride salts were reacting with the paint,” Costello says.

To test that hypothesis, she treated a terra-cotta pot from a garden store with HCl and broke it into bits. On each bit, she painted a different color she had used in her restoration work. After a month, the cadmium orange paint she’d

used turned gray.

Costello then sought out the cadmium orange samples in the Forbes Pigment Collection. Working with conservation scientist Georgina Rayner and researchers at Harvard’s Center for Nanoscale Systems, Costello eventually determined that chloride and light were freeing selenium from the compound that makes up the pigment. The metallic selenium was separating out and growing into dark, needlelike crystals, which turned Costello’s paintwork gray.

**“New Binghamton University Exhibit Examines Restoration of Carlo Francesco Nuvolone Painting,”** *Press and Sun-Bulletin*, 03/13/2010

“The Binghamton Nuvolone: Restoring an Object in Six Parts” exhibit opens at the Binghamton University Art Museum on the Vestal campus. The exhibit, which runs through May 19, focuses on a single work from the permanent collection: a 44-inch-by-55-inch canvas by the Milanese Baroque painter Carlo Francesco Nuvolone (1609-1702) depicting St. Benedict with two cherubs.

The painting had been cut into six pieces, then reassembled without any effort to disguise the damage. The painting had belonged to theatrical director and producer Max Eisenstein (1884-1980), a successful Viennese businessman who fled Austria with his family in late 1938 and settled in Binghamton. His son, Norbert Eisenstein, gave the painting to the gallery in 1982.

The co-curators of the exhibit, Karen Barzman from art history and Neil Christian Pages from German studies and comparative literature, teach at Binghamton University. They have been assisted by Joseph Tanski, professor of chemistry from Vassar College; Susan Blakney, paintings conservator from West Lake Conservators; geology professors Richard Naslund and Jeffrey Pietras; and classics professor Hilary Becker from BU.

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*Random Horoscope #5*

When you lose your sense of humor, you have passed the point of productive work. Take a break.