

Articles You May Have Missed

techniques at CCI. The sample paintings of cotton duck with acrylic ground and lead/zinc oil paint were all cut to have uniform tears. Several types materials and methods were used to repair the tears including epoxy infused threads, stainless steel pins, and BEVA. Some of the samples were keyed out and others were allowed to age under slacker conditions. After 20 years the samples that looked the best were the cracks mended with stainless steel pins that had not been keyed out indicating that tighter paintings can aggravate surface deformations associated with local repairs.

Nina Roth Wells

And finally (as if the preceding weren't enough) some general thoughts.

It needs to be said that the organizers did an excellent job. They had originally expected about 150 participants. When the number became 380 (with people from every continent except Antarctica) they managed to find a comfortable and convenient larger location, and kept the price to \$125. All of the sessions and tours went smoothly, in all a real accomplishment.

The moratorium on lining may have meant that far fewer linings were done in museums, however the many conservators in private practice who regularly encounter paintings with severe structural damage continued to perform them. The result has been the development and adaptation of effective and sometimes elegant techniques to do linings that are consistent with minimal treatment standards.

The development of the suction table as a tool that allows for control and versatility in treatments cannot be overemphasized.

During the discussion of the various glue paste lining methods, the issue of exposure to water was linked to the possibility that water may initiate the lead soap formation cycle. This needs further investigation.

A number of surveys of large, sometimes very large collections, to determine what linings have survived well, were described. This information could provide another level of significance if the storage / housing / environmental conditions of the paintings were correlated with the condition information. In the coming decades, as the resources to support conservation are eroded by necessary responses to climate change, knowing what survives in less than optimal conditions will be important.

And in that same vein, just as Greenwich marked a change in how lining was considered, this may be the time that criteria for minimal treatment be re-considered, due to the increasing uncertainties of climate change.

Carolyn Tallent

“In a Conservation Triumph, a 15th-Century Tapestry Highlights the Age of Chivalry,” *The Art Newspaper*, 10/30/2019

French conservators spent a year stabilising and reweaving the Tournament Tapestry of Frederick the Wise (from around 1490) before it traveled to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

Lent by the Musée des Beaux-Arts de Valenciennes in France, the tapestry figures prominently in *The Last Knight: The Art, Armor and Ambition of Maximilian I* at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, an exhibition billed as the most comprehensive loan show of European arms and armour in decades.

That the tapestry was able to travel was a triumph for French conservators, who spent a year restoring the work in Aubusson, France, starting in April 2018. Over the centuries the tapestry had become grimy and structurally degraded. Its silk threads were particularly damaged, its metal threads were tarnished and the borders were worn, including a galloon, or braided strip, that was not original to the tapestry.

The tapestry had undergone restoration numerous times; reweaving in some areas was rough and visually distracting, although this did not affect the work's overall structural integrity. Some seams had weakened and the work was held together chiefly by its lining.

Conservators removed the lining, allowing them to see the original dyes more clearly. They also removed the hanging system and the non-original galloon before reweaving the borders. Considerable stitching was needed to stabilise the tapestry and a new lining was added to the back. The tapestry underwent a vacuum cleaning because it was considered too fragile for a wet treatment.

“Australian Innovation Adds New Sheen to Old Masters,” *CSIRO*, 10/30/2019

Masterpieces by Rembrandt and van Dyck housed at the National Gallery of Victoria have been restored to their former glory and protected for years to come thanks to a special resin developed by Australia's national science agency, CSIRO.

The new varnish resin is the result of a collaboration between Australia's oldest and most visited gallery, the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV) and CSIRO. The product has now been commercialised by Melbourne chemical manufacturer Boron Molecular, a former CSIRO spin-out.

The synthetic resin, called MS3, is the latest generation of a synthetic varnish that was designed specifically for conservation and cultural heritage applications. After extensive testing at the NGV, the resin will now be trialed by conservators working in several of the world's major art institutions.

CSIRO's Leader of Materials for Energy and the Environment, Dr Deborah Lau, said using the emerging technology of 'flow chemistry' allowed the team to develop the resin in a safer, cleaner, more efficient way than traditional chemical manufacturing. This in turn delivered improved colour, chemical stability, and consistency between batches.

Carl Villis, Senior Conservator of Paintings at the NGV, said that MS3 has been warmly received by the international paintings conservation profession because an earlier and much loved version, known as MS2A, had gone out of production in 2015.

“Mural By Depression-Era Master Artist Resurrected From The Trash To Hang In Stamford 50 Years Later,” *CBS News*, 11/05/2019

Stamford is a city where there’s always something new going up. Usually glassy and modern. Usually, not always.

The newest addition to the lobby of the Tully Health Center was created in 1934 and nearly destroyed in 1970. A mural by Depression-era master James Daugherty now hangs about a tenth of a mile from its original home at Stamford High School.

It’s one of seven murals that dominated the old music room, until a renovation 49 years ago. Construction workers cut the canvases up into 30 pieces, and threw them into a dumpster. Frank Bowne, who was a student at Stamford High School, found them and brought them home. Bowne gave the canvases to an art expert, triggering an ownership battle.

Daugherty is held in high regard. The murals are worth more than \$1 million. Some were sold to private parties. Stamford got one and sent it to Cleveland for restoration by experts at ICA Art Conservation. From a trash pile, to a place of pride — on display after nearly 50 years for generations to enjoy.

14 Ships’ Figureheads Weighing Over 20 Tons Arrive at UK’s Newest Museum, The Box,” *History News Network*, 11/07/2019

In what is the most ambitious sculpture conservation project currently taking place in the UK, 14 monumental 19th century naval figureheads have been saved from decay. From spring 2020, these icons of Britain’s maritime history will be on public display at The Box in Plymouth.

Three specialist conservation teams in London, Devon, and Cornwall, led by Orbis Conservation, have spent over two years restoring the 14 wooden figureheads to their former glory, after years of water damage led to rot and decay. One of the most badly damaged of the figureheads was HMS Topaz, a three-quarter-length female bust carved in 1858, whose ship was responsible for removing two of the Easter Island statues that are now in the British Museum.

Sonic Tomography scanning - a method designed for measuring decay cavities within living trees - enabled conservators to assess the internal

condition of the timber of each figure head. In most cases it showed such severe internal degradation that the figureheads had to be carefully and systematically deconstructed, revealing timber so damaged that it resembled saturated compost, only retaining its structural integrity at the very outer carved surface.

Each independent section then had to undergo controlled drying, in order to minimize warping and shrinkage of the timber, in large purpose-built humidity chambers.

Once the structural integrity of each sculpture was restored, one of the challenges was how to faithfully replicate the original colour scheme of each individual sculpture. The conservation team did cross section paint analysis, as they had been painted over many times. They were also able to track down a set of 1912 full colour cigarette cards featuring the navy’s most famous figureheads from the previous century.

Conservators made up a palette of colours inspired by the cigarette cards that was then used to restore each of the 14 figureheads when they came to be repainted.

“Thanks To a Doodle, Experts Now Say Unattributed Painting is by Botticelli,” *The Art Newspaper*, 11/15/2019

An unattributed painting in Cardiff is now believed to be a work by the Italian master Sandro Botticelli and his workshop, following conservation and deeper research into its provenance.

The Madonna and Child (1480s) was considered a copy before the art historian Bendor Grosvenor and the conservator Simon Gillespie examined the work as part of the BBC Four series *Lost Masterpieces*. Key to the findings was a doodle of a male’s face, which was concluded as being ‘indicative’ of the artist’s hand.

At some point in its past, the work is thought to have been overpainted, with the addition of an arched background that was potentially added to mask the fact that the painting was once part of a larger work.

The work will now be on display at the museum in Cardiff and it is expected that continued research will shed further light on its history. Gillespie says that by raising awareness, he hopes that the *Lost Masterpieces* series will also address

“the separation between conservation and the rest of art world—[conservators] give so much information for those that sell, display and enjoy these works, but our role is often hidden away”.

“Conservators to Restore Michelangelo’s Florence Pietà in Full View of Visitors,” *The Art Newspaper*, 11/22/2019

Experts are poised to begin the restoration of Michelangelo’s marble Pietà at Florence’s Museo dell’Opera del Duomo in full view of the public.

The sculptural group, on which Michelangelo worked from 1547 to 1555, when he was about to turn 80, depicts Jesus Christ after his descent from the cross, supported by the Virgin Mary, Mary Magdalene and an aged Nicodemus, who bears a resemblance to the artist himself.

Michelangelo famously destroyed parts of the sculpture and left it unfinished out of frustration with his progress and the quality of the marble. Over the centuries, the work has accumulated dirt and candle wax and undergone interventions in which iron rods were inserted to repair breakages.

“The dirt is the first issue,” says Timothy Verdon, the director of the Museo dell’Opera del Duomo. “As far as we can judge, it has never had an in-depth cleaning.” The stains from candle wax will also be addressed, he says, along with traces of discolouration that resulted when a cast was made of the work in the late 19th century. Some of the discolouration may be related to the quality of the marble, however.

Verdon said that according to Michelangelo’s contemporaries, the artist intended for the Pietà to be installed in the chapel where he would be buried, but ultimately abandoned it. Michelangelo gave the damaged work to a servant who had it restored and then sold it. Then it changed hands several times, eventually arriving in Florence in 1674. It resided in a series of churches before it was transferred to the Museo dell’Opera del Duomo in 1981.

“Restoration of 1970s East German Artwork Marks Key Moment in Battle to Assert Artistic Merit,” *The Guardian*, 11/03/2019

Its sweeping multicolour panorama set off against a grey ravine of prefab high-rises, Josep Renau’s mural in Moscow Square in Erfurt used to have a mission to turn heads and inspire. Made

of 70,000 glass mosaic tiles, the Spanish artist's work shows two gigantic hands, one clutching a sliced apple, the other what looks like a Salvador Dalí rendering of a jellied Rubik's cube.

Its title, in the utopian jargon still favoured in socialist East Germany when the mural was conceived in 1976: *Man's Relation to Nature and Technology*. When the culture centre that lent the artwork its facade went bankrupt after the end of the cold war, the mural was disassembled and packed away into storage. But as of this week, Renau's work is back in all its pixelated glory, with 500 replacement tiles made of artisanal Italian glass being fixed to a concrete structure that sets it apart from what is now a shopping centre.

Completed just in time for the 30th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, the fact that the majority of the €800,000 restoration costs were shouldered by a western German building association marks a significant moment in the long and embittered battle over the status of the East's cultural heritage in a reunified Germany.

Each previous anniversary of the collapse of the German Democratic Republic (GDR) has been marked by ill-tempered debates about the inclusion or lack of East German artists in the reunified country's galleries. The *Bilderstreit* ("picture quarrel") started in 1999 over an exhibition in Weimar, which seemed to symbolically equate the artists of the East with those working under the patronage of the Nazi regime.

Many of the murals that adorned civic buildings in East Germany have been actively discarded or allowed to fall into disrepair. The return of the Erfurt mural, however, speaks of a new pragmatism in the treatment of artworks from the East German regime.

"1930s-Era Murals Found Under Painted Hallways at SF Art Institute,"
NBC Bay Area, 12/12/2019

The plain white walls in the hallway of the venerable San Francisco Art Institute tightly clutched their secret for more than eight decades — buried beneath a dozen layers of paint. But a new effort to turn back the decades and peel away the paint has bared one of those secrets — a fully intact 1930s fresco painted by Frederick Olmsted Jr.

The fresco is one of a half dozen murals painted on the lower walls

of the 140-year-old institution, and later painted over. Olmsted's fresco depicts a group of workers toiling in a marble factory. The tower of the school's Russian Hill campus is visible in the mural's top corner — its perspective drawing from the nearby industrial neighborhood that would later become touristy Fisherman's Wharf.

"I think it's an important memorial to a period when San Francisco really was a working class city," said SFAI Facilities Manager Heather Hickman Holland. It was Holland who first noticed the strange lines on the stark white hallway walls which she initially thought were cobwebs.

As architectural conservator Molly Lambert and her team began peeling away the paint, the faces of 1930s workers began to emerge from their long slumber. The uncovering of the mural comes at a time when San Francisco's School Board recently voted to cover a controversial mural at George Washington High School. The board had originally voted to paint over the mural but then decided to simply cover it.

"The Painstaking Task of Making a 200-Year-Old Sculpture Look Almost Like New,"
Washington Post, 12/14/2019

Robert Price was in a corner of the National Gallery of Art's East Sculpture Hall last week breaking one of the cardinal rules of museums. He was touching the art.

Perched on a stool under a bright spotlight, Price leaned into a 200-year-old marble sculpture carved by Frenchman Jean-Pierre-Antoine Tassaert, using a cotton swab to remove decades of grime from its base. For the next 15 months, Price will be working in the skylighted hall, cleaning and restoring a half-dozen French sculptures while simultaneously offering visitors a peek into a critical but largely unseen aspect of museum work: conservation.

To encourage visitors to stop and watch, the museum has set up two monitors on the periphery of the cordoned-off area where Price will work. He began last week by dusting and vacuuming the surface and photo documenting its condition. The next step is to clean it with the pH-adjusted water that will remove dirt without damaging the stone. The bulk of the time will be spent improving earlier restorations.

There are other reasons to work on the sculptures in the gallery. The works are large and heavy, so moving them is difficult and accommodating them in the

lab is tricky.

Price said working in the gallery allows him to compare his progress to the other works on view, which is a plus. Conservators like to treat a work in the same light that it is displayed under, he added. They can re-create the gallery light in the lab, he said, but it's never exact.

"Ghent Altarpiece: Latest Phase of Restoration Unmasks the Humanised Face of The Lamb Of God,"
The Art Newspaper, 12/18/2019

Restoring the Ghent Altarpiece may well exceed the years it took for Flemish brothers Jan and Hubert Van Eyck to create their wondrously detailed 12-panel masterpiece, from the mid-1420s to 1432.

Since October 2012, Belgium's Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage (KIK-IRPA) has led a transformative €2.2m altarpiece conservation project in full view of the public, within a specially constructed laboratory at Ghent's Museum of Fine Arts.

Marking the end of the project's second phase, the five lower interior panels—including the central Adoration of the Mystic Lamb—will return to their home in St Bavo's Cathedral on 24 January after a three-year treatment. The eight outer panels, restored during a first phase from 2012 to 2016, will come back to the museum in February, as exceptional loans for an exhibition in honour of Ghent's "Year of Van Eyck".

The altarpiece has been an iconographical puzzle for generations of art historians, its mystery compounded by the lack of archival information on the Van Eyck brothers.

Despite the wealth of prior research conducted on the altarpiece, it was only during the KIK-IRPA restoration that scientists made an astonishing discovery: beneath the layers of yellowed and cloudy varnish, around 70% of the outer panels was obscured by 16th-century overpainting.

Analysis confirmed the overpainting could be removed without damaging the original because an earlier layer of varnish "was acting as a buffer between the two", says Hélène Dubois, head of the restoration project.

These 16th-century additions had covered around half of the panel featuring the sacrificial lamb, the symbol of Christ. Removing a blue hill on the horizon, for instance, revealed a trio of miniature buildings in the style of Medieval Ghent.

AYMHM, continued

Most surprising of all was the lamb's humanised face, which emerged beneath its more animal 16th-century appearance. The challenge was to reveal the quality of the Van Eycks' original work "without erasing every single mark of time", Dubois says. Pending further funding, KIK-IRPA aims to publish new research in 2020 that addresses the long debate over the altarpiece's authorship.

"New Lab Helps Support Conservation Work at Denver Art Museum," CBS Denver, 12/27/2109

The new Martin Conservation Lab opened one month ago allowing staff to improve their work on paintings and other objects in the collection of the Denver Art Museum.

In addition to new resources and facilities available to staff, the lab features north facing windows that will provide a uniform spectrum of light year-round. "It really reflects the function and the intention of what it is we are trying to accomplish in terms of exhibition and long term preservation of the Denver Art Museum's collection," said Sarah Melching, the Silber Director of Conservation.

The Martin Conservation Lab supports the Conservation and Technical Studies Department and the specializations they will focus on including modern, contemporary and traditional objects. Not only is the lab larger with new equipment, it also includes a separate room for photo documentation and analytical equipment.

"Uffizi Panel Quits Over Loan of Raphael," ANSA, 02/25/2020

The scientific committee at the Uffizi resigned en masse Tuesday in protest at the Florence gallery's loan of a Raphael work to an unprecedented Rome show marking the 500th anniversary of the Renaissance master's death.

The panel said it had worked for months to draw up a list of works that should never be moved from the Florentine gallery, and the portrait of Pope Leo X was one of them. The famed portrait was specially restored for the show in the capital by the experts at Florence's restoration works Opificio delle Pietre Dure.

In a letter to the bodies that appointed them, including the education ministry and Florence city council, Donata Levi, Tomaso Montanari, Fabrizio Moretti and Claudio Pizzorusso said the Leo X

portrait should never leave Florence. They said that Uffizi director Eike Schmidt had approved their decision on December 9 last year banning the transfer of the work. Schmidt responded Tuesday by saying that the Leo X was "indispensable" to the Rome show.

The portrait will be one of the centrepieces of the show, called simply Raphael, at the Scuderie del Quirinale from March 5 to June 2.

"Today we learned from the press," the four experts said, "that the painting is already in the Rome exhibition space. "We think that keeping us busy for months drafting lists which are then ignored undermines the very existence of the committee. "We think that the mass resignation of the scientific committee of Italy's most important museum makes a rethink inevitable, and a redefinition of the role of the scientific committees in the management of autonomous museums".

"Notre Dame Enters a New and High-Risk Phase in its Restoration," The Art Newspaper, 12/30/2019

The restoration of the cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris, which was badly damaged by fire on 15 April, has entered a new and delicate phase. This involves removing a vast and heavy scaffolding structure at roof level that became fused by the intense heat.

It had been erected before the fire in order to carry out restoration work on the 19th-century roof spire, whose dramatic collapse was seen on screens around the world.

The removal of the scaffolding requires three levels of steel beams to be positioned around its exterior to form a stabilising "belt". Once this operation is complete, the same firm that built the scaffolding will start to dismantle it, using telescopic crawler cranes that will allow roped technicians to descend into the forest of pipes and gradually cut them away after having coated them with a protective layer to avoid spreading the pollution caused by the melting of the lead roof.

Work is expected to be complete next April. No decision has been taken so far over how to rebuild the roof. A reconstruction according to traditional techniques is clearly possible as the skills and materials (essentially, tall oak trees) are available in France.

As the previous roof proved effective and resilient—it survived 800

Jobs

Museums of New Mexico

Chief Conservator (open to all specialties)

The Museum Resources Division (MRD) for the State of New Mexico is seeking to fill its Chief Conservator position.

Located within the New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs, MRD is comprised of skilled museum specialists that serve multiple New Mexico state-run museums and historic sites. MRD includes conservators, designers, woodworkers, mount makers, preparators, writers, editors, and educators. MRD provides services to the Museum of International Folk Art, New Mexico History Museum/Palace of the Governors, New Mexico Museum of Art, Museum of Indian Arts and Culture, and seven state historic sites.

Reporting to the Director of New Mexico's Museum Resources Division, the Chief Conservator manages the organization's conservation program. They act as an advocate for conservation and preservation within MRD and the institutions they serve; create policies and procedures on preservation issues including recommendations pertaining to exhibitions, storage, loan and acquisitions of collections; direct project workflows within the conservation lab; develop conservation and collection care priorities; draft grant proposals to fund special projects; perform conservation treatments and carry out research.

Salary: \$20.23 - \$35.21 Hourly or \$42,088 - \$73,233 Annually. Generous benefits.

Candidates must apply through New Mexico's State Office of Personnel website: spo.state.nm.us The job is listed as: Chief Conservator (DCA #4568) / Job ID 111078. This position is open until filled, with the first consideration given to applications received by April 17, 2020.

For questions about the application process please reach out to the MRD Division Director, David Rohr, at 505-476-1137 or david.rohr@state.nm.us.

years—this seems the most desirable solution as it would also fully respect internationally accepted conservation principles, with the addition of modern fire-monitoring and prevention technologies.