



46th Annual Meeting

Virtual Presentations

12:00 noon – 3:00 pm Pacific Time

November 4-6, 2021

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[Western Association for Art Conservation \(WAAC\)](https://www.waac-us.org/)



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Meeting Schedule:

Note: questions will be taken after each presentation

Day One: Thursday November 4th, 12 - 3pm PST

Welcome remarks: *Geneva Griswold, WAAC President*

Host(s): Geneva Griswold

Q&A Moderator(s): Brianna Warren

Newsletter reflection: Disaster Response Or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Read the Article
Steven Pine

Solving Problems in the Display and Transit of Paintings Requires Teamwork
Jia-sun Tsang, Eric Dixon, Chris Hollishwander

Playing it by Ear: Piano Roll Preservation in the Stanford Piano Roll Program
Jill Sison, Elizabeth Ryan

10-minute break

Community-based Conservation: Launching the Utah Collections Preservation Program
Marie Desrochers, Tara Beresh

Treatment of a Baleen Sled: In Search of a Consolidant Befitting Baleen
Céline Wachsmuth, Sarah Owens

Day Two: Friday November 5th, 12 - 3pm PST

Welcome remarks: *Jan Burandt, WAAC Vice President*

Host(s): Jan Burandt; Sophie Hunter

Q&A Moderator(s): Magdalena Solano

Conservation Imaging Applications of Unmanned Aerial Systems

James Craven

The Iraqi Institute for Conservation of Antiquities and Heritage: Recovery Work at Nimrud and the Mosul Cultural Museum

Kent Severson

Art + science = magic: Iron Age chariot burial declared treasure in part due to XRF metallurgical analysis

Katya Madrid

10-minute break

Wax Miniature Sculpture: From Chloroform to the Modular Cleaning Program

Nicole Passerotti

Material Investigation, Object Histories, and the Wellcome Collection at the Fowler Museum

Marci J. Burton, Carlee S. Forbes, Erica P. Jones, Christian de Brer

Day Three: Saturday November 6th, 12 - 3pm PST

Welcome remarks: *Geneva Griswold, WAAC President*

Host(s): Rae Beaubien

Q&A Moderator(s): Colleen O'Shea

MEMBER BUSINESS MEETING

Technical study of ten prints from the Rifkind Collection and Latin American collection in the exhibition "Pressing Politics"

Madison Brockman

10-minute break

Art at the boundaries: Conservation of a 1930s black silk velvet portrait of Duke Kahanamoku

Netanya Schiff, Blanka Kielb

Zooming the MCP

Nina Roth-Wells, Chris Stavroudis

2021 Abstracts

Disaster Response Or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Read the Article

Steve Pine

Faced with making informed decisions under duress while responding to a disaster at a museum, library or archive can be daunting. The potential for being overwhelmed by both the lack or in some cases abundance of clear guidance for decision making at the moment is a challenge for both the novice and veteran. Choices made can impact the health of both the collection threatened and the responder lending aid. In those moments it has been immensely helpful to have reference tools at hand that are readily accessible, clear and effective. I have found two articles from the archives of the WAAC Newsletter illustrate that utility and I would like to reflect on how those references were helpful during NHR and THR deployments. The two articles are:

Salvage at a Glance, Betty Walsh, first published in WAAC, *WAAC Newsletter*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (May 1997), Carolyn Tallent, Editor. <https://cool.culturalheritage.org/waac/wn/wn19/wn19-2/wn19-207.html>

Superstorm Sandy: Frontline Advice for Dealing with Mold and Salvaging Electronic Devices, Chris Stavroudis, Volume 35, Number 1, January 2013. (<https://www.waac-us.org/vol35-1-2013>).

https://170517c7-5797-4867-b76e-a5e55f7532ec.filesusr.com/ugd/d3b1ca_7ac1ed8241d649e5ba6e561d143070e1.pdf

Steve Pine is Senior Decorative Arts Conservator at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston and President of the Texas Alliance for Response group TX-CERA. In his role at the MFAH he treats historic and modern furniture and leads the museum's IPM program. He is an active member of the National Heritage Response team of the FAIC. Steve has deployed as part of these groups following Hurricanes Katrina, Ike, Sandy and Harvey. He lectures and leads workshops on disaster preparedness and response for cultural heritage resources and building Alliance for Response networks. spine@mfaah.org

Solving Problems in the Display and Transit of Paintings Requires Teamwork

Jia-sun Tsang, Eric Dixon, Chris Hollishwander

Preventive conservation of modern and contemporary art presents conservators with numerous challenges: structural abnormalities, bowed fiberboard, brittle acrylic supports, decayed composite supports, ill-fitting frames and hardware, etc. Preparing these artworks for display and transit often requires fabrication skills that paintings conservators do not possess. Thus, collaboration between conservators and allied professionals is essential.

This presentation will briefly describe how this paintings conservator teamed with a model maker and a fabrication supervisor to meet the challenges. It will focus on two recent innovations: Floating Panels, a highly creative display system, and OneStep, a system for safely handling, displaying, and transporting artworks.

The Floating Panel highlights the optical quality of an artwork through the use of a protective glass cover with a frameless edge. Low-carbon steel sheets and angle form the metal brackets that hold the glass in place. When painted the same color as the wall, these brackets become virtually invisible, giving the impression that the painting behind the protective cover is floating in space. Two high-profile artworks currently on view at the NMAAHC are installed with Floating Panels.

The OneStep system for handling, displaying, and transporting artworks reduces vibration, minimizes physical vulnerabilities during transit, and integrates the functions of safety, security, and handling into one metal mount. The OneStep system, inspired by the “spider” hardware for hanging plates, is made with a large metal mount embedded with hanging hardware. A D-ring and brace secure a painting to the wall and to a travel frame. An NMAAHC artwork with no functional hanging hardware and no space for new hanging hardware was loaned to a museum that employed only contract art handlers and had no staff conservator. The OneStep system protected the artwork in transit and allowed the borrower to uncrate and hang it with no special preparation.

Jia-sun Tsang is a senior paintings conservator at the Museum Conservation Institute of the Smithsonian Institution, where she specialized in modern materials research, conservation, and preventive conservation of modern and contemporary art. She holds a MSc from the Winterthur/University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation in Delaware, and a MSc in chemistry from Bowling Green State University in Ohio. Since 2007, Jia-sun worked on the conservation and analysis of paintings from the visual art collections of the National Museum of African American History and Culture. tsangj@si.edu

Eric Dixon has been the Fabrication Supervisor in the Office of Project Management and Planning for the National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC) at Smithsonian Institution (SI) since 2017. Eric oversees the fabrication and installation of all exhibition elements, object mounting, and graphics. Prior to NMAAHC, Eric worked in the exhibition fabrication shops at the National Museum of American History at SI. Eric holds a bachelor’s degree in History, specializing in Museum Studies and Theatre History from the University of Maryland University College and studied theatre technology and design at Brigham Young University. Prior to SI, Eric worked in theatre arts at The Shakespeare Theatre

Company in Washington, DC and the Royal Shakespeare Company in Stratford-upon-Avon, UK.
dixone@si.edu

Chris Hollishwander graduated from the Art Institute of Pittsburgh, with a degree in Industrial Design. Since 2003, he has been working for the Smithsonian Institution, as an Exhibits Specialist, Model Maker, focusing on model making, exhibit fabrication, and mount making. Prior career experience has been in the amusement park industry, as a fabricator/model maker. As well as, work in the toy industry building prototypes, and other models for most of the major toy companies, freelance mold maker, and architectural model maker. **hollshwanderc@si.edu**

Playing It by Ear: Piano Roll Preservation in the Stanford Player Piano Project

Jill Sison, Elizabeth Ryan

The Stanford University Player Piano Project is an interdepartmental collaboration focusing on the study and research of piano performance practice of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as captured on player piano rolls. Jill Sison and Elizabeth Ryan will discuss the Stanford Conservation Department's involvement in the preservation and digitization component of the project beginning in December 2017. The Conservation Department's role has been to ensure the physical stability of historically significant piano rolls through the digitization process and for long-term preservation. Unexpected challenges and lessons learned in developing repair protocols for a fragile composite object, handling procedures for use in a purpose-built roll scanner, tracking, and working within a larger university project will be addressed.

Jill Sison is a Conservation Technician for Stanford University Libraries' Special Collections. Jill currently serves on the Stanford Piano Rolls Program team and is primarily responsible for repair and documentation of Conservation Services' work for the Program. Jill has an MSIS/CAS from the University of Texas at Austin, specializing in book conservation, and has previously worked at private conservation labs, as well as interning at the American Museum of Natural History, the Harry Ransom Center, the Briscoe Center for American History, and the Ryerson and Burnham Libraries at the Art Institute of Chicago. jgsison@stanford.edu

Elizabeth Ryan is a Book Conservator at Stanford University Libraries. She is an AIC Professional Associate and serves on the board of the American Bookbinders Museum. Elizabeth holds an MLIS from the State University of New York at Albany, completed a fellowship in Library Preservation at New York University, and trained as a book conservator at Stanford Libraries. She was involved in the early stages of the Stanford Piano rolls program helping to develop protocols for handling, repair and documentation. eryan@stanford.edu

Community-based Conservation: Launching the Utah Collections Preservation Program

Marie Desrochers, Tara Beresh

Utah Field Services (UFS), a partnership between the Utah Division of Arts & Museums' Office of Museum Services and Utah Humanities' Center for Community Heritage, is launching a new, strategic, state-wide Collections Preservation Program (UCP) with the support of a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. The challenge of preserving and making accessible Utah's large and diverse cultural holdings is enormous, and the need for knowledgeable museum/collections stewards in Utah is significant. The UCP will empower UFS to expand beyond museums to include other institutions holding collections, including historical societies, archives, libraries, tribal organizations and other types of non-traditional collecting groups. One of the first steps to implementing this program was the recent hiring of a Preventive Conservator to manage the program and provide subject area expertise and training.

The UCP will include the following activities:

1. *Virtual and On-Site Education and Training*

This project will develop and implement a regular calendar of virtual and regional on-site training activities specifically targeted to small museums/collecting institutions from rural areas throughout Utah. Topics will include but are not limited to the following:

- Preventive preservation best practices
- Preservation and access strategies for a range of object types (digital media, archival, 2D and 3D objects, textiles, artwork, etc.)
- Ethical, legal, and culturally appropriate practices (e.g., managing material from under-represented communities, restricted/sacred material, community stewardship, etc.)
- Risk assessment and disaster preparedness and response
- Collection advocacy and fundraising.

2. *Collections Preservation Team (CPT)*

This project will develop and support a Collections Preservation Team which will connect stewards from small, rural areas to professionals and colleagues from around the state. Team members will be responsible for "deepening the bench" of individuals in Utah who are professionally trained and available to consult on collection care matters.

This talk will share insights from the launching of this program, including a Collections Preservation Team co-presenter, Tara Beresh, who will discuss her insights into the preservation challenges of small institutions around Utah.

Marie Desrochers currently serves as the Preservation Outreach Coordinator for the State of Utah's Division of Arts and Museums. In this role, she is launching the Utah Collections Preservation Program which will provide training for small collecting institutions across the state. This work is funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, and it strives to increase preventive conservation knowledge for all heritage stewards. Marie graduated in 2021 from the Winterthur/University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation, where she was a National Endowment for the Humanities Graduate Fellow with a

major in Preventive Conservation. She spent her third year internship working under Patty Silence at the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. **mdesrochers@utah.gov**

Tara Beresh, Curatorial & Collections Manager at Moab Museum

Treatment of a Baleen Sled: In Search of a Consolidant Befitting Baleen

Céline Wachsmuth, Sarah Owens

In addition to being used for transportation of people, sleds were also used to move materials and goods in Alaska. We often picture wood sleds, as depicted in the classic animated film “Balto” but they can also be made of baleen. Baleen is a filtration system found in the mouths of plankton-eating whales. The center is made up of parallel bone tubes held together in a cement-like protein material with outer layers of keratin. It is these outer keratin layers that Alaska Native peoples used to make sleds, containers, nets, and intricately woven baskets.

An early 20th century baleen sled in the Anchorage Museum collection was identified as requiring cleaning. Upon closer inspection, areas of significant delamination became apparent. Attempts to research treatment methods for baleen did not yield many suggestions, therefore a delaminating surface was mocked up on a section of baleen from the lab’s reference collection. We selected a variety of adhesives to test based on those readily available in the lab and those recommended from the limited research results. Initial findings led to modifying certain consolidants, while some were determined unsuitable for use. Further testing was undertaken to determine a proper course of treatment. The consolidants were tested in discrete areas on the baleen sled, in addition to the mock-up, to compare results on new baleen versus aged and used baleen. The comparison helped guide and influence the choice of consolidant for treatment. This presentation will discuss the results of testing and share the treatment of the baleen sled in the Anchorage Museum’s collection.

Céline Wachsmuth is a student in the UCLA/Getty MA Program in the Conservation of Cultural Heritage. Originally from the Philadelphia area, she has slowly moved West, starting with her undergraduate program at DePauw University in Indiana, and now considers Seattle home. She graduated in 2016 with a BA in Classical Archaeology and minors in Ancient Greek and Studio Art. Studying the material culture of the Mediterranean helped her realize her passion was in preservation and she began searching for conservation internships. She interned for a few years at the Penn Museum in Philadelphia and had smaller internships at the Cleveland Museum of Art and with private conservators in the Seattle area before being accepted in 2019 to the UCLA/Getty Conservation program. Most recently, she spent four months interning at the Anchorage Museum in Alaska where she immersed herself in Native Alaskan material culture and her surroundings. Céline is a member of AIC’s Education and Training Committee and serves as the ECPN Liaison. She is also the co-chair of the UCLA Cotsen Institute of Archaeology’s Anti-Harassment Committee and a Conservation Representative in the Graduate Student Association of Archaeology. Céline enjoys hiking and biking and spending whatever time she can when in Philly with her dog, Scooter. wachsmuthc@g.ucla.edu

Sarah Owens is owner of Interwoven Fibers LLC, an Alaskan based textile conservation business. She has undertaken conservation and exhibit display projects for various private clients and Alaskan institutions including: the Alaska Native Heritage Center, Resurrection Bay Historical Society, Sealaska Corporation and Sealaska Heritage Institute.

With a background in textile design and construction her passion is conserving culturally and historically important textiles. Sarah also enjoys the challenges of working with the mannequin form as a bridge between conservation needs and the respectful representation of cultures.

Sarah was the Conservator at the Anchorage Museum from October 2013 to November 2021, responsible for all aspects of conservation for the museum's permanent collection. She completed a fellowship in Textile Conservation at the National Museum of the American Indian from 2011 to 2013. During the fellowship she conserved regalia from Native American communities and researched Yupik fur parkas.

Sarah has also held conservation positions at the National Museums Scotland, Historic Royal Palaces, Scottish Conservation Studio and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. She earned her Masters in Textile Conservation from the Textile Conservation Centre, University of Southampton; and Bachelor of Arts in Textiles/Fashion, University of Southampton, in U.K.

Conservation Imaging Applications of Unmanned Aerial Systems

James Craven

The rapid advancement of small unmanned aerial systems, or drones, in the last decade has brought what was once an advanced professional undertaking into the broader consumer market. With the increased control and stability provided with computational flight assisted by positional sensors novice pilots can maneuver these aircraft with precision. In response to the rapid influx of amateur pilots the Federal Aviation Administration has recently been rapidly updating their rules and regulations regarding unmanned flight, in order to maintain a safe airspace.

With a drone attached camera pilots are able to take photos and video above structures, foliage, and bodies of water un-inhibited. This is an opportunity to access areas otherwise unable to be documented or monitored. In addition, comprehensive detail images of objects can be used to generate 3D models utilizing photogrammetry. This process allows for documentation of a structure's geometry and texture in addition to visual appearance.

James Craven is the conservation imaging specialist at the Menil Collection in Houston, TX. There he utilizes an array of imaging tools to document and research artworks. With a history of working in color science and photomechanics, James continues his technical journey at the Menil to build an ever more detailed archive of images for conservation. [**jcraven@menil.org**](mailto:jcraven@menil.org)

The Iraqi Institute for Conservation of Antiquities and Heritage: Recovery Work at Nimrud and the Mosul Cultural Museum

Kent Severson

Since 2009, the Iraqi Institute for Conservation of Antiquities and Heritage, in Erbil, Iraq, has been training staff from Iraqi museums in preservation and conservation. The work of the IICAH became increasingly important with the dramatic destruction of cultural property by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in 2015–2016. Together with the Smithsonian Institution, the Institute is now a central part of a collaborative project to recover and protect fragments of Neo-Assyrian sculptures at the devastated site of Nimrud. Key Iraqi public officials in charge of recovery efforts in Nineveh province, which includes the city of Mosul and Nimrud, were early participants in training at the IICAH. This presentation will highlight work done on the protection of the stone sculptures at Nimrud as well as a mission to assess and document destruction in the Mosul Museum in 2019 after the liberation of the city.

Kent Severson is currently in private practice in Sacramento, California. He was formerly the conservator at Shangri La Museum of Islamic Art Culture and Design in Honolulu, Hawaii (2012 - 2020). A graduate of the New York University Institute of Fine Arts Conservation Center training program, from 1998 through 2020 Severson was in private practice in Boston, working primarily for museums and other institutions. He has participated in archaeological projects in Turkey, Greece, Italy and Egypt for more than 30 years, including two decades as the Senior Field conservator for the NYU Excavations at Aphrodisias, Turkey. Since 2010, he has been Visiting Instructor for the Iraqi Institute for the Conservation of Antiquities and Heritage in Erbil, Iraq, where he continues to participate as a team member of Nimrud Rescue, and other projects. [**kjpsever@gmail.com**](mailto:kjpsever@gmail.com)

Art + science = magic: Iron age chariot burial declared treasure in part due to XRF metallurgical analysis

Katya Madrid

In February of 2018, a metal detectorist stumbled upon a Celtic burial site in Pembrokeshire, in the west of Wales. An archaeological team working with the National Museum of Wales (NMW), including the museum's archaeological conservator Luise Mumford, conducted a full excavation of the site, discovering two iron tyres, a sword, and multiple copper alloy decorative details from the horse bridles of a chariot. These were all ceremonially buried together, indicating a high-ranking individual in that society had died. It was "the first chariot burial to be found not just in Wales, but in southern Britain," (June, 2019) said Adam Gwilt, principal curator of prehistoric archaeology at NMW to the BBC. The story made a huge media splash!

The UK has a complex system in place that helps to determine ownership of archaeological finds. Only if a piece qualifies under the Antiquities Scheme does a museum have the right to acquire it for their collections. If the find(s) is not pronounced Treasure, it is returned to the finder, who then has the right to sell it to whomever they wish, and the public could lose all access.

Adam Gwilt compiled an over 1000-page report making the case that the chariot burial ought to be declared 'treasure' based in part on the presumed age of the finds.

To assist in the dating process, the metallurgy of multiple buckles of the horse's harness was analyzed. The two likely copper alloys could either have been brass, if containing zinc, or bronze if containing tin. As the earliest use case of brass is known, finding zinc would disqualify the grouping. Gwilt turned to the archaeological conservation team at NMW. I performed the XRF analysis necessary to find the presence or absence of tin.

The XRF analysis, though difficult due to surface decay, revealed the presence of tin and the absence of zinc. This evidence corroborated Gwilt's art historical visual comparison from other burials known across Britain. The chariot burial was dated to approximately AD 25-75. The information gleaned from the analysis was included in the extensive report, which led to a successful ruling that the chariot finds could be bought by the National Museum of Wales for its permanent collection.

The chariot and the accompanying finds were conserved at the in-house lab in NMW, where I had the pleasure and honor of participating in the conservation.

By presenting an example from a UK context, I am able to illustrate more concretely the critical role that conservators can play in deciding the future of cultural heritage. Being aware of such power, we must stay vigilant in researching provenance for every piece we touch. In this case, our investigating and XRF analysis led to the chariot remains being preserved and accessible to the general public instead of stored in private hands.

Katya Madrid has worked for a private practice in San Francisco for years before starting up her own conservation studio, *Red Dragon Conservation*, in the San Francisco Bay Area. She lived in Wales, UK where she worked at the National Museum of Wales Archaeological Conservation Lab while earning her Masters of Science in conservation from Cardiff University. Madrid has a Masters in Art History from the

European University at St. Petersburg, Russia. She is a textile artist and maker of hand cast silver jewelry. Madrid began her exploration of the stewardship of cultural heritage with the Phoebe Hearst Museum of Anthropology at UC Berkeley, moving an ethnographic collection to purpose-built storage facilities, and later arranged for her practicum placement to be at their conservation studio. Madrid is also a conservator for *The Hampton Archive Project* at Tracing Patterns Foundation, Berkeley.

katyamadrid@icloud.com

Wax Miniature Sculpture: From Chloroform to the Modular Cleaning Program

Nicole Passerotti

A survey of the Philadelphia Museum of Art's European miniature wax sculpture collection and archival research revealed well-intentioned, but outdated treatment practices in the 1970s. Similar methods and materials were also used with comparable wax sculpture collections at the Victoria & Albert Museum, The Royal Collection, and The Wallace Collection. A 2017 Samuel H. Kress Fellowship offered an opportunity to collaborate with a Curatorial Fellow to complete a comprehensive condition survey, establish joint priorities, and create a small exhibit featuring fabrication methods. In addition to technical analysis, conservation treatment included loss compensation and cleaning informed by the Modular Cleaning Program.

Nicole Passerotti is an objects conservator and the Program Associate for the Andrew W. Mellon Opportunity for Diversity in Conservation at the UCLA/Getty Interdepartmental Program in the Conservation of Cultural Heritage. Previously she was an assistant conservator at the Field Museum and has worked at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Pitt Rivers Museum at Oxford University, the Kaymacki Archaeological Project, and the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian. Nicole holds an M.A. and Certificate of Advanced Study from SUNY Buffalo State College and a B.A. in English from Oberlin College. [**npasserotti@g.ucla.edu**](mailto:npasserotti@g.ucla.edu)

Material Investigation, Object Histories, and the Wellcome Collection at the Fowler Museum

Marci J. Burton, Carlee S. Forbes, Erica P. Jones, Christian de Brer

In 2019, the Fowler Museum at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), via a generous research grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, began a three-year interdisciplinary research project. This project focuses on a subsection of the Museum's African arts collection, a gift received in 1965 from the Wellcome Trust. Consisting of over 6,000 African objects collected in the early twentieth century, the objects in this gift represent a wide range of functions and materials. Some documentation accompanied the gift and the objects have varying degrees of information on the context of use, materials, and provenance. This project seeks to use interdisciplinary methods to further examine the objects' histories, from their making to their eventual acquisition by Wellcome.

After conducting a collections survey, the curatorial and conservation team selected 800 objects for further technical study. Current case studies include wooden sculptures and reliquary assemblages from Central Africa, and Ghanaian gold weights. This paper examines how collaborative curatorial and conservation practices can deepen our ability to uncover an objects' history. Research methods include archival research, non- and minimally-invasive material analysis, and conservation treatment. Together, these aspects of research help to complete the collections and conservation histories of the objects and shed insight into the conservation and preservation challenges within the collection.

Marci Jefcoat Burton is an Andrew W. Mellon Fellow at the Fowler Museum at UCLA. She has a Master of Arts in Conservation from the UCLA/Getty Conservation of Archaeological and Ethnographic Materials program, as well as a Bachelor of Arts in Forensic Chemistry and a Minor in Art History from California State University, Sacramento. Interests and experience include the analysis and treatment of archaeological materials and objects made and used by world cultures, as well as research into conservation treatment options for synthetic materials. Previous work includes the research, analysis, and treatment of objects at the Smithsonian, National Air and Space Museum and the National Museum of the American Indian, and the Penn Museum. mjefcoat@arts.ucla.edu

Carlee S. Forbes is an art historian specializing in African art and currently a Mellon Curatorial fellow at the Fowler Museum at UCLA. She has prior curatorial experience at the North Carolina Museum of Art, Ackland Art Museum at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and Samuel P. Harn Museum of Art at the University of Florida. Carlee completed her PhD at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. She received a Caroline H. and Thomas S. Royster Fellowship and a Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Research Abroad fellowship to fund the research for her dissertation, titled: *Making for New Markets: Art, Innovation, and Collecting in Colonial-era Congo, 1880-1940*.

Technical study of ten prints from the Rifkind Collection and Latin American collection in the exhibition “Pressing Politics.”

Madison Brockman

Ten prints from two curatorial departments, the Rifkind Collection and Latin American collection, were chosen for a technical study to prior to their joint exhibition “Pressing Politics.” The study group of 10 objects, five from each collection, included a variety of prints, from fine art portfolio prints to mass-produced broadsides and books. An in-depth investigation into the materials and techniques used to produce these paper supports and printing inks has not been undertaken to date. The study was conducted by LACMA's Assistant Paper Conservator and Associate Conservation Scientist, with multispectral documentary imaging by the Senior Imaging Specialist and Photographer. Visual and microscopic examination, X-Ray Fluorescence, Micro-fade Testing, and fiber identification via Polarizing Light Microscopy were carried out to identify the fiber and filler content of the supports, the pigments used in the printing inks, and the manufacturing techniques used to produce the supports. While curatorial and conservation hypothesized that a variety of supports ranging from utilitarian newsprint to high-quality fine art papers were used, this study revealed that the study sample of ten prints was largely composed of bleached wood pulp paper. This new knowledge of the artworks' materials has significant implications for their preventive conservation recommendations, and for the longevity of these and other works in each respective collection.

Madison Brockman (she/her) is the Assistant Paper Conservator and Academic Coordinator for the Conservation Center at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. She earned an M.S. from the Winterthur/University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation and returned to LA for a graduate third year internship and two years of Andrew W. Mellon Fellowship at LACMA's Paper Conservation lab. Madison previously worked at the Legion of Honor, UCLA Library, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, and more. She is interested in treatment- and materials-based research and loves outreach and education. Madison was born and raised in the Los Angeles area and is passionate about its art, food, outdoor spaces, and the LA Dodgers (for better or worse). [**mbrockman@LACMA.org**](mailto:mbrockman@LACMA.org)

Art at the boundaries: Conservation of a 1930s black silk velvet portrait of Duke Kahanamoku

Netanya Schiff, Blanka Kielb

Black velvet paintings, a popular art form often considered counter to good taste, are nevertheless an important, if traditionally “low-brow,” part of the Americana canon. Cited as having originated in the early 1930s with the work of Edgar Leeteg, an American who worked and lived in Tahiti, black velvet painting evokes images of smoky dark bars and kitsch iconography. Almost since its conception, American black velvet painting has fallen out of the cultural bounds of artworks traditionally considered worthy of conservation. As such, there is little literature or established practice for the treatment of these works. This paper looks to fill this lacuna, exploring the history and significance of American black velvet painting and addressing the practicalities of treating such works. A treatment of a c.1930s black velvet portrait of Hawaiian/American icon Duke Kahanamoku, undertaken at ArtCare Conservation Los Angeles, will be discussed and illustrate the need for creative thinking and cross-disciplinary approaches essential to contemporary conservation practice.

Netanya Schiff is a cultural heritage conservation professional with over eight years of formal training and practical experience in a diverse range of material and object types. She began her training in Florence, Italy in 2012, receiving a Bachelor of Science in Conservation Studies with a focus on the conservation and restoration of easel painting, polychrome sculpture, and wall paintings with a minor in studio arts. Her training continued at University College London, where she received her Master of Arts and Master of Science degrees in Principles of Conservation and Conservation for Archeology and Museums respectively.

Netanya has worked within institutions and private practices in Italy, the United States, and the United Kingdom including the British Museum, Royal Museums Greenwich, La Soprintendenza Archeologica Peril Lazzo and the Central Park Conservancy. As an object conservator with a foundation in paintings conservation Netanya has unique cross-disciplinary skills in the assessment and treatment of complex painted surfaces on both traditional and non-traditional supports and has participated in the conservation of large-scale murals, frescos, contemporary artworks, and polychrome ethnographic and archeological artifacts, in addition to classic easel and panel paintings. netanyasschiff@gmail.com

Blanka Kielb is the director and Chief Conservator of ArtCare Conservation’s Los Angeles Office. Blanka holds a Master of Art Conservation in Paintings from Queen’s University, Kingston, Ontario, and a BA in Art Conservation from the University of Delaware. After earning her graduate degree, Blanka held positions at a private Washington, DC-based firm, specializing in easel paintings and murals, and at the University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation, where she taught an undergraduate course in painting conservation and co-directed a UD study abroad program in Peru aimed to provide students with hands-on experience in the documentation and treatment of wall paintings.

Prior to joining ArtCare, Blanka worked at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) on the conservation of the Watts Towers of Simon Rodia, one of LA’s most iconic art landmarks, and on the Damascus Room, a painted and gilded wood interior from the late Ottoman period. She served a key role in project planning and management of the Watts Towers Conservation Project and worked with

conservation scientists and engineers in developing materials testing, treatment, and monitoring protocols, research which culminated in presentations at the 41st and 42nd AIC Annual Meetings and a paper in the AIC Objects Specialty Group Post prints.

Zooming the MCP

Nina Roth-Wells, Chris Stavroudis

The Covid 19 pandemic has curtailed many conservation projects, as safety protocols necessitated the closing of many conservation studios and museums. Stuck at home many conservators found this to be an isolating and unproductive time. In an effort to reach out and connect to colleagues, (while also giving back to the conservation community) Chris Stavroudis and Nina Roth-Wells offered an online version of Stavroudis' legendary Modular Cleaning Program. As conservators in private practice with in-home studios Stavroudis and Roth-Wells had access to materials and supplies which allowed them to participate in conservation activities even during the pandemic. This paper will outline how Stavroudis and Roth-Wells implemented several online programs and how these lead to connections with colleagues and birthed the popular Practical Science for Conservators programming.

Nina Roth-Wells is a painting conservator in private practice in Maine. Nina is a graduate of the Queens Art Conservation Program and a Fellow of the AIC. In her practice Nina serves museum and college collections in the state of Maine along with private collectors. Nina is committed to conservation education; she teaches an Introduction to Art Conservation to undergraduates at Colby College, and has assisted in both online and in-person MCP workshops. ninarothwells@me.com

Chris Stavroudis is a private paintings conservator in West Hollywood, California. He developed the Modular Cleaning Program in 2002 as an off shoot of the work of Richard Wolbers and the Gels Cleaning Project at the Getty Conservation Institute.

Chris obtained undergraduate degrees in Chemistry and Art History from the University of Arizona and his Masters' degree from the Winterthur/University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation in 1983.

In addition to the online workshops to be discussed today, Chris has presented 59 in-person MCP workshops and has been a co-instructor for all 10 GCI sponsored CAPS (Cleaning Acrylic Paint Surfaces) workshops. He is also working with GCI on the cleaning of oriental lacquer and cleaning gilded wood surfaces projects.

Chris was on display one day a week for 6 months at MOCA treating Jackson Pollock's "No. 1, 1949" in a Getty-sponsored collaboration.

He is also the Membership Secretary and Treasurer of WAAC.

Currently, Chris is still working on finishing the latest update to the Modular Cleaning Program - version 11. Due out within the next week or two. cstavrou@ix.netcom.com

WAAC would like to thank the 2021 meeting sponsors:



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