

## President's Letter

**Sue Ann Chui**

Dear WAAC members,

Happy New Year everyone! I hope 2019 has been good to you so far.

I know thanks have already been given to the board members who stepped up to write the President's Letter while I was simultaneously VP and acting president, but I would like to personally extend a big thank you to Susi Friend, former MAL Samantha Springer, and Jennifer McGlinchey Sexton, former MAL and now webmaster, for taking care of this column.

I also owe a huge debt of gratitude to the local arrangements committee in Santa Fe headed by Susan Barger which allowed the annual meeting

at Ghost Ranch to happen. Seriously, there would not have been a meeting last year if it wasn't for their determination, enthusiasm, and hard work. We hope to share photos on our new website for those of you who missed it or for those who want to remember a great gathering where we had a record-breaking silent auction. Sincere thanks to all who contributed and participated.

Speaking of the website, as you know, we have been working on an update of ours for the past couple of years which will look and function much better than the current one. I just saw a preview of it, and I have to say that web editor Justin Johnson has done an absolutely wonderful redesign that I can't wait for you to experience yourselves. We're very close to launching it, and hope that you'll be able to take it out for a spin by the time the next *Newsletter* arrives in your mailbox.

If you haven't done it already, mark your calendars for the 45<sup>th</sup> annual meeting in Los Angeles November 6-8! I hope that many of our colleagues in Southern California will participate by either submitting abstracts or attending (hint, hint). If you're new to the area, this is a great way to get to know your local colleagues. The venue is the J. Paul Getty Museum which is also a generous sponsor of this year's WAAC meeting. The Getty has a long history of hosting our meeting, the first one ever in 1977 at the original site in Malibu. The last time the meeting was in Los Angeles was over 10 years ago in 2008 at the Getty Villa, and before that was 2001, a few years after the Getty Center opened, so if you

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## President's letter, continued

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haven't been to LA for a while or at all, it's time, and the annual meeting is great reason to come.

Regarding abstracts, in addition to the general regional theme of Los Angeles and Southern California, we are inviting papers on collaborations with mountmakers and preparators. The inspiration for including these colleagues comes from the biennial PACCIN Preparators Meeting happening in April 2019 and the biennial Mountmakers Forum in 2020, so it seemed a good time to cross paths with them. At the last meeting in Santa Fe I was thoroughly impressed by the talks given by the newly minted conservators, so I continue to encourage proposals from those emerging in their careers. The friendly and collegial atmosphere of the WAAC meeting is a great place to get your feet wet! All categories of papers are welcome, of course, not just those mentioned above. Besides the usual terrific slate of talks, a workshop and tours are in the planning, so stay tuned for more details. WAAC members receive a preferred registration rate for the meeting, so please remind your colleagues to renew their memberships or join, especially emerging conservators.

While you're at the Getty, why not also take advantage of doing some research that you've been putting off at the Getty Research Institute (GRI), one of the best art libraries and archives in the country. If the weather is good, consider heading down to the beach or taking a hike in the Santa Monica Mountains. Great state and national parks such as Anza Borrego and Joshua Tree are within driving distance of LA. There is so much to do and see in and around the City of Angels - this is just the tip of the proverbial iceberg! We'll be sharing more ideas on the new website and in the next *Newsletter*.

Before signing off, I would like to acknowledge Ray Marchant, panel paintings conservator and mentor who left us too soon on January 23rd. He was not a WAAC member, but he certainly had a big impact on this one. I am truly grateful for having had the opportunity to learn from him over the years. Until the next time, I leave you with this thought - who are you grateful for today?

Warmly,  
Sue Ann Chui, President



photograph by Gary Mattison

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## Volume 41 Number 1 WAAC Newsletter

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### ARTICLES YOU MAY HAVE MISSED

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### Photocopying

To make academic course packets that include articles from WAAC Newsletter, contact the authors of the articles directly.

### Note to Authors

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### Internet

Articles and most columns from past issues of WAAC Newsletter are available on-line at the WAAC website, a part of CoOL (Conservation OnLine) <http://cool.conservaion-us.org/waac/>.

### Deadline

Contributions for the May *Newsletter* should be received by the Editor before **April 5, 2019**.

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## Western Association for Art Conservation

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**The Western Association for Art Conservation** (formerly, the Western Association of Art Conservators), also known as WAAC, was founded in 1974 to bring together conservators practicing in the western United States to exchange ideas, information, and regional news, and to discuss national and international matters of common interest.

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Donna Williams

Individual Membership in WAAC costs \$40 per year (\$45 Canada, \$50 overseas) and entitles the member to receive the WAAC Newsletter and the annual Membership Directory, attend the Annual Meeting, vote in elections, and stand for office. Institutional Membership costs \$45 per year (\$50 Canada, \$55 overseas) and entitles the institution to receive the WAAC Newsletter and Membership Directory. For membership or subscription, contact: Michelle Sullivan secretary@waac-us.org

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## Regional News

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*Tricia O'Regan*  
*column editor*

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### **Alaska**

*Regional Reporter*  
Ellen Carrlee  
Alaska State Museum  
Juneau, AK  
ellen.carrlee@alaska.gov

### **Arizona**

**Fallon Murphy** has joined the conservation staff at the Center for Creative Photography as a technician and will be working with **Dana Hemmenway** until June 2020. **Elodie Loprin** will join them in February for a 6 month internship for her conservation training at the Institut National du Patrimoine. Dana Hemmenway joined the faculty for a week long workshop in Kolkata India organized by the Film Heritage Foundation. The training is focused on the preservation of motion pictures in archives in India and surrounding countries

**Marilen Pool** has been busy during the holidays catching up on private work including: a Chinese figurine, a Tarahumara olla, an Ojibwe beaded bandolier bag, and several small ceramics. In January she will resume classes at the University of Arizona as well as the treatment phase of the Archaeological Perishables Project at the Arizona State Museum.

The conservators at the Western Archeological and Conservation Center are keeping busy with their exhibit projects mentioned in previous newsletters. New projects include treatments and storage upgrades for archeological objects from Fort Davis National Historic Site and research into stabilization methods for fossils in paper shale matrix.

*Regional Reporter*  
Dana Senge  
National Park Service  
Intermountain Regional Museum Services Program  
Tucson, AZ

### **Hawaii**

Objects conservator **Meg Absolon** recently joined the Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum conservation team with conservation assistant **Nicole dela Fuente**. Meg came to the Bishop Museum from the National Gallery of Australia where she was an objects conservator for 8 years working on a wide range of the collection from outdoor sculpture to contemporary objects and installations. She has also spent several Antarctic seasons working on artifacts from historic explorer huts.

**Rie and Larry Pace** have a large fragment of what is purported to be a 1st-century Roman wall fresco. It fell from it's wall mounting during a house fire and is now in more than 50 smaller fragments. They have also recently treated paintings by Yaakov Agam, Lawrence Carmichael Earle, Hu Chi-Chung, Robert Kobayashi, Herb Kawainui Kane, Tadashi Sato, Paul Petrovits, Charles W. Eaton, Sean Scully, and Dorothy Faison.

**Dawne Steele Pullman** has been treating disaster damaged paintings by Gustave Courbet and Peter Coker from the Typhoon 10 at the end of last year in Hong Kong as well as from the Malibu fires in California this new year.

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## Regional News, continued

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Shangri La closed its doors to the public from the end of September through end of November to install a new driveway. This project capped a long year of construction that included major work on the swimming pool and landscaping.

During closure, under the guiding hand of curator **Leslee Michelsen** and with the help of consulting conservator **Ann Svenson**, the museum staff (primarily **Chelsea Kaufmann**, galleries and collections coordinator, and **Kristin Remington**, digital assets and collections manager) refreshed a number of galleries, installing new textiles, reworking vitrines, and re-interpreting spaces for a fresh, new look.

Conservator, **Kent Severson**, continued work on a Qajar tile spandrel and made an additional trip to Iraq on behalf of the Nimrud rescue project at the Iraqi Institute for Conservation of Antiquities and Heritage in Erbil. On the way back he stopped in Vienna, and then Toronto, where he was able to meet with colleagues and scholars also working on Qajar tiles.

Earlier in the year, **Thor Minnick** completed an eight month treatment of a highly figured curly koa dresser made by Johann H. Wicke for Hawai'i's King Lunalilo in the 1860s. He recently treated a reverse painted glass diptych *Flame Angel Surgeon* by artist Carol Bennett, a blown glass sculpture *Looking Out from Within* by artist Michael Mortara, and a large and very thin turned kou wood bowl made by Robert Hamada.

He is presently working on a large brass and mango wood sculpture, *Landscape*, by artist Satoru Abe for the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts. Also completed were a pair of badly damaged vitreous enamel and gold King Kalakaua, Royal Order badges.

*Regional Reporter*  
D. Thor Minnick  
Minnick Associates  
Honolulu, Hawai'i

### Los Angeles

Beginning in January, **Noemi Bustamante** and **Martha Ramos** will be starting pre-program internships in the Autry Museum's objects conservation lab. Noemi's internship is through the Mellon Opportunity for Diversity in Conservation. She has a BA in anthropology with minors in classical studies and Native American studies. Noemi is particularly interested in archaeological and ethnographic objects conservation and has recently attended a field school at ancient Lechaion, Greece.

Martha has her BA in anthropology with an archaeology concentration and a minor in art history. Martha has held preservation and collections positions at the Huntington and the UCLA Fowler Museum prior to beginning her journey towards a conservation graduate program.

UCLA library preservation department said goodbye to their fearless leader **Dawn Aveline** this December. They will miss her terribly, as will their LAPNET (Los Angeles Preservation Network) colleagues, but they all take some comfort knowing they will likely run into her at conferences in her new role as manager of projects client relations for Preservation Technologies, where **Bob Strauss** will be showing her the ropes. They wish her the best of luck in her move to Pittsburgh.

The head of audio visual preservation **Yasmin Dessem** and audio visual specialist **Allie Whalen** are planning to travel to Cuba again this spring to continue collaborative work in the reformatting of rare Cuban audio and video recordings. This fall **Chloe Patton** joined the UCLAAV team to digitize the oldest UCLA archival movies ahead of the upcoming centennial celebrations on campus.

Both Allie and Yasmin completed UCLA extension classes this fall, one in programming and the other in advanced audio processing.

**Hannah Moshier**, registrar and digitization coordinator attended a

workshop in NYC on modern and contemporary materials in library collections. She will complete her first courier trip this January, bringing a manuscript back from the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

**Wil Lin**, collections conservator, has been busy training pre-program conservation assistants **Kevin Torres-Spicer** and **Katerina (Kat) Stiller** on how to treat case-bound books damaged in circulation and get them back on the shelf in a timely fashion. Kevin and Kat have been assisting with object movement and handling for Frank Lloyd Wright Hollyhock House archival materials, as well as surface cleaning 18<sup>th</sup>-century engravings ahead of a washing treatment.

Wil has also been busy hiring new collection conservation assistant **Devin Mattlin** to work on pre-1945 Bruman Historical maps. Devin is a graduate of the Cardiff Wales University with a master's in conservation practice. She holds a BA in chemistry from Western Washington University, Bellingham, WA.

**Chela Metzger** has discovered the joys of using hair silk to secure display pages in book exhibits and shared this with UCLA Library special collections visual materials specialist **Octavio Olvera** for the current medieval manuscript exhibit at the library. She is delighted to see a new fume hood with HEPA capacity and a HEPA vacuum in place for archival processing. This equipment will be incorporated into a future library quarantine area.

**Debra Burchett-Lere** and **Aneta Zebala** are pleased to announce the publication of *Sam Francis: The Artist's Materials*. The authors present an in-depth scientific study of over forty paintings by the artist. The book will be available from GCI in February 2019.

**Madison Brockman** from the Winterthur program is currently working in the LACMA paper conservation lab as a third year intern. The Mellon Fellow in paper conservation, **Amanda Burr**, received a book and paper position at the Huntington Library.

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## Regional News, continued

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LACMA assistant conservation scientist **Laura Maccarelli** gave a talk at Brentwood School last December on "What a Conservation Scientist Does in a Museum." She and scientist emeritus **Terry Schaeffer** have two papers in press in *Dyes in History and Archaeology*, based on talks they presented at recent meetings.

**Caroline Hoover** joined LACMA paintings conservation last October as incoming Mellon Fellow. Caroline is treating a painting by Child Hassam, *Boston Street Scene* from 1900, which required varnish removal, and she is working with LACMA conservation science on a technical study of Hassam's materials and techniques. Caroline recently examined a group of Hassam paintings at the Smithsonian American Art Museum as part of the project.

**Elma O'Donoghue** is treating Jacob Adriaensz Backer's 1638 *Portrait of a Young Woman*. The treatment involves the removal of old varnish and restorations, and Elma is studying interesting changes that the artist made to the costume. **Joe Fronck** recently published an article on the techniques and materials found in LACMA's important 18<sup>th</sup>-century scroll painting from a casta series by Miguel Cabrera, *From Spaniard and Morisca, Albino Girl*. The article is forthcoming in the new online quarterly journal *Latin American and Latinx Visual Culture*.

*Regional Reporter*  
Virginia Rasmussen  
Los Angeles Museum of Art  
Los Angeles, CA

### New Mexico

Kathy Flynn, ED, shares with us this news: "A BIG step forward for the National New Deal Preservation Association and New Mexico Chapter: A Memorial #39 was presented in the legislature to create a National New Deal Museum and house it at the National Park Service Building in Santa Fe which is currently under total restoration. The sponsors of the Memorial were Rep. Matthew McQueen, Rep. Brian Egolf and Sen. Peter Wirth. Since there is no

money attached to it legislators still need to vote for it. Then, if it is approved, it will move up to the National Congress to get their support which will need to include money for it in the near future. The state will also need to put money into it probably next year to become a reality, but this a big possibility!"

Long time art conservator and former city of Santa Fe historic preservation officer, David Rasch, became the New Director of the Traditional Spanish Market in Santa Fe last year, and was the subject of an article in *The Santa Fe New Mexican*.

Mark MacKenzie, the Museum of New Mexico's chief conservator, explains in a new article at the *Santa Fe New Mexican*, the new multispectral imaging laboratory located at The Stewart L. Udall Center for Museum Resources. Mark designed (with some help) and built the equipment he uses to carry out pioneering investigations of two renowned Segesser Hide paintings.

*Regional Reporter*  
Silvia Marinas-Feliner  
Museum Conservation Program Director  
New Mexico State University  
Conservation Laboratory  
Art Department  
[artdepartment.nmsu.edu.museumcons/](http://artdepartment.nmsu.edu.museumcons/)

### Pacific Northwest

It was a busy fall for staff at the University of Washington Libraries Conservation Center having hosted the second session of Seattle heritage responders workshop, organized by FAIC and the Seattle Heritage Emergency Response Network. This session focused on incident response management and featured disaster scenarios at the Henry Art Gallery, the Burke Museum of Natural History, and UW's Suzzallo Library.

The UW Libraries also hosted a digital print preservation workshop taught by **Daniel Berge**, senior research scientist at the Image Permanence Institute. This two-day workshop covered the basics of digital print identification, digital printing history and the preservation of digitally printed objects. It was a

rewarding and informative session that was highlighted by an additional evening lecture hosted by the Henry Art Gallery. Staff at the libraries are also preparing to host FAIC's workshop traditional techniques in the conservation of leather bookbindings, taught by **Jim-Reid Cunningham** at the end of July 2019. This workshop will cover a range of topics typically associated with the repair of rare books and bound manuscripts using leather and traditional leather working tools.

In addition to daily treatment, **Justin Johnson** is preparing to conduct interviews for advanced interns from the conservation programs at Winterthur/University of Delaware and SUNY Buffalo. He has also just completed his second year as assistant editor of AIC's *Book and Paper Group Annual*, having just sent Volume 37 to print. In the coming year he will take over as managing editor for **Gwenanne Edwards** (Library of Congress) who will rotate off, and will be seeking a new assistant editor to serve beginning with the completion of the 2019 annual meeting of AIC.

With the support of the WAAC board and the assistance of **Jennifer McGlinchey Sexton**, Justin has also begun work on updating the WAAC website. He will be debuting an early version for review at WAAC's mid-year board meeting in Los Angeles, and is looking forward to sharing that work with the rest of WAAC membership in the coming year.

**Claire Kenny** is in the midst of conducting a collection survey of more than 300 photographs by Frank Kunishige, a pictorialist photographer and member of the Seattle Camera Club active in the early twentieth century. She continues treatment of European prints from the Henry Art Gallery collection and photographs and works-on- paper from the UW libraries collections.

Claire is also working hard to finalize plans with the Atlas Obscura organization for an upcoming behind-the-scenes tour of the University of Washington (UW) Libraries Conservation Center. In late summer, SAM conservation staff were interviewed by Pacific Northwest radio station KNKX about their continuous work in the Olympic

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## Regional News, continued

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Sculpture Park. The segment was called “The Art And Science of Conservation At the Olympic Sculpture Park.”

Progress on the Seattle Asian Art Museum (SAAM) renovation and expansion is proceeding as planned. The museum is slated to open its doors again in fall 2019. **Geneva Griswold**, **Marta Pinto-Llorca**, and **Nicholas Dorman** continue their ongoing work preparing the collection for its return to SAAM and for the re-opening exhibitions, and implementing storage upgrades thanks to an IMLS Museums for America grant. **Jane Hutchins** surveyed and treated new acquisitions and works for the SAAM installation in December and the museum continues the planning, and construction process for the new Asian Paintings Conservation Center at SAAM.

As chair of the AIC sustainability committee, Geneva attended the Climate Heritage Mobilization in San Francisco in September, and the AIC Internal Advisory Group meeting in Washington, D.C. in November.

SAM conservation staff joined colleagues from around the region for the second week-long training in emergency planning and response at the University of Washington. The comprehensive training program was funded by the NEH and organized by the FAIC, working with the Seattle Heritage Emergency Response Network.

At the Portland Art Museum, **Samantha Springer** said good-bye to graduate intern, **Karen Bishop**, in August. Karen is now completing her third-year internship for the Buffalo State program in the wooden artifacts lab at the Met in NY. Karen’s work on the Brancusi in PAM’s collection can be seen on the Museum’s blog titled, “All that glitters is not gold... but sometimes it is!”

After Karen’s departure, **Marjan Anvari** joined the conservation team for a short-term project as conservation technician thanks to the funding of a private donor. Marjan cleaned and coated a group of thirty or so 20th-century silver pieces to reinstall in a decorative arts case as a test for a future silver cleaning initiative. In October, the department welcomed a new matter/framer, **Jaxun Doten**. Jaxun comes with experience from the Creative

Center for Photography, in Tucson, as well as the commercial world. This fall also brought four new volunteers, one retired conservator and three pre-program: **Linda Edquist**, retired from the US Postal Museum; **Laura Richter**, working on covers for art books in the print vault; **Rachel Done**, organizing historic conservation documents and entering them into the database; and **Lauren Couey**, organizing incident and touch log data collected by gallery guards on spreadsheets.

Lauren and Samantha have also started collecting FAIC oral histories in the Portland area. They collected their first interview with **Sonja Sopher**, who was a paintings conservator at PAM for 20 plus years. They are now looking for other candidates in the region.

After attending the WAAC conference in September and saying goodbye as a MAL, Samantha traveled to NY in the late fall to participate in the second Materials Working Group meeting assembled under the auspices of AIC. She anticipates this group being able to develop the AIC Wiki Oddy Test Database and its relatively recent links to CAMEO into a stronger resource for the conservation community.

In between travels, Samantha worked on grant proposals and the preparations for some grant funded projects. The largest in scope will be the deinstallation-meaning the excavation from its concrete footing- and repainting of Lichtenstein’s *Brushstrokes*. This will take place out in front of the building next spring and will be funded in large part thanks to Bank of America.

The second is an NEH preservation assistance grant supporting **Jennifer McGlinchey Sexton** to come and teach a workshop next summer that will touch on photography process identification, condition reporting, and UV examination best practices. This project also includes a funded 8-week fellowship to survey the photographs from the Northwest Art collection.

Finally, Samantha and collections manager **Heather Bouchey** sit on a recently reenergized steering committee, called Portland Alliance for Response. It is made up of members from local

collecting institutions, performing arts organizations, and emergency management professionals. Currently funded by a Mellon Performing Arts Readiness grant they are working on a multi-organizational network and mutual aid agreement plan to ensure that all are prepared and potentially can support one another during emergencies and disasters, whether natural or human-made.

Work is somewhat at a temporary standstill with the birth of Alena, **Lisa Duncan**’s second daughter, but work is streaming in for the springtime. The retirement or semi-retirement of several long standing conservators in the region have opened the floodgates for work. She’s been involved in several survey projects with local institutions and has also taken on many fun projects for private clients. She just got a new convex photograph project that she’s excited about working on. Her intern, **Jenni Beetem**, has been busy helping with writing proposals for treatment.

**Kjerstin Mackie** retired from the Royal BC Museum in October after almost three decades of job sharing the textile conservator position with **Colleen Wilson**.

**Kasey Lee** presented with **Elisabeth Czerwinski** at the BC Museums Association Conference, sharing the work and spreading the word about the BC Heritage Emergency Response Network. Kasey also co-wrote and **Robert Waller** presented “Impact of Facility Renewal Deferment on Risk to RBCM collections” at the IIC Congress in Turin, Italy in September.

**Lauren Buttle** attended the IIC conservation of photographs on glass symposium and workshop in Toronto and organized a jam-packed fall meeting of the Pacific Conservation Group at Craigdarroch Castle in Victoria in November. She presented a recap of her experience in the photographs on glass workshop at the PCG meeting.

**Lisa Bengston** attended a mount making workshop delivered by Jamie Hascall in Seattle in September, along with two other Royal BC Museum staff members. Lisa presented on some of her Japanese tsunami debris research at the Pacific Conservation Group meeting in October. She’s also been investigating organic

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## Regional News, continued

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pesticide use at the Royal BC Museum, working out testing and handling protocols for the Learning Collection.

**George Field** travelled to London, England for the Sixth International Mount Makers Forum in October. He presented on this experience at the Pacific Conservation Group meeting in Victoria.

**Katie McEvoy** continues to catalogue new palaeontology specimens and assist in some conservation projects. She has been researching a strange blue cast on some of the fossil matrices and presented that work at the Pacific Conservation Group meeting.

**Mary-Lou Florian** continues her research and publishing on western red cedar, presenting her latest findings at the Pacific Conservation Group Meeting in Victoria.

*Regional Reporter*  
Corinne Landrieu  
Landrieu Conservation  
Seattle, WA

### Rocky Mountain

**Beth Heller** completed CAP surveys at the Lorain Historical Society, Ohio, and the Southern Utah Museum of Art, as well as NEH-funded collection surveys for the Melton Legacy Collection, University of Central Oklahoma, and the Denver Botanic Gardens Library. She provided conservation treatment for exhibits and institutions including History Colorado, University of Denver, Colorado State University, and University of Colorado Boulder Art Museum. Some of the more interesting projects encountered were 3 architectural models by Charles Deaton (remember the spaceship house in *Sleeper?*), owned by the Denver Public Library, and a group of letters from John McIlvain to his wife, written from Fort Laramie in 1853, owned by the University of Wyoming.

**Teresa Knutson** of Rocky Mountain Textile Conservation is treating a U.S. Forest Service flag from the Idaho Panhandle National Forests, Sandpoint, Bonners Ferry, Priest Lake Ranger Districts. It has been removed from a plywood backing board and will be placed in a pressure mount for future display.

**Julie Parker** recently completed treatment projects for the Denver Museum of Nature and Science and History Colorado's new exhibition *Written on the Land - Ute Voices, Ute History*.

*Regional Reporter*  
Julie Parker  
Objects Conservator  
Parker Art Conservation LLC  
Denver, Colorado

### San Diego

**Jacinta Johnson** accepted the position as associate conservator for the University of Kansas Libraries and the Spencer Museum of Art in Lawrence, KS. Her position is part of a three-year initiative funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to help bridge the conservation efforts between the two institutions and help diversify the field by raising awareness about conservation through various outreach activities and teaching outputs. She joins **Whitney Baker**, **Angela Andres**, and **Roberta Woodrick** in KU's brand-new conservation lab. She hopes WAAC members will come and visit!

*Regional Reporter*  
Frances Prichett  
Frances Prichett Paper Conservation  
San Diego, CA

### San Francisco

The textile lab at the FAMSF welcomed **Jennifer Nieling** in early November to be their first ever costume mounting assistant. She has an MA in fashion and textile studies from FIT/NY and most recently was employed at the Philadelphia Museum of Art and the Nantucket Historical Association. Jennifer will be working closely with **Sarah Gates** and **Anne Getts** on a variety of projects including prepping both the *Contemporary Muslim Fashion* and *Summer of Love* exhibitions to travel internationally and preparing the 500-ensemble Suppes Costume Collection for integration into permanent collection storage. They've been lobbying for this position for 13 years, are thrilled to have Jennifer's expertise at

long last, and hope to make the position permanent.

**Beth Szuhay** and **Catherine Coueignoux** are finishing a two-year project to conserve *Our Lady of Bethlehem with Child Jesus*, which dates from the 15th century and, as the oldest known statue in California, is the star of the Carmel Mission's collection.

**Meg Geiss-Mooney**, costume/textile conservator & collections care/management consultant, thoroughly enjoyed working with the staff of the Contemporary Jewish Museum (San Francisco) installing the fabulous costume exhibition *Veiled Meanings: Fashioning Jewish Dress, from the Collection of The Israel Museum*, Jerusalem last fall. She also taught the textile/costume/fibre salvage portion of the FAIC Heritage Responders webinar training series for Houston and Seattle last year. She has been a member of the National Heritage Responders (formerly AIC-CERT) since 2011.

**Alisa Eagleston-Cieslewicz** is very happy to be moved into SFO Museum's new building. She is enjoying having a dedicated conservation lab in the new facility. SFO Museum has also welcomed **Allion Kelley** as a conservation assistant. She will be working on the conservation of objects for upcoming exhibits and on a large United Airlines cutaway model from the 1960s.

*Regional Reporter*  
Alisa Eagleston-Cieslewicz  
SFO Museum  
San Francisco, CA

### Texas

In November six staff members from the Harry Ransom Center preservation and conservation division attended a regional colloquium on conservation science organized by the Edith O'Donnell Institute of Art History (EODIAH) at the University of Texas at Dallas and held at the Dallas Museum of Art. The colloquium, led by senior staff of the institute and **Norman Tennent**, visiting conservation scientist at EODIAH, included roundtable discussions about

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## Regional News, continued

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the state of conservation science in supporting the work of practicing conservators and curatorial staff of museums.

The keynote lecture was given by **Robert van Langh**, head of conservation and science at the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. Examples of collaborations between conservation scientists and conservators were given in presentations by **Jodie Utter**, paper conservator at the Amon Carter Museum of American Art; **Amy Walker**, professor of materials science at UT Dallas; and **Guus Verhaar**, post-doctoral researcher at UT Dallas and the Corning Museum of Glass. The workshop was attended by over 40 conservators, curators and other museum and higher education professionals from North and Central Texas.

The paper conservation lab at the Harry Ransom Center is very pleased to welcome **Claire Valero**, the new Bollinger post-graduate fellow who will work with preservation and conservation division staff and colleagues across the Center over the next year. Claire graduated with a BA and Master's in preservation and conservation of fine arts on paper from ENSAV La Cambre in Brussels. Since graduating in 2015, Claire has held internships at the National Archives of Ireland, Dublin and at the Library of Congress.

A major focus of her work at the Ransom Center is the examination, documentation, and research into the treatment of a mid-16th-c. large-format printed world map with hand-applied coloring from the publishing house of Joan Blaeu in Amsterdam. The map is one of a number of historic maps in the collection of the Ransom Center that were purchased in the 1960s from the rare book and print dealer, H.P. Kraus in New York.

*Regional Reporter*  
Ken Grant  
Senior Paper Conservator  
Harry Ransom Center  
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Austin, Texas 78713-7219

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## Membership

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**WAAC welcomes the following new members** and very late renewals.

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## Jobs

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### Minnesota Historical Society COLLECTIONS MANAGER

The Minnesota Historical Society (MNHS) seeks applicants to lead conservators, registrars, and collection managers in the physical management, care, and preservation of collections. The Manager, Collections Management is responsible for planning, directing, and overseeing the operations and fiscal health of the unit.

**SUMMARY OF WORK:** 1) oversee the physical management, care, and preservation of collections; 2) manage the overall operational, budgetary, and financial responsibilities and activities of the Collections Management unit; 3) maintain transparent communication about collections management issues to internal and external stakeholders; 4) develop, manage, and participate in projects and programs that support institutional goals and initiatives; and 5) provide overall direction for placing, training, supervising and motivating assigned staff, interns, volunteers and fellows. Ensure compliance with MNHS policies and procedures.

**MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:** Bachelor's degree in Art, Art History, Archeology, Museum Studies, Museum Conservation, Library/Information Science and eight years museum management experience OR Master's degree in Art, Art History, Archeology, Museum Studies, Museum Conservation, Library/Information Science and six years museum management experience. Knowledge of or experience in management, including budget and personnel management, short and long-range planning, office procedures, and bookkeeping principles. Ability to plan, organize and manage complex budgets and multi-faceted projects/programs within a large institution. Demonstrated ability to think imaginatively and problem solve.

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Demonstrated ability to communicate in written, oral, and visual media to specialized audiences and the general public. Ability to develop a working knowledge of Minnesota history. Knowledge of preservation, maintenance and security methods for contemporary and historical structures.

Basic knowledge of curatorial practices as they apply to both two- and three-dimensional objects. Skills in human resources and personnel management related to hiring, training, coaching, and appraising performance. Demonstrated positive customer service skills. Proven ability to work diplomatically with individuals of diverse backgrounds.

Ability to pay attention to details while overseeing multifaceted projects. Excellent organizational, oral, public speaking, and written skills. Self-motivated and able to work independently. Strong organizational and project management skills.

**DESIRABLE QUALIFICATIONS:** M.A. preferred in Art, Art History, Archeology, Museum Studies, Museum Conservation, Library/Information Science. An understanding of the methodology of museum education, audience assessment, and exhibit evaluation. Knowledge of and ability in historical interpretation methodology and techniques.

Salary: \$5,168.00 monthly minimum. Full-time, regular (2,088 annual hours) position. Eligible to participate in State Employee Group Insurance Program & Retirement program with employer contribution. Deadline date: March 6, 2019

**To Apply:** Interested applicants must apply online at the Minnesota Historical Society's career center at [mnhs.org/jobs](http://mnhs.org/jobs) and include a resume and cover letter by the application deadline date.

Should you have questions with the application process, email [humanresources@mnhs.org](mailto:humanresources@mnhs.org) or call MNHS Job Line at 651-259-3181. Applicants offered employment are subject to passing a background check as a condition of employment. EEO

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## WAAC Publications

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### Handling Guide for Anthropology Collections

Straightforward text is paired with humorous illustrations in 41 pages of "do's and don'ts" of collection handling. A Guide to Handling Anthropological Museum Collections was written by Arizona State Museum conservator Nancy Odegaard and illustrated by conservation technician Grace Katterman. This manual was designed to be used by researchers, docents, volunteers, visitors, students, staff or others who have not received formal training in the handling of museum artifacts. Paperbound and printed on acid-free stock.

**Price: \$10.00**

(\$8.00 copy for orders >10 copies)

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### Back Issues of WAAC Newsletter

Back numbers of the *Newsletter* are available. Issues Vol.1 - Vol.14, #3 (Sept. 1992) are \$5/copy. Issues Vol.15 - Vol.29, #3 (Sept. 1997) are \$10/copy. Issues Vol.30 (Jan. 2008) and after are \$15/copy. A 20% discount will be given to libraries seeking to obtain back issues to complete a "run" and for purchases of ten copies or more of an issue.

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**Prices include shipping and handling.  
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# Treatment and Storage of a Buffalo Hide Tipi

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This article describes the treatment and storage of a buffalo hide tipi from a Montana collection.

Hide tipis were once common on the Northern Plains but are relatively rare in collections today. Only a handful are preserved in museums in the United States. This tipi was acquired by the Montana Historical Society in 1939. The estimated date of origin is the 1860s, and the construction details, most especially the pinked edges and leather lacing along the inside edge of the smoke flaps, suggest it was made by the Plains Cree.

The tipi is constructed of eight full sized brain-tanned bison hides and many smaller pieces, all sewn together with heavy sinew thread. The tipi had been set up, displayed, and photographed at least once in the 1950s and again in the 1970s and is currently stored in the ethnographic collections at the state museum in Helena, Montana.



1860s Cree bison hide tipi as photographed in the 1970s

Original storage in two rolls with heavy metal rod inserts, laid on a wooden platform

The goal of conservation treatment was to document the object's condition and design treatments appropriate for both long term storage and to sustain handling for research and possible display. The large size of the object proved challenging when considering treatment options and creating the storage mount. The tipi measured approximately 14 feet across when laid flat, or over 16 feet when rolled because of the extended smoke flaps and uneven edges.

Considering its age, the tipi is in remarkably good condition. It had been well used and repaired many times during its working lifetime, yet most of the leather remains supple, and the seams intact. The upper parts of the tipi are saturated with smoke from cooking fires, leaving light colored shadows where the tipi poles had been. Leather along the lower sections of the tipi was brittle, creased, and tattered from many years of being in contact with the

ground, and no longer laid flat. Numerous fabric patches had been applied to reinforce holes in the original leather.



Detail of stiffened leather, creasing, and original fabric patches along the lower edge of the tipi

The tipi had been stored for many years on two cardboard tubes laid side by side on a wooden pallet. Two long pieces of metal square stock had been placed in the cardboard tubes, possibly to facilitate moving the object. The heavy weight of the metal rods was therefore concentrated on the lower part of the rolls.

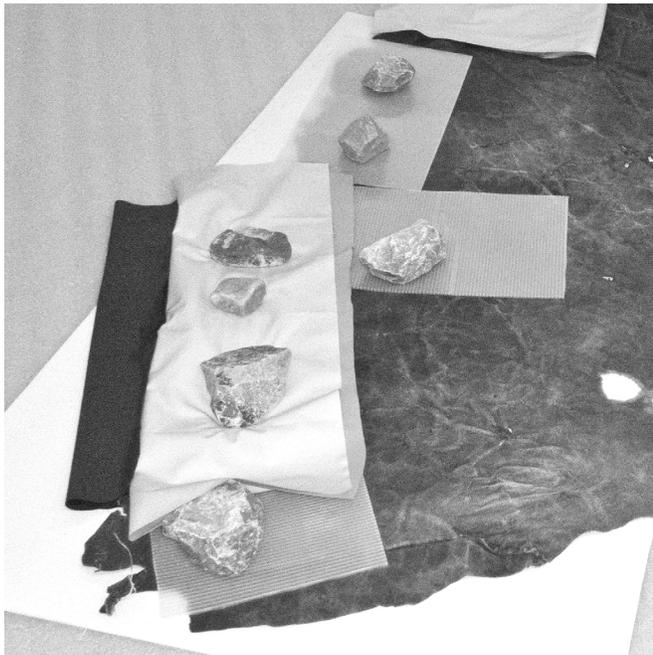
The two-tube configuration made the leather especially susceptible to tearing if the rolls had been inadvertently pulled apart. It was determined that the best way to store the tipi long term would be on a single large roll.

In order to document the object's condition, a map was made of the tipi construction, showing the placement of each of the full hides and smaller pieces of leather. White lines added to the image delineated the sinew sewn seams. Each individual hide was assigned a number in the treatment report so that location of repairs could be easily identified.



Map of the tipi construction, showing the placement of eight tanned hides. White lines indicate sinew-sewn seams.

The conservation treatment itself was multifaceted. The first step was to vacuum all loose debris from the leather surfaces using a soft bristle brush and a vacuum with a screened nozzle. Because of the size of the object, cleaning was best accomplished by carefully walking across the leather surface in stocking feet, using washed cotton sheeting to cover the leather under foot. Inexpensive knee pads were also found to be especially helpful when working on and around the tipi. Fragments of plant materials and grass seeds recovered by the vacuum were preserved as part of the record of the history of the object in use.



Reshaping leather with rehydration using breathable membrane fabrics and weights

The second, and most time consuming, part of the treatment, was to straighten and open out the stiff creases along the lowermost edges of the tipi. Flattening the leather allowed for more efficient rolled storage and gave access to areas of damaged leather that might require treatment.

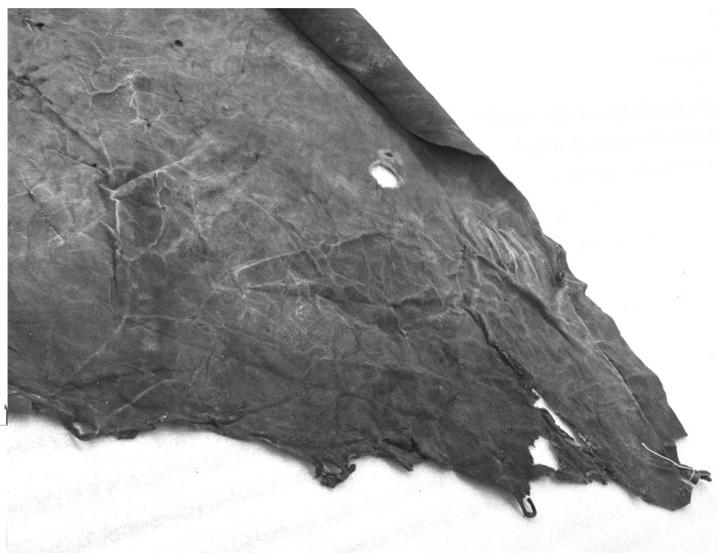
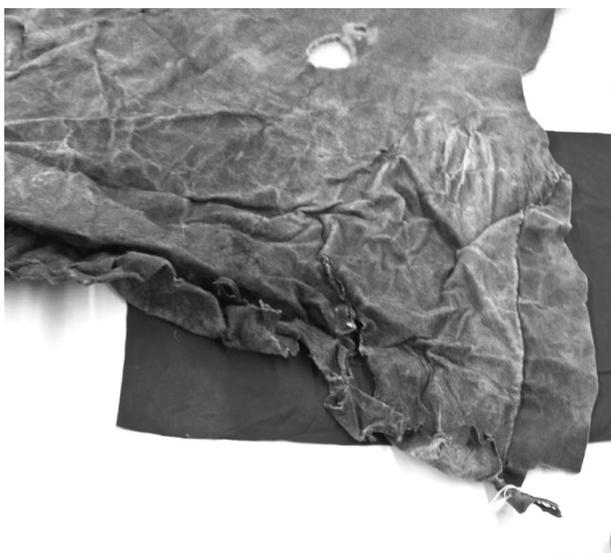
In order to flatten the materials, small sections of leather were hydrated using a waterproof breathable membrane fabric similar to Goretex. Deionized water was applied to a cotton pad sandwiched between the layers of membrane fabric and placed in contact with the leather, top and bottom.

After 2 or 3 hours the hydration packs were removed, the softened leather was weighted with washed river rocks placed on pieces of 3 mm corrugated polypropylene, and left to dry. Adding a layer or two of washed cotton muslin helped absorb extra moisture and sped the drying time. This method was very effective in recovering the original shape of the leather along the bottom of the tipi.

Three types of leather damage required attention during the treatment – open seams, simple tears, and large voids in degraded leather. Each type of repair required different methods and materials.

Torn sinew-sewn seams were repaired using sinew thread and the original sewing holes. Sinew thread was chosen for its strength and similarity to the original construction materials. The repair thread was marked for easy identification with a single strand of brightly colored polyester thread held parallel to the sinew during sewing.

Simple tears in leather that was otherwise supple and stable were repaired by backing the tear with Beva-flocked tissue, (Beva 371 flocked onto Hollytex 3221 - 2.8 mil.) The flocked tissue was tinted with dilute latex paint to match the surrounding leather. Temporary tissue bridges were



Detail of stiff and creased leather, before and after treatment

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## Treatment and Storage of a Buffalo Hide Tipi, continued

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first placed across the tear on the front side to align the raw edges, then larger strips were applied to the back side. The adhesive was heat set with a warm iron to create a bond that was strong, yet could easily be removed without leaving adhesive residue.

Very fragile leather along the lower edges of the tipi was stabilized by backing entire areas with unbleached cotton muslin. Cotton fabric was chosen because of its flexibility and similar appearance to the flour sack cloth used for the original repairs in the same areas.

Because the cotton backings were much larger than the tissue tear repairs and the leather much more fragile, it was deemed impractical to apply adhesives using heat. Lascaux 498 was chosen for these backed repairs because it can be easily reactivated with a solvent.

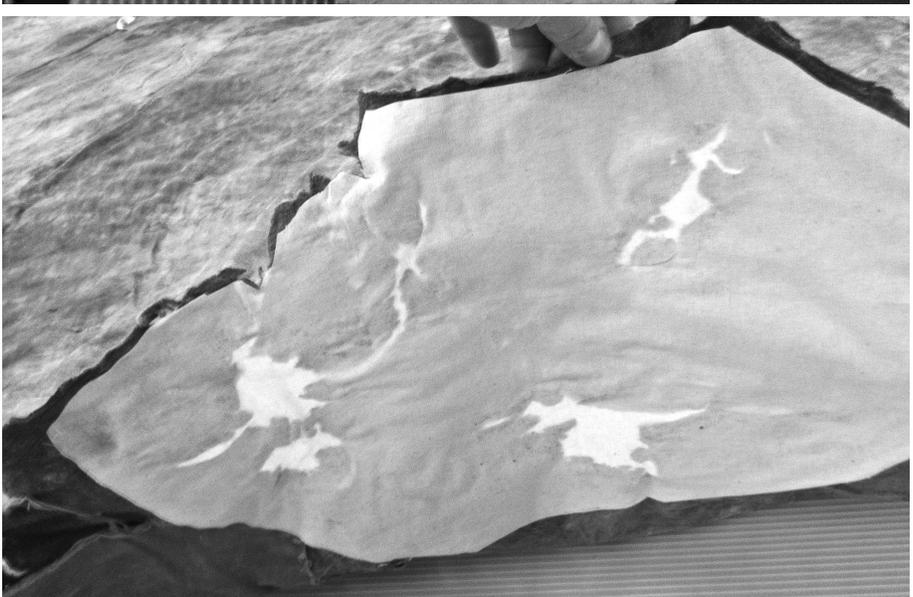
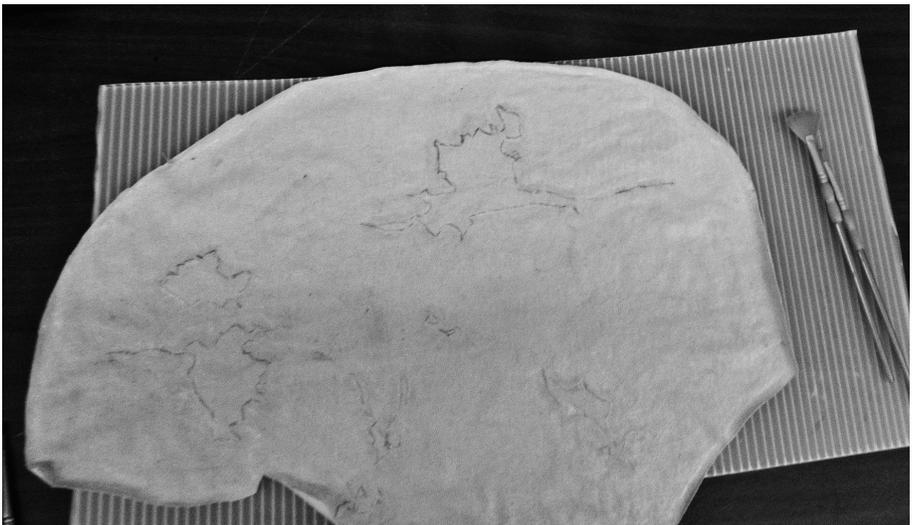
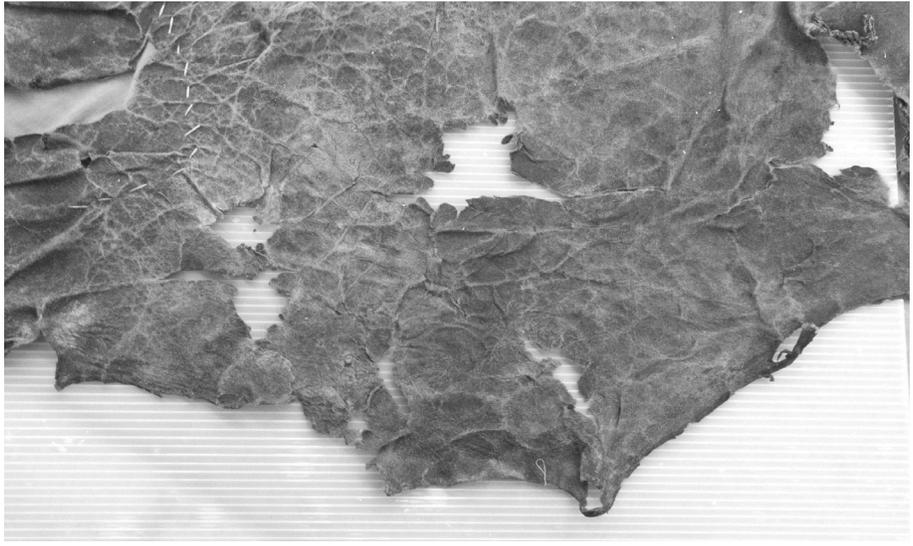
Pieces of washed cotton fabric were cut to shape and placed under the area to be reinforced. The outline of the voids was drawn directly onto the fabric with a pencil, following carefully the outline of the remaining leather.

Then the fabric piece was removed, the Lascaux was painted onto surfaces that would be in direct contact with the leather, and the adhesive allowed to dry. Adhesive applied along the raw edges of the fabric also prevented raveling and

Detail of fragile leather along the lower edge of the tipi

Fabric backing marked with pencil and coated with Lascaux

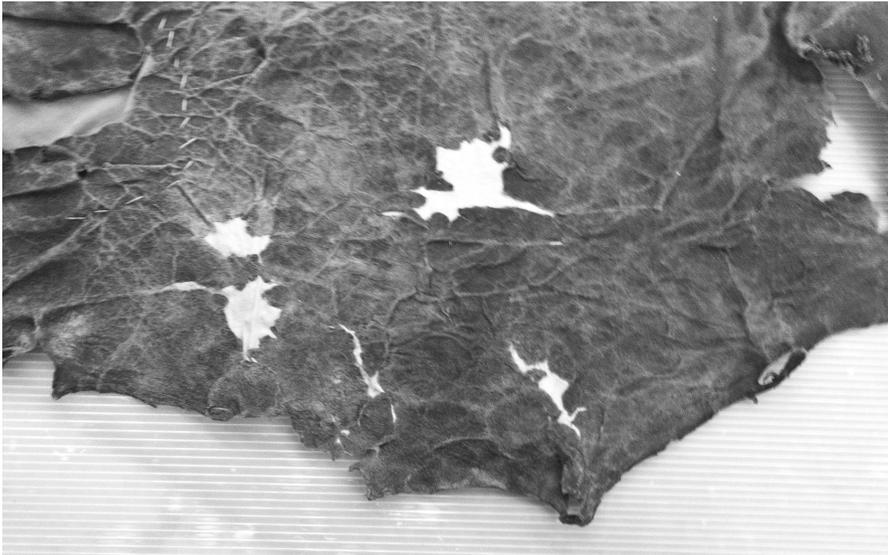
Back side of repaired area



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## Treatment and Storage of a Buffalo Hide Tipi, continued

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Fabric backing left undyed to help differentiate between original and new fabric repairs



eliminated the need to sew or bind the edges of the patch.

To apply the backing, the adhesive-coated fabric was laid behind the leather, aligning the raw edges of the leather to the pencil marks.

A piece of blotter paper the size of the backing material was taped to a piece of rigid polyethylene plastic. Acetone was applied to the blotter paper, and the blotter assembly was quickly slid beneath the cotton backing to reactivate the adhesive.

After 5-10 seconds the blotter paper was removed, and the leather and backing material was pressed from the top side to bond the backing to the leather.

This method created a strong, flexible repair that was not visually distracting, could be easily removed, and effectively supported the most fragile pieces of leather along the bottom edge of the tipi where they might be easily lost during handling. The curator requested that the fabric backings be left undyed to identify the difference in the old and new repairs.

The final part of the project was to roll the tipi onto a single tube for long term storage. A piece of 8 inch diameter corrugated polyethylene culvert pipe (available at building and construction supply retailers) was cut to size, padded with a layer of polyethylene foam sheeting, and covered with soft Tyvek.

The tipi was rolled onto the tube with soft Tyvek interleaving, tied in place with wide cotton twill tape, and covered with another layer of Tyvek. Wooden mounts were placed under the ends of the culvert tube to support the roll.

Polyethylene culvert pipe covered with ethafoam padding and Tyvek for large scale rolled storage

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# Art Conservator's Guide to the New Pass-Through Tax Deduction

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You're probably aware that a new tax law took effect in 2018, called the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA). Most of the massive changes brought about by the TCJA benefit corporations and the very rich. However, the law does include a brand new deduction for pass-through businesses (explained below) that will benefit many art conservators with a private practice, no matter their income.

This deduction is called the **pass-through deduction or qualified business income deduction** (QBI for short). If you qualify to take it, you can deduct up to 20% of your net business income from your taxable income, which of course reduces your tax.

This can really add up. For example, if you have \$75,000 in income (your net profit from Schedule C line 31), you could deduct as much as \$15,000 from your taxable income. If you're in the 22% income tax bracket, this will save you \$3,300 in income tax.

(However, as explained below, your actual deduction could be less depending on your total income, that is, if you also have income from other sources.)

To qualify for the pass-through deduction you just have to have a profitable pass-through business. If you're a self-employed art conservator, you likely qualify.

You can take the deduction whether you're a sole proprietor, in a partnership with others, or have formed a limited liability company (LLC) by yourself or with others. S corporations also qualify.

For tax purposes, what distinguishes pass-through businesses is that they pay no taxes themselves. Instead, the profits (or losses) are passed through the business, and the owners report the income on their individual tax returns and pay tax on it at their individual tax rates.

Owners of C corporations don't get this deduction, as they are not pass-through entities.

At lower income levels (less than \$157,500 taxable income for singles and \$315,000 for married taxpayers) the pass-through deduction is relatively simple. You can easily deal with it yourself if you do your taxes yourself, especially if you use tax preparation software.

At higher income levels, however, this deduction can get quite complicated. If your income is more than \$157,500 / \$315,000, you should have a tax professional help you.

Here's what you need to know about the deduction.

## You Must Be In Business

First of all, you can't be an employee and take the pass-through deduction. For example, you can't take it if

you're on the staff of a museum. Nor can you take it if work as an employee for another conservator. You must have your own business, either owned by yourself or with others.

By the way, new IRS regulations make it clear that employees cannot get the deduction simply by having their employers reclassify them as independent contractors. The regulations provide that if a worker is reclassified as an contractor, but continues to perform the same work directly or indirectly for the hiring firm that he or she did when an employee, the IRS will presume that worker doesn't qualify for the pass-through deduction for the next three years.

## You Must Have Qualified Business Income

To take the pass-through deduction, your business must earn a profit. For a sole proprietor (or own a single-member LLC) this will be the amount on Schedule C line 31.

If you're in a multi-member LLC or partnership, you file IRS Schedule E, Supplemental Income or Loss. Your deduction is based on the amount of income that passes through the LLC or partnership to your individual tax return. This is shown in line 24.

Next, you must determine your income for purposes of the pass-through deduction. This is called qualified business income (QBI). You start with your net business profit (line 31 again), but do not include any of the following:

- investment income such as capital gains or losses, or dividends;
- interest income;
- wages paid to S corporation shareholders;
- guaranteed payments to partners in partnerships or LLC members; or
- income from conducting a trade or business outside the United States.

Most art conservators have none of these items.

Then, deduct the following business-related deductions:

- the deduction you get for one/half of your self-employment tax (Social Security and Medicare tax)
- the self-employed health insurance deduction,
- and the deduction for contributions to retirement plans such as IRAs and 401(k)s.

These deductions are all taken on Form 1040, Schedule 1, lines 27, 28, and 29.

This gives you your QBI. If you have a qualified business loss—that is, your QBI is zero or less—you

get no pass-through deduction for the year. Any loss is carried forward to the next year and is deducted against your QBI for that year.

If you use tax preparation software, it will calculate your QBI for you based on the numbers you supply.

### **Calculating Your Deduction**

If your taxable income is below \$315,000 if married filing jointly, or \$157,500 if single, you qualify for a pass-through deduction of 20%.

*Example:* Jane is single and operates her conservation practice as a sole proprietorship. She earned \$100,000 in qualified business income (QBI) during the year.

She also earned \$20,000 in investment income.

She takes the \$12,000 standard deduction.

Her total taxable income for the year is \$108,000  
( $\$100,000 + \$20,000$ ) -  $\$12,000 = \$108,000$ .

Her pass-through deduction is  $20\% \times \$100,000 = \$20,000$ . She may deduct \$20,000 from her taxable income  $\$108,000 - \$20,000 = \$88,000$ .

That is the number she uses to calculate her taxes due.

However, the pass-through deduction can never exceed 20% of your taxable income. If you have no income other than your practice income, your QBI will be more than your taxable income. This is because you are allowed a standard deduction of \$12,000 or \$24,000 or your itemized deductions if more, when you determine your taxable income. Thus, if you have no income other than the income from your practice your deduction will be less than 20% of your QBI.

*Example:* Assume that Jane earned no investment income in 2018. Her taxable income is  $\$100,000 - \$12,000$  standard deduction =  $\$88,000$ .

She cannot take a pass-through deduction of \$20,000 because the deduction cannot exceed 20% of her taxable income.

Instead, her pass-through deduction is limited to  $20\% \times \$88,000 = \$17,600$ .

The Form 1040 Instructions, page 37 contain a worksheet you can use to calculate the pass-through deduction. Again, if you use tax preparation software, it will do the calculations for you.

### **The Pass-Through Deduction for High Income Taxpayers**

The pass-through deduction is much more complicated if your taxable income is over \$157,500 if you're single

or \$315,000 if you're married and file a joint tax return (as almost all married people do). In this event, your deduction is based wholly or partly on how much you pay your employees and/or the cost of the property you use in your business. If you have no employees and little or no expensive business property, your deduction will be quite small.

In addition, pass-through business owners who perform certain types of services are not entitled to take the pass-through deduction at all if their taxable income exceeds \$207,500 if single or \$415,000 if married filing jointly. These services include: health, law, accounting, actuarial science, performing arts, consulting, athletics, financial services, brokerage services, investing and investment management, and trading and dealing in securities or commodities.

Fortunately, art conservators do not fall within any of these categories, with the possible exception of consulting. Consulting is defined as including people who provide professional advice and counsel to clients to assist in achieving goals and solving problems. It's far from clear if any art conservators would be considered consultants by the IRS. Maybe some would.

If your income is over \$157,500 if single or \$315,000 if married, you should hire a tax professional to determine your pass-through deduction.

### **Taking the Deduction**

The pass-through deduction is a special personal deduction you take on line 9 of your Form 1040. You can take this deduction whether or not you itemize your personal deductions. The pass-through deduction only reduces income taxes, not Social Security or Medicare taxes. Nor does it reduce adjusted gross income (AGI).

The pass-through deduction took effect for the 2018 tax year and is scheduled to continue through 2025. However, there is no guarantee it will last that long, so enjoy it while you can.

You can find out more about the pass-through deduction in IRS Publication 535, Business Expenses, Chapter 12. The deduction itself is set forth in Section 199A of the tax code.

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Stephen Fishman is a lawyer and author of many legal and business books tailored to small business owners about small business and tax law. This article is an elaboration for the *Newsletter* of an article on the Nolo website.

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## Annual Meeting Abstracts

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*The 2018 WAAC Annual Meeting was held September 26 - 29 at Ghost Ranch, NM.*

*The papers from the meeting are listed below along with summaries prepared by the speakers.*

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### Keynote Presentation

#### **Ladies of the Canyons**

Lesley Poling-Kempes

Ladies of the Canyons was a lecture/slide show about remarkable women who left the security and comforts of genteel Victorian society and journeyed to the American Southwest in search of a wider view of themselves and their world.

Educated, restless, and inquisitive, Natalie Curtis, Carol Stanley, Alice Klauber, and Mary Cabot Wheelwright each left behind the comforts and confines of upper-class American society to explore the land and cultures of the exotic Four Corners Indian Country. They came into the Southwest between 1900 and 1922 when the region's indigenous people were undergoing cultural assault and intellectual scrutiny by the "civilized" world.

Each of these women became art and cultural preservationists years before these causes were recognized as American ideals. Their friends included Louisa Wade Wetherill, Alice Corbin Henderson, Mabel Dodge Luhan, Elsie Clews Parsons, Mary Austin, and Willa Cather. Their adventures took them to Monument Valley and Rainbow Bridge, into Canyon de Chelly and the Grand Canyon, across the high mesas of the Hopi, and to the pueblos and the villages along the Rio Grande. Their saga included Boston's Brahmins, the Greenwich Village avant-garde, the building of San Diego's Balboa Park, and the birth of Santa Fe's art and literary colony.

#### **Two Strong Women: Georgia O'Keeffe (1887-1986) and Caroline Kohn Keck (1908-2007)**

Jean Portell

On February 9, 1931, the year after Caroline Martin Kohn (later Mrs. Keck) graduated *Phi Beta Kappa* from Vassar College and was a graduate student at Radcliffe, she penned a letter to her favorite college teacher, Agnes Rindge (later Mrs. Claflin). In that letter, Caroline mentioned in passing that she had recently spent a boring hour hearing Stieglitz talk, but that she enjoyed looking at O'Keeffe's paintings. Georgia O'Keeffe (who was probably not present) was then 44 years old and married to Alfred Stieglitz. Caroline Kohn was 22, single, and working on her MA in art history.

The relationship between those two women began in 1946, when they were introduced to each other at the Museum of Modern Art (NYC) during the museum's preparations for an exhibition of works by Georgia O'Keeffe. One of the paintings needed treatment; Caroline was called in to talk with the artist; the matter was quickly resolved. The long friendship that resulted was remarkable because, despite their occasional vocal sparring about how to treat one of O'Keeffe's paintings, they managed to settle amicably even their worst disagreements.

They also dealt with situations that are uncommon in formal conservator-and-client relationships. For example, O'Keeffe invited Sheldon and Caroline and their two sons to spend a month in 1956 vacationing at Ghost Ranch, during which O'Keeffe encouraged them to join her for lunch or dinner at her Abiquiu home several times. She also persuaded the Keck family to accompany her to an Acoma Indian Festival. (After that wonderful trip, Caroline's typed letters to the artist opened with "Dear Georgia.")

A different situation came up in the 1980s, when Caroline was the Executive Director of the Foundation of AIC, urgently seeking ways for FAIC to acquire the funds necessary to organize a series of conservation workshops and publish brochures about conservation for the public. Caroline suggested to

O'Keeffe that she donate to FAIC a painting titled *Skunk Cabbage* that had hung for years in the Kecks' home, where they could watch for changes in an unusual surface condition. After some consideration, O'Keeffe agreed to donate the painting to FAIC (and obtain a tax deduction). It was sold legally, garnering about \$300,000 for FAIC projects.

These episodes raise questions about how to maintain a correct business relationship with an artist client who becomes also a personal friend. How might a conservator's attitude help to avoid, or resolve, a major difference of agreement regarding treatment? What behavior of a conservator might some people consider unprofessional? These were appropriate matters to address during the WAAC meeting at Ghost Ranch, where members could be inspired by thoughts of those long-ago open and honest talks between Caroline Keck and Georgia O'Keeffe.

#### **Out of the Attic and Onto the Wall: Treating a 20th-Century Suffrage Poster**

Courtney Helion, Theresa J. Smith, and Juana Juana Chen

Treating prints on coated papers is not without its challenges. Posters such as those from the women's suffrage movement are now drawing more attention with the approaching centennial of the ratification of the 19th amendment, the rise of the #metoo movement, and the Women's March and are being revisited by museums and archives.

The poster that will be discussed is a women's suffrage poster by Evelyn Rumsey Cary, *Bring of Her the Fruit*, printed for the New York State Suffrage movement. It is a stone lithograph with metallic ink and pigment based ink on coated paper. The subject matter of the women's suffrage posters were important to combat the negative propaganda that portrayed the movement as a spinsterhood rather than a sisterhood. As these posters are ephemera type objects, they have not necessarily been stored in the most desirable conditions or handled with the extreme care associated with museum collections.

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Lithographs printed on coated papers frequently use a variety of metallic and pigment based inks and come with many challenges such as an aversion to aqueous intervention, making cleaning, sympathetic fills, and toning difficult. This particular treatment went through several iterations as old techniques were adapted and new techniques were implemented to cope with the challenges of the medium and support.

The challenges included: simulating lithostone textures; layering colors to achieve the nuanced tonality of the pigment ink and metallic inks; compensating for large fills, the largest of which took up approximately 1/10th of the poster; accommodating for the underlying texture, sheen, and drape of the original coated paper; and doing this all with minimal aqueous intervention.

Overall, the treatment intervention was a success, and the poster will be part of a centennial exhibition of the ratification of the 19th Amendment at the Buffalo History Museum in 2019.

### **A Picnic, an Eclipse and a Hurricane: a Short History and Treatment of a Rediscovered Painting by Henriette Wyeth**

Rob Proctor

In the summer of 2017, Whitten & Proctor Fine Art Conservation were contacted by Kirsten Jensen, curator of the James A. Michener Art Museum who, along with the Roswell Museum and Art Center, were planning an exhibit called *Magical & Real: Henriette Wyeth & Peter Hurd, A Retrospective*.

Jensen had recently rediscovered a long lost piece by Wyeth entitled *The Picnic*, an early work belonging to a group of works known as her “fantasy paintings.” *The Picnic*, her largest and arguably most important painting, had an illustrious history which had left it severely damaged and more or less abandoned.

Whitten & Proctor received one snapshot of the painting rolled out on a dining table and a plea for a proposal and

estimate to fulfill the request for a grant with a rapidly approaching deadline. On August 21st 2017 Jill Whitten and Robert Proctor drove to San Patricio, New Mexico to examine and prepare the painting for shipment to Houston, TX where the painting would be treated. The painting was larger and in far worse condition than they had imagined.

The 4 x 9 1/2 foot painting arrived in Houston just 3 days after Hurricane Harvey hit with a 4 month deadline for the show opening at the Michener Museum in January of 2018. A mix of traditional techniques and modern methods and materials were used during the treatment including the development of micro-emulsion solutions to clean the extremely dirty, water sensitive painting.

This presentation “A Picnic, an Eclipse, and a Hurricane: a Short History and Treatment of a Rediscovered Painting by Henriette Wyeth” will discuss both the history and treatment of this painting as well as the fascinating relationship of New Mexican artists Peter Hurd and his wife Henriette Wyeth with the rest of the Wyeth clan.

### **What’s Shakin? Vibration-Induced Displacement and Fatigue Deterioration in the Canvas Paintings of Georgia O’Keeffe as a Result of Road Transit, with Strategies for Their Preventive Mitigation**

Dale Kronkright

In 2012, the Georgia O’Keeffe Museum concluded a year-long, three venue touring exhibition of 75 canvas works of art by Georgia O’Keeffe. Despite the clear evidence from courier logs and temperature, humidity, and shock data loggers that no harmful shock or environmental extremes had occurred in transit, post exhibition examinations and imaging revealed that several works had suffered both new and existing crack and interlayer cleavage propagation.

While museum conservators understood that physical and mechanical damage to art in transit is cumulative, existing literature suggested that repeated exposure to low amplitude, randomly

generated vibration accelerations commonly encountered in fine art transport trucks and airplanes should pose little danger to works of art.

Yet conservators discovered a strong correlation between the number of miles of motor transport with historic and contemporary crack and cleaving propagation in paintings.

Because the museum was traveling its collection far more frequently each decade than it had previously and because it had no data on the natural frequency of the paintings in its collections, nor an understanding of the vibration frequencies transmitted by art transport vehicles or attenuated by fine art crates, it began a study to use calibrated three axis accelerometers, laser displacement meters, and laser vibrometers to gather a more complete understanding of the mechanics of transit vibration induced-damage in art transit.

The museum used acceleration measurements, displacement measurements, discrete cosine transform, and Fourier fast transform to understand the power distributions of both facsimile paintings and, ultimately collection paintings, as well as truck beds, walls, and various crating and cushioning methods.

The findings fundamentally changed the museum’s understanding of vibration induced damage to canvas paintings, the vibration spectral power distribution of fine art transport vehicles, and the successes and failures of framing, backing, crating, and loading methods to attenuate vibrations across damage-sensitive frequencies.

The presentation will summarize the methods, results, canvas movement visualizations, and conclusions of the 5 year study. The tendency of traditional foam-cushioned wood crates to generate additive interference and amplify canvas displacement excursions at frequencies surrounding the natural frequency of the paintings suggests the need for new engineering approaches for the protection of canvas paintings during transit. Likewise, the vibration damping effects of sealed frame backings and glazing in frames will also be described.

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## Annual Meeting Abstracts, continued

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### **Providing Conservation Support to Individuals Affected by Disasters**

Christina Bean

There is a long history of projects and funding aimed at aiding cultural institutions when natural disasters strike. Often individuals have to find help on an individual basis from a private conservator when they can find one. However, when dealing with the trauma and never ending to do list that arises from disasters, conservation of precious family items can often get overlooked entirely. This paper will present a short term project that was created in conjunction with the Santa Barbara Bucket Brigade to provide community based mold remediation and stabilization of damaged family items from the January 2018 Montecito debris flows.

Early on the morning of January 9, 2018 mudflows struck Montecito, which had been affected by the Thomas Fire, and other areas of Santa Barbara County. An estimated 0.5 inches of rain fell within a five-minute period at approximately 3:30 a.m., causing mud and boulders from the Santa Ynez Mountains to flow down creeks and valleys into Montecito. The debris flows were up to 15 feet in height of mud, boulders, and tree branches, moving at estimated speeds of up to 20 miles per hour into the lower areas of Montecito. Over 400 homes were damaged or destroyed, and 23 people lost their lives.

Once the storm passed the mud remained. Digging commenced immediately and is expected to continue through December 2018. Due to the weather conditions which included rain and a daily marine layer of fog, the mud stayed wet through July 2018, and some pockets still being dug out are still wet. These conditions led to the perfect breeding grounds for mold and pest infestations.

Partnering with local volunteers and government agencies a free, community pop up, mold remediation service was started. The goal was to dry, bag, freeze, and vacuum any item brought into the pop up space. Over the course of six months over 7,000 objects were brought into the center for this service.

This paper will discuss the successes and pitfalls of working in a disaster zone with unknown volunteers without a case study of a similar project. I will go over the sensitive issues of privacy when dealing with traumatized members of the community, as well as the unexpected emotional healing aspect the work had for the survivors. Lessons learned from a practical and personal level will be presented with tips for starting more community based projects in other disaster zones.

### **Uncovering the Life of Hilaire Hiler to Inform Ethical Decisions and Treatment**

Becca Goodman

In 1943, the Works Progress Administration (WPA) allocated to the Detroit Institute of Arts (DIA) a painting entitled *Hyde Street Trolley* by Hilaire Hiler. The work, which had remained largely unexhibited since its arrival, was scheduled for display in 2018, prompting a treatment campaign rife with ethical issues.

Cadmium degradation product had migrated through the paint layer and precipitated onto the unvarnished surface, and a heavy layer of grime compromised Hiler's vibrant palette. Although these salts could be removed mechanically, grime removal would require the use of an aqueous cleaning agent. As the introduction of moisture could initiate further cadmium deterioration, conservators were faced with a dilemma: should treatment prioritize the health of the work's physical materials or the power of its colors? Furthermore, the WPA-issued frame exposed the painting's now-discolored, white border, inspiring a curatorial suggestion that the painting be displayed in a frame with a smaller sight size. Was it acceptable to forgo the original frame for a more pristine presentation?

To answer these questions, DIA's conservators embarked on a project exploring Hiler's artistic philosophy. Although Hiler had passed away in 1966, he left behind a rich legacy as an artist and educator. Through careful reading of Hiler's prolific writings—including his syllabi from the Hiler School of Design in Santa Fe, New Mexico—it became

apparent that color was Hiler's driving force as an artist. A research trip led to the discovery that *Hyde Street Trolley* was one of three paintings in a series. The other two works are currently on display in Portland, Oregon and Champaign, Illinois in their original WPA frames, exposing similar white borders.

In keeping with Hiler's passion for color, treatment proceeded in the form of grime removal. To protect the vulnerable paint layer from mechanical action and limit the introduction of water, alternative methods of administering an aqueous cleaning agent were employed. Close examination revealed that the painting's discolored border had been painted by the artist, suggesting it was a compositional element that should be left exposed. A compromise was struck to protect the fragile paint surface. A new, white frame approximating the painted border was created, and the original was retained for future use and reference.

Ultimately, improved understanding of this lesser-known, eccentric artist helped inform treatment, which reestablished interplay between the monochromatic borders and energetic composition.

### **Legacy: Frederick Hammersley's Remarkable Records of Paint and Process in His 'Hard-Edge' Geometric Paintings**

Alan Phenix

Frederick Hammersley (b. 1919; d. 2009) was one of the leading abstract painters in Southern California in the later twentieth century. He first gained widespread acclaim when, together with Karl Benjamin, Lorser Feitelson, and John McLaughlin, his work was featured in the 1959 LACMA exhibition *Four Abstract Classicists*, which led to the coining of the movement in painting known as "West Coast Hard-Edge." After studying art in Los Angeles in the 1940s, he practised painting and printmaking there and held several teaching positions in Southern California. In 1968 he moved to Albuquerque, New Mexico where he continued teaching, at the University of New Mexico, until 1971 when he stopped teaching to concentrate on his painting. Hammersley remained active as an artist until he was well into his eighties.

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## Annual Meeting Abstracts, continued

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Hammersley is a remarkable artist in many respects. His abstract paintings are meticulously crafted; he never used masking tape as an aid to rendering the crisp boundaries between adjacent shapes. From the technical point of view, his paintings were generally sound, and were undoubtedly created with longevity in mind. A special feature of his practice, however, was the painstaking record he kept of the origination of the ideas for his compositions and of the paintings he created. A series of four books Hammersley compiled that he called his *Painting Books* are the mother lode in terms of technical information.

Over the thirty years or more that Hammersley lived and worked in New Mexico, he diligently recorded in his *Painting Books* the minute technical details of method and materials used in the making of about 160 geometric paintings, representing approximately half his lifetime production in that genre. Hammersley used commercial artists' oil paints almost exclusively. Remarkably, in his *Painting Books* he recorded the composition and sequence of virtually every coat of paint in every geometric painting he made after 1968. Taken together, the later Hammersley *Painting Book* entries form a uniquely detailed and comprehensive personal account of a painter's method and materials that has few comparisons.

The presentation will survey the technical information contained within Hammersley's *Painting Books*, with particular focus on his use of proprietary artists' oil paints and on the light his entries can shed on matters pertaining to conservation of his geometric compositions, such as occasional combinations of materials which lead to particular deterioration phenomena. For example, Hammersley was an habitual user of varnish, as a finishing treatment to his paintings; after 1966 he almost always chose commercial polycyclohexanone resin products. Issues of varnish alteration (chemical and optical) are likely to be one of the most common forms of deterioration in Hammersley's paintings, and the presentation will consider some of the implications of this aspect of the painter's practice on the appearance of his works and on conservation treatment decisions.

### **Increasing Diversity in the Textile Conservation Field**

Lalena Arenas Vellanoweth and Catherine McLean

Conservation and the care of cultural collections is a field that greatly benefits from having a diverse workforce. The 2015 AAM and Andrew W. Mellon Foundation's *Art Museum Staff Demographic Survey* provided hard numbers to illustrate the lack of ethnic diversity. These results inspired an increased number of initiatives to address the problem, primarily by providing funding for (a) outreach to universities and underrepresented communities, (b) fully or partially funded pre-program internships, and (c) mentoring.

However, not every lab or institution has the appropriate funding to provide support. Without such funding, LACMA's textile conservation lab has committed itself to provide assistance to pre-program interns, students in conservation graduate programs, and recent graduates, especially to those who come from underrepresented communities.

This paper will share the numerous ways conservation labs and institutions can create a work environment that is inclusive and promote an ethnically diverse workforce in the field of conservation with the presentation of no-low budget initiatives and programs.

### **A Holistic Approach to the Conservation of Jicarilla Apache Piñon Resin-Coated Water Baskets at the Museum of Indian Arts and Culture**

Sophie Hunter and Landis Smith

Beginning in September of 2017, the Museum of New Mexico conservation unit partnered with the Museum of Indian Arts and Culture to carry out a project regarding the conservation and preservation of the museum's collection of Jicarilla Apache, resin-coated water baskets. The project was supported by a grant from the Foundation of the American Institute for Conservation, funded by the Samuel H. Kress Foundation. It was carried out by FAIC/AIC Samuel H. Kress Fellow, Sophie Hunter, who was

supervised by the conservation staff of the Museum of New Mexico museum resource division and conservator and consultant Landis Smith.

Native American resin-coated baskets have presented conservation challenges to museums across the country. The resin, or "pitch," used to coat their interior and/or exterior becomes brittle, discolored, and cracked over time due to oxidation. Thus, resin-coated baskets often sit on museum shelves and accumulate small piles of pitch in and around them over time.

There is no exception for the basket collection at the Museum of Indian Arts and Culture in Santa Fe, NM. A general condition survey of their outstanding collection of approximately 1,500 historic/ethnographic baskets showed that the Apache resin coated water baskets were in urgent need of conservation treatment. The baskets could not be safely handled or used as a resource for study, exhibition, or loans without serious risk of further loss.

Thus, this project began to develop a suitable treatment and conservation methodology for these baskets that would be collaborative with the conservation and curatorial staff, as well as Native American stakeholders.

The proximity of the Museum of Indian Arts and Culture to Apache communities and the continuity of the basket-making tradition added a layer of depth to the project, as four members of the Jicarilla Apache Nation who have knowledge about and experience with water baskets, were able to visit to discuss the collection and its conservation. Several baskets were successfully stabilized using techniques that built upon previously published methodologies for treating resin coated baskets.

The value of bringing the perspective of those familiar with water baskets into the project cannot be understated. Thus, it is the hope that out of this project and presentation, not only will a successful treatment methodology be described for resin-coated baskets, but that museums who may not have active collaborations with native communities be encouraged to begin them.

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## Annual Meeting Abstracts, continued

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### **Southwest Pottery and a House Fire: The Problems and Solutions for Removing the Soot**

Nancy Odegaard, Leah Bright, Annabelle Fichtner, Marilen Pool, Gina Watkinson, with assistance from Susie Moreno, Anthony Sweezy, Sophie Church, Josephine Lai, Arthur Vokes, and Andrew Higgins

Three pieces of pottery were recently donated to the Arizona State Museum. A large Ancestral Pueblo-Mogollon Puerco Black-on-Red bowl [ca. 1000-1180 CE] with previous restoration and a wire hanging mount; a small Gila Polychrome bowl [ca. 1300-1450 CE] with a wire hanging mount; and a painted plaque from Tesuque Pueblo [20<sup>th</sup> c.] with a string hanging cord. The pieces were donated by the granddaughter of noted southwest chemist and archaeologist Frederick Hawley, who advised several mining companies and museums in Arizona during his career.

The pottery pieces were treated as part of the 2018 Pottery Blitz in the conservation lab. Conservators sought to remove embedded soot from an earlier house fire. Our literature review indicated that there was little information about removing soot from pottery and especially American Indian pottery. The conservators utilized study sherds of the same pottery types and put them through a mini barbecue house fire. The sherds were then cleaned with a variety of methods, and each cleaning method was executed by two people and evaluated:

Dry methods: soot sponge, groom stick, Vellux cloth with vacuum, CO<sub>2</sub> snow, erasures, walnut shells

Aqueous methods: DI water, warm DI water, DI water with ammonia

Solvent methods: acetone, Stoddard's and cosmetic sponge, methylene chloride

Conservators found the cleaning materials and techniques varied in effectiveness on pottery. This presentation will discuss and illustrate the problem of soot damaged pottery and the conservation approaches to its removal. The most successful results involved multiple methods utilized from each category.

### **The Contemporary Reconsideration of a Challenging Historical Presentation: Conservation Planning and Collaborative Conservation for the Revitalized Interpretation of the Field Museum's Hall of Native North America**

Stephanie E. Hornbeck

This presentation will introduce conservation planning and proposed collaborative conservation efforts for conservation and care essential to the Field Museum's development of a new Hall of Native North America.

The museum's Native North American collection of approximately 700,000 archaeological artifacts and 70,000 ethnographic objects ranks among the largest and most comprehensive in the world. From the late 19th- through mid-20th century, the museum's major expeditions and field research in North America resulted in broad and diverse collections, some acquired through prevailing museum collection models of their day that are no longer acceptable today. The museum is committed to caring for these collections in updated approaches which draw on the knowledge of Native American colleagues.

In 2016, the Field approved a strategic plan that places a new emphasis on the museum's collections as the centerpiece of all activities, with a stated goal to comprehensively upgrade older exhibitions drawn from the collections. The first priority is the reinstallation of the museum's current Hall of Native North America. This new exhibition experience will present one of the three large permanent multi-gallery areas devoted to material culture of the Americas.

While the individual objects in the collection are powerful historical documents and often aesthetic masterworks, the current hall presents outdated presentation and conservation methodologies. Nearly all of the displays in the museum's current exhibition were created between 1951 and 1956. The current outdated presentation has sometimes received criticism from both Native community members and a diverse array of visitors.

Many of the more than 1,400 artifacts have been on continuous display for more than 60 years. Objects include woven textiles, clothing and accessories, containers, tools, and implements. A wide variety of materials include animal skins, bead- and quillwork, plant fiber, wood, bone, pottery, and feathers. A 2013 condition review of objects describes exposure to off-gassing from old exhibition case woods, paints, and fabrics; fading from light exposure; and damage from inadequate mounts, including holes, tears, and distortion.

The Field Museum is the recipient of an Andrew W. Mellon grant to support the conservation and community engagement activities necessary to the revitalization of this permanent hall. As the third largest natural history museum in the United States, we have a leadership responsibility to chart a progressive course for the conservation approach to the museum's anthropology collections, emphasizing a commitment to collaborative conservation with source communities. In collaborations involving museum conservators and collection managers in dialogue with community members, tribal leaders, and Native artists, we aim to increase our ability to incorporate traditional knowledge and preferences for care while also sharing current museum practices with our Native American colleagues.

Conservation work for the reinstallation of the Native North American collections will involve two major stages. Phase 1 involves the exhibition deinstallation, documentation, and conservation of the 1400+ objects currently on view that will return to collections storage. Phase 2 involves the documentation, stabilization, and treatment preparation of perhaps 1,000 objects that will go from storage to exhibition in the new galleries. A dedicated project team will include conservators specializing in ethnographic objects and textiles.

In selecting objects curators will likely draw on the Field's fine collections of Plains objects (which include the Arapaho, Blackfoot, Cheyenne, Crow, Pawnee, and Dakota, Lakota, and Nakota) and collections from the Great Lakes (which include the Ho-Chunk, Iroquois, Menominee, Ojibwe,

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## Annual Meeting Abstracts, continued

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Potawatomi, Sauk, and Meskwaki.) The Great Lakes collections represent the material culture of groups who are closest to the Field Museum geographically, and who compose a large portion of Chicago's urban Native American population. Collected mainly during the museum's early years from 1895-1910, these objects are comprised of many different materials with differing conservation needs.

As Native artists, makers, and elders assist our curators and exhibit developers with new content, we in conservation will also draw on their insights regarding traditional care methods and cultural storage preferences. Community collaborators will be identified from a broader group of Native community members, both in Chicago and across the country. These collaborators could include community leaders, Native American artists, tribal historic preservation officers, and tribal representatives.

Drawing on knowledge of primary uses, meanings, and significance, collaborators may advise on how objects are made and traditional approaches to consider for conservation treatments, as well as how best to display items in a respectful manner. As part of this dialogue, conservators and collections staff will outline contemporary museum practices for object care and conservation. Community collaborators from specific tribes will advise the museum on the traditional care and handling of their heritage items in the museum's collections. These discussions will be documented.

The reinstallation of a major permanent exhibition hall is, for any museum, among its most ambitious and complex efforts. As we move forward on this reinstallation, we are committed to a collaborative model in the exhibition process for content development, Native interpretation, object selection, and object care and conservation, with members of source communities, whose heritage we hold in our collections.

Museum collaborations with communities strengthen the overall stewardship of the collections we hold and lead to including traditional cultural care practices into their conservation

and housing; improving their records; bringing researched knowledge about them back to Native communities; and providing valuable exposure to museum conservation methodology. To inform our work at the Field Museum, it is hoped that this presentation will encourage a dialogue among conservators, who are dedicated to a collaborative conservation approach.

### **Lost and Found in New Mexico: Revitalization of a Northwest Coast Pole**

Landis Smith, Rae Beaubien, and Mina Thompson

A 40 foot carved and painted Tlowitsis cedar pole stood for decades in the desert climate of the University of New Mexico (UNM) campus. Little was known about the pole but research initiated by a UNM student in 2013 revealed that in 1942, the pole, carved by Charlie Yakuglis James, had been taken by a UNM anthropologist under dubious, and even, illegal, circumstances, from its original site in front of Chief Smith's house in British Columbia. Images of the pole posted on Facebook were spotted by descendants of the original carver as well as by the chiefly Smith family from whom the pole had been taken. Subsequent discussions between the UNM Maxwell Museum and the Towitsis community eventually led to re-connecting the pole with source community members, and a 2017 collaboration between conservators and Tlowitsis carvers to stabilize, restore, and ultimately revitalize the pole.

As with all such collaborative work, issues of ownership, authority, representation, and cultural aesthetics are brought to the fore. How is indigenous cultural heritage treated and presented and who decides? As a result of the collaborative approach for this project, creative and unique treatment solutions were developed and carried out by the conservators together with Tlowitsis carvers. The pole was moved indoors and its new placement blessed by Chief Smith and family with an agreement that the physical possession of the pole by UNM would be reviewed periodically. In addition, the University will fund the carving of another pole to replace the James pole.

### **Tribal Ties: A Conservation Partnership with the Seneca-Iroquois National Museum**

Nicole Passerotti

An ongoing partnership between the Seneca-Iroquois National Museum (SINM) in Salamanca, New York and the Patricia H. and Richard E. Garman Art Conservation Department, SUNY Buffalo State is the result of thesis work completed in 2016. *Promoting Conservation: An Investigation and Treatment of Seneca-Iroquois Moccasins*. The project aimed to establish a relationship between the two institutions while fulfilling graduate coursework requirements. The moccasins that were treated are highly valued for their fine craftsmanship and resulted in some surprising material analysis. The results can guide and inform further research into the historical context of their production and use.

The new Seneca-Iroquois Cultural Center opened its doors in Salamanca, NY in August 2018. A short video about the treatment was produced and is currently displayed alongside an exhibit featuring the moccasins. With over 8,000 registered Seneca tribal members and only a few dozen fluent Seneca speakers, language revitalization is a top priority for the tribe. The video features both Seneca and English subtitles. This project has initiated an ongoing relationship between SINM and the Buffalo Art Conservation department which will lead to improved access to state of the art analytical tools and cost-effective treatment for the museum, as well as the promotion of conservation awareness.

There are over 500 federally recognized American Indian Tribes in the United States, but only a small portion operate tribal archives, libraries, or museums. An even smaller percentage of these institutions are able to address the conservation and preservation needs of their collections due to limited resources. While there is no one-size-fits-all solution to addressing the needs of tribal museums, it is a sincere hope that this newly established relationship will be the start of a long and mutually beneficial partnership between the two institutions.

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## Annual Meeting Abstracts, continued

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### **A Mask on the Move: Analysis and Treatment of an African Mask for Traveling Exhibition**

Lindsay Ocal

An African mask was acquired by the Connecting Cultures Mobile Museum (CCMM), a Los Angeles non-profit organization with a diverse collection of global arts and artifacts. By bringing their exhibitions to local schools, CCMM's aim is to instill in students an understanding and respect for cultural diversity. This particular mask is in the form of an antelope and made of painted wood with a plant fiber ruff. Upon acquisition by CCMM, the piece had a broken horn, evidence of current pest activity, and was rapidly shedding plant fibers. As a result of an ongoing relationship between the UCLA/Getty Conservation Program faculty and the CCMM, the mask's condition prompted CCMM staff to contact the program for assistance.

As very little was known about the object, art historical and anthropological research was carried out to identify the culture that made the piece, how it was made, and the context in which it was used. Scientific analysis and examination identified the materials used both in the initial creation of the piece and in later repairs to the broken horn. The object's condition issues required that it undergo several treatment procedures, including pest eradication, cleaning, removal of unsuitable previous repair materials, and reattachment and stabilization of the broken horn. Lastly, a mount and box were constructed that would be suitable for travel, storage, and display.

### **Cross-Disciplinary Collaboration: Efforts in Curation, Conservation, and Preservation at the Richard L. Proenneke Cabin Complex**

Daniel Papke, Katie Myers, and Nicole Peters

The Richard L. Proenneke Cabin Complex is located in Lake Clark National Park and Preserve on the southeastern shore of upper Twin Lakes, approximately 40 miles north of Port Alsworth, Alaska. The site is recognized nationally for its stature as an excellent and well known

example of an Alaska bush log cabin. It is also recognized for Richard Proenneke's voice in the preservation of wilderness in Alaska.

The Proenneke Complex is only accessible by float plane in the summer. Currently, efforts are being put forth by the NPS curatorial division, NPS preservationists, and conservators in order to develop a comprehensive preservation plan for the objects housed in this historic cabin and the outbuildings. This has proven to be a complex project requiring cross-disciplinary collaboration due to the unique preservation issues of the backcountry environment and the effect on the historic cabin objects.

The ongoing relationship the park has had with site stewards and volunteers has been critical in the overall maintenance of the site. The recording of oral histories from longtime site stewards, video documentation of repairs done to artifacts and how these repairs are holding up, and conversations with neighbors and friends of Dick Proenneke have been invaluable sources of information that have aided in preservation.

This presentation features a three-point perspective from NPS curator Katie Myers, NPS preservationist Daniel Papke, and conservator Nicole Peters, and how each member of the team dealt with logistical, technical, and ethical issues encountered throughout the project.

### **Outreach Experiment: Treating Panoramic Photographs with Buddhist Community Members in Hawaii**

Kazuko Hioki

In February 2018, I was contacted by Aiko Oda, the chair of the archives committee at the Honpa Honganji Mission (HHM) of Hawaii, who asked me for helping to preserve their historical photographs. HHM is a Buddhist organization practicing Jodo Shinshu (a school of Buddhism) around the world. Established in 1889 in Honolulu to provide spiritual support for Japanese immigrants, the HHM Hawaii has been a spiritual and cultural center of those immigrants in the islands.

Today, there are over 30 temples spread through the islands including Oahu, Maui, Kauai, and Hawaii, while their members are rapidly aging. The majority of the mission members are now in their 70s including Aiko herself, and many of the younger generation have left the islands or don't join the mission. Urged by needs of keeping their history, Aiko and the HHM Hawaii members started collecting, organizing, and preserving archival materials tucked away in various parts of the headquarter building.

Of the gathered items, they found a number of rolled panoramic photographs. The panoramas (many are from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century) captured events held by the HHM Hawaii and group portraits of their bishops, members, and guests. Unfortunately, the photographs' contents are not easily accessible because of their tightly rolled forms.

Aiko asked me how to flatten those rolled panoramic photos and to teach flattening techniques to not only the Honolulu community members but other islanders who are desperate for help. Making those panoramas more accessible will help promote the value of other family photos possessed by aging immigrant members and encourage them to preserve their history.

We decided to have a test workshop with a small group of people to teach humidifying and flattening techniques, and handling and caring for panorama photos and other archival records in the fall. We have never done this kind of workshop. Our resources are so limited. The HHM Hawaii does not have an archivist on their staff. I am new to Hawaii, and the state has no photo conservator.

While planning a workshop, many questions arose. For instance, is teaching this kind of treatment to amateurs a bad idea? What are the risks? What is a right balance between ideal and reality? And how can I make the training scalable and sustainable? In my talk, I will briefly summarize the challenges the HHM Hawaii community faces, report the project's progress, and ask for input and feedback from the audience.

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## Annual Meeting Abstracts, continued

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### Icons, Retablos, and Spanish Colonial Paintings: Insights, Practical Applications, and Lessons Learned in Treating Paintings of Non-Traditional Materials and Techniques in Exceptionally Poor Condition

Cynthia Lawrence

The materials and techniques employed to create Spanish colonial paintings, icons, and retablos can sometime diverge from what we consider traditional or typical, their conditions may oftentimes be quite poor, and the caretakers of these objects frequently have little or no prior knowledge of the field of conservation nor the financial resources to undertake major conservation projects.

These issues, especially when coupled together, can provide a significant challenge for the conservator. However, the conservation of these paintings can also allow for the opportunity to learn more about the diversity of materials and techniques employed by artisans; to explore lesser known histories and cultural significance of art to their communities; to gain new insights and skills and improve one's ability to adapt existing conservation methodologies; to be a better conservation educator and ambassador; and to practice tolerance, collaboration, and inclusiveness with a wide range of parties that may be involved in any given conservation project.

This presentation will consist of three general parts. 1. A brief synopsis of some of the varying materials and techniques employed in these paintings and devotional images, relevant histories, and specific condition issues that have been encountered.

2. A sampling of how these concerns have informed conservation decisions and design of treatments, including case studies and studio tips.

3. Observations on how the conservation of icons and colonial art relates to the field of conservation as a whole—treating objects with problematic materials and conditions, the current state of art collections and collecting; the need to balance original intent of the artist with the history of the object and its

meaning for a community; thoughts on achieving ethical conservation goals while working within a complex context of multiple stakeholders and objectives, and interdisciplinary decision-making.

### Fungal Infestation of Stella's Daylight Fluorescent Canvas Paintings from the 60s

Kamila M. Korbela-Dunigan

Frank Stella's canvas painting *Bampur* (1966) has been examined and treated in preparation for an upcoming exhibition emphasizing and juxtaposing works by Frank Stella from LACMA's permanent collection. *Bampur* is part of a small series of works collectively known as the Persian Paintings and was inspired by Stella's travel to Iran in 1963. Informed by the more staccato, less melodic quality of the prevalent Persian dialect in Iran and Persian decorative abstract forms, the painting consists of sharply separated bands in three distinct daylight fluorescent colors - Saturn Yellow, Aurora Pink, and Horizon Blue, all manufactured by the Day Glo Color Corporation.

When compared with *Bampur*'s other paint films, the Saturn yellow has aged permanently and irreversibly at a faster rate, fading and changing in hue. On closer inspection, one can detect unintended small brown discolorations throughout the painting's front, noticeably affecting the yellow, as well as the unpainted areas.

Viewed from a mid-distance, the eye cannot see the individual spots and, according to the principles of optical color mixing, the brain interprets them as subtle grey camouflage patterns breaking up the yellow bands. The discolorations were identified as inactive mold detritus. Several further Stella paintings from the 60s housed in private and public collections throughout America were identified that are affected by the same mold condition.

Based on these preliminary findings a new study into Stella's paintings from the 60s was initiated, which consists of comparative technical examinations that were complemented with materials research through spectroscopic and spectrometric analysis

to help characterizing and informing the paintings' degradation. This research project ties up loose ends of existing research into mold infested artworks and day-light fluorescent paints and extends the existing body of research about Stella's canvas paintings from the 60s with new aspects. The paper reviews the possibilities and limits for treatment, and presents how experimental research with mock-ups was eventually applied into practice.

### Digital Documentation and More! Adventures with Microsoft OneNote and Tablets

Raina Chao, L.H. (Hugh) Shockey, and Steve Carr

Documentation is an important aspect of a conservator's work and is essential for communication between conservators in the present and the future. While vital, documentation using traditional methods can also be very time consuming, when time is an ever more limited commodity.

In an effort to streamline the documentation process, conservators at the Saint Louis Art Museum (SLAM) have implemented a process for digital condition reporting using Microsoft OneNote and PC tablet computers. While a number of options for digital condition reporting have presented themselves in recent years, these tend to rely on specialized software or apps and are often restricted to a single type of operating system.

By using Microsoft OneNote, already a part of the museum's IT infrastructure, and tablet PCs, the conservation department has been able to improve the efficiency of documentation processes without purchasing additional software or placing an undue burden on SLAM's IT department.

This paper will focus on the genesis and implementation of digital condition reporting at SLAM using Microsoft OneNote, including an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the process. The potential for further applications of Microsoft OneNote for collections documentation will also be discussed, as will observations on the use of Microsoft OneNote with other operating systems.

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## Annual Meeting Abstracts, continued

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### **A Peek Beneath the Paint: Infrared Reflectography and all that Jazz**

Elma O'Donoghue

Some practical aspects of using Infrared Reflectography to document underdrawings and pentimenti in Dutch 17<sup>th</sup>-century paintings at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art will be presented. Successful IRR imaging, that is, the detection of underdrawings, pentimenti, and damages in the paintings, depends on the material choices made by artists, as well as restorers.

The typical behavior of many of these materials will be examined, as will conditions that can interfere with IRR imaging. The underdrawing techniques of a number of important Dutch 17<sup>th</sup>-century artists will be compared with other Dutch artists who did not appear to use underdrawing. Problems and successes with trying to differentiate brush, pen, pencil, and transferred underdrawings with IRR will also be discussed, as will the use of x-radiography, UV reflectance, and UV fluorescence in conjunction with IRR.

### **Multispectral Examination and Documentation of Works of Art on Paper and Photographs Using a Video Spectral Comparator at the J. Paul Getty Museum**

Sarah Freeman, Michelle Sullivan, and Nancy Turner

The Department of Paper Conservation at the J. Paul Getty Museum recently acquired a video spectral comparator (VSC), an instrument designed by Foster + Freeman for detection of fraudulent government issued documents and counterfeit currency. First adopted by conservators at Harvard Art Museum's Straus Center, the VSC is now being used by conservators and curators in the study of cultural heritage.

In addition to transmitted and raking illumination, the VSC8000 is equipped with a range of technical imaging modes including ultraviolet-induced fluorescence, reflected infrared radiation, and narrowband hyperspectral imaging (1-15nm step, 400-1000nm

range). The VSC8000 also contains a spectrophotometer for point analysis in reflectance or absorption modes.

This presentation will outline the advantages and limitations of the VSC as compared to traditional multispectral imaging setups for two-dimensional works of art; the Getty's current instrumental protocol; and several case studies highlighting the VSC's valuable role in examination and documentation of Old Master drawings, illuminated manuscripts, and photographs from the Getty's collection.

### **Making Visible the Missing Original Surface of Two Wooden Sculptures from a Cabinet by André-Charles Boulle**

Silvia Ottolini, Arlen Heginbotham, and Jane Bassett

How is it possible to understand and replicate the missing original copper powder surface treatment on two 17<sup>th</sup>-century French wooden sculptures, which was scraped off in 1977 during a misguided conservation treatment in London? The presentation is about these two sculptures that belong to a cabinet by André Charles Boulle exhibited at the J.Paul Getty Museum and their unusual surface which was an imitation of bronze sculptures with a reddish patina.

In 2005, through cross-sections and scientific analysis which were made on an almost identical and better preserved cabinet (at Drumlanrig Castle, Scotland), conservators were able to understand the nature of the original paint layers. These results were compared with the brief scientific report drafted in the occasion of the 1977 conservation treatment of the Getty cabinet.

The very unusual technique was achieved through a complex overlapping of different materials characterized by a red vermilion paint covered with copper flakes applied to a linseed oil size. Our effort is currently focused on trying to simulate the supposed original appearance of the surface, initially on mock-ups and finally on a 3D replica of one of the sculptures.

Since the natural copper powder has an odd shiny color, our work in progress is based on understanding how to manage the copper flakes following descriptions and recipes contained in French and European treatises ranging from the 17<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, as well as looking at bronze sculptures which have reddish patinas and at paintings where the same sculptures are depicted.

Despite this, the peculiarity of the material as well as the difficulty of finding any surviving visual evidence make it very challenging to achieve an aesthetically convincing surface.

### **Two for One—a Second Composition Discovered Beneath a Painting by Robert Rauschenberg**

Paula De Cristofaro

Robert Rauschenberg's *Untitled [glossy black painting]* in the collection of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art is one of a series of the artist's monochromatic paintings from the early 1950s. *Glossy Black* is constructed of torn paper collage elements covered by a thick layer of enamel paint which was poured on the canvas overall, effectively adhering the paper fragments to the underlying support. The presence of vibrantly colored underpaint on *Glossy Black's* tacking margins inspired the conservation department at SFMOMA to x-radiograph the work, with surprising results.

It was assumed that the underlying composition was executed by Rauschenberg or by artist Susan Weil, to whom Rauschenberg was married. The composition revealed by the radiograph is closely related to early paintings created by Cy Twombly (many of which have been lost or were destroyed). It is apparent that Rauschenberg, who was a friend of Twombly's and a fellow student at Black Mountain College in North Carolina in 1951, appropriated one of Twombly's canvases to create *Glossy Black*.

This presentation will explore a pivotal moment in the *oeuvre* of these two artists who would become important figures in the 20<sup>th</sup>-century art world.

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## Articles You May

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**“The Night Watch: Rembrandt Painting to be Restored Under World’s Gaze,”** *The Guardian*, 10/16/2018

The Night Watch by Rembrandt is to be restored under the world’s gaze at the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. The public will be invited to watch the intimate conservation process, both up close in the gallery itself and via an internet livestream, in what is believed to be the biggest ever undertaking of its kind.

Completed by Rembrandt van Rijn in 1642 at the height of the Dutch Golden Age, The Night Watch, more formally known as Militia Company of District II under the Command of Captain Francis Banninck Cocq, was commissioned by the major and leader of the civic guard of Amsterdam.

The painting has pride of place in the Rijksmuseum’s Gallery of Honour, which was built especially for the painting.

In recent years, deterioration was noticed. The work was last restored in 1975, following a knife attack by a Dutch teacher.

A clear glass chamber, 7-metres square, designed by the French architect Jean-Michel Wilmotte, is being built to encase The Night Watch and its conservators.

Firstly the experts will research the painting, mapping it millimetre by millimetre using a scanner, in a process which will take around 70 days. Using the scan, and additional imaging techniques, high-resolution photography and computer analysis, a detailed picture of the painting, from the varnish to the canvas, will be mapped.

Only then will the team make a plan, determining precisely how to proceed with the restoration.

Conservators will be on hand to answer visitors’ questions, and regular updates on the work, such as discoveries over pigments used or changes made by Rembrandt, will be made public.

The restoration process is due to begin in July 2019. In the five preceding months, from 15 February 2019, it will be the centrepiece in the Rijksmuseum’s showcase of its entire collection of over 400 works by Rembrandt as it commemorates the 350th anniversary of his death.

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## Living Matter Symposium / Simposio La Materia Viva

June 3-5, 2019 Mexico City

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The Preservation of Biological Materials Used in Contemporary Art/  
Conservación de materiales orgánicos en el arte contemporáneo

Living Matter/La Materia Viva will discuss the broad implications and challenges (conceptual, ethical, and practical) associated with collecting, displaying, and preserving contemporary works that include biological materials. It will explore how the initial intention for the work might conflict with museum policies and the ways this might impact both the nature and lifespan of the work, present a range of possible solutions through case studies, and give an overview of current thinking and practices on this topic.

The two-and-a-half-day event will gather conservators, artists, art historians, and curators. It includes invited keynote addresses, lectures, as well as panel discussions and site visits. The symposium languages will be English and Spanish with simultaneous translation provided.

Organized by the Getty Conservation Institute, the Museo Universitario Arte Contemporáneo (MUAC) of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, and ENCRyM (Escuela Nacional de Conservación, Restauración y Museografía “Manuel del Castillo Negrete”).

The preliminary program, registration link, and information on funding opportunities can be found here: <http://bit.ly/2NiLX5t>

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## Have Missed

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*Susanne Friend*  
column editor

**“Two Different Approaches to Conservation and Restoration,”** *Times of Malta*, 11/5/2018

Two sets of antique religious statues will soon be on display at Heritage Malta’s new museum of art, MUŻA. One pair of these museum pieces represents the baptism of Jesus through the figures of St John the Baptist and Christ. The other pair, which date to an earlier 17th century period, consist of sizeable figures of Our Lady and St Joseph.

“These two sets are excellent examples of two different approaches to conservation and restoration. While the baptism pair have been totally reintegrated, the other pair have missing parts and they clearly show the traumatic damage which they suffered,” said senior conservator Anthony Spagnol.

“Both these sets form part of the national collection previously at the National Museum of Fine Arts. Both were intensely attacked by wood-boring insects, a long time ago. “The same devastation was obvious in the other pair. However, while the outer shell of the baptism statues survived, the other couple had experienced extensive losses, including both hands of Our Lady, two

fingers of St Joseph and a considerable part from the bottom of the artwork.”

This necessitated a tailor-made approach for each set. “It is the curator’s prerogative to select the artefacts which will be displayed in the museum. It is also in his responsibility to decide upon the level of conservation and restoration which is required, as long as this goes along with modern conservation ethics.

In this case, after proper investigations by the conservators, it was agreed that the baptism set will be fully reintegrated, whereas the other set will have only minor reconstructions.” Nonetheless, all depends on the context of where these statues will be exhibited. Spagnol explained:

“Let’s imagine that this pair of religious statues was originally in a church’s niche and people were devoted to them. In that case, one cannot reintroduce a pair of statues with missing parts because they will interfere with the perception of the devoted. This might sound frivolous but when people really believe that a statue of a saint might intervene on their behalf, especially with regards to serious health conditions, for them, the image becomes real and in it

they find something to sustain them.

So in such a situation, a conservator would recommend the introduction of a new pair of statues. “In rare cases, where the statue has also miraculous connotations, such a recommendation is not easy to put forward.

Considering this scenario, a compromise has to be found, as the beliefs and traditions of the people cannot be ignored. “On the other hand, in this situation where we are dealing with significant artworks which will form part of a museum’s display, the missing parts of the statues will relate the narrative of their history. Even in this incomplete state, their value will not diminish, and they will still radiate their artistic merit.”

**“Restoration of Rare English Medieval Altarpiece Reveals a History of Serial Vandalism,”** *The Art Newspaper*, 11/13/2018

Conservation work on one of a handful of English painted altarpieces that survived the fury of iconoclasm after the dissolution of monasteries by Henry VIII has uncovered not only the original glowing Medieval colour, but evidence of serial vandalism years after the faces of its seven elegant saints were gouged down to the bare wood.

The Battel Hall retable is owned by the Leeds Castle Foundation in Kent and named for the Medieval house on the estate where its existence was first recorded in 1863, but most of its 600-year history is a mystery. The graffiti may have been added by schoolchildren, and include Latin and Greek words and astronomical and geometrical diagrams, as well as compass-drawn circles interpreted as “witchmarks” to protect against evil spirits.

The gouging of the saints’ faces may have occurred in 1539 following the dissolution of Dartford priory, the altarpiece’s probable original home. A two-year conservation project in Cambridge has securely dated the altarpiece to around 1410 through dendrochronology tests on its Baltic oak planks. The figure of St Dominic shows that it was made for a Dominican altar — one of only three such panels surviving in England — and the assembly of women including Catherine of Siena, still only a candidate for sainthood in 1410, suggests

that it was for a convent.

Most of the conservation work, more than 160 hours over the course of many months, was a project for a German postgraduate student, Michaela Straub, who made a partial reconstruction. Her work revealed scorch marks from candles on the upper frame, showing that the panel was made as a retable to hang behind an altar.

She also found a design change in the underdrawing: the more conventional lily carried by the Virgin became a cherry branch — alluding to the popular Medieval legend of the tree bowing down to offer its fruit. The panel is now on display again in the chapel of Leeds Castle, with as much of its beauty as could be recovered and its many scars painfully visible again.

**“Peeling Back the Paint to Discover Bruegel’s Secrets,”** *New York Times*, 11/23/2018

What would happen if you peeled back the layers of a masterpiece by one of art history’s greatest painters?

Dead bodies might suddenly appear. Take, for example, Pieter Bruegel the Elder’s large-scale festival scene, “The Battle Between Carnival and Lent,” which he painted in 1559. If we look at his first drafts of the painting, using X-ray photography, we can see a corpse inside a cart that an old woman is dragging behind her. Then we see another dead body on the ground, its face turned to the viewer; he is lying ominously close to a sick child.

But when we look at the final version of the painting — the one we see with our own eyes — these macabre elements aren’t there anymore. The corpse in the cart has been blotted out with brown paint; the body on the ground is shrouded in a white cloth. When and how did these dead people disappear?

New imaging technology, created by a project known as “Inside Bruegel” offers some insight into these questions, by allowing us to pull the painting’s layers apart. The project was developed along with the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, for “Bruegel” a once-in-a-lifetime exhibition, featuring 87 of the painter’s works, and which ran through Jan. 13, 2019.

As to the painting’s corpses, Sabine Pénot, a curator of

Netherlandish and Dutch paintings at the Kunsthistorisches Museum and one of the exhibition’s four curators, said that Bruegel didn’t make these changes himself; someone else blotted out the dead body in the cart, and covered up the corpse on the ground, although nobody knows who did it or when, precisely.

Using the web tool InsideBruegel.net, anyone can access 12 paintings from the Vienna museum and spend hours zooming in on these details. Initially funded by the Getty Foundation’s Panel Paintings Initiative, a decade-long effort to train panel paintings restorers, this technology has also been used to study the paintings of Bruegel’s fellow Netherlandish master Hieronymus Bosch, as well as the works of van Eyck.

**“Conserving Photographs” at the Art Institute of Chicago,** *Blouin Artinfo*,

The Art Institute of Chicago is hosting “Conserving Photographs,” an exhibition inviting visitors to travel behind the scenes of its high-tech conservation lab, and uncover the numerous ways its photograph collection is taken care of and preserved.

The exhibition is on view through April 28, 2019. This exhibition explores the many facets of the work that AIC’s conservators undertake in the process of the photographs’ daily care — from connoisseurship and material science to precise hand skills.

The museum’s holdings boast of a staggering 2,400 objects, from early daguerreotypes to contemporary digital prints and time-based media. “I hope to take our visitor’s gaze beyond the image content alone and bring it closer to the objects, the way a conservator approaches a work of art,” says Sylvie Penichon, Head of Photograph Conservation and curator of the exhibition.

**“How a Painting’s Microbiome Might Help Restore Artworks and Find Fakes,”** *ABC News*, 12/5/2018

Art is a matter of taste — and quite literally, if you’re a microbe.

A team of Italian scientists have analysed the various bugs inhabiting a 400-year-old painting that was left leaning against a church wall, neglected, after a 2012 earthquake. They found

different species and strains of bacteria and fungi colonised different-coloured parts of the artwork.

While some microbes were in the process of destroying the artwork, they report, others could possibly be enlisted to help preserve it and other ancient pieces.

Study lead author Elisabetta Caselli from the University of Ferrara is a microbiologist who normally focuses on how microbes contaminate hospitals. She and her colleagues have discovered that in clinical settings some strains of “beneficial” bacteria outcompete their nasty counterparts. So when the opportunity arose to help restore Carlo Bononi’s oil painting *Incoronazione della Vergine*, Dr Caselli and her team decided to take the same approach.

“The aim of the project was to understand the composition of the painting’s microbiome to drive the restoration procedure and develop systems able to prevent new contamination.” Microbes have been shown to nibble away at pigments, including those made from red and yellow ochres, and red lac, which contains organic dyes mixed with a base such as chalk.

So to see what fungi and bacteria called the 17th-century Bononi painting home, Dr Caselli and her crew swabbed and grew microorganisms from different parts on agar plates. Sure enough, they found that certain bugs did prefer to live on — and eat — certain paints.

For instance, *Penicillium* and *Aspergillus* species tended to congregate on red and dark brown patches, while *Chadosporium* species dwelled in lighter areas. Indeed, some dyes and pigments are naturally antimicrobial. On Middle Eastern manuscripts, for instance, dyes made with turmeric seem to inhibit mould growth.

So what about the helpful microbes? Dr Caselli and her team once again grew various fungi and bacteria, taken from the painting, in petri dishes. But this time, they also added a probiotic cocktail made from three strains of *Bacillus* bacteria. The probiotic slowed or almost stopped growth of some strains of microbes.

Although their experiments have only been done in dishes — they’ve not yet applied probiotics to a real canvas yet — Dr Caselli said a fungi-fighting probiotic concoction might be mixed in

a weak alcoholic solution and sprayed on artworks, but only after showing *Bacillus* species won’t cause damage, of course.

A painting’s microbiome might one day also be used to sniff out fakes. “The evolution of a microbial population on an ancient artwork is a slow and balanced process, and cannot be recreated easily in a short time,” Dr Caselli said. That’s still a way off though, she added, with more comparative studies needed to set up such procedures.

### **“Egypt Struggles to Restore Cairo’s Historic Heart,”** *The Jakarta Post*, 11/6/2018

The capital’s Islamic quarter, a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1979 often referred to as historic Cairo, boasts some 600 listed monuments. But the task to patch up decades of dilapidation is immense, and Egyptian authorities are struggling to come up with the cash after unrest and jihadist attacks have driven away tourists and slashed crucial income.

Islamic Cairo is packed with ornate monuments, mosques and mausoleums, and its narrow streets are punctuated with trinket shops, cafes and traditional old homes -- an urban fabric layered in centuries of history.

UNESCO has warned several times in recent years of increasing degradation in historic Cairo, raising the alarm as it has for many other heritage cities across the globe. In 2017, its World Heritage Committee urged Egyptian authorities “to take all needed measures to halt the rapid deterioration” of sites across the quarter. Architect Alaa al-Habashi said time was of the essence in the push to preserve the area. “It cannot wait... if we want to stay on the World Heritage List there is not a minute to lose,” he said. The only way to effectively combat the decay, he said, was “to get citizens involved”.

### **“Curtains Without Borders Revives History Through Niche Restoration,”** *The Recorder*, 12/7/2018

Just over a century ago, the residents of Orange, MA walked into their Town Hall and were greeted by a magnificent sight. Before them, at the back of the room, was a bridge across a river, leading to a tranquil park surrounded by trees of green, teal and

purple hues. In the center of that park was the statue of a minuteman, a monument to America’s earliest freedom fighters.

No, it wasn’t a real bridge, or park, or statue, but a 28-foot by 18-foot custom curtain, donated to the town in 1912 that depicts the minuteman statue in Concord.

The curtain will hang in Orange once again, with Curtains Without Borders Director Chris Hadsel and fellow conservator M.J. Davis restoring the curtain last month following successful fundraising efforts.

Curtains Without Borders is a traveling conservation company formed in Vermont that restores historic curtains that once hung prominently in government buildings across the country. Such curtains were a trend in the late 1800s and early 1900s, and often depicted natural scenery or historic sites. Especially in New England, the curtains were popular, with 483 such historical curtains listed on Curtains Without Borders’ directory of New England states, though there could be more that have yet to be discovered.

Hadsel and her team travel throughout the country based on requests from individual towns’ historical commissions. Orange’s curtain took three days of careful work to restore. According to Hadsel, mid-sized and large curtains are rolled up and wrapped around a long tube that can be rotated to reach central parts of the curtain that need to be painted.

Restoring each curtain comes with its own set of challenges, and requires knowledge about history, painting and textiles, something Hadsel quickly found out when Curtains Without Borders was founded in 1996 as a project of the Vermont Museum & Gallery Alliance.

“We’re really the only company in the country that does this,” said Hadsel. Hadsel and Davis vacuumed the old curtain, which had become blackened in spots due to the coal stoves used for many years in the Town Hall, and used a pet-hair sponge to rub off other dirt and dust. Then, the curtain was repainted, with Davis painstakingly matching the colors of her palette to those on the curtain. Especially in areas the curtain was folded — the “seams,” in other words — the original paint was gone. Part of the challenge, Hadsel said, is that

the curtain painters often used stencils, which are long gone in many cases and cannot be replicated perfectly. Davis has to very carefully use freehand to paint what was once done by stencil.

**“You Can Buy a Painting, But it’s Not Really Yours,”** *The Boston Globe*, 12/14/2018

The first lesson that prospective art buyers have been learning is that artworks aren’t yours to do with whatever you want. Art owners are “stewards” and “custodians” of objects that belong to the ages.

If it is a mural on the side of a building you own, you can’t just whitewash it or knock down the wall as part of an expansion. If the artist calls the sculpture “site specific,” you can’t just move it to some place that seems just as good or better. If the artwork needs cleaning or restoration, don’t just take it to someone to do the job, but contact the gallery for recommended conservators and the artist for approval of the job.

“Restrictions on what you can do with things you have bought are foreign to the American concept of jurisprudence,” said New York art lawyer Susan Duke Biederman. “Under American law, when title changes hands, generally you can do what you want with what you own. The art world is different.”

Another one of those wrinkles is a federal law, the Visual Artists Rights Act (VARA), which empowers artists (and their heirs) to bring lawsuits when their work is intentionally destroyed or altered in ways in which the artists do not approve.

One instance of an artwork’s destruction involves a science fiction-themed mural titled “Six Heads” on a building in the Los Feliz district of Los Angeles that had been painted in 1992 by artist Monte Thrasher.

In 2014, the owners of the building decided to whitewash Thrasher’s mural in order to have a new image painted on the wall more befitting the theme of the saloon inside. Thrasher brought a lawsuit against the building’s owners and the saloon owner, Marci Siegel, who stated that she was not aware of laws protecting artwork.

A lawsuit is perhaps the most painful way to learn a lesson about the responsibilities of art ownership. VARA has generated other legal actions

involving how owners of artworks have or have not maintained their appearance, particularly with pieces created by artist Cady Noland. In one case, a work titled “Cowboys Milking” was not conserved (“The current condition of the work materially differs from that at the time of its creation,” her lawyer claimed in 2011) and in another case an installation titled “Log Cabin” was treated by a conservator (“Noland angrily denounced the restoration of the artwork without her knowledge and approval,” according to a lawsuit filed in 2014).

In both instances, the artist disclaimed authorship of these works, which has the effect of diminishing their value. VARA does permit normal conservation and does not pertain to changes in an artwork that are the “result of the passage of time or the inherent nature of the materials,” but the parameters of when an artist is entitled to disclaim authorship were not laid out in the statute or subsequently determined in a court of law.

As a result, another lesson for collectors is that if they “need to have a work of art cleaned or repaired, they should not just take it to someone on their own but go back to the gallery where they bought the work, if the gallery still represents that artist, for recommendations on which conservators should do the cleaning or restoration,” Weiner said.

“And then you need to check with the artist to make sure that the artist approves of what is being done.

**“The Treasure Behind the Wall,”** *New York Times*, 1/21/2019

Something in the new Oscar de la Renta boutique in Paris was not what it seemed.

Alex Bolen, the chief executive of Oscar de la Renta, planned to have his new store in Paris open around this week, just in time for the couture shows. Then, last summer, in the middle of renovations, Mr. Bolen got a call from his architect, Nathalie Ryan. “We made a discovery,” he remembered her saying. On the other end of the phone, Mr. Bolen cringed. He asked what, exactly, the discovery was. “You have to come and see,” she told him.

So, gritting his teeth, he got on a plane from New York. Ms. Ryan took

him to the second floor of what would be the shop, where workers were busily clearing out detritus, and gestured toward the end of the space. There was a 10-by-20-foot oil painting of an elaborately coifed and dressed 17th-century marquis and assorted courtiers entering the city of Jerusalem.

Stephane Pinta of the Cabinet Turquin, an expert in old-master paintings, determined that the painting was an oil on canvas created in 1674 by Arnould de Vuez, a painter who worked with Charles Le Brun, the first painter to Louis XIV and designer of interiors of the Château de Versailles.

Mr. Pinta traced the painting to a plate that was reproduced in the 1900 book “Odyssey of an Ambassador: The Travels of the Marquis de Nointel, 1670-1680” by Albert Vandal, which told the story of the travels of Charles-Marie-François Olier, Marquis de Nointel et d’Angervilliers, Louis XIV’s ambassador to the Ottoman Court. On Page 129, there is a rotogravure of an artwork depicting the Marquis de Nointel arriving in Jerusalem with great pomp and circumstance — the painting on the wall.

But how it ended up glued to that wall, no one knew, nor why it was covered up. What everyone did know was that it would be dangerous to move because of how the painting had been attached to wall: backed by gauze and glued on.

Mr. Bolen reached an agreement with the building’s owners: He would restore the painting if they agreed to let it remain in the store while the store was a tenant (the initial lease is for 10 years).

Benoît Janson, of the restoration specialists Nouvelle Tendence, who is overseeing work on the canvas, got to work in late November. “It was very dark because of all the overpaint from earlier restorations and varnish,” Mr. Janson said. For the last two months, a team of three to five people have laboriously swabbed away some of the varnish to allow the colors to come through.

The discovery demanded something of an interior rethink as well as some practical changes. “We’re not going to put a wall of dresses in front,” Ms. Ryan said. Security will be increased, and the 10 floor-to-ceiling windows on the second floor equipped with treated glass. The plan is to open in late spring.