
Articles You May Have Missed

Susanne Friend column editor

“Piazza, Mosaici “Macchiati”: ma non ci sono Restauratori, (Piazza, mosaics “stained: but there are no restorers)”
Giornale di Sicilia, 02/26/2013

The mosaics at the 4th century Villa Romana del Casale, just outside Piazza Armerina, Sicily, are once again being threatened by the rise of salts, with the first white patches visible to tourists. Funds are lacking for daily maintenance of the mosaics and millions of Euros spent on conservation in the last five years could be compromised.

Desalination is needed and should be done as routine maintenance. The site is in a state of good preservation after the 18 million euro restoration campaign but daily rising salts, dried leaves, and pigeon droppings need to be removed on a weekly basis. Training workshops for students from undergraduate courses in restoration in Italian universities are being considered.

“Berlin Wall’s Most Iconic Paintings under Threat from Property Developers,” *The Guardian, 02/27/2013*

The painted mural of former Soviet and East German leaders Leonid Brezhnev and Eric Honecker in a passionate clinch is one of the star attractions of the East Side Gallery, the longest-remaining stretch of Berlin Wall and the second-most visited site in Berlin.

But the 1.3km-long outdoor gallery, which is covered in paintings by artists from around the world, is now threatened by the city’s strident advance of gentrification, with a significant section of it due to be dismantled soon to make way for a luxury block of flats.

What guide books describe as an unbroken length of wall already has a gaping hole after a 50-metre section was removed some years ago to provide access to a boat landing stage and an open view on the river for the O2 World arena. The latest threat is from Living Levels, a 63-metre-high tower of 36 flats and offices. Opponents said it would destroy the

aesthetics of the gallery, which is visited by an estimated 800,000 visitors a year, as well as insulting the memory of those who were killed on the former death strip.

Kani Alavi, head of the artists' initiative East Side Gallery, who led a €2.5m (£2m) restoration project of the wall four years ago, and was one of the original artists to paint on the wall, said the whole of the structure was now under threat.

“Museo Egizio: Presentato il Restauro del Papiro,” (Restoration of the Papyrus presented at the Egyptian Museum) *Cultura*, 03/01/2013

The restoration of the papyrus “Book of the Dead of Tasnakht” was presented at the Museum of Egyptian Antiquities in Turin, made possible by the Fondazione Citta’Italia.

The restoration was entrusted to a team of restorers specialized in papyri and involved conservation treatment as well as remounting. For some hundred years the Papyrus Tasnakht had been displayed in a single 18 meter frame with five other papyri and the mounting presented major problems, including direct contact with the glass, the presence of a significantly deteriorated cardboard backing and the incompatibility of materials used with the fragility of papyrus.

Only by dismantling was it possible to determine the true condition of the papyrus, characterized by light color and medium thickness. Some losses were found on the top and bottom edges – these had been likely filled in the nineteenth century with new papyrus that was slightly thicker than the original.

Following the practice of earlier times to stretch and reinforce the papyrus, sheets of paper had been adhered to the back with animal glue. Both the lignin-rich paper and the glue showed obvious oxidation and subsequent browning of the papyrus on the front, especially along the joins. Losses caused by wood-eating insects had been retouched with tempera. A significant accumulation of dust was found on both sides of the papyrus.

“Balance Restored, Shard by Shard,” *The New York Times*, 03/27/2013

The art collector Albert C. Barnes had no compunction about letting people know precisely how much he wanted things his way. So just imagine

how unhappy Barnes would have been about the state of a small gallery on the second floor of his foundation, whose collection was transplanted intact last year from the suburb of Merion to a sleek new home downtown.

Like many of the institution's galleries, this one united a handful of lovely Matisse and Klee's with rather odd roommates, like works by unknown folk artists depicting birds. And Barnes crowned the whole conglomeration with a glass cabinet in the middle of the room displaying one of the best Greek vessels he ever bought, an Attic pyxis, or lidded round box, from 750 B.C., topped with four expressive horses.

But shortly after Barnes's death in 1951, while employees were documenting the collection, the earthenware pyxis shattered. The vessel, along with the case and all the other objects in it, were taken off view. Now, more than half a century later, they are about to re-emerge from historical oblivion to bring the gallery, still called Room 17, back to its eccentric Barnesian counterpoise.

A new, large, windowed conservation lab headed by chief conservator Barbara Buckley, has become the locus of the first comprehensive efforts by the Barnes to take a hard look at its 2,500-object collection and assess what needs cleaning, stabilizing, conserving or even full-fledged restoration.

Margaret A. Little, senior conservator of objects, has been studying and working on the pyxis, removing weak adhesives and pieces of filler material used by earlier restorers. Judith F. Dolkart, the Barnes's chief curator, said the return of the sculptural elements to Gallery 17 — expected to happen by summer — would not only bring the small gallery back to its intended state but would also re-establish a kind of balance on the foundation's second floor.

“L’Aquila Staggers Towards Recovery on Fourth Anniversary of Quake,” *The Art Newspaper*, 04/01/2013

As the fourth anniversary of the earthquake that devastated L’Aquila comes up on 6 April, the Italian town's fate finally seems to be improving. Some restoration projects are already under way, although locals are still holding protests and art historians are up in arms over proposed plans to build a shopping mall

and car park beneath the main square.

Hardly any restoration work was carried out on L’Aquila's ravaged centre for three years and it remained a ghost town, while 13 controversially expensive “new towns” were built on the outskirts for the 73,000 homeless residents. These were built without any kind of tendering process, sparking several allegations of government corruption.

The first round of overdue restoration projects, funded by the Italian government, is now under way, just months after power was handed back to the local authorities. Notably, the government will spend an initial €14m to restore the 15th-century Spanish castle, which houses the Museo Nazionale d’Abruzzo, and €10m will be spent on the 18th-century Duomo in L’Aquila's main square.

Foreign governments have also pitched in to help. The amount of damage to the town's historic centre and the surrounding area is so vast that works are expected to carry on at least until 2021. Restoration will involve around 485 separate sites and will cost an estimated €525m.

How Many Light Bulbs Does It Take to Discolor a van Gogh?, *ArtNews*, 04/03/13

Last year, conservators at the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam noticed that areas of bright yellow paint in many of the artist's works, such as Sunflowers, were turning shades of green and brown.

To find out why, they teamed up with scientists at the University of Antwerp in Belgium. Online news reports claimed that the scientists found prolonged exposure to LED lights to be the cause of the darkening. That conclusion, however, is inaccurate. “This was not a study into the effects of LED lighting,” says Ella Hendriks, a senior conservator at the Van Gogh Museum. “It was a study on the aging process of the yellow pigment.”

Lead by Koen Janssens, the Antwerp researchers tested samples of the browning paint and identified it as chrome yellow. Janssens and his team then found that exposure to light caused samples of chrome yellow to darken. Lighter shades of the pigment, he explained, darkened quickly because they contain a high amount of sulfur, which

makes them more susceptible to chemical reactions. Dark shades of chrome yellow contain little sulfur, and were less affected by light.

The darkening of the paint is permanent, says Janssens, and “to reverse this chemical reaction would likely cause more damage to the paintings.” But the study did not isolate which band of light caused the browning or attribute it solely to LED bulbs.

This information is still of use to museums. As institutions phase out halogen and incandescent lighting in favor of energy-efficient alternatives like LED bulbs, they need to understand the possible effects these lights will have on artworks.

“To Salvage and Sell?,” *The Art Newspaper*, 04/04/2013

After Superstorm Sandy hit New York City last October, conservator Gloria Velandia’s studio was littered with hundreds of damaged works of art. But whether she repaired a work depended not so much on the extent of the damage, but on whether or not she received approval to proceed from the insurance company paying the bill.

The insurance adjusters might decide it’s cheaper instead to declare a work “a total loss” and pay out its insured value. But paying out a total loss isn’t the end of the story.

“There is a group of collectors who say: ‘Let us know if you have damaged work,’” says Christiane Fischer, the president and chief executive of AXA Art Insurance Americas. This is the little-known world of “salvage art”, which raises a host of questions about valuation, the art market, and its integrity.

When the damage to a work is deemed a “partial loss”, the insurer pays the cost of repair and also compensates the owner for any loss in value. But when an insurance company declares an existing work of art a total loss, the insurer compensates the owner the full, insured amount—and then it owns the work.

“Art that is a ‘total loss’ can still have value. If there’s not an agreement that we shouldn’t resell, the insurance company can do whatever it wants,” says Fischer.

The salvage art market’s size is difficult to estimate, because the major insurance players do not reveal figures.

However, the world of salvage art is full of paradoxes and ethical quandaries.

Work that is only slightly damaged, if at all, may still be declared a total loss by an insurance company. Work that is severely damaged may be repaired by the insurer and then reappear on the market, with potential buyers none the wiser. There can be a “corruption of morals on every side of the table”, says Renée Vara, an independent appraiser, a board member at the Appraisers Association of America, and a former national fine art specialist at Chubb.

To the outsider, total loss can seem arbitrary. Clearer reasons for total loss are destruction by catastrophe. Art may also be declared a total loss for economic reasons. “If the conservation cost plus loss in value is higher than a total loss [payment], then it’s a total loss,” says AXA’s Fischer.

Valuation can be especially sticky. Do clients lie? “Absolutely,” says Straus. Then there are conflicts of interest, such as when an auction house gives a valuation for a damaged work it may later sell. The insurers are quick to state that when they sell salvage art, they disclose everything. Whether that information reaches the ultimate purchaser is another question.

At auction, the insurer is not identified as the consignor, which would immediately raise condition questions. All insurers contacted agree on one point—if an artist does not want the work repaired or renounces the work after it is conserved, it is a total loss. Artists can also disclaim work under the Visual Artists Rights Act.

“Art Restoration Project at WIU,” *Western Illinois University*, 04/05/2013

The Western Illinois University collection of Federal Art Project works will be included in the exhibition “A New Deal for Illinois: The Federal Art Project of Western Illinois University,” which will be shown at the Figge Art Museum in Davenport, IA.

WIU’s Federal Art Project collection was formed in the 1930s when University officials commissioned works through the Public Works of Art Project, and later through the Federal Art Project of the Works Progress Administration (FAP/WPA). WIU Art Gallery Director Ann Marie Hayes-Hawkinson said Ma-

comb is fortunate to have this collection.

Commissioned works were used to decorate classrooms, hallways and other public spaces on campus. The WIU Art Gallery is now home for these works. Some of the works in the collection are in need of conservation. The exhibition and the conservation initiative represent Western’s dedicated efforts to preserve and promote knowledge of the important legacy of New Deal art.

Sponsored works will be sent to The Conservation Center in Chicago before the exhibition travels to the Quad Cities. To help visitors to the exhibition understand what art restoration entails, Hayes-Hawkinson and a University Television crew will visit Chicago to interview conservators.

“Queen Mary Restoration Efforts Continue as Ship Marks 20th Anniversary of Historic Designation,” *Long Beach Business Journal*, 04/10/2013

While the Queen Mary will mark its 20th year as a registered national historic place on April 15, efforts over the past five years have taken shape in the form of a conservation management plan to guide restoration and preservation of the ship as an art piece and tourist destination.

One of the crown jewels of Long Beach since 1967, the Queen Mary ship underwent a substantial conversion from the point it permanently docked in Long Beach’s harbor to 1971. Part of that conversion was to redesign the ship as a destination with a hotel, event space and attractions on board.

John Thomas, the ship’s historic consultant, said, “Today we are working with the city to take more of a focus of the ship being a historical art piece as well as a destination.” Thomas said he and his conservation team work with City of Long Beach Asset Management Bureau Manager Victor Grgas and his bureau to come up with the most appropriate protocols and treatments for the ship.

There is still a large quantity of furniture, artwork and other items in storage aboard the ship to be explored and used in restoring the ship in the adaptive reuse process. Approximately 70 percent of the conservation management plan is research, 20 percent is actions to be taken and 10 percent is evaluation of what has been done. The ship’s design-

nation as a national historic landmark “enables us to be more critical” in the conservation process, said Thomas.

“Mosque Conversion Raises Alarm,”
The Art Newspaper, 04/11/2013

One of the most important monuments of late Byzantium, the 13th-century Church of Hagia Sophia in the Black Sea city of Trabzon, which is now a museum, will be converted into a mosque, after a legal battle that has dramatic implications for other major historical sites in Turkey.

For around 50 years, responsibility for the Church of Hagia Sophia in Trabzon has rested with Turkey’s Ministry of Culture and Tourism. The courts now accept the claim made by the General Directorate of Pious Foundations, the government body responsible for most of the country’s historical mosques, that this has been an “illegal occupation”.

The court has ruled that Hagia Sophia is an inalienable part of the foundation of Sultan Mehmed II who first turned the church into a mosque after his conquest of the Empire of Trebizond in 1462. The head of the directorate declined to speculate on whether this would mean covering up nearly half the wall space taken up with figurative Christian art, including the dome depicting a dynamic Christ Pantocrator.

Concern for the building is prompted by the fate of Istanbul’s Arab Mosque—originally a 14th-century Dominican church—also administered by the directorate. An earthquake in 1999 shook loose plaster from the vaults revealing frescoes and mosaics. The conservation of these paintings was finished last year but they were immediately recovered.

Like its namesake in Trabzon, Hagia Sophia in Istanbul was also turned into a mosque, after Mehmed II’s conquest of the city in 1453. It was famously made into a museum in 1935 by cabinet decree—unlike the informal arrangement in Trabzon.

The re-conversion of Istanbul’s Hagia Sophia into a mosque has long been the “golden apple” sought by Turkey’s religious right. Recent experience suggests that the directorate reconstructs mosques without regard for the millennia of history they contain.

“Over U.S. Objections, Hopi Tribal Masks Sold in France,” *The Los Angeles Times*, 04/12/2013

Dozens of Native American masks were sold at auction in Paris despite objections by the Hopi tribe, which considers the items sacred, and the U.S. government.

The 70 masks sold for a total of about \$1.2 million after a French court approved the auction, rejecting arguments by the Hopi tribe and its supporters that the items should not be up for sale because they are “sacred figures” of their ancestors, not art.

The items, mainly Hopi tribal artifacts dating to the 19th and early 20th centuries, went on display at the Drouot auction house before the sale. The masks, made from wood, leather, horse hair and feathers and painted in vivid red, blue, yellow and orange, are thought to have been removed from a northern Arizona reservation in the 1930s and ‘40s.

The Hopi tribe, which now numbers fewer than 14,000 people, keeps its masks, called Kachina and believed to be actual spirits, out of public view and considers it sacrilegious even for pictures of the objects to be shown. The masks are referred to as “qwatsi” — friends — and are worn during ceremonial dances to represent deities, but also mythical ancestors.

“Conservators Told to Follow Star Trek Captain’s Orders,” *The Art Newspaper*, 04/12/2013

“Take every opportunity to tell people what you do,” said Fiona Hyslop, the Scottish government’s Cabinet Secretary for Culture and External Affairs at opening of “Positive Futures in an Uncertain World,” Icon’s triennial conference at the University of Glasgow, on Thursday 11 April.

“The sector needs to get smarter about shouting about culture.” Hyslop’s message was repeated by other speakers at the conference, including the chancellor of the university, Kenneth Calman, urging the assembled crowd of conservators to talk to politicians, captains of industry and the public about the importance of heritage preservation.

“The excellence of our profession often remains a longstanding secret,” said David Leigh, a conservator and Icon’s representative on the National Trust Council’s art panel, alluding to the

fact that the job of a conservator has been traditionally a backroom activity.

In the current economic climate, however, where resources are limited and cutbacks in staff and budgets have become a fact of life, one of the best ways to make a case for heritage preservation is to engage with the public.

Calman ended his plea for conservators to become more involved with the public by instructing the audience to follow two commands from a captain—not a captain of industry, but a captain nonetheless—Jean-Luc Picard from the USS Enterprise: “engage” and “make it so.”

“Early Images of American Indians Found in a Vatican Fresco,” *The New York Times*, 05/06/2013

Vatican officials say they have found what could be the first European images of American Indians in a fresco painted within two years of Christopher Columbus’s first voyage to the so-called New World.

The lightly sketched group of men — nude save for what appear to be feathered headdresses and posed as if dancing — emerged during the restoration of a fresco of the “Resurrection of Christ” by the Renaissance artist Pinturicchio, painted in one of several rooms he decorated for Pope Alexander VI between 1492 and 1494.

The figures’ appearance in the fresco is in keeping with a practice common during the Renaissance of introducing contemporary elements into historical or sacred scenes, said Franco Ivan Nucciarelli, a Pinturicchio scholar who teaches at the University of Perugia.

The figures emerged from under layers of soot and overpainting during a 2006 restoration of the space called Room of the Mysteries, which includes “Resurrection of Christ,” but Vatican experts took a cautious approach to their findings. “We didn’t publicize them because we wanted to carry out further verifications,” said Maria Pustka, who is responsible for restoring the rooms once inhabited by Alexander VI.

Pinturicchio lightly sketched the figures in black and white paint directly onto the dried fresco, an unusual “and interesting” technique, she said, and they were painted over in successive restorations. When wet, the figures disappear altogether, she said.

“Art Doctors: Midwest Art Conservation Center Keep Paintings Healthy,” *Star Tribune*, 05/05/2013

One of only four nonprofit conservation labs in the country, the Midwest Art Conservation Center (MACC), located in a remote corner of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, cleans and restores art of all kinds along with frames, documents, textiles and other objects. Its nine staff members also advise museums about the care and preservation of their collections, and work with first responders in disasters.

More laboratory than art studio, their offices are equipped with huge tables, elaborate air-filtration systems, sinks with ionized water, freezers, microscopes, and trays of solvents and brushes. They even make their own wooden-stemmed cotton swabs for removing grime from paintings. Cleaning art is MACC's bread-and-butter work.

Founded in 1977, it earns about two-thirds of its \$1 million annual budget restoring art for public institutions and private collectors, and gets the remainder from grants and donations. Over the past year, it freshened up about 24 pictures for the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, which has launched an Adopt-a-Painting program for fans to pay for cleanings (typical cost: \$1,400 to \$7,000).

Assistant curator Erika Holmquist-Wall prepared a “look book” that allowed enthusiasts to shop for projects. Supporters get to visit the conservation lab and observe the work, plus they have their names attached to the picture for five years.

“The Art of Asian Lacquer Draws Hundreds to Western New York,” *The Buffalo News*, 05/16/2013

Dozens of artists and scholars from around the world converged on SUNY Buffalo State for a four-day symposium dedicated to the ancient art of Asian lacquer. To accompany the conference, the Burchfield Penney Art Center hosted “Asian Lacquer International,” an exhibition that explores artists' diverse uses of lacquer in decoration, painting and sculpture.

Patrick Ravines, the director of Buffalo State's recently expanded art conservation department and an associate professor there, described lacquer

as “a dying art” and the conference as an attempt to bring together artists and scholars whose paths might not otherwise cross.

The conference featured more than 25 speakers, including three artists working in the traditional mode of “Uru-shi,” or Japanese lacquer: Kazumi Murose, Fumio Mae and Kunihiro Komori. It also featured talks by Metropolitan Museum of Art curator Barbara Brennan Ford, as well as panels moderated by Ravines and Buffalo State College design professor and lacquer expert Sun-hwa Kim.

The breadth and ambition of this first-of-its-kind symposium, Ravines said, is extensive. “We've brought in art historians,” he said. “We've brought in lacquer artists, craftspeople, conservators, restorers, scientists and museum people, and basically anybody who has touched or is touching lacquer and hasn't gotten a rash will be coming to talk to about it.”

“Cedar Rapids Shows Off Conservation Work in Progress,” *KCRG.com*, 05/21/2013

Another bit of “Depression-era” art hidden away for decades will soon go on display again inside the council chambers at Cedar Rapids' city hall.

The Law and Culture mural on display in the old federal courthouse in Cedar Rapids was painted over for the final time nearly 50 years ago. But when the city of Cedar Rapids converted the old courtroom to a council chambers, the idea was to uncover all the hidden artwork.

Conservationists began work on uncovering the second hidden mural recently. The unveiling is set for June 1st. Scott Haskins, chief mural conservator for Fine Arts Conservation Laboratories, said uncovering artwork is not the same as stripping paint off a wall at home.

There are four murals in the city's council chambers. Fundraising to uncover the remain two is currently underway. The city is paying Fine Arts Conservation Laboratories \$87,940 for the work. The murals were created in 1937 and are approximately five feet tall and run for a total of 48 feet in length. The art depicts various scenes of industrial and social progress.

“Digital Reincarnation for Dunhuang's Buddhist Art,” *Dawn.com*, 05/24/2013

From the fourth century onwards the 492 largely hand-dug caves near Dunhuang acted as a depository for Buddhist art for around a millennium. Unesco describes the World Heritage Site as “the largest, most richly endowed, and longest used treasure house of Buddhist art in the world”.

But their unique appeal is the very thing that is putting them under threat, with every visitor's entrance, body and breathing altering the delicate environmental balance inside the chambers. The remote site in Gansu province saw 800,000 visitors in 2012, up 20 per cent in a year. The recommended daily maximum is 3,000, but as many as 18,000 arrived on one public holiday last October.

Authorities must strike a difficult balance between limiting access to visitors and avoiding alienating them, particularly the hundreds of thousands of primarily Chinese tourists whose numbers are steadily rising. The digitisation project - which has been running for decades - is part of the solution, a grand project to transform the way visitors are received and cut the time they spend inside.

It is an immense task. The paintings cover 485,000 square feet. Thousands of images are taken of each chamber, using specialised lights to avoid damage, and then laboriously computer-processed to create a precise cyber replica. “We have six working teams here on a very intense schedule. Each team must digitise three to four caves a year,” said Wang Xudong, director general of the Dunhuang Academy.

Once the new system goes into effect next year visitors will be overseen as soon as they reach the airport and have to stick to a tightly controlled sightseeing circuit. In a domed theatre currently under construction they will view high-definition images of the inside of the chambers, before taking a glimpse inside the real thing - but only for a limited time. “The typical tour might be 10 caves, and of those 10 caves there would be two or three of these so-called must-see caves,” says Neville Agnew, a project specialist at the Getty Conservation Institute who has worked with the academy for 25 years.

“Pacific Northwest Artists Restore Stanford Totem Poles to Their Original Grandeur,” *Stanford News*, 05/30/2013

The first totem pole installed on the Stanford campus rests close to the Oval, tucked into a nearby grove of trees. Art Thompson finished the Nuuchah-nulth style pole, titled Boo-Qwilla, in 1995. The second pole, The Stanford Legacy by Don Yeomans, sits adjacent to the Law School’s Crown Quad and was completed in 2002. Carved in the traditional Haida style, Yeomans’ pole rises 40 feet in the air.

Over the years, the totem poles’ paint had noticeably faded. In order to restore their vibrancy, artists John Livingston and his wife, Maxine Matilpi, traveled from Victoria, British Columbia, to help with the restoration. To uphold the integrity and appearance of the totem poles, it was important to match the original hues. “The colors are very traditional,” Livingston said. “These are the same colors and tones that have been used for hundreds of years.”

The estates of Don Yeomans and Art Thompson approved the paint selection. The work on the poles isn’t strictly cosmetic. Elizabeth Saetta, an outdoor sculpture technician for the Cantor Arts Center, thoroughly cleaned the poles, treated them for insects and, after the painting was finished, applied a topcoat specifically designed for totem poles.

“The most important thing, especially with exterior pieces, is preventive maintenance,” she said. “You are trying to keep water and insects out, and do it in a way that doesn’t visually change the pole.”

“Bank of America Merrill Lynch Helps Conserve Three Tudor Portraits at the National Portrait Gallery in London,” *Here is the City*, 06/2013

Bank of America Merrill Lynch has announced that the National Portrait Gallery in London will receive funding to conserve three Tudor Portraits through the company’s global Art Conservation Project. This is one of 24 projects in 16 countries around the world that has been selected for grant funding in 2013.

The three portraits being renovated include one of Queen Elizabeth I in her early 40’s, which is thought to be one of only two surviving large portraits associated with Nicolas Hillard. Yellow-

ing varnish on the work has distorted the appearance of the original colour scheme but once properly conserved, the painting will clearly display the skill of Tudor artists.

Also being restored is a portrait of Edward VI by an unknown artist after Hans Holbein the Younger. During the conservation treatment, experts will examine the level of overpaint used particularly in the background of the painting.

The third piece being restored is a portrait of Edward VI and the Pope by an unknown artist. Created during the reign of Elizabeth I, it depicts Henry VIII on his deathbed, pointing towards his successor Edward VI.

During the restoration process, technical analysis will be undertaken in order to contextualise the production of a fourth painting, a version of the ‘Armada Portrait’ of Elizabeth I.

The Bank of America Merrill Lynch Art Conservation Project was introduced in 2010 in Europe, the Middle East and Africa and expanded to the Americas, Asia and Australia in 2012. To date, it has funded the conservation of more than 57 projects in 25 countries around the world.

“International Art Conservation Project to Help Preserve the Watts Towers,” *Market Watch* 06/10/2013

Bank of America announced that it has provided funding to assist with the restoration of Simon Rodia’s Watts Towers in Los Angeles through its 2013 Art Conservation Project, a global effort that will conserve 24 projects in 16 countries around the world, including eight in the United States.

The funding has been used to help Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) provide staff time and expertise to identify repairs to the Watts Towers, provide day-to-day maintenance and long-term care of the Towers, and increase awareness of the landmark. The project was selected because the Watts Towers, constructed between 1921 and 1954 by Simon Rodia, are an iconic part of Los Angeles and due to wear and tear are in need of necessary restoration efforts.

Art conservation project recipients were unveiled today at an event at LACMA, including notable projects such as “Number 1A,” “One,” and “Echo” by Jackson Pollock at the Museum of

Modern Art; 13 mural drawings by Diego Rivera at the Detroit Institute of Arts; four Tudor paintings at National Portrait Gallery in London, England; “Scholar in His Study” by Rembrandt at the National Gallery in Prague, Czech Republic; and a Frida Kahlo photography collection at La Casa Azul in Mexico City, Mexico.

“Artist Restoring Tourtellotte Memorial Room’s Aging Paintings,” *The Bulletin*, 06/11/2013

For the last several weeks, Rhode Island-based artist Roy Collins has been cleaning, re-gilding and refurbishing several historic paintings that have been gathering dust and dirt for decades inside the Tourtellotte Memorial Room in North Grosvenordale, Connecticut.

In the Memorial Room, in the heart of Tourtellotte Memorial High School, 89 paintings of varying size hang on the space’s recently repainted walls, rising up to the room’s vaulted ceiling. “This museum and school is one of the oldest of its kind,” curator Joe Lindley said. But time took a toll of the paintings, dulling their frames with dirt and causing paint to flake and crumble.

Lindley hired Collins to restore the museum’s paintings to their original luster. “We’re looking to do eight paintings a year, depending on the size of the piece,” Lindley said. “We’ve planned to spend roughly \$3,000 each year on the restoration and, in some years, that could mean one large painting gets done.”

The paintings, most dating from the late 1800s, include towering portraits, still lifes and landscapes, most bracketed in 22-carat gold-leaf frames. Collins, an art dealer who rehabilitates paintings for several auction houses, said restoring the paintings means removing accumulated grime from crevices in the frames and applying tissue-paper-thin swatches of gold leaf onto the dulled portions.

In some cases, sections are sanded or repainted. The painting’s surfaces are given a light going-over with a “secret recipe” of cleaners and, if necessary, touched up.

“Conserving Works made with Synthetic paints,” *The Art Newspaper*, 06/13/2013

The American Abstract Express-

sionist Clyfford Still is one of the latest artists to be put under the Getty Conservation Institute's (GCI's) microscope. As part of its Modern Paints project, the institute teamed up with the artist's estate, the Hirshhorn Museum in Washington, DC, and the Artex Conservation Laboratory to analyse several key works representative of Still's oeuvre.

Although the artist is known to have used traditional paints, especially oils, scholars have long wondered whether he added the oils to hand-ground pigments (these types of pigments were found in his studio after his death) or to tube paints. The findings are due to be published in mid-2014 in the GCI's series "The Artist's Materials."

Still joins good company as other artists in the series includes Willem de Kooning and Lucio Fontana. One of Jackson Pollock's largest paintings, *One: Number 31, 1950*, is now back on display at New York's Museum of Modern Art after a nine-month project to clean and examine the work "inch by inch".

The museum's chief conservator, James Coddington, kept the public abreast of the project in posts on MoMA's Inside/Out blog. The drip patterns of this 9ft x 17ft painting show that Pollock applied paint while the canvas was on the floor as well as when it was popped up. The examination also revealed that some paint had been applied after the artist's death in 1956—possibly during a mid-1960s restoration.

This was removed during the cleaning process. Conservators will soon begin work on another painting by Pollock, *Number 1A, 1948*. The project is being sponsored by Bank of America Merrill Lynch as part of its art conservation grant programme.

To a Summer's Day, 1980, an acrylic on linen work by the British artist Bridget Riley is currently in the Tate's conservation studio. The composition consists of a series of undulating wave patterns in pink, lilac, blue and ochre yellow stripes set on a white background. Conservators expect to use a dry cleaning process to remove the thin veil of dirt that has accumulated on the painting's surface in recent months. Although this will be a minimal treatment, cleaning is required as the work's optical illusion depends upon the stark contrast between the white and the coloured stripes.

"Artist Feels Sacred Duty In His Restoration Work," *Columbus Dispatch*, 06/14/2013

The statue of Jesus needed a few touch ups after being repositioned in an alcove overlooking the sanctuary of Sacred Heart Church in Italian Village. So Todd Brausch got to work, quickly mixing paint to match Jesus' brown hair and climbing up scaffolding to fill in his eyebrows and beard and make other small fixes.

Few details are lost on Brausch, who specializes in restoration, refinishing and fine art. Raised a Roman Catholic, he has found a niche for his craft in Catholic churches. Brausch recently completed work to refinish the Sacred Heart of Jesus statue, as well as a companion Sacred Heart of Mary statue for a chapel.

The work capped a restoration project that included repainting walls, marbleizing columns, and restoring the altars and lectern at the Tudor Gothic-style church that seats about 800 and was dedicated in 1923. The altars required sanding, smoothing and resculpting before spray-painting to avoid brush strokes. Pieces then were glazed for an aging effect, and 23-karat gold leaf was applied to accent carvings of angels and doves.

Brausch, who studied at the Columbus College of Art and Design and in Ortisei, Italy, started his business, T. Brausch Studio in Lithopolis, in 1999. He started work on Catholic churches shortly thereafter.

"Rare Drawings by George Bridgman, Inspiration to Norman Rockwell, Return Following Yearlong Conservation," *Art Daily.org*, 06/19/2013

The Norman Rockwell Museum announces the conservation and return to its American Illustration Collection of 28 rare drawings on paper by anatomy and figure-drawing teacher and illustrator George Bridgman (1864-1943).

The damaged drawings were taken to Williamstown Art Conservation Center (WACC) in nearby Williamstown, MA, where they received treatment in 2012 and 2013 under a grant from the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). The 28 drawings are part of a larger gift of more than 100

Bridgman study drawings that had been donated to the Museum in 2010.

Bridgman's influence on 20th century American art is deep. He is best known for his popular life drawing and anatomy books that are still used today. Bridgman established a unique technique for capturing human anatomy, gesture, and details by representing parts of the body as geometric forms.

As an instructor at the Art Students League in New York for 45 years, he taught nearly 70,000 students, among them sculptor Paul Manship, abstractionist Arshile Gorky, abstract expressionist Jackson Pollack, Peter Max, and Norman Rockwell. Bridgman was an inspiring presence for the young Rockwell, who spoke highly of him in his 1960 autobiography, "My Adventures as an Illustrator."

The Bridgman drawings had not been easily accessible to researchers for decades, nor have they been presented in public exhibitions. The treated drawings – along with the entire Bridgman collection – provide scholars and curators with an unparalleled resource on how Bridgman constructed his lessons and taught figure drawing in the classroom and through his books.

"Philadelphia Museum of Art's Sculpture Diana by Augustus Saint-Gaudens to be Regilded," *artdaily.org*, 06/25/2013

The Philadelphia Museum of Art will undertake a major project to regild Diana, the thirteen-foot-tall sculpture of the Roman goddess by Augustus Saint-Gaudens that commands the Museum's Great Stair Hall and was once mounted atop the tower of Madison Square Garden.

Made possible by a grant from Bank of America, this work will be undertaken by the Museum's Conservation Department in consultation with its department of American Art and is expected to last approximately four months.

"Most people do not realize that the sculpture's gray-green surfaces once gleamed in gold," said Timothy Rub, the George D. Widener Director and CEO.

The treatment plan will consist of corrosion removal, surface preparation for the application of gold size, and the laying of 180 square feet of gold leaf. This regilding project involves several

phases of preparation: research on the manufacture and appearance of the sculpture in the 1890s, and an assessment and documentation of the current structural condition of its sheet copper and armature, including the rotating mechanism of the weather vane.

Andrew Lins, The Neubauer Family Chair of Conservation and Senior Conservator of Decorative Arts and Sculpture at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, noted that the treatment plan of corrosion removal and the laying of leaf will be followed by any adjustments necessary to improve the appearance and lighting of the sculpture.

“During the years that it served as a weather vane at Madison Square Garden, its gilding apparently was significantly eroded, and the cleaning and repairing of the sculpture before it was installed in 1932 at the Philadelphia Museum of Art further altered the original surface,” he said.

“200-year-old Painting Resurfaces at Mission San Juan Capistrano,” *Los Angeles Times*, 07/08/2013

When Father Vincent Lloyd Russell looked upon the paintings depicting Jesus’ suffering and death, he didn’t like what he saw. Dirty from generations of neglect, colors faded, canvases torn. It was the early 1970s, and Russell reached out to a man who played the church organ on Sundays.

William Maldonado was also a gifted, self-taught artist who could copy virtually anything. Russell enlisted Maldonado to spruce up the 12 paintings that make up the Stations of the Cross. The first 11 were no problem. No. 12 was another story. Nearly 12 feet tall and 6 1/2 feet wide, “The Crucifixion,” painted in 1800 by a Spanish colonial artist named Jose Francisco Zervas, was in such terrible shape that Russell decided that rather than try to restore it, he would simply cover it up with a reproduction by his talented church organist.

After Maldonado worked off and on for a year in a rented warehouse, his copy was placed over the original without fanfare. Entombed behind its impostor, the painting from the mission’s early years effectively disappeared.

“The community lost its collective memory of it,” said Mechelle

Lawrence Adams, the mission’s current executive director. When the Serra Chapel underwent a major restoration a few years ago, the Stations of the Cross underwent a professional restoration.

Again, No. 12 was another story. It clearly was a modern painting. But upon close examination, one could see that it stuck out from its frame a quarter-inch. Last month, as several dozen people looked on, an art conservator hired by the mission carefully removed nine narrow nails and slowly removed Maldonado’s piece from 1973, revealing the 213-year-old painting.

Unseen for 40 years, the work is indeed a mess. Its canvas is saggy, pockmarked, torn and tarnished. Up close, it’s hard to make out most images. It will take time — and tens of thousands of dollars that the mission intends to raise — to restore the original 1800 painting.

But Maldonado’s piece isn’t leaving the mission. It will be hung someplace else. “It’s a part of the mission’s history too,” Lawrence Adams said.

“New Attempt to Identify Techniques Used by Antonio Stradivari,” *SciNews.com*, 07/08/2013

Dr. Marco Malagodi from the Università degli Studi di Pavia in Italy and his colleagues have used innovative methods to identify the techniques used by Antonio Stradivari, the celebrated Italian violin maker whose craftsmanship to this day baffles scientists.

The importance of Stradivari’s work lies in his craftsmanship, the quality of the materials used and the finishes on the instruments’ surfaces. Dr. Malagodi’s team used different diagnostic techniques to identify the characteristics and composition of the materials in an original Stradivari violin top plate.

They also studied surface coatings and decorations. The findings appear in the journal *Applied Physics A – Materials Science & Processing*. Their analyses revealed the absence of varnish layers on the surface of the top plate as a result of extended and excessive restoring.

The scientists also identified the dye used for the black layers of the purflings – three strips of wood, glued together and set in as a decorative detail, encircling the outline of the violin,

just inside the edge, and the characteristics of the black and white elements of the decorations, which confirmed that Stradivari used ancient techniques of wood coloring.

They then copied the top plate based on their discoveries, using materials similar to those identified on the original Stradivari, and carried out the same detailed analyses for comparison.

“These findings represent an important step in the study of the materials used by violin makers during the second half of the 17th century in Northern Italy,” Dr. Malagodi and colleagues said.

“Palace Hotel Announces Return of Pied Piper painting,” *SFGate*, 08/07/2013

After a boisterous outcry from the public following its removal, the Pied Piper of Hamelin will be returning to the Palace Hotel.

The painting by Maxfield Parrish, valued by the hotel at somewhere between \$3 million and \$5 million, had hung in the Pied Piper bar at the hotel almost continuously since it was commissioned in 1909. Despite the fact that the painting is considered by many to be a cultural treasure, the hotel took it down in April and shipped it off to New York where it was slated to be auctioned off to the highest bidder.

“It is no longer practical for the hotel to display an original work of this value and cultural significance in a public area,” the hotel’s owners, Kyo-ya Hotels and Resorts, said in an April statement. But San Franciscans were having none of that. After a call from the mayor, criticism from art historians and a petition that garnered more than 1,200 signatures, the hotel has changed its tune.

“The response from the public was influential in the decision to keep the painting at the Palace Hotel,” said Christophe Thomas, General Manager of the Palace Hotel. “We are thrilled to announce the return of the beloved Pied Piper to its historic home.”

The Pied Piper spent its downtime in New York receiving an extensive restoration, removing what conservators called a “thick layer of superficial grime,” which accumulated on the painting after hanging in a smoky bar for more than 100 years.