**President's Letter**

**Katherine Holbrow**

Dear Members,

Greetings, and happy new year! 2014 is the Year of the Horse: a celebration of energy and ability. Let’s hope that means WAAC has a year of success and exciting activity ahead.

The WAAC annual meeting 2013 was a huge success! I’d like to thank outgoing WAAC President Nick Dorman for the fantastic meeting in Seattle. The talks were insightful, the Seattle Art Museum welcoming, and the weather hot and sunny. I particularly enjoyed the tour of the Olympic Sculpture Park, team-led by Nick and Liz Brown. The beautiful waterfront site offers a sublime backdrop to world-class monumental artworks and brings with it a range of challenging conservation problems (not to mention some interesting security videos).

Kudos to the great team who helped bring the meeting together, including Nick, Liz, Lauren Barach, and all our hosts at SAM. One of WAAC’s greatest strengths is its ability to offer insight across a range of specialties, and this meeting was no exception. Nancy Odegaard started the meeting with an eye-opening keynote address on the Kennewick Man, coming to grips with a complex, long-term collaboration involving numerous stakeholders and agendas—something that is more and more common in conservation today. Subsequent presentations ranged widely in subject—from needle felting to condition reporting, from Florentine paintings to public art complexes—but maintained the same high standard of ethics, scholarship, and polish. I left Seattle with a freshly renewed respect for conservators, a better understanding of the compromises and difficulties that arise daily in our field, and vast admiration for the amazing, creative solutions we manage to find every time.

Our outgoing WAAC Board also deserves a round of thanks. Members-at-large Pam Skiles and Sean Charette have completed their terms, and will be replaced by newly-elected MALs Sue Ann Chui and Yadin Laroquette. Claire Gerhard has also wrapped up her term as Secretary; she is being replaced by Denise Migdail. Welcome Denise! Members-at-Large Susi Friend and Elizabeth Homberger will continue in their positions for a second year. Chris Stavroudis (Membership Secretary), Carolyn Tallent (Newsletter Editor), Walter Henry (Web Editor), and Donna Williams (Publication Fulfillments) will continue in their appointments. Thanks, everyone, and welcome to the newly elected.

**Coming attractions: Annual Meeting 2014**

I’m looking forward to serving as your President this year, and wondering what I can bring to WAAC. An annual meeting in San Francisco is one thing, of course, hosted at the Asian Art Museum in the Civic Center Plaza. The proposed dates are September 8-12, 2014, so please mark your calendars now! The last WAAC meeting in San Francisco was held in 1999, so it is definitely time for another. This is a wonderful city in which to gather, with stellar scenery, good weather, and a really great bridge (two, actually). Bring your walking shoes, though, and prepare for some daunting hills. Details are still being worked out, but count on some really good restaurants, an angels’ project, and of course, a boat ride!

So it’s the Year of the Horse?

Immersed in an Asian museum as I am, it seems like a good idea to share a little bit of Chinese culture. What can we expect in 2014, astrologically speaking?

Historically, the horse provided fast, effective transportation and had a military function, so the Chinese horse is a symbol of travel and speedy success. Riding on horseback also indicated that the rider was from a noble or high ranking family, so people born in the Horse year are considered to care about dress, appearance, and speech. Horses are social, and like to compete and even show off. The horse is also connected to heat, fire, and the color red. Since red is also connected to love, the horse sign is treated as a romantic sign in the Chinese horoscope. So expect busy, goal-oriented schedules in the year of Horse, and pursue those goals with leadership and passion!
Regional News

Alaska

Helen Alten accepted the position of director at the Sheldon Museum and Cultural Center in Haines, Alaska. Northern States Conservation Center will emphasize their online training courses, www.museumclasses.org. Helen has reduced her teaching load, but will still be teaching some online courses each year. Brad Bredehoft has been promoted to general manager to oversee operations of Northern States Conservation Center in Minneapolis.

Ellen Carrlee has been leading the packing team for the Alaska State Museum’s approximately 40,000 items that must be moved to a new storage vault through a tunnel made of shipping containers during a 6-week window this spring. Info about the packing/rehousing/storage support techniques are detailed with dozens of images at http://ellencarrlee.wordpress.com/.

Scott Carrlee has been busy working on an IMLS funded professional development project that brings museum professionals from around the state to Juneau to help the Alaska State Museum prepare its collections for the move to a new storage building. When the project is complete 30 museum professionals from 15 institutions will have participated in this mentored training project.

Monica Shah was happy to welcome a new conservator to the Anchorage Museum Collections Department, Sarah Owens. Sarah recently finished a post-graduate conservation fellowship at the National Museum of the American Indian, where she worked on a variety of projects, and completed research on Yup’ik fur parkas, consulting with Yup’ik skin sewers. Prior to her work at NMAI, she has worked at the Historic Royal Palaces, National Museums of Scotland, and Metropolitan Museum of Art. She obtained her graduate degree in textile conservation from the University of Southampton (UK).

Regional Reporter:
Ellen Carrlee

Arizona

Martha Winslow Grimm is deep into costume made for the movies. She is treating a collection of Judy Garland costumes. While it does not include those ruby red slippers, the sparkly shoes will be in the Hollywood Costume exhibit opening in March at the Phoenix Art Museum, which originated at London’s Victoria and Albert Museum. She is organizing a Costume Society regional meeting in April which will include a symposium about creating costume for Hollywood movies.

Marilen Pool continues to work on the Basketry Project at the Arizona State Museum, moving from ethnographic to archaeological perishable collections in the new year. Marilen has also started working as a consultant on a three year grant with the Tucson Museum of Art on a storage upgrade project for their object collections. For the last few months Marilen has been conserving a collection of ceramic stations of the cross for the Franciscan Renewal Center in Scottsdale, AZ along with a variety of other objects for private clients.

Dana Senge and Maggie Hill-Kipling completed an extensive survey and identification of plastics in the National Park Service storage repository. Dana happily traveled to Edinburgh Scotland to attend the ICOM Metals 2013 conference. Brynn Bender and Dana worked at Bandelier National Monument, a park with natural disaster risks too great for collection storage, to pack and transport collections to

ARTICLES YOU MAY HAVE MISSED

Susanne Friend

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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.conservation-us.org/waac/.

Deadline
Contributions for the January Newsletter should be received by the Editor before April 4, 2014.
Regional News, continued

Tucson as well as prepare evacuation transport boxes for items on exhibit. Dana, Maggie, and Audrey Harrison skillfully rehoused over one-thousand historic textile items, which actually created much needed empty shelves for incoming collections. Bailey Kinskey treated ceramics, and Paige Hoskins treated basketry in the lab.

Nancy Odegaard, Jae Anderson, Werner Zimmt, Martina Dawley, and Joy Farley successfully removed arsenic from three Navajo textiles. Nancy and a team from the University of Arizona recently completed a project in cultural conservation with faculty from the University of Kabul in Afghanistan. Nancy will be teaching two courses in the Care and Management of Archaeological Repository Collections in Erbil, Iraq. Christina Bisculca received a grant to use Vis-NIR spectroscopy as part of a technical study the study of Hohokam pallets.

Brunella Santarelli continues to research the use of lead in early Basketmaker pottery designs. Ellyse Canosa continues to research reversible epoxies. Crista Pack is working on the basketry collections doing surveys, treatments, and designing storage solutions. Gina Watkinson completed her master’s degree in American Indian Studies (basketry topic) with a graduate Certificate in Heritage Conservation from the Drahman Institute. Madeleine Nieman is working on a wide variety of objects including the difficult treatment of a folded and fused oilcloth with a painting on the back. Katie Belton is working on a large ceramic vessel that was completely covered in aged masking tape. Many lab members, students, and volunteers continue to work on the new visible vault for the basketry collections.

Teresa Moreno has been working closely with ASM’s Curator of Photographic Collections researching the needs of the museum’s more than 525,000 photographic prints, negatives, and transparencies to make much needed improvements to the collections’ storage environment. She continues to work preparing objects for exhibition and loan. Most recently she has done condition assessments on select photogravures by Edward Curtis which are being displayed in a three-part installation at ASM in a new exhibit titled Curtis Reframed.

Teresa is also advising on the development of new permanent and temporary exhibits to highlight ASM’s collections both at ASM and in other locations on the campus. One such exhibit is being developed for installation in the UA historic ‘Old Main’ building. Constructed in 1891 as the first UA building, it is undergoing historic preservation and will soon house the administrative offices of the UA President. Teresa is working with and advising colleagues from ASM, the UA Center for Creative Photography, the UA Flandrau Science Center, and the UA Libraries Special Collections on the environmental, lighting, and security needs for exhibiting collections in a historic building.

Last fall Teresa guest lectured in a UA class that focused on critical issues for museums in the 21st century and assisted UA graduate students with the analysis of objects which they selected for their own student curated exhibit case. Teresa continues to serve on the UA Faculty Senate and last fall began serving a two-year term on the UA Faculty Senate Executive Committee. Additionally, she continues her research on ASM’s silver jewelry collection.

Regional Reporter:
Brynn Bender

A Correction
In the process of cutting and pasting together the parts of the remembrances of Victoria Blyth Hill in the last issue, I inadvertently put the wrong name on the first segment. It was actually by Nancy Thomas from LACMA. My apologies.
Hawaii

Kent Severson completed work on the openwork marble screens (or jali) that make up the pavilion on the roof of Doris Duke’s bedroom at Shangri La in early August. With that, attention has turned to preparation of the rooms below, Doris Duke’s bedroom, dressing, and bath rooms, known as the Mughal Suite, for presentation to the public in fall of 2014. Richly decorated with inlaid marble and jali screens, these spaces have never before been opened to the public. The design phase is nearly complete, including plans for new vitrines to highlight Doris Duke’s collection of Mughal jewelry, enamels, and gem encrusted jade vessels, new LED lighting, and a selection of furniture and other collection items dating from the late 1930s. Electrical upgrades are wrapping up, as are the difficult repairs to the elaborate bronze frames around the sliding screen, glass, and marble pocket doors and windows.

Pre-program conservation intern Liane Na’auao was accepted to the Buffalo training program and left Shangri La in September; she is sorely missed. Kent is now assisted in preparing the space for the exhibition by pre-program conservation interns Kat Harada and Kayleen Roberts, and by local conservation technician Gilbert Martinez, a recent addition to the Shangri La team. We have had site visits from some of our regular consultants, such as Molly Lambert and Ann Svenson, as well as a new visitor from L.A., John Fidler. We are grateful for their help in sorting out the difficulties of conservation in the challenging shoreline environment of Shangri La.

In Asia, Dawne Steele Pullman has finished extensive inpainting on a Lin Fengmian that was heavily damaged by a previous cleaning, and addressed environmental damages on an Edward Seago painting, as well as stabilized a Sanyu. Back in the islands she has been working on paintings by Joan Mitchell, Vu Cao Dam, and Diane Hansen Young. She was also in the UK surveying a private collection of contemporary art.

Thor Minnick recently completed an extensive nine month treatment of a koa and kou wood desk made in the 1860s by Honolulu cabinet maker Major T. Donnell for the Secretary of the Legislative Assembly of the Monarchy Period. He is presently working on an Italian rosewood, ivory, and ebony table from the 19th C. for Shangri La. He continues to find himself inundated by Hawaiian umeke (calabash) in need of help.

Rie and Larry Pace attended the AIC meeting in Indianapolis. In the fall they had a pre-program intern, Josie Maldonado, working for them. Prior to coming to Hawaii Josie had been an intern with Beverly Perkins at the Buffalo Bill Historical Center.

Regional Reporter: D. Thor Minnick

Los Angeles

Decorative Arts and Sculpture Conservation at the J. Paul Getty Museum welcomes graduate intern Briana Fenton. A 2011 graduate of the Conservation Center of the Institute of Fine Arts, NYU, Briana comes to the museum most recently from the Musée de Sèvres where she coordinated the conservation of scores of porcelains damaged during WWII. At the Getty, Briana is working on a range of projects with an emphasis on the treatment of outdoor bronzes. Also new to the department is conservation assistant Rainers Knecht who is on temporary contract to assist in the maintenance and treatment of outdoor sculpture.

Julie Wolfe is working on the use of carbon dioxide blasting for removal of outdoor bronze coatings for the museum’s sculpture collection. The removal of 20-year-old Incralac and recoating of the bronzes will be a long-term project. Julie and her husband Alan Phenix of the Getty Conservation Institute will be visiting professors at the Conservation Center, IFA, NYU for the Spring quarter 2014. The subject of Alan’s course will be solvents; Julie’s course topic will be the conservation of public art.

Jan Dorscheid, the department’s former intern, and Arlen Heginbotham completed a major treatment on an opulent Parisian Régulateur, decorated in Boulle marquetry and gilt bronze, ca. 1744 by Jean Pierre Latz. The clock was on loan from the Cleveland Museum of Art and was conserved at the Getty in exchange for exhibition in the museum’s galleries. The treatment took approximately six months and used several newly developed techniques for the removal of old varnishes and corrosion.

Tonny Beentjes, Head of Metal Conservation at the University of Amsterdam, was recently a visiting scholar in the department. While at the Getty, Tonny conducted research into 19th-century French bronze casting technology, with a concentration on foundry practices at the time of Auguste Rodin.

This spring David Bourgarit, head of the Metal Group at the Centre de Recherche et de Restauration des Musées de France will be a Getty Conservation Institute visiting scholar, collaborating with Decorative Arts Conservation on a database of 16th to 18th-century French bronze alloys.

David, Jane Bassett, and Francesca Beower are editors of the Archetype Publications volume French Bronze Sculpture 16th – 18th Century: Materials and Techniques (Bronzes Français: Matériaux et Techniques de la Sculpture en bronze du XVIème au XVIIIème siècle) that will be released this month. Three WAAC members: Jane, Arlen Heginbotham and John Griswold have authored papers in the volume.

Jen Kim started as associate conservator at the Autry National Center. This past summer as supervising archaeological lab conservator, she also went back to Sardis, Turkey. She has also attended the 9th North American Textile Conservation Conference in San Francisco. The Autry assistant conservator Ozge Gencay-Ustun went to Antioch Turkey to join the Tell Atchana excavation team as a conservator. She worked in the Antakya Archaeological Museum for the opening of the Tell Atchana exhibit in the new museum.

In March 2013 Ozge also helped Allison Lewis and Vanessa Muros for the fourth successful workshop entitled: “Flaking, fragile, and fragmentary: safe lifting and
Regional News, continued

storage of delicate objects in the field.” They have been presenting the workshop at the annual meetings of the Society for California Archaeology since 2009. Previous three years Molly Gleeson and Liz Werden were also on board.

SCS finished two great projects to end a great 2013: the conservation/restoration of the historic plaster decorative facade on the exterior of the 1920s El Palacio Apartments in West Hollywood and the conservation of the Aztec Brewery interior, the first micro brewery in California, in El Cajon. The brewery was closed in the 1960s but the interior decor and bar was saved for the future. It is now being conserved and installed, after a few exhibitions in and around the San Diego area, in the Horton Plaza in San Diego. The SCS conservator, Jill Hari, just successfully finished conserving a damaged Yves Klein torso, with the help of research from expert Yves Klein scholars in Europe.

Rosa Lowinger & Associates was recently awarded public art conservation contracts with the San Diego Airport Authority, Arizona State University, and the cities of Kansas City, MO, and Olympia, Washington. Rosa is guest editing the vandalism-themed issue of Change Over Time, the University of Pennsylvania’s theoretical journal on built heritage.

LACMA will also have a new Mellon fellow, Peter Konarzewski, a student from the program for Preservation and Conservation of Works of Art on Paper, Archival and Library Materials at the State Academy of Art and Design in Stuttgart, Germany. He will be concentrating on identification, exhibiton, and storage of the color photographs in the collection. He will also conduct an analytical survey of the light sensitivity of LACMA’s digital prints.

In January Antoinette Dwan taught a two day workshop at the paper conservation lab at LACMA in stain reduction with ammonium citrate and sodium borohydride. The workshop was organized by Janice Schopfer and partially funded by Peter Loughrey of Los Angeles Modern Auctions.

Funded by a generous grant from the Ahmanson Foundation LACMA’s Conservation Center has purchased VIDISCO digital X-radiography equipment and a pulsed 270 kV X-ray source. The whole system is battery operated and portable. Allison Akbaroff and Frank Preusser have begun to develop SOPs for a variety of object types and spaces. They have generated X-radiographs of paintings and a silver object. They have also used the equipment to X-ray elements of the Watts Towers to assist in the design of conservation measures. Once all procedures have been developed, the system will replace the current film based radiography units.

Elma O’Donoghue treated a Lorser Feitelson in LACMA’s collection for the exhibition 4 Abstract Classicists which opened last December.

Carolyn Tallent will be custodian of Robin (RH Conservation Engineering) Hodgson’s low mass hot suction table for the next year. Anyone who would like a demonstration is welcome to get in touch.

Regional Reporter: Virginia Rasmussen

New Mexico

Susan Barger wanted to share the article “Idle Hands Do Good Work” by Tom Sharpe in the New Mexican. Here is a summary of the article: “Three National Park Service employees on furlough due to the federal government’s partial shutdown found something to do with their free time: slapping mud plaster on San Miguel Mission, a Santa Fe landmark known as the oldest church.”

Lauren Meyer, a conservator with the cultural resource program at the Santa Fe office of the National Park Service, filled cracks on the south side of the adobe structure’s second level. George Prothro, an archaeologist, and Rachel Adler, a conservator with Bandelier National Monument, added new layers of plaster to the parapets. San Miguel Mission was first constructed in 1610, destroyed in 1640, rebuilt in 1645, destroyed again in the 1700s, and rebuilt again in 1710. Today it is one of Santa Fe’s most popular tourist attractions.

With the help from a grant from the Save America’s Treasures organization, Cornerstones began a three-year rehabilitation project in 2010. Jake Barrow, program director at Cornerstone’s Community Partnerships worked alongside with chief plasterer Don Sean, regular volunteer Candy McKinley, as well as Meyer, Prothro and Adler. Cornerstones also has projects underway on La Sala (Galisteo) and the trading post at Santo Domingo Pueblo (Kewa Pueblo).

Silvia Marinas-Feliner, in cooperation with Stephanie Taylor of the NMSU Art Gallery, recently created a new exhibition Conserving Tradition: Caring for the NMSU Retablo Collection at the University Art Gallery which celebrates two NMSU treasures: the university’s renowned collection of 19th-century Mexican devotional paintings called “retablos” and the Museum Conservation Program for undergraduate students (the program also serves many graduate
students in programs such as anthropology and history). The exhibition showed both the retablos from the NMSU collection and the conservation work done by the students.

Also, this past year a group of ten students from the NMSU Museum Conservation Program participated in the annual restoration of the bronze sculpture The Traders. In addition to this, two of Silvia Marin’s students, Maria Marin and Whitney Jacobs, restored a bronze sculpture by Glenn Goodacre titled Tomita, 1998. Garry Carruthers, the NMSU President, hired the Conservation Program Lab to restore it during the spring semester.

NMSU Museum Conservation Program student, Lyndy Bush, worked as an intern at the Smithsonian Institute, National Museum of Natural History (Botany Department). She was restoring their 1,000 herbarium specimens that are dried on paper that had been damaged after hurricane Sandy. She worked under Catherine Hawks, conservator for the National Museum of Natural History and Lisa Palmer. She was also awarded $1,500 from the Stockman Scholarship. Cassandra Canada, another Marin-Feliner student, also got a summer internship at the Smithsonian Institution, National Air and Space Museum. She also attended the Annual Meeting and Museum Expo by the American Alliance of Museums in Baltimore, at an invitation from the Smithsonian.

Regional Reporter: Silvia Marin-Feliner

Rocky Mountain Region

Beverly Perkins, chief conservator at the Center of the West in Cody, Wyoming has been promoted to Director of the Museum Services Division. Bev will be supervising the registration and collections staff and facilitating the use of the Center’s collections.

The conservation lab of the Center of the West hosted three interns this past autumn. Grace Walters carried out over 60 treatments and designed archival and accessible housing for 15th-18th-century English and American manuscripts on vellum with wax seals. Abby Brown worked on many interesting projects including a 15th-century French tapestry. Yacoub Soleiman, an Egyptian conservation student, spent the autumn working on the repair of many books.

Judy Greenfield has recently completed various treatments including: cleaning and repairing an inlaid marble tabletop belonging to History Colorado Center and disassembling and reassembling a Mayan bowl. In addition, Stephanie Cashman, a pre-program intern has been, under Bev’s supervision, treating a large terra cotta sculpture and a miniature Chinese tableau of a court scene.

Hosted by the Denver Art Museum, Gina Laurin organized a two-day introductory workshop for learning to use the Bruker Tracer handheld XRF. Bruce Kaiser instructed museum staff, area conservators, and staff from the neighboring PaleoResearch Institute on use, application, and interpretation of this type of analysis.

Allison McCloskey and Julie Benner are working on a selection of quits for an upcoming rotation in the textile art gallery. Stay tuned for upcoming blog posts on their efforts on the Denver Art Museum website.

Courtney (Von Stein) Murray has been diligently working on a range of objects with Kate Moomaw and Gina Laurin. Along with other museum staff, Courtney and Kate conducted an interview with Brazilian artist Ernesto Neto to inform the preservation of his interactive piece, Walking in Venus Blue Cave. Under the supervision of Gina, Courtney has been researching, analyzing, and treating two Ecuadoran polychrome wood figurines from the museum’s New World collection.

Sarah Melching treated a range of graphic art output by Herbert Bayer now on view. In addition Sarah and Caitlin Whaley prepared a representation of graphic art posters from the American Institute for Graphic Arts (AIGA) collection for the politically-inspired exhibit, Drawn to Action.

Regional Reporter: Paulette Reading

Pacific Northwest

Jack Thompson from Thompson Conservation Lab, conducted two CAP surveys: Oregon Maritime Museum in Portland and the Shasta Historical Society, in Redding, California. He visited the Glucksman Conservation Centre located in the Sir Duncan Rice Library at the University of Aberdeen, in Scotland, while on his way to a small village where his paternal ancestors farmed until 1883, when they emigrated to America. While there he donated a silver award won by his gr. grandfather in 1872 to the local museum. After 38 years in the business he has decided that it is time to begin winding things down. There are still a few projects to finish, but he’s already begun donating items from his research library and long-term testing projects. The American Bookbinding Museum in San Francisco and the Cooperstown program in Buffalo, NY, have been recipients of large donations of materials. He hasn’t yet gotten around to dealing with the 4,000+ volume research library and a collection of stuffed filing cabinets.

In July and August J. Claire Dean had the pleasure of working with UCLA Getty Program summer intern Caitlin Mahony at the Hibulb Cultural Center (HCC), and Caitlin’s supervisor, Ellen Pearlstein, also joined them for a couple of weeks. Claire continues to develop conservation activities at the HCC and is especially busy coordinating a conference on the conservation of poles, posts, and canoes to be held at the HCC this coming July. Information and a call for papers will have been posted by the time this goes to press.

From Alice Bear Conservation of Works of Art on Paper: Intern Josh Summer was of great assistance in the preparation for the WAAC Angles Project at the Black Historical Society of Kit-sap County. Alexandra Whedbee and Monica Cavagnaro put in long hours of sewing for the completion of a 2 year Thangka restoration project. Archivist James Ghormley has recently joined the
staff to assist in processing the Washington Art Consortium survey the studio is completing for WAC’s new Safeco Art Collection.

Things are still settling out after a major reorganization at the Royal BC Museum last year. The staff has been busy with new projects, programs, and priorities. George Field has been on the road with loans to Amsterdam, Montreal, and Vancouver. In Montreal he had the good fortune to oversee a maintenance run of the RBCM John Lennon’s Rolls Royce at the Grand Prix track. George also travelled with an intern and Jana Stefan to Alert Bay, where they assisted after a devastating fire at the U’Mista Cultural Centre. It was a great learning experience in less than ideal conditions. We wish U’Mista the best as they continue with their collections salvage treatments.

The museum bid farewell to an amazing crop of interns this past summer. Emily Turgeon-Brunet joined the RBCM from Queen’s University, spending most of her time in the Archives Lab. Courtney Von Stein joined the team from the Winterthur program, assisting in the Objects Lab. And the lab ‘stole’ Salma Nalil from Collections Management to round out the team. Together they were a formidable force of enthusiasm and smiles, as well as a treasure trove of new ideas. Thanks for the great summer, ladies. During the fall Stephanie Chipilski joined RBCM from Fleming College. Stephanie is all over the museum, carrying out research and treatments, as well as blogging and travelling as a special guest of UNESCO.

Lisa Bengston wrapped up her public conservation project in the galleries, entertaining and educating visitors as she completed a complex and protracted treatment on an early 20th-century Chinese paper lantern. Fortunately the interns all helped out with the treatment and a plethora of volunteers took some of the pressure off by interpreting some of the work for the public. Based on survey results and anecdotal evidence, it was an extremely successful program. We hope to reprise it at the next opportunity.

Several conservators and interns travelled to Vancouver to update training and certification for XRF analysis. And a great time was had by all at the regular spring meeting of the Pacific Conservation Group. Thanks to Carol Brynolison and the Vancouver Museum for their hospitality and planning work.

Kjerstin Mackie has taken over responsibilities for the museum’s archaeology collection, initiating a massive rehousing project that will greatly enhance the preservation and accessibility of the artifacts. She and Colleen Wilson have expanded their expertise in silver threads to polish silver on display in the permanent gallery. It’s a stretch, but they’re doing an admirable job. Colleen has also completed an intriguing reconstruction of former Lieutenant Governor Thomas Robert McNiven’s uniform, literally piecing it back together to solve an age old mystery.

Kay Garland is deep into cold storage, preparing materials and working with Betty Walsh to fine tune procedures for the first retrievals. Kay has also begun the dreaded process of identifying deteriorated Polyplank in collections storage areas in anticipation of replacement with Ethafoam.

During the summer, Betty Walsh condition reported 18 photographs from the Harold Mortimer- Lamb collection. Nine were identified by XRF as platinum prints. She performed minor treatments on 8 prints. The works will be exhibited at the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria. In October, she attended the workshop “Photographic Conservation for Book and Paper Conservators,” delivered by Gawain Weaver and Jennifer Olsen in Pasadena, California.

Kasey Lee recently had the good fortune to complete some conservation treatments and even a week of de-installation and condition reporting as the Race to the End of the Earth exhibition was dismantled. A consolidation of committees and concerted effort to decrease the number of meetings has been quite liberating.

The Royal BC Museum hosted the fall meeting of the Pacific Conservation Group in November. Presentations were most fascinating and the opportunity to network with our colleagues most enjoyable. Don’t miss the next PCG meeting in Vancouver next spring!

Kristen Kern presented seven disaster preparedness workshops in September and October as part of the IMLS funded Oregon Connecting to Collections program to train its MentorCorps participants and interested community members.

Regional Reporter: Corine Landrieu Landrieu Conservation

San Diego

No news reported.

Regional Reporter: Frances Prichett

San Francisco Bay Area

Heida Shoemaker, private paper and photograph conservator working in Berkeley, returned from a trip to Mali, West Africa in October. She organized and taught a workshop on photograph conservation in the capital city of Bamako to the photography students at CFP (Cadre de Promotion pour la Formation en Photographie). The workshop included history and identification of photo processes, deterioration, environmental issues, storage, and exhibition. She combined the lectures with hands-on activities of process id, washing, tear repair, and mounting techniques. Heida also worked with the Malian photographer Malick Sidibé, whom she had met the previous year in Bamako. She developed and began the implementation of a project for cleaning a selection of his 2” x 2” negatives, and re-housing them in good-quality envelopes and boxes.

Elisabeth Cornu taught several exhibition conservation workshops in November 2013 in Buenos Aires, Argentina: one at the Museology Program of Universidad del Museo Social Argentina and a second one at the conservation training program of the Universidad de San Martin. In late January, Elisabeth will travel to Oran, Algeria for a preventive conservation consultancy at the Zabana National Museum of Algeria. In addition to sharing US conservation solutions, this will give her a chance to practice Arabic.
In August Victoria Binder, associate paper conservator at the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, traveled to Japan to participate in a three week course on Japanese paper conservation techniques organized by ICCROM and the National Research Institute for Cultural Properties, Tokyo. The course consisted of two weeks of lectures and hands on practicals in Tokyo and a study tour to Kyoto, Nagoya, and Mino visiting traditional craftsmen and conservation studios. Victoria has called it one of the highlights of her career to date.

Rowan Geiger left her position as head of conservation at SFO Museum to run her business, SF Art Conservation, full time. Before her departure, Rowan and Alisa Eagleston-Cieslewicz conserved objects for exhibits on the history of airline signage, the history of the zeppelin, Japanese toys, and the America’s Cup yacht races. They also prepared works from the San Francisco Arts Commission collection for installation in the newly-renovated Boarding Area E at SFO. Rowan is currently supervising a variety of studio and outdoor projects, and SF Art Conservation will provide object treatment, consultation, project management, collection surveys, and maintenance for museums, collections, and private clients.

Martha Little has accepted a full-time position at the UC Berkeley Library Conservation Lab. After 26 years in private practice this will be a big change, though she will have a small set-up in her new home in the East Bay and expects to continue to do the occasional freelance job. She will also be getting married in April.

The de Young was honored to be one of the hosts for the North American Textile Conservation Conference (NATCC). Not only were the talks presented at the museum, but Richard Wolbers’ two-day cleaning workshop was held in the wet room of the Textile Conservation Lab. An informative and enjoyable time was had by all.

Recent News, continued

Texas

Julie Unruh has returned from working with staff at the National Museum of Civil in Constantine, Algeria, on a project to condition check, stabilize, number, and rehouse the Museum’s 19,000 archeological icons.

Sylvie Pénichon recently left her position as Conservator of Photographs at the Amon Carter Museum of American Art to join the Art Institute of Chicago as their newly appointed conservator in the Department of Photography. She succeeds Doug Severson who retired in July after successfully leading the program for 33 years.

Anne Zanikos conserved a mural painted by Porfirio Salinas on the dining room walls of a private home. The mural was extracted and treated to allow reconstruction of the room inside a gallery at the Witte Museum in San Antonio. In November, Anne presented on the conservation of paintings and frames at the Conference on Historic House Museums sponsored by the McFaddin-Ward House in Beaumont Texas.

Lindsey Reynolds, a San Antonio, TX high school senior, chose art conservation as her “Mentorship Course” topic and conducted an interview recently with Mark van Gelder about the field. Mark also has been working on the treatment of a newly acquired painting in the Texas State Capitol collection and a suite of four paintings in the Texas Governor’s Mansion collection.

Regional Reporter:
Ken Grant

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.

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Remote Condition and Maintenance Cost Assessment of the Washington State Art Collection, 2011  
by Peter Malarkey, Jessica Kottke, and Janae Huber

Project Summary

In 2011, conservator team Peter Malarkey and Jessica Kottke performed a unique assessment of the Washington State Arts Commission’s state art collection, one of the largest and oldest collections of public art in the United States. The collection includes 4,500 artworks located at public schools, colleges, universities, and state agencies across Washington. The assessment — of works that range in scale from 2D works on paper to major landscape installations to technology-based artworks — answered the fundamental question: what resources are needed to care for this large, diverse, and geographically spread collection?

The team and Arts Commission agreed that an object-by-object assessment was not presently feasible. Thus the assessment that was carried out applied a combination of statistical analysis and experience-based, subjective reasoning to a statistical subset of the state art collection. When applied to the collection as a whole, it gives the Commission a picture of the needs of its large and vulnerable group of artworks. The resulting report has been the foundation for numerous management decisions and has resulted in additional resources allocated for the collection’s care.

Project Background

Founded in 1974, the tax-funded collection consists of over 4,500 individual artworks by artists of regional and national significance. It is distributed across 36 of 39 Washington counties with artworks sited in public schools, community colleges, universities, and a variety of state agencies. The artworks occur in a range of scales and media including wood, stone, metal, paper and paint-based media, plastic, glass, organic material, and digital technology. Funding for conservation of the collection is capped by the State Legislature at $100,000 biennially, making care of this diverse collection a particular challenge.

The Commission’s collections policies maximize the accessibility and visibility of artworks within Washington’s communities and maintain its original mission of conservation and development of the state’s artistic resources. In order to operate within the conservation cap and maximize its resources the Commission began, in recent years, strengthening its preventative conservation policies and procedures to more effectively manage the collection.

The development of preventative conservation models and the implementation of a preliminary conservation review during artwork acquisitions have decreased the Commission’s reliance on costly, reactive preservation efforts and facilitated the long term success of the collection by increasing supervision, information gathering, and quality control of newly acquired artworks.

To further implement these strategies, the Commission hired conservators Kottke and Malarkey to assess the overall condition of the collection in order to give some idea of what might be needed to perform necessary short term conservation and maintenance and to help develop a realistic budget for ongoing preservation. The assessment that the team developed provides a profile of expected overhead for the Commission which covers hands-on treatment, administration, and transportation for the artworks based on size, material scope, age, and geographical distribution.

To approximate a cost range for the conservation and maintenance of objects in the collection, the team developed minimum and maximum treatment overheads, in hours, for individual artworks in a sample set of 8% of the collection, or 347 pieces. This was then scaled to represent all 4,500 pieces. Most fact finding for the sample set of artworks was based on individual records in the state’s MIMSY database and office documentation and was corroborated by site visits to 28 artworks.

While neither the contract nor the methodology were conceived as a strict statistical cost analysis, the outcome of the process has revealed the extent of overdue conservation and maintenance costs and has provided a useful tool for the Commission’s ongoing management and budgeting initiatives.

Summary of Overheads

To arrive at an overall condition and cost assessment for each piece in the sample set, the team applied current best practices as defined by the AIC and considered basic conservation treatments such as reframing, new vitrines, operational inspections, cleaning, recoating, stabilization, damage repair, and loss compensation.

The base overhead was estimated, not in terms of financial cost, but rather in the potential number of hours expected for treatment, administration, and travel associated with each piece based on its sitting and geographic location. This hourly approach provided a basis for applying real-world administrative variables such as inflation, varying contracted professional rates, in-house versus contracted labor, and fluctuating travel factors such as fuel and mileage costs, and the grouping of multiple artworks into a single travel circuit.

To achieve current approximate treatment costs, this hourly basis had rates applied, of $35/hour for administration and in-house labor, and $100/hour for contracted labor. Variation factors, described below, were applied to account for large unknowns about the artworks’ actual conditions.

The team built a sample set to approximate the overall collection makeup based on eight characteristics with the greatest impact on the durability and condition of the artworks:

- size
- material type
- age
- agency type (i.e. public school, college, university, or state agency)
- geographic location
- portability
- indoor/outdoor siting
- whether artwork was on view or in storage

The pieces selected for the sample set also needed to be well described in the database, whose records are not robust due to incomplete reporting during the early years of heavy accessioning with the Commission.
Remote Condition and Maintenance Cost Assessment of the Washington State Art Collection, continued

Estimating Overhead
The team applied two similar and simple formulas which are distinguished from one another by the application of three distinct variation factors in the second formula.

The first formula was used for estimating minimum overhead for an artwork:

\[
(\text{Sales Tax} \times \text{Estimated Treatment Cost}) + \text{Administration} + \text{Documentation} + \text{Travel} = \text{Estimated Minimum Treatment Cost}
\]

The second formula was used for the maximum estimated overhead for the same artwork:

\[
[\text{Sales Tax} \times (\text{Estimated Treatment Cost} \times \text{Risk Factor})] + [(\text{Administration} + \text{Documentation}) \times \text{Administrative Variation Factor}] + (\text{Travel} \times \text{Travel Variation Factor}) = \text{Estimated Maximum Treatment Cost}
\]

Variation Factors
Administrative variation
Administrative variation was given an additional 10%, to account for unknowns or administrative time variables such as email accumulation, repeat phone calls, varying paperwork, etc.

Travel variation
Travel variation was set at 30%, to account for variations in fuel costs, traffic, road problems, etc. The travel overhead associated with care of the collection is currently estimated at 35% of the total cost, though this would be mitigated by grouping of projects into one trip.

Risk variation
The more complicated variation was set for the risk factor. The team defined risk as the amount of potential threat possible for a given piece, based on elements of its construction, its age, its location, and the deaccession history of the agency responsible for the piece, based on failed condition or actual loss.

In order to approximate the amount of potential risk to a piece’s ongoing good condition, the team devised a weighted chart where points representing risk could be set for eight criteria. Each criterion was assigned up to 6 possible risk points, with some exclusion possible. For example, an artwork less than 10 years old was denied the highest risk potentials, while an older piece was denied the lowest risk potentials due to the likelihood of some damage or deterioration. Similarly, a piece sited out of doors was denied low risks, based on the overall more rapid deterioration of outdoor pieces, while indoor-sited works were denied the highest risk potential.

For each piece, the total risk points were tallied, and fell among three risk categories based on their sum. The three risk categories were assigned a different variation factor to be added to the base formula. As such, a piece with a risk total of between 8 and 19 was assigned a risk variation of 20%, a piece with a risk total of 20 to 33 was given a variation factor of 40%, and a higher risk-rated piece, of between 34 and 45 was assigned an additional overhead of 60%, or over half, of its minimum estimated treatment overhead.

Each of the 347 pieces in the sample set was rated according to this method and formed the basis of calculating total potential labor, travel, and administrative overheads for the collection as a whole.

Overhead Calculation Table
On the opposite page is the worksheet the team used to remotely estimate the potential minimum and maximum overheads for treating an artwork. This process incorporated available database information, hard copies of any existing evaluations or treatment records, and subjective thought based on the conservators’ experience working with public art and what could be known about the siting of each piece.

The upper table consists of a conservative estimate, in hours, to determine a piece’s minimum expectable treatment time, which served as a base. The lower table was used for risk calculation and was applied to the minimum overhead, to establish a maximum expectable treatment overhead computed in hours. The section on the following page covers administrative and travel costs.

Indoor siting was permitted less potential risk than outdoor siting, to reflect deterioration from environmental elements.

Material risk was based on the inherent fragility of a given artwork’s medium or construction.

The age of the artwork had corresponding risk possibilities, in ascending risk based on age.

Being off view meant that the piece was either in storage at a Commission facility (minimum risk) or that it was either damaged beyond exhibitable condition, or potentially misplaced within the site.

Information quality reflected the amplitude of risk that could be applied based on how much guesswork about condition was actually needed—the less knowledge about a piece, the greater assumed risk.

Complexity refers to moving parts or variable components, such as mixed media or electronic pieces.

Portability refers to the possibility that the piece has been relocated to a more vulnerable position within the site, or has potentially been misplaced.

The four agency categories refer to the condition-based deaccession histories of the agencies, and the likelihood that a piece’s condition had been correspondingly compromised.
Location: Washington State University, Pullman, WA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minimum Treatment Estimate</th>
<th>Subtotal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Location related work including setup and takedown</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stabilize</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clean object: surface. Work Speed: (eg 4 sqft/hr)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clean object: abrasions</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structural damage repair</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss compensation, replace parts</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New coating</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservation Materials</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Framing/vitrine without UV</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Framing/vitrine with UV</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Add UV plex</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk Factor</th>
<th>Relative scale of 1 to 6 (1 is least risk and 6 is highest risk)</th>
<th>Subtotal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indoor</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age: 0 to 9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age: 10 to 19</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age: ‘20 to 29’</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age: ‘30+’</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off view</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information quality: No idea</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information quality: Some idea</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information quality: Some detail</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information quality: Clear</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complexity</td>
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<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portability</td>
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<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency: Public Schools</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency: Colleges</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency: Universities</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agency: State Agencies</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Risk Value (9 to 46)</strong></td>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Risk Factor</strong></td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Low Risk Factor: 8 to 20 = 1.2) (Medium Risk Factor: 21 to 33 = 1.4) (High Risk Factor: 34 to 46 = 1.6)

| Sales Tax                                           | 1.086    |
Remote Condition and Maintenance Cost Assessment
of the Washington State Art Collection, continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Administration</th>
<th>Subtotal</th>
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<tr>
<td>Reports</td>
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<tr>
<td>Photodocumentation</td>
<td>0.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>MIMSY data entry</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variation factor</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.35</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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<table>
<thead>
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<th>Subtotal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Travel staff 1</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel Staff 2, if any, based on size</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lodging</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truck rental for pieces over 48” in any one length</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Per diem</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variation factor</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>42.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Estimated Cost            | 63.69    |

Site Visits
The team visited 28 different artworks at 12 locations, located in each of three different travel radii representing 2 hour, 4 hour, and 6 hour one-way trips from the administrative center.

Before visiting each artwork at the sites, the conservators estimated the amount of treatment time for each piece according to remotely available information and using the worksheet shown above. On the actual site visits the artworks were observed and estimated based on their true conditions and environments. The process provided a comparison between the remotely estimated and actual artwork conditions, by verifying the pertinence of the actual estimating criteria, and by giving a basis for the weighting of the risk fields.

The site visits also showed the variety of conditions and ways the artworks were being used, or in some cases, not used, as in the case of a group of digital/interactive artworks that were being stored with spare furniture and were no longer operable or serving their intended function as artworks.

Conclusions
The assessment report was not intended as a curatorial tool, but did include general recommendations for improved collection maintenance. Based on the analysis, the team was able to substantiate the following observations for administrative purposes:

- The collection is historically under-resourced.
- Overdue collection care compounds conservation costs.
- Collection care is enhanced by communication with centralized partner agency administrators (e.g. school districts), rather than onsite art location staff (e.g. school staff). This method improves both institutional memory and agency accountability.
- Public schools and community and technical colleges represent the highest risk agencies.
- Maintenance costs for larger, three-dimensional pieces are lower, per acquisition dollar, than for small, two-dimensional pieces.
- Obligations by partner agencies regarding site supervision and inventory reporting are generally underperformed.

Conclusions the team provided to the Commission were that the long-term success of preserving state-owned artwork depends upon improved funding for all activities pertaining to the preservation of the collection, improved co-stewardship between the Commission and partner agencies, and enhanced enforcement of obligations and agreements by partner agencies. In addition it was demonstrated that the Commission needed to increase hands-on professional staff time for travel, inventory, and care of artworks.

A second contractor built upon these conclusions with a focus on management and curatorial recommendations. Since the completion of this and the second report, the Commission has advanced its care of the collection in a number of ways: the Commission’s Conservation Technician position has increased from part to full time; the related travel and tool/equipment budgets have increased; collections staff now has a dedicated workspace space for conservation, mounting, and repair projects; the first comprehensive physical inventory of the collection is in the planning stages; the deaccession policy has been changed to support the formation of a standing deaccession committee; condition questions and response times for the regular electronic inventory have been improved; warrantee periods for newly acquired artworks have been increased; collection records are being prepared for a web-based searchable database, improving access to information on a year round basis for the public and partner agencies.

These accomplishments—while modest in the face of a collection of 4,500 objects spread across nearly 70,000 square miles—are all the more noteworthy given the economic recession and its effects on state government. The Commission as a whole experienced a 55% cut in state funds since 2009. Demonstrating the need for a greater investment in the State Art Collection and its care will continue to be a priority for collections staff, agency leadership, and board as they navigate changing standards in care and the very active public environments in which the artworks reside.
No matter the size or design, the one common element in all fountains is water. A fountain’s water chemistry can have the most degrading effect on an associated artwork, the basin, or the mechanical system. To maintain the optimum fountain performance in regard to appearance and preservation, some common basic approaches need be undertaken. After presenting some background information on water, monitoring, and maintaining water chemistry in fountains, this article will present a step by step outline to make the ongoing maintenance as simple as possible.

Background
Maintaining mineral content in water is of prime importance. Minerals held in suspension are measured in hardness, a term derived from the effect of particular water on soap. Hardness can be compared to levels of saturation, which is the state where a solution contains the maximum amount possible of dissolved solute in a stable situation under prevailing conditions of temperature and pressure. Soft water can be compared to unsaturated water. When the water is unsaturated it has the ability to hold more dissolved solids. Unsaturated water will leach minerals from stone, metals, masonry, or any available source including artwork. The opposite extreme is very hard or supersaturated water. In a supersaturated state the water cannot hold the amount of dissolved solids in suspension, and they will precipitate out of solution forming deposits referred to as scale. With fountains, mineral saturation is the goal (Smethurst 1988).

Hardness is affected by pH, temperature, and the amount of minerals in the water. These three things are interdependent. For example, in most cases a rise in temperature increases the solubility of minerals, meaning that if water starts off as balanced, but then the water temperature increases, the warmer water now has the ability to hold more minerals. However, the solubility of calcium carbonate decreases as the water temperature increases. To be sure that the water in a fountain is stable and at the point of saturation, the water is tested to measure pH, calcium hardness, temperature, and ability to hold stable pH. The results of these tests are then plugged into a calculation to find whether the water is balanced. The key to this calculation is finding something called the saturation index. If the saturation index indicates a measurement of more than 0.5, then scale will form on the artwork and other surfaces. If the saturation index is -0.5 or lower, then the water is corrosive and will attack the artwork and other surfaces.

No matter what type of fountain you have, balanced water or proper mineral saturation is the starting point for having a fountain with clean clear water that is aesthetically pleasing and least likely to harm the artwork or the fountain itself.

To find the saturation index, use a Taylor brand K-2006 test kit. Taylor brand kits are reliable, easy to use, and accurately measure the water constituents within the desired ranges. Other methods for testing exist, and as long as the recommended factors can be reliably tested then other procedures may be used. The K-2006 is available from your local pool or spa supply store, or online. The kit comes with all the reagents needed. Each individual factor is tested, then using the results of each test and a slide wheel calculator, the saturation index is determined. The approach for simple fountains is to test the water weekly and make adjustments as needed. This should only take about 10 to 20 minutes depending on whether or not adjustments are needed.

After achieving balanced water the rest of the maintenance depends on the mechanical system and its components. A simple fountain made up of a small reservoir, a pump, and a rubber hose has a few options for maintenance. More complex mechanical systems bring even more options for treating the water to keep it balanced, clean, and algae free.

As water evaporates more water can be added to the fountain until the water becomes too hard. Because of the limited capabilities of the mechanical system in a simple fountain and lack of any filtration system, it is likely the fountain will need to be periodically drained and refilled.
Algae

In a simple fountain there are few options for algae prevention. One option is to drain and clean the fountain whenever algae appear. The other option is to use an algaecide.

In swimming pools it is practical to use halogens such as chlorine and bromide or metals like copper or silver to control the unwanted growth. When chlorine is added to water, it forms hypochlorous acid. The formation of hypochlorous acid is considered the most germicidal of the chlorine compounds.

The current belief is that the chlorine penetrates the cell wall and then attacks the enzyme group within, resulting in the death of the organism (White 1992). However, chlorine can have undesired effects, for example, leaving the gallery smelling like a swimming pool. Chlorine and other halogens such as bromide can deteriorate the mechanical systems and the artwork that is in contact with the chlorinated water or vapor from these waters (Butler and Ison 1976).

Copper and silver are commonly used to control biological growth in water. Some studies have shown that for particular growths, a combination of silver and copper work better. Copper acts as an algaestat rather than an algaecide, retarding or preventing growth, but not actually killing established algae. Silver is an algaecide for pink algae, but otherwise is a better bactericide (Young and Lisk 1972).

Pool supply companies caution that the use of metallic algaecides can cause staining on hard surfaces. The use of metallic algaecides will eventually cause staining on hard surfaces such as basins or artwork. In swimming pools this is generally not a problem because there is an expectation that a pool will be re-lined at about the same time staining becomes apparent.

Another option for killing algae is to use a quaternary ammonium, also referred to as a “quat.” Quats are effective at killing algae by disrupting the cell wall. The downside of using a quat is that they have limited effect on a variety of biological growth and even more important, they can cause foaming in the water. An alternative to a quat is a Polyquat. Polyquats, like quats, are surface-active chemicals. Polyquats kill algae by adhering electrostatically to the outer cell membrane blocking them from nutrients. Polyquats will also act as a floccing agent for other organic matter.

Polyquats are sold for use in swimming pools, spas, and ponds. The bottles are never labeled as polyquats, but the active ingredient is poly[oxyethylene(dimethyliminio) ethylene(dimethyliminio) ethylene dichloride]. The directions on the bottle tell how much to add to the water each week. Rather than weekly measured doses of polyquats, use a Taylor K-1582 test kit to test for parts per million (PPM) quantities of available polyquat. The more organic matter in the water, the more polyquats will be used up. If the water is relatively clean, the polyquats will then continue to be available for an algaecide effect.

More advanced mechanical systems have a greater ability to control the water and restrict the water’s ability to support life. Adding a filter to the system will increase the ability to maintain balanced, algae free water. There are many levels of filtration, such as screens, activated charcoal, particulate filtration via pleated media, sand filters, and diatomaceous filters.

Along with filtration, some systems have UVC sanitizers, which are very effective at killing bacteria, viruses, and fungi. In these systems the killing of organisms is expressed as a product of the UVC energy and time. The effectiveness can be obtained with high-intensity UVC energy in a short...
amount of time, or a longer exposure to a low-intensity of UVC radiation. The germicidal effect happens between the wavelengths of 205 and 265nm. When the UVC radiation penetrates the organism, it disrupts unsaturated bonds, causing a lethal biochemical change (Huff et al 1965). UVC is easily blocked and can only penetrate a certain amount of water before losing its effectiveness. In order for UVC systems to work optimally, the water must be filtered before being exposed.

Another method of controlling biology is to limit the nutrients within the water. Nitrogen, phosphorus, sulfur, carbon, iron, and trace minerals are required for algae to grow.

When waters are enriched with an abundance of these elements, the water is considered eutrophic. In the eutrophic state the water is highly productive for biological growth. In terms of water quality, eutrophic waters are considered poor. Mesotrophic water has these nutrients, but in limited quantity, allowing some plant growth. In the mesotrophic state the water is considered good quality. For most fountains the goal is to have very non-productive waters, or oligotrophic water. Oligotrophic water is considered to be of excellent quality and very well suited for clean, algae free water in a fountain.

The nutrients required in large quantities for algae to grow are carbon, nitrogen, phosphorus, sulphur, and iron (Waite 1984). These nutrients are absorbed by plants in a fixed stoichiometric ratio. Limiting any one of them will limit algae’s ability to grow (refer to Snoeyink, Vernon, and Jenkins 1981. Water chemistry for more on the carbonate-carbon equilibrium system).

Phosphate is used in the formation of cell walls and is a crucial part of the DNA backbone structure (Seager and Slabaugh 2000). Limiting phosphate from the water will therefore limit organic growth (Waite 1984). Unless a fountain is supplied with a distiller or has a sand or diatomaceous filter, then practical control of phosphate is difficult.

Beginning of Maintenance
If possible, begin by draining the fountain’s water and clean all surfaces that come into contact with the water and those near the water. Using an appropriate brush, Triton X-100 (or other surfactant) and water, clean the surfaces until the visible algae is removed. D/2 may be used as the surfactant to be sure the algae are killed. Rinse until all the surfactant has been removed. If there is scale on the fountain or insoluble mineral salts, this would be the time to remove these too.

Refill the fountain with water. Most often a fountain will be filled with municipal or tap water which has both minerals and organics from plants and also from human sources such as fertilizers and other chemicals. If the water is supplied from a distiller, minerals will most likely need to added to the water. No matter the source of the water, it will have to be tested, and the water’s chemistry will need to be adjusted.

Maintenance
The following maintenance procedure applies to all fountains. The maintenance may sound time consuming, however, once the system is regularly maintained and these procedures become habitual, maintenance will be a relatively quick process.

Use a checklist and keep a written record every time maintenance is performed. This will be helpful in the long-term to establish patterns of change. Start by checking the condition of the water weekly. After a couple of months of testing and making adjustments, it may be found that twice or even once per month is enough. The larger the body of water, and especially if it is indoors, the more resistant to change it will be. Outdoor fountains will likely need more attention, and the amount of attention needed may also be seasonally adjusted. Record observations and the water chemistry test results. In time a relationships between the test data and recorded observations will begin to appear.

Begin with a visual and tactile inspection. Inspect for any algae visually and by feeling the wet surfaces. If surfaces feel slimy or slippery, then organic growth is beginning.

Example of Weekly Maintenance Checklist

| Inspect: |
| Date: |
| surface of sculpture |
| plumbing / mechanical |
| temperature Fahrenheit |
| total alkalinity PPM |
| pH |
| calcium hardness PPM |
| pH of saturation |
| saturation index |
| Polyquats PPM |

Notes:

If applicable, wash away dust and accumulated debris that settle around the fountain and may fall into the water. Also use a net to remove any debris from the water.

Inspect the mechanical system for anything out of the ordinary via a quick overall visual inspection of the exposed plumbing and mechanical system. If limiting phosphate is desired, then test for phosphate using the Taylor K-1106 test kit. Algae thrive at phosphate levels above 125 ppm of orthophosphate. Before overall water chemistry is adjusted, the phosphate level needs to be corrected if possible.
A Conservator’s Approach to Maintaining a Recirculating Water Fountain, continued

The easiest way to lower phosphate levels is by draining some of the water from the fountain and refilling with phosphate free water. If the fountain is supplied with municipally provided tap water, test the tap water before adding it to the fountain. If the tap water contains levels of phosphate above 125ppm then this method will not work. If the fountain is filled with distilled water, then this method will work.

Removing phosphate from water is possible using a chelating agent. Chelating is usually not practical in a fountain because once the phosphate is chelated, it must be removed or it may be released back into the water. If sand or diatomaceous filters are being used and they have the ability to be back-washed, then this might be worth exploring, otherwise it may not be reasonable to attempt lowering the phosphate levels.

After making adjustments to the water for phosphate levels, check the phosphate level again in 24 hours. Once the phosphate levels are acceptable, proceed with the rest of the water chemistry testing.

For all fountains, use the Taylor K-2006 test kit and a thermometer to test the condition of the water and find the saturation index number.

When the water chemistry test results indicate changes are needed, the additives should be placed directly into the holding tank or area where the most water is stored within the fountain. If the additives are dry chemicals, they should be diluted in water before being added to the fountain. This will allow for better dispersal. It is preferable to add too little rather than too much. It is easier to add more if needed than to remove excess. Be sure to measure the amount of water in the holding tank before calculating additions.

The following flow-chart goes along with the water testing and adjustments:

If adjustments are needed based on the saturation index results, begin with the total alkalinity because adjusting the total alkalinity will affect the pH. It may sound counterintuitive, but total alkalinity is not an adjustment for pH. Even though it affects the overall pH, it functions as a buffer to resist fluctuations in pH.

- If the total alkalinity is low, add sodium bicarbonate, baking soda, or a product called Alkalinity up. After 24 hours check the level again. If it is still low, add more sodium bicarbonate.
- If the total alkalinity is high, drain some of the water from the fountain and add fresh water to the fountain. After 24 hours check the total alkalinity again.

After total alkalinity, pH is the next crucial adjustment.

- If the pH is too low add soda ash, sodium carbonate, or a product called pH up. After 24 hours check the level again. If the pH is still low, add more calcium carbonate.
- If the pH is too high, drain some of the water from the fountain and add fresh water to the fountain. Test again after 24 hours. After adjustments are made to the pH, then recheck the total alkalinity.

Finally, test the water’s hardness as total CaCO₃ (Calcium carbonate).

- If the hardness is too low, then add liquid calcium hardness up or calcium chloride. One should always question when chloride is used around a sculpture. In this case, the amount of free chloride being introduced into the system should not pose an harm to the artwork. NEVER add calcium Hypochlorite. This product is for adding chlorine to pools and will add harmful amounts of chloride to the system.
- If the hardness is too high, drain some of the water from the fountain and add fresh water to the fountain. After 24 hours check the hardness again. It may be worthwhile to also test the water supply for hardness.
- If adjustments were made to lower hardness, re-test the total alkalinity and pH.

Test polyquats levels. Using a Taylor K-1582 test kit one can rely on PPM quantities of available polyquat readings. 20ppm should be a good place to start for the first week. After the first week let the ppm of polyquats drop to between 5 to 10ppm.

Media filters should be inspected weekly. Installing pressure gauges on both sides of the filter affords a quick and easy way to judge if the filters are clogged and need replacing. Other types of filters can be more complicated so refer to their manual or a consultant.

If a UVC sanitizer is installed, read the owner’s manual to find out how often the lamp should be replaced and how to maintain the unit. Many of the higher end units have built in cleaning mechanisms that will clean the quartz casing around the lamp so accumulated grime will not block the effects of the UVC radiation.

Some units also have ports built in that allow the attachment of a UVC monitor. If the UVC sanitizer has a “window,” be aware that the window only tells you the unit is on, but is not an indication of the amount of UVC that is being produced. Usually after about 10 to 12 months of continuous use, the UVC output has dropped to a level where it is no longer effective.

When using a UVC sanitizer it is important to review the manual that came with the sanitizer to make sure the water is maintained in a way that maximizes the sanitizer’s ability to radiate the water. To follow the UVC manufacturer’s recommendations, they may ask that you insure the turbidity, manganese, total suspended solids, and iron are kept within a certain range. These are measured with a colorimeter. For these tests, rely on a local pool supply store. Many of the
suppliers have colorimeters in their store, and they can provide these tests for their customers for a minimal charge.

Another sanitation device that can be found on a fountain is an ozone generator. These add ozone directly into the water. These systems also need maintenance which should be outlined in the manual that comes with the ozone generator.

Ozone generators are very effective at controlling biology, however the possibility of adding ozone to the surrounding environment should also be considered. Ozone can cause health problems for some people with asthma, and ozone can cause degradation in artworks. Ozone scavengers can be added to systems with ozone generators so the ozone will be destroyed before it is exposed to the atmosphere.

While this article may make fountain maintenance seem difficult, it is not. Within a short amount of time the procedure will become routine and simple. The maintenance outlined here applies to all recirculating fountains as the first place to start.

Bibliography


Annual Meeting Abstracts

The 2013 WAAC Annual Meeting was held September 18 - 20 in Seattle, Washington

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

Preserving Our Human Heritage: How Curating and Conserving Kennewick Man Has Influenced the Care of Human Remains in Cultural Institutions

Nancy Odegaard, Laura Phillips, Jennifer R. Richman, Megon Noble, Peter Lape, Vicki Cassman, Chris Pulliam, and Michael K. Trimble

It has been nearly two decades since the remains known as Kennewick Man, or the Ancient One, were accidentally discovered. Four Northwest tribes (Yakama, Colville, Nez Perce, and Umatilla) fought in court for reburial under the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA). The remains are among the oldest and most complete ever found in North America. In 2004 a federal appeals court found the bones to NOT be Native American because they were too old and lacked sufficient archaeological detail to assign membership genetically or culturally to any modern tribe.

The Burke Museum at the University of Washington houses the remains under a curation agreement with the US Army Corps of Engineers which is the responsible agency. After submitting a study plan, several sessions of study including over 37 researchers were granted access to study the remains in great detail. At the request of the Department of Justice and curatorial experts with the US Army Corps of Engineers, conservators were included in these activities since 1998. While it was argued that the collection had immense value to the scientific community and the public, most of the study findings have yet to appear in scholarly journals for scrutiny and discussion. There is expectation for a book by the researchers to appear in 2014.

This presentation offers a discussion on the important role the Kennewick Remains have had on the advancement of curation and care for human remains. The enhanced participation of conservation as part of the study sessions inspired new techniques and approaches that in turn had significant influence on other projects that followed including the Lucy Remains from Ethiopia, the Chinchorro Mummies in Chile, and important collections at the British Museum as well as collections throughout the United States. Specifically, the conservation field has been compelled to reevaluate our approach to the care and handling of human remains in activities related to teaching, curation, examination, and reburial.

How Maastricht Brought Venice to Denver

Sarah Melching

In the fall of 2011, Denver Art Museum Director Christoph Heinrich, received an invitation from the Chairman of the European Fine Art Fair - more commonly referred to as TEFAF - inviting a proposal for the TEFAF Restoration Fund. This was to be the first award of its kind, marking the 25th anniversary of the organization. After review of the guidelines and in conference with museum staff, the decision was made to submit a grant request for the painting Venice: The Molo from the Bacino di San Marco, by the 18th-century Italian artist Canaletto. The proposal requested funds for conservation of as well as the interpretation of the process. In January, 2012, the DAM was notified of its successful application. With the intent of inspiring others to apply for funding from TEFAF, this talk will give an overview of the planning, implementation, and outcome of the DAM’s project.

Extreme Makeover: Florence Edition: The Restoration of a Small Maestà by Taddeo G addi

Sue Ann Chui

In preparation for the exhibition Florence at the Dawn of the Renaissance: Painting and Illumination 1300–1350 shown at the J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, and at the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, several paintings were treated and studied by the Paintings Conservation department of the Getty Museum. One of these paintings was the central section of a triptych by Taddeo Gaddi representing the Virgin and Child with Ten Saints: Maestà. Painted around 1330-34 by Giotto’s pupil, this small panel was donated to the New York Historical Society in 1867 and has resided there ever since. The main goal of the treatment was to improve the aesthetic presentation of the Maestà as the old restorations were rather broad and had discolored to an unacceptable level. Original fragments were uncovered during the cleaning which helped in the reconstruction of key parts of the composition that had largely gone missing. For the exhibition, a pair of shutters from a private collection was identified as the possible companions to the Maestà, and the three paintings were displayed together in a hypothetical reconstruction of the triptych. A technical study done in collaboration with the Getty Conservation Institute was carried out on the paintings to compare their materials, technique, and structure to try to determine if the paintings belonged to each other. X-radiography, infrared reflectography, and x-ray fluorescence were used to analyze the paintings.

A Preliminary Investigation into Conservation Methods and Materials for Smoking Automata

Brittany Cox

This presentation will detail research focused around a case study object, concluding with future research recommendations and considerations. The case study research involved the investigation of suitable materials that may be used to replace deteriorated bellows coverings in smoking automata, specifically those automata made in France between the period of 1848 and 1914. Three materials were determined suitable for testing here based on discussions with trade restorers, museums, and materials scientists: Type 14 Tyvek, Zephyr, and aluminized skin.

Among the different test methods involved, a machine was constructed that was capable of running three sets of bellows simultaneously. The bellows were designed to be identical to those inside the case study object, a Vichy Huntsman smoker automaton. The machine was set up so that the three bellows on test consisted of one covered in each of the three test materials. The three bellows smoked one pack of cigarettes each, running at the same speed as the bellows in the Vichy automaton.

Infrared spectroscopy, tensile testing, and temperature monitoring were used for further analysis.
The conclusions drawn from this research demonstrate how problems arise when tangible and intangible qualities are in direct conflict, and why these problems are difficult to address in the case of dynamic objects, especially automata.

Use of Ammonium Citrate Dibasic in Paper Conservation
Antoinette Dwan

There are numerous advantages for using ammonium citrate dibasic in paper conservation. It can successfully be used as a substitute for “dry cleaning”; for pre-treatment; and for stain reduction. It is possible to reduce stains while removing unwanted metallic particles prior to other treatment procedures. Often this will be the only treatment step needed to completely eliminate stains or it will significantly reduce the stain so that less bleaching is required. It is possible to achieve significant cleaning at a neutral pH and low concentrations. Ammonium citrate dibasic can be used successfully as a grime removal agent either applied locally or in a bath. Especially significant is its advantage working on colored papers as typical bleaching agents do. Finally, ammonium citrate dibasic is very safe for paper artifacts, easily rinsed, and reduces many stains as a substitute for more invasive oxidizing or reducing procedures. Additional treatment steps using dilute sodium borohydride are demonstrated.

Pedro Ramirez: An Examination of 17th-century Spanish Colonial Painting Techniques.
Elma O’Donoghue

The Los Angeles County Museum of Art has an extensive and diverse collection of Latin American art ranging from pre-Columbian, through to contemporary. Since 2006 however it has focused on acquiring 17th- and 18th-century Spanish Colonial works, becoming one of the principle repositories of such art in the United States. These acquisitions and their conservation treatments have provided LACMA’s conservation department with a rare opportunity to examine the materials and techniques of artists from New Spain.

The author’s treatment and research of a large panel painting by the 17th-century Mexican painter Pedro Ramirez is the focus of this paper. While Ramirez is known to have exemplified Sevillian chiaroscuro and to have influenced a younger generation of artists, the painting’s compromised condition made it difficult to appreciate his power. The analysis of paint cross-sections however, in addition to the treatment of large areas of lifting paint and selective removal of extensive overpaints helped reveal the sophistication of his style. Ramirez’s techniques were essentially Spanish and closely related to established 16th- and 17th-century methods described in treatises by Nunez, Pacheco, and Palomino y Velasco. These techniques and those of other first generation Mexican painters will be discussed as will the rigid guild system which controlled and monitored the arts and the economy at the time in Mexico.

Larger 17th-century religious paintings such as this panel by Ramirez were often part of huge and elaborate Baroque altarpieces. Created in highly organized workshops headed by maestros who were Spanish or of Spanish descent, they were commissioned by the wealthy elite and the church in Mexico. Over the years many of these altarpieces were overcleaned, overpainted, and eventually dismantled. The rarity of surviving works from 17th- and early 18th-century Colonial maestros has necessitated an interesting shift in museum attitudes towards accepting paintings from New Spain that are often in less than ideal condition.

The Treatment of Three Nineteenth-Century Ship Figureheads
Corine Landrieu

Three figureheads: a man from the four-masted William T. Lewis, a woman from yacht Yolanda, and a woman from an unknown vessel found off the coast of Australia, were donated to the Museum of History and Industry, Seattle in the mid 80s. They hung in the museum’s stairwell for more than 25 years, and by 2011 they were in poor condition. The museum was preparing to relocate to South Lake Union, and the figureheads presented a unique challenge due to their large scale, significant weight, and potential fragility.

Hansen Brothers Moving Company, who was readying the museum for their move, was charged with the daunting task of removing the figureheads from the stairwell, moving them into the collection storage, and placing them in such a way that Corine Landrieu could start the conservation process. This involved exploratory work to determine the interior structure of the figureheads, the various causes of damage, and communications with Richard Hunter, Figurehead Historian in South Yorkshire, England. This presentation will describe the process, and put it in context with traditional figurehead restoration. A brief history of ship figureheads will also be presented.

The Whitney Museum’s Collection Documentation Initiative (CDI) from the Conservators’ Perspective
Claire Gerhard, Megan Berkey, and Matthew Skopek

The Collection Documentation Initiative, or CDI, created and implemented by staff at the Whitney Museum of Art in New York is described from the perspective of painting conservators who worked on the painting collection portion of the initiative. The initiative’s rationale is “to update physical and non-interpretive information by cataloguing, confirming media, creating a standardized conservation assessment, and entering acquisition, provenance, and curatorial notes directly into the Museum’s data system” for all works of art on paper, paintings, and sculpture in the collection. (From the CDI Manual.) Sources of damage to the painting collection are prioritized and trends in painting conservation and in artist materials as seen through the collection discussed.

Development of a Field Monitoring Technique for Protective Coatings on Outdoor Metal Artwork
Alice H. England and Tami Lasseter Clare

A non-destructive technique for rapid, on-site evaluation of coating performance on outdoor metal artwork is developed. Electrochemical Impedance Spectroscopy (EIS), a common laboratory method for characterizing the barrier properties of protective coatings, is adapted for outdoor measurements by utilizing flexible electrodes that can be applied to non-uniform surfaces in any orientation. For the electrode material, a novel conductive hydrogel was synthesized and then characterized via
Swelling capacity, conductivity, and impedance in a variety of electrolyte solutions to determine the optimal conditions for electrode performance. The effects of cell geometry were investigated to establish a normalization procedure with standard liquid cell EIS spectra, allowing for comparison to the existing collection of impedance studies on coating degradation.

Hydrogel EIS results from test plates in an ideal laboratory setting will be presented to introduce basic impedance concepts and spectral interpretation for diagnosing coating performance. Usage of this method to detect coating failure in the field will then be discussed with preliminary measurements from the Olympic Sculpture Park (Seattle, WA). Because outdoor EIS experiments are subject to other complications such as electrical and vibrational noise, a limited frequency range will be used. Additionally, restricting the field measurements to several representative frequencies allows for less complicated instrumentation, faster data acquisition, and simplified interpretation. All of these factors contribute to the utility of this technique for efficient, real-time analysis of coating performance.

Although polyester appears to be a relatively stable material, the resin continues to move after curing, and so the pristine surface of his work—so crucial to its function—is difficult to maintain. To date the artist has preferred pieces to be re-sanded and re-polished prior to display, recovering an un-blemished effect but at the expense of removing its surface. As such, his work offers an excellent example of the common conflict faced by conservators between honoring an artist’s intent and preserving the integrity of the original materials. To help tell this story—and as part of the Pacific Standard Time initiative—the GCI organized the exhibition, From Start to Finish: De Wain Valentine’s Gray Column, to raise public awareness of the technical studies and conservation thinking that conservators routinely undertake with modern and contemporary art.

This talk outlines the conservation story behind Gray Column and ways in which this information was presented in the exhibition. Gray Column will be part of the 9 from LA exhibition at the Virginia Wright exhibition space in Seattle, where WAAC will enjoy its opening reception, with a separate gallery dedicated to showing accompanying, didactic content produced for the GCI’s original PST exhibition. A 25 minute documentary, produced as part of this project, will also be screened at the Seattle Art Museum on Friday.

De Wain Valentine was one of a number of artists during the postwar era in Los Angeles who adopted new materials and innovative fabrication processes, some of which were appropriated from aerospace, boat, automobile, and even surfboard industries. He pioneered the use of colored polyester resin, which he cast into simple shapes, then sanded and polished to create striking, highly-finished, large-scale sculptures that interact intensely with the surrounding light. No commercially available polyester resins could be cast in large volumes—anything more than a thin resin layer would crack during curing due to high levels of heat released. Through trial and error, Valentine developed a new resin that allowed him to create luminous art of imposing scale. One of his largest polyester pieces was Gray Column of 1975-6, 12 feet in height and 8 feet wide, it weighs over 3500 pounds.

In the 1960s, a group of LA based artists embarked on a reductive process that led to the creation of a distinct aesthetic, one featuring simple forms and highly polished surfaces and often referred to as West Coast Minimalism. Critics and art historians have identified the use of innovative materials and processes, often borrowed from the industrial world, as one of their defining elements. This talk will focus on four pioneers of this group: Larry Bell, Robert Irwin, Craig Kauffman, and John McCracken, all of whom used synthetic paints and/or resins as well as industrial processes to create objects that were both painting and sculpture, and all of whom have work showing at the 9 in LA exhibition, at the Virginia Wright exhibition space.

Larry Bell used a process called vacuum deposition of thin films to coat plate glass with micron-thin films of material that altered the way the light was absorbed, reflected, and transmitted by the glass. Craig Kauffman employed vacuum-forming, a process usually reserved for commercial signs, to form acrylic sheets that were then reverse-painted with a spray-gun. John McCracken perfected a thorough process in which plywood was coated with fiberglass and spray-painted with countless layers of automotive paints, and later replaced the automotive paints with poured polyester resin to achieve a greater degree of surface perfection. Robert Irwin spray-painted with the finest colored mists discs of hammered aluminum or vacuum-formed plastics, and later developed with his fabricator, Jack Brogan, methods to glue and polish his column of cast acrylic plastic.

The study represents the accumulation of technical analysis, archival research, object examination, and oral history accounts initially undertaken by the GCI as part of the Los Angeles–wide Pacific Standard Time initiative, which has also investigated some of the issues associated with the conservation of the work of these four artist, which are often emblematic of issues in the conservation of contemporary art in general.
A Case of a Weeping Sculpture
Liz Brown and John Twilley

Sakyamuni on the Lion Throne, a sculpture in the collections of the Seattle Art Museum (SAM), is an invaluable Kashmiri artwork relating to Buddhism’s dissemination in the 8th Century. In 2009, as the Seattle Art Museum prepared for masterpieces from its collection to travel in a multi-venue exhibition in Japan, it was discovered that a prior corrosion problem was once again active. Large, moist drips of zinc hydroxyl chlorides and carbonates associated with discoloration of the metal surface that had first been identified and treated in 1988 had reappeared.

A better understanding of the problem and improved treatment were sought through more comprehensive analysis. Radiographs of the casting were obtained and analyses of the alloy and corrosion products were undertaken using optical metallography and Scanning Electron Microscopy with elemental analysis by X-ray spectrometry. The sculpture is a rare example of high zinc brass from the region where archaeometallurgical research has identified the earliest sustained production of this material in the world. The alloy, a leaded brass, was found to lie in the two-phase region of the copper-zinc alloy system, a composition that is vulnerable to preferential chloride corrosion of the beta-phase, leading to the development of interconnected pores through the casting. Copper, also liberated in the corrosion process, is responsible for a salmon-colored hue that accompanies the emergence of deliquescent zinc chloride on the surface.

This phenomenon was reproduced on modern brass of similar composition. The source of the chloride is uncertain but appears to lie with the casting core, much of which remains inside. Complexing of the zinc chloride and corrosion products with acetonitrile posed certain advantages as a means to remove them. Local applications were tested as concerns about its potential to expand clays in the casting core precluded its use by immersion. Ultimately it proved possible to halt the process through housing in a microclimate at 10% RH. As a part of the project, this research was shared with the public in an exhibition when the sculpture returned to Seattle.

University Partnerships: Building a Professional Education Program for Afghan Cultural Heritage Conservation
Nancy Odegaard, R. Brooks Jeffery, Suzanne Bott, Atifa Rawan, and Noorullah Dawari

The University of Arizona has begun a cultural heritage conservation education project with Kabul University in Afghanistan. The project is funded from US Embassy-Kabul’s Local Grants Program whose stated purpose is “[increasing] the scope, capacity, and participation of non-governmental organizations and other citizen’s groups to support and develop Afghan voices and new leaders capable of countering extremism, and that support civil society and boost institutional capacity.”

The current project is the implementation phase for a comprehensive long-term project to build educational capacity in Afghanistan that protects and preserves its cultural heritage. The overarching goal is to develop a long-term professional education program. Previously, a series of outlines, bibliographic references, and web-based content information were created. The purpose of the project is to build educational institutional capacity in Afghanistan that will protect and preserve its cultural heritage for future generations. Objectives include:

1. Identify and select Kabul University faculty for initial training cohorts
2. Provide specialized Heritage Conservation education program at University of Arizona
3. Develop Heritage Conservation curriculum program for Kabul University
4. Initiate Heritage Conservation curriculum at Kabul University
5. Provide ongoing curriculum development support at Kabul University

Early Chinese Lacquer Artifacts from the Asian Art Museum: Analysis and Testing of Some Pre-Han Lacquered Wood Cups
Katherine Holbrow

A group of badly deteriorated Chinese lacquered wood cups from the Warring States period (400-200 BCE) is currently undergoing analysis, with the goal of eventually treating the objects. Radiography, Py-GCMS, and other methods have been used to investigate the structure and to characterize the materials used in this very early example of decorative lacquerware. While the treatment is still in the testing phase, the project has provided an opportunity to evaluate earlier lacquer treatments, identify degradation issues, and test possible alternative solutions.

Glass Bead Deterioration on Native American Objects: Evaluating Change and Treatment Procedures
Robin Ohern

How has the condition of deteriorating glass beads changed when stored at stable relative humidity and temperature for fourteen years? Are there long term differences in the effectiveness of different cleaning techniques for beads with glass disease? Glass deterioration occurs when hygroscopic components of the glass migrate to the surface where they form a crust and leave behind cracks and voids in the glass. The process is affected by environmental parameters, glass composition, contact with other materials, and other factors.

This paper will reevaluate ideas about glass deterioration on beads and reconsider cleaning techniques for glass beads. It will begin with a brief overview of the glass bead history and previous research done at the National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI). Objects originally identified by Kelly McHugh and Scott Carrell [Carroll] in 1999 as displaying glass disease are being re-surveyed to evaluate condition changes and increase documentation of glass disease present on the object. Results from the re-survey will be discussed, including which colors, manufacturing techniques, or substrates were most frequently associated with glass deterioration.

A second part of the research project will reassess treatment procedures for objects with glass disease by evaluating the current condition of objects that were previously cleaned with different techniques. Results will be presented from a survey of objects with red beads that have previously been treated for glass disease using water, ethanol, 1:1 water and ethanol, and mechanical cleaning. This project aims to identify types
of beads that are most susceptible to deterioration and cleaning techniques that have better long term results to enable a more targeted use of conservation resources for glass bead preservation.

**Celadonite and Vivianite: Green and Blue Pigments on the Northwest Coast**
Melanie Ancheta

In a field where much has been studied and written about the artform styles and history, the subject of pigments and paint technology of NW Coast Natives has only been given very brief comment. With only four colors used (black, red, and blue or green), the materials used for black and red are common knowledge. Green, an iron silicate called celadonite has only been recently identified in NW Coast art and there has, as yet, been no scholarship or literature about its use in this region. And blue, the use in this region of an iron phosphate mineral known as vivianite, has only been identified by myself and is a mineral unknown by contemporary NW artists and scholars alike.

I have been able to establish through radio carbon dating, scanning electron microscopy, and X-ray fluorescence analysis the use of celadonite as early as 3500 – 4000 years ago by the Coast Salish. Through the same methods I have confirmed the use of vivianite on a number of NW Coast Native artifacts as well. With the technology available I am able to begin building a database of deposits in which samples from artifacts can be matched providing museums and collections with the ability to more closely determine the point of origin and possibly dating for artifacts. There are significant implications for museums and private collections regarding identification of celadonite and vivianite in cases when the pigment has altered color due to environmental factors or natural decay of the minerals, as well as appropriate storage, conservation, and restoration of Native artifacts which bear these pigments.

**Collection Assessment: Statewide Publicly Sited Artwork**
Janae Huber, Jessica Kottke, and Peter Malarkey

In late 2011, conservator team Peter Malarkey and Jessica Kottke performed a unique assessment of the Washington State Arts Commission’s (ArtsWA) state art collection, one of the largest and oldest collections of public art in the United States. The collection includes 4,500 artworks located at K-12 public schools, colleges, universities, and state agencies across Washington. Their assessment—of works that range in scale from 2D works on paper to major landscape installations to technology-based artworks—answered the fundamental question: what resources are needed to care for this large, diverse, and geographically spread out collection?

Malarkey and Kottke devised a rigorous method for evaluating a collection for which they could not feasibly view every artwork. Their careful analysis of a statistical subset of the state art collection, when applied to the collection as a whole, gives ArtsWA a picture of the needs of its large and vulnerable group of artworks. Malarkey and Kottke’s report has been the foundation for numerous management decisions and has resulted in additional resources allocated for the collection’s care.

This session will cover the methodology employed in this assessment, its advantages and disadvantages, the resulting recommendations, and the outcomes.

**Good Vibrations: The Role of Monitoring in the Development of Treatment Protocol at the Watts Towers Conservation Project**
Mark Gilberg, Frank Preusser, Sylvia Schweri-Dorsch, and Blanka Kielb

Since January 2011, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) has worked under contract to the City of Los Angeles on the conservation of the Watts Towers, a National Historic Landmark sculptural site. Created by Sabato Rodia between 1921 and 1954, the Towers include three towers, the tallest measuring 99.5 feet in height, and eight additional sculptures constructed of scrap iron covered in Portland cement and ornamented with scavenged glass and tile fragments, sea shells, stones, and other material. LACMA’s mandate is to update the site’s conservation and maintenance protocol through written guidance, as well as provide daily preservation maintenance.

The Towers are subject to deterioration including mortar cracking, loss of ornaments, and corrosion of the steel elements, due at least in part to Rodia’s non-traditional construction methods. Cracks often reoccur in areas of past restoration. Past restorers assumed corrosion played the leading role in deterioration, and replaced original armature and mortar in many treatments. In order to understand the various causes of deterioration, LACMA is engaged in thermal, vibration, and corrosion monitoring.

Preliminary data indicate that the deterioration of the Towers is more complex than previously thought. Conservation materials have been identified in view of requirements for flexibility and improved adhesion. Polymer modified mortars, elastomeric crack fillers, and a range of adhesives are being tested onsite, and evaluated in terms of performance and aesthetics. By utilizing materials better suited to the unique conditions of the Towers, it is hoped to minimize the need for more aggressive structural intervention in the future.

**The Conservator’s Approach to Fountain Water Treatment**
Robert Krueger

No matter the size or design, the one common element in all fountains is water. This talk addresses the need for monitoring and maintenance of the water chemistry in fountains and outlining a straightforward maintenance routine. The fountain’s water chemistry can have the most degrading effect on an associated artwork, or the basin and mechanical system. No matter the material composition of the fountain, its mechanical system, or the type of artwork, common basic approaches should be undertaken for the optimum fountain performance in regard to appearance and preservation.

Often the curatorial and maintenance focus is limited to keeping the water clean and free of algae. Managers of fountains often believe the publically accessible body of water must be treated as a swimming pool. Ignoring or not understanding the potential damage that can be caused by a specific course of treatment, or lack of treatment can be detrimental.

While killing algae may seem straightforward, the effect of algacides and algae...
Annual Meeting Abstracts, continued

Conserving Art at the Seattle Art Museum’s Olympic Sculpture Park
Liz Brown and Nicholas Dorman

In 2007, the Seattle Art Museum opened its third museum site, the Olympic Sculpture Park. Established on a former industrial site on one of the last undeveloped parcels of property on the Seattle waterfront, the park rapidly became renowned as a multiple award winning piece of urban planning and a fine location for the presentation of modern and contemporary sculpture.

In this tour, after half a dozen years of park operation, SAM objects conservator, Liz Brown, and chief conservator, Nicholas Dorman, will conduct a tour of the sculpture park, discussing conservation policy and the care of particular pieces from the collection as they go.

Please wear comfortable shoes for walking and bring two singles and two quarters for the bus fare (each way) to OSP. We will be going straight to the pavilion for the banquet following the tour of the park.

Fashioning Felted Fiber Fills: A Case Study in Needle Felting
Anne Getts

Needle felting is a fiber art technique used to create three-dimensional shapes from wool roving. It has been recently introduced into the repertoire of textile conservation as a method for filling holes in felted or fulled wool garments (JAIC 48(1): 25-36).

After an examination of the felting process – required materials, tools, and techniques – as well as a brief literature review, the focus of this paper will be the conservation of a mid-nineteenth century cashmere suit, cut and embroidered in India for the European market. Both the trousers and jacket were sprinkled with moth holes, and the main aim of treatment was to employ the technique of needle felting to create small fiber plugs that completely fill each loss. Because one can control the exact shape of the felted fill, every plug can be tailored to the shape and depth of each unique loss, while remaining completely reversible. Needle felting is easy to learn, time-efficient, and can be successfully used in a conservation context.

The Great Divide: Public Art in Edmonton
David Turnbull

The City of Edmonton’s Public Art Collection includes approximately 250 artworks; nearly 200 of these were acquired since the city adopted a Percent for Art policy in 1992. The Edmonton Arts Council, a not-for-profit society funded by the City of Edmonton, coordinates the management of the collection. In 2008 a Public Art Master Plan was created; one of its recommendations to the city was the implementation of a conservation program to work with existing artworks while integrating it into the acquisition process for newer public artworks. Case studies will examine some of the challenges of working with older works in the collection and some of the procedures put in place moving forward.

RAdICAL: Conservator/Scientist Team-Building Workshops for the Study of Asian Lacquer
Arlen Heginbotham, Sean Charette, Michael Schilling, and Nanke Schellmann

A workshop series titled Recent Advances in Characterizing Asian Lacquers (RADICAL) has been developed by the Getty Conservation Institute and the J. Paul Getty Museum that explores newly developed analytical and sampling procedures for acquiring detailed compositional information about Asian lacquers.

The RADICAL workshops are designed to:
• demonstrate particular protocols, and the kinds of information that can be gathered using these approaches and methods
• provide participants with tools such as the Py-GC/MS marker compound database and an Excel evaluation form
• highlight the benefits that collaboration between scientists and conservators can provide
• identify pressing analytical and conservation issues and problems in the field, and priorities for future research.

Two workshops have been held to date. The first in October 2012 at the Getty Center in Los Angeles and the second in July 2013 at the Center for Conservation and Preservation, Yale University. The next workshop is planned for July 2014 at the Centre de recherche et de restauration des musées de France in Paris.

Public Outreach: Where, When, How?
Jan Cavanaugh

There has been an ongoing debate in the DistList and elsewhere over the proper place and content for the dissemination of knowledge about art and artifacts conservation outside the established university programs. While detailed treatment instruction may be deemed inappropriate for layman use, at the same time there is a growing call for public outreach to a general audience with an increasingly sophisticated awareness of and interest in art conservation due in no small part to the media coverage of international controversies and other issues.
This paper will focus on one venue for public outreach that has received very little attention: the general university course. Historically, rather than being part of the academic system, the development of the profession of modern art and artifacts conservation has taken place through museums, beginning when chemists were first employed at museums in the late nineteenth century. In North America, the incorporation of art conservation as a field of study at universities has been limited largely to a few masters level training programs. Undergraduate courses are most likely to be found where there is a close connection between a museum and university with a museum studies program. This paper will discuss some exceptions to the rule and consider both the obstacles to and advantages of the general university course as a form of public outreach.

LACMA on the Road: The Role of Conservators during Travelling Exhibitions
Siska Genbrugge and Natasha Cochran

The director of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA), Michael Govan, defines the increased international visibility of the museum as a strategic priority. In order to raise its profile, LACMA is engaging in ambitious and diverse programs of exhibitions at home, coupled with a far reaching international touring schedule. Implementation of this demanding schedule requires timely and efficient approaches from the conservation staff regarding condition reporting, documentation, and installation.

This presentation will discuss the changing function of the conservator in assisting the touring of LACMA-organized exhibitions abroad over the past two years. Conservators have travelled recently with exhibitions to the furthest places, from Doha (Qatar) to Paris (France). Our conventional role as bench conservators, carrying out in-house treatments, has changed into an adaptable globetrotting museum worker who wears many hats.

As conservators we have specific tasks during the four phases of the process: before the exhibition, during the installation, during the de-installation, and upon return to LACMA. The installation of LACMA exhibitions abroad have affected our way of condition-reporting. This has been streamlined into a fully digital and portable process, with the assistance of software such as ArtStudio, Notability, and Dropbox on a tablet. Furthermore, during each installation the travelling conservator prepares essential devices such as travel toolkits, installation manuals, and installation templates. The revised process has also compelled greater collaboration between different conservation laboratories, since due to working constraints, installation of 200+ artwork exhibitions frequently need to be managed by a single conservator (who needs to be instructed by conservators from other specialties). Moreover, as conservators we are also prepared to take up the role of registrar, art handler, installer, and crate refurnisher whenever needed.

Each traveling exhibition has taught us new things, and we are constantly adapting our approach to make the process of future travelling exhibitions even more efficient.

Condition Documentation with the iPad
Yosi Pozeilov

Museum and cultural institutions today embark in the very busy and fast paced borrowing and lending of art works for the production and curation of exhibitions all over the world. A key element in the communication among institutions is the documentation generated regarding the condition of an art object at the time of arrival and/or departure while on an exhibition tour.

Traditionally condition reporting of the artwork, through narrative and images (documentation), has been produced on paper using photographs or image facsimiles like photocopies to mark and map areas of interest on the object so that the two parties, the lending and the receiving, can agree on the artifact’s current state. With the growing digitization of images and documents, as well as with recent enhanced electronic communications, the traditional way of condition reporting has become outdated. In an effort to revolutionize and simplify this aspect of the borrowing experience, Yosi has developed a protocol using the iPad and third party apps to carry out the condition reporting task in a fully digital environment that mimics its analog counterpart.

A fine art conservator based in London said he never recommended scrapping the corn mural at the Chatham Cultural Centre.

Keith Bantock of Bantock Art Conservation Services Inc. said he did tell administration officials over the telephone he thought it would be difficult or impossible to rebuild the 34-year-old organic corn mural that was created for the 1979 International Plowing Match held in Chatham-Kent. The corn mural is back in the news this week as a result of the chair of the Chatham-Kent Museum Board demanding a third-party review of why the corn mural was scrapped without proper permission.

“People have to accept that the mural had a limited life span,” Bantock said. “The mural was around for longer than intended.” Bantock added, however, he sees no problem in reviewing the procedures when it comes to deaccession of art pieces. Dr. Bruce Warwick, chair of the museum board, said “the issue is now less about a mural and more about the process – accountability and transparency – two over-used words that often ring hollow.”

“Lasers & Art Conservation: Duke University Professor Discovers New Way to Analyze Paintings,” Huffington Post, 07/04/2013

A Duke University professor who developed a laser to study melanoma has discovered a new use for the system: uncovering what’s underneath artwork without damaging the pieces in any way.

Dr. Warren S. Warren was at the National Gallery in London, looking at an exhibit on art forgeries, when he realized that the art world used imaging technologies that were 30 or 40 years old. Warren and others in Duke’s Center for Molecular and Biomedical Imaging, which he heads, have discovered they can use Warren’s pump-probe laser to create three-dimensional cross-sections of art that let researchers see colors and layers and maybe, at some point, discover the source of materials.

John Delaney, senior imaging scientist in the conservation division of the National Gallery of Art, researches how to adapt noninvasive analytical imaging methods to help identify and map artists’ materials. He has traveled to Durham to see the laser system at work.

The first beneficiary of the laser is the N.C. Museum of Art, about 60 miles southeast of Durham. The museum and the school are figuring out together how to make the pump-probe laser work optimally for art conservators. Warren’s lab will develop a portable version of the pump-probe so it can go to the paintings, and so it can be used to examine larger works of art.

The pump-probe laser system provides a three-dimensional view of any part of a painting without taking a chip. Warren explained that the pump-probe laser uses two laser pulses of different colors and varies the delay between the pulses. The first one “pumps” the pigment and the second one “probes” what happened to the energy deposited by the first one.


Bank of America Merrill Lynch has announced that it will provide funding, through its global Art Conservation Project to conserve artworks of significant historic and cultural value at four national cultural institutions across Asia, including Australia, Japan and China.

These artworks are part of a total of 24 projects in 16 countries around the world that have been selected for grant funding in 2013. The beneficiaries of the 2013 grants include:

— Rare ceramics from Qinglongzhen near Shanghai, dating from the Tang and Song dynasties, at the Shanghai Museum
— 14 stone sculptures at the Beijing Stone Carving Art Museum, dating from the second to the nineteenth century
— The North Wind, an iconic Impressionist work by Frederick McCubbin at the National Gallery of Victoria in Melbourne
— As art conservation consumes ever greater portions of tightened museum budgets, the need for private arts funding has become even more critical,” said Matthew Koder, President, Asia Pacific, Bank of America Merrill Lynch.

“We are honored to help preserve works of art that are culturally and historically significant to these countries as part of our longstanding partnership in Asia, where we have done business for more than 60 years.”

“Saving Medusa,” University of Delaware UDaily, 07/11/2013

This June, 14 University of Delaware art conservation undergraduates and one graduate student worked with famed conservator Roberto Nardi to excavate and preserve the remaining salvageable pieces of a medallion in a Medusa mosaic.

Dated somewhere around the second century, it remained buried for centuries on the island of Sardinia until its discovery in 2010. Blogging their experience, the students worked with Nardi, to excavate the pieces and transport them to a workshop in a converted 13th-century Franciscan convent outside of Rome, where they began to piece together the fragments.

The students also studied under Roberto Cassio, director of Vatican Museums Restoration Laboratory for Mosaics, who uses traditional Roman materials and techniques to reproduce and restore classic, religious and modern subjects and portraits. “Introducing us to the new mosaic material he uses, comprised of glass with metals and minerals, he walked us through his method of creating tesserae and melting them with a blowtorch,” the students wrote in a June 21 blog post.

“This was the first time the department has offered this experience, and we certainly hope to do more,” said Vicki Cassman, associate professor and undergraduate director of the art conservation program. “Our students returned with a deeper appreciation and understanding of conservation, not just as something we study in class, but as something that has a profound impact on culture and society across the globe.”

“Agilent Technologies Powers Art Conservation Workshop at Yale University,” Market Watch, 07/16/2013

Agilent Technologies Inc. today announced it is supplying state-of-the-
art instruments and software for a workshop at Yale’s Center for Conservation and Preservation on Recent Advances in Characterizing Asian Lacquer at Yale University.

An international group of art conservators and scientists are learning advanced techniques in gas chromatography and mass spectrometry to help them analyze lacquer and a broad range of other trace-level compounds found in Asian lacquer artifacts. Careful analysis of lacquer can reveal a wealth of information about the age and geographical origins of the components, and also address the authenticity of the artifact.

Modern coatings that aim to imitate lacquer are composed of various mixtures of polymers and pigments and can also be characterized using GC/MS techniques. The five-day workshop, based on the Getty Conservation Institute’s research on Asian lacquers, was developed in partnership with the Yale Institute for the Preservation of Cultural Heritage.

“Smithsonian Institution Grapples with Maintenance of its Growing Inventory,” The Washington Post, 07/17/2013

Smithsonian Inspector General Scott Dahl testified that the Smithsonian is still using inadequate storage space in Suitland, a temporary facility built in the 1950s that was never intended for permanent storage of collection items. In 2010, one of the buildings collapsed in a snowstorm.

The world’s largest museum complex is bursting with stuff, from elephants to first lady gowns, biological specimens to space shuttles. Now, the Smithsonian Institution is grappling with a long-term challenge: how to maintain the 137 million items in its collection.

On Wednesday, the Committee on House Administration held a collections stewardship hearing to discuss challenges to implementing a maintenance plan to care for the art, archival footage, and dinosaur bones.

In an audit of the National Museum of American History, the museum could not locate 10 percent of items sampled, including historic gold watches and Roman coins. Audits of several other institutions also revealed incomplete collections.

G. Wayne Clough, secretary of the Smithsonian, said the Smithsonian has gone to great lengths to remedy maintenance issues, investing $462 million in collections management and $390 million in facilities improvements since 2006. But Smithsonian leadership has also been vocal about its aging infrastructure and the long-term impact of budget cuts on maintenance. Still, the panel assured Congress that “the treasuries are safe.”

“Museum Has One More Painting Than It Thought,” Aberdeen News, 07/20/2013

When a Frank C. Ashford painting was sent to Minneapolis to be restored, the Dacotah Prairie Museum found it had one more Ashford painting than it thought.

The museum has long owned an original Ashford oil painting called “Portrait of a Young Woman.” With the support of the Yellow Brick Road Quester Club, the museum hired the Midwest Art Conservation Center in Minneapolis to restore the painting.

While the painting was in Minneapolis, the conservator removed the canvas from the frame to discover another painting of another young woman underneath. The two pieces will be jointly unveiled at a reception on Tuesday. The discovered painting needed only minor repair, which was financed by the Dacotah Prairie Museum Foundation.

Ashford was a 19th-century artist who had strong ties to the Aberdeen area. “Portrait of a Young Woman” portrays a “mystery lady,” as little is known of her background, her identity or even the time period Ashford painted it.

“Sewage Backup Floods Lab at Folk Art Museum,” Santa Fe New Mexican, 07/23/2013

Raw sewage flooded the conservation lab at the Museum of International Folk Art on July 14 during the final day of the Santa Fe International Folk Art Market. Carrie Moritomo, public information officer for the New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs, said the sewage backup was caused by a piece of plastic flushed down one of the museum’s toilets.

No artwork from the collection of the Museum of New Mexico was damaged, Moritomo said, but the lab will be out of commission for four to six months. She said she did not have an estimate for the cost of remediation, but the tile floor in the lab will have to be replaced.

The conservators have been moved to offices in the Stuart Udall Center for Museum Resources on Camino Lejo near Old Santa Fe Trail. But no one was working there on Tuesday because of a mouse problem in a closet, which is to temporarily serve as “a lab.” The space has been used by the Folk Art Market, and its staff suggested that the space be turned over to the conservation lab.


In the basement of Madrid’s Reina Sofia museum, a giant robotic machine painstakingly scans a painting by Catalan surrealist artist Joan Miro, slowly snapping hundreds of microscopic shots. The pictures taken by the machine, which uses infrared and ultraviolet photography, will help experts determine the condition of the 1974 oil on canvas painting called “Women, Bird in the Night” in unprecedented detail.

The device lets restorers see cracks, scratches and creases as well as underlying preparatory sketches and all subsequent touch-ups that would be otherwise undetectable. The robot has been nicknamed “Pablito” since the first work it tackled was the modern art museum’s top draw — Pablo Picasso’s immense canvases “Guernica,” a depiction of the carnage of the Spanish Civil War.

The machine, which is nine meters long and 3.5 meters high and weighs about 1.2 tons when it is assembled at its full size, took 22,000 pictures of Picasso’s black-and-white masterpiece last year. Those images are currently being analyzed by the restoration department at the museum.
Since then, the robot has been used on about a dozen other works, mostly by Miro, to help prepare an exhibition of works by the Catalan artist which will travel to the United States next year.

“Part of Vasari Corridor Roof Collapses in Florence,” The Art Newspaper, 08/19/2013

Emergency restoration work started today on a section of Florence’s famous Vasari Corridor, after some plaster and tiles fell from the roof on Friday. The damage occurred in the section of the raised corridor that passes next to the church of Santa Felicita, just over the Ponte Vecchio, on the south side of the river Arno.

It is reported that no one was hurt, and museum professionals are already establishing the best course of action to restore the damage to the building. Around ten portraits have been removed from the walls as a precaution while restoration work begins, but the popular tourist site will remain open.

The Vasari Corridor is a long, raised passageway that connects the Palazzo Vecchio, in Piazza della Signoria, with Palazzo Pitti, on the other side of the river Arno. It passes through and along some of Florence’s most important landmarks, such as the Uffizi galleries, the Ponte Vecchio and the Boboli Gardens. It was designed and built in 1564 by Giorgio Vasari to allow Cosimo de Medici and the rest of the Florentine elite to walk safely through the city.

“Great Pompeii Project Finally under Way,” The Art Newspaper, 07/30/2013

Conservators are using lasers to clean the delicate frescos in one of Pompeii’s most popular sites, the Villa of Mysteries. The laser is able to detect and remove the different protective layers that have been applied to the frescos by previous restorers.

The Neapolitan Superintendency, the regional arm of the ministry of culture which is responsible for heritage and archaeological sites in and around the Naples area, is overseeing the project and is single-handedly funding the €900,000 restoration costs, which include conventional cleaning of other decorative elements, such as mosaics.

The news is especially welcome given the recent controversies and scandals that have tarnished the reputation of one of the world’s most well known archaeological sites.

Work ground to a halt last year because of a lack of professional staff as Italian and international experts decreed the state of the ancient town, which was so bad that some ancient buildings had started to collapse, including the House of the Gladiators.

Further embarrassment came when Annamaria Caccavo, the head of the firm Caccavo srl, which had secured contracts for conservation projects in Pompeii, was arrested and charged with corruption and fraud in February. The former special commissioner, Marcello Fiori, and the former director of conservation, Luigi D’Amora, are also under investigation for overspending, awarding irregular contracts to Caccavo and authorising unnecessary work on the site.

Meanwhile, the European Union has given €105m of funding to kick start the stagnant “Great Pompeii Project”, which finally seems to be under way.

“American Tourist Breaks Finger Off 600-Year-Old Statue At Italian Museum By Accident,” The Huffington Post, 08/06/2013

An American tourist broke a finger off a statue at the Museo dell’Opera del Duomo in Firenze, Italy, on Monday. According to Corriere Fiorentino, the 55-year-old Missouri man was measuring the right hand of the ancient artwork when he unintentionally snapped the pinky finger off the estimated 600-year-old piece. A security guard monitoring the exhibit reacted immediately but apparently intervened a moment too late. As to be expected, museum officials were none too happy with the apparent accident.

Fortunately, the broken piece was not part of the original work by Giovanni d’Ambrogio, a late 14th-century Florentine sculptor. Museum director Timothy Verdon confirmed to Italian media that the plaster finger was one of several restorations made to the Virgin Mary statue throughout the years. Experts are currently working to determine the extent of the damage, Firenze Today reports.

For his part, the American tourist apologized, but he may be financially liable for the damage, Italy’s The Local notes.

“Botched Restoration of Fresco turns into Windfall for Spanish Town,” Washington Post, 08/14/2013

A year ago, Cecilia Gimenez’s botched attempt to restore a fresco of Christ inspired ridicule. Now, the 81-year-old Spanish artist is having the last laugh. Since gaining worldwide attention, the disfigured fresco has drawn more than 40,000 visitors and raised more than $66,000 for a local charity in the town of Borja.

The art has also prompted the town to put the likeness on merchandise. Gimenez and a local council are set to sign a deal next week that splits profits from merchandise featuring the image, with the artist getting 49 percent, said councilor Juan Maria Ojeda.

The turnaround is apparently quite the relief for Gimenez, a retiree who was overwhelmed by the attention a year ago. The fresco originally depicted Christ wearing a crown of thorns in a style known as “Ecce Homo” (“Behold the Man”).

The church painting was for decades a little-known piece of religious art by a minor Spanish artist. It had remained in peaceful obscurity in the Misericordia sanctuary since it was painted in 1930. That was until Gimenez, a longtime devotee of the work, decided that it needed some attention because damp church air was causing it to flake.

Her attempt didn’t go so well, and some dubbed Gimenez’s retouching of it “Ecce Mono” (“Behold the Monkey”). But the retouched version grew popular. The image started appearing — without authorization — on T-shirts and cellphone covers, coffee mugs and wine labels. People arrived in Borja asking to see the painting.

The council started charging an entrance fee of $1.30 and giving the money to the Sancti Spiritus charitable foundation, which used the windfall to help pay bills at a care home for elderly people.

Mexican artist Frida Kahlo is renowned for her painting, especially her vivid self-portraits, but she was also a keen photographer and collector of photographs, like her husband, Diego Rivera. The museum based at Kahlo’s former house in Mexico City, La Casa Azul, or the Blue House, possesses around 6,500 images, many taken by Kahlo and Rivera, and capturing their bohemian life in the first half of the 20th century. Among those pictured are André Breton, the French writer, and Leon Trotsky.

The vast collection, much of which is in need of repair, also covers works by celebrated photographers such as Man Ray and Henri Cartier-Bresson. Now, more than 350 of the photographs are to be restored in a six-month scheme financed by the Bank of America Merrill Lynch, one of 25 such projects undertaken by the bank over 2013.


It began as an attempt to restore one blurry image that had been hidden for a century behind a large built-in wardrobe on William Morris’s bedroom wall. Months later, the painstaking removal of layers of paint and wallpaper revealed that an entire wall at the artist and craftsman’s first married home was painted by his young friends who would become world-famous pre-Raphaelite artists.

The near-lifesize figures on the wall at the Red House, now buried in south-east London suburbia at Bexleyheath, are now believed to represent his young friends who would become world-famous pre-Raphaelite artists.

“In the morning we had one and a half murky figures, in the evening we had an entire wall covered in a pre-Raphaelite painting of international importance.,” James Breslin, property manager at the Red House, said.

The mural is also a significant discovery for the National Trust. Ten years ago the National Trust bought the redbrick house studded with romantic details including turrets, stained glass, window seats, a miniature minstrels’ gallery and a well, and opened it to the public for the first time.

In the bedroom the discovery almost doubled the cost of the conservation work, to £110,000. Fragments showing up on the ceiling and the other walls – partly covered by a particularly horrible 1960s version of Morris’s classic willow boughs design, whose owner could never have guessed they were burying a genuine piece by the master – suggest there is much more work to come.

“Picasso Murals Debate Divides Norway,” *BBC News*, 08/19/2013

The fate of five Picasso murals on buildings damaged in the Anders Breivik bombing in Oslo in 2011 has led to a heated debate in Norway.

A panel of experts has recommended demolishing the buildings and removing the murals. But art experts say that as the murals were designed by Picasso for those specific buildings, they should remain where they are. The artworks were Picasso’s first attempts at concrete murals. The murals were drawn specifically for the government buildings known as H and Y block. Picasso’s designs were sandblasted onto the concrete both outside and inside the buildings by the Norwegian artist Carl Nesar.

Both buildings were damaged when Breivik set off a van bomb at the foot of H block in July 2011. A panel of experts has decided the most economical solution would be to demolish the buildings, cut the murals out and place them elsewhere.

Norway’s government has until early next year to decide what to do about the buildings. The rights to the murals are owned by the Picasso family and they must be consulted on what happens to them.

“Egyptian Antiquities Looting, Damaged in Unrest, Reports Say,” *Los Angeles Times*, 08/21/2013

The latest political unrest in Egypt has resulted in the theft and destruction of more than 1,000 artifacts in a museum south of Cairo, according to multiple published reports. The looting is believed to have taken place over several days starting last week.

The Malawi National Museum, located in the Nile River city of Minya, contained numerous archaeological specimens and antiquities dating back thousands of years. Reports claim that the recent attacks at the museum represent the largest instance of cultural looting in the country’s history. Among the casualties is a missing 3,500-year-old statue of the daughter of Pharaoh Akhenaten, according to the Associated Press. Other missing objects include sculptures, coins and various metal objects.

Other attacks on cultural sites around Egypt have been reported during the unrest. Irinia Bokova, the head of UNESCO, has publicly condemned the attacks, saying that “this constitutes irreversible damage to the history and identity of the Egyptian people.”

“JMW Turner’s Country Retreat to Undergo £2m Restoration,” *The Independent*, 08/28/2013

A bid to raise £2 million to restore JMW Turner’s neglected Grade II country home has been boosted by £135,000 of lottery money. Built in 1813, Sandycombe Lodge in Twickenham is listed as one of English Heritage’s buildings at risk due to large amounts of damp and a collapsed basement ceiling.

Plans are underway to restore the holiday home to how it looked when Turner lived there. The £135,000 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund will enable detailed excavation work on the house, such as taking paint scrapes from the walls to match the paint colours chosen by Turner. The Andrew Lloyd Webber Challenge Fund for Historic Buildings at Risk has also donated £140,000.

Sandycombe Lodge, which was designed by Turner, was used by the painter as a retreat away from his Harley Street studio. His retired barber and wigmaker father William resided there permanently. As part of the restoration, which is due to finish in 2017, the interiors will be designed to match Turner’s own as closely as possible. A collection of his original prints will also be on show.