
Publications

Magnetic Mounting Systems for Museums & Cultural Institutions

By Gwen Spicer

Magnetic Mounting Systems for Museums & Cultural Institutions serves a critical need in conservation and museum studies by addressing how to properly use magnetic mounting systems for all types of art works. It discusses in depth how to use magnets as well as consolidates existing information on magnetic properties and how magnets have previously been used by practitioners.

This book systematically explains magnetic behaviors and the procedures required to develop a magnetic system. With real case studies and over 70 photograph images and drawings, the book explores a broad range of artifact types and magnetic systems that can be employed and manipulated for uses in exhibition and storage. The case studies alone make this book is an essential reference text for any reader planning or executing displays. This book is also a must-have for anyone who display collections in museums of all sizes, galleries, archives, libraries or private collections. In particular, Magnetic Mounting Systems for Museums & Cultural Institutions is an essential text for mount-makers, exhibit designers, museums professionals, curators, conservators, collections managers, archivists, and architects. Mount-makers and installation teams within museums and the commercial exhibition industry will find the conservation and technical material in this book especially helpful. Conservation students and technical staff who wish to insure the safety of objects they install or mount can do so by learning from this book how to properly use magnets.

Softcover

Over 400 pages, 81 case studies each with cross-sections and images, 16 chapters with extended glossary, appendixes and reference list, 44 tables, Chapters contain 'how tos', 'Useful tips' and 'Wacky behavior'

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Articles You May Have Missed

Susanne Friend, column editor

“French Senate Says Notre Dame Must Be Restored ‘In The Same Way As Before’,” *The Art Newspaper*, 05/29/2019

Members of the French senate say that the fire-ravaged Notre Dame must be restored “in the same way visually as before,” effectively ruling out proposals submitted by the Belgian artist Wim Delvoye and the UK architecture firm Foster + Partners as part of an international competition. But Delvoye says: “I am confident that they will change their mind 100 times, and possibly bend towards my solution.”

The roof and spire of the Medieval cathedral were destroyed in the blaze on 15 April. The prime minister of France, Edouard Philippe, launched a competition shortly after to rebuild the 93-metre spire, which was erected in the 1860s when the cathedral was dramatically reshaped by the architect Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc.

The former spire was made from around 750 tons of ancient oak lined with lead. The Senate debated the government’s restoration plan, inserting key clauses including the stipulation that the conservation project “restores the monument in the same way visually as before”, and “if the [conservation team] uses materials different from those in place prior to the disaster, it [should] publish a study giving the reasons for these changes.”

Delvoye said that he is already working on proposals to restore the cathedral. “Having it like it was before the fire is not original”, says Delvoye. He adds, “If wood is used, it will be an ecological disaster. My design would [be for] a 100 ton-spire, using just steel.” Foster + Partners’ plan involves building a glass and steel “topper”.

“Art Treasure Uncovered By Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad Volunteers Restoring The Saint Lucie Sound Rail Car,” *Akron Beacon Journal*, 05/30/2019

Covered by thick glue and carpet, the mural depicting Seminole Indians along the side of the curved bar on the Saint Lucie Sound rail car

was all but forgotten.

The mural dates back to 1946 — a time when traveling by rail was a luxury — and the artwork was befitting for the Florida East Coast Railroad’s runs through the region where the Native American tribe called home. Officials from Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad, which now owns the rail car, believe the mural was covered up in the 1980s when a bar was extended and refurbished.

And it wasn’t discovered again until 2014 when volunteers from the scenic railroad began peeling back the carpet and found the intricate mural that is made of pieces of linoleum as they worked to restore the rail car donated by the Haslinger family in the 1990s.

It took some 1,494 hours and 262 scalpels to carefully remove the thick glue under the carpet and not damage the soft linoleum. The mural restoration effort was led by volunteer Carol Schroeder who credited help from the Intermuseum Conservation Association to evaluate the mural and offer suggestions on how to restore it and recreate the pieces and sections that were beyond repair.

“Historic Stations of The Cross Given New Life,” *The Catholic Weekly*, 05/29/2019

For the past 133 years, the Stations of the Cross hanging in St Mary’s Cathedral have provided a devotional focus for Sydney’s Catholics. Now, the 14 Stations, each standing over two metres high and weighing approximately 200kg, are being cleaned and restored for the first time in 80 years.

Sydney art restorers, David Stein & Co, have undertaken the mammoth project and to date have cleaned and restored six of the Stations. The Stations were produced by a Parisian arthouse after being commissioned by Cardinal Moran — Australia’s first cardinal — in 1886.

Restoring the Stations has been one of the hardest projects for David Stein & Co, Mr Stein said, from a logistical perspective. Just removing

them from the Cathedral required a specialist hoist which only made it through the doors of the Cathedral by 3cm. Originally it was thought the 133 year-old paintings would need a simple clean. However upon closer inspection it was found the works were in dire need of restoration.

Over the last 80 years, the Stations have sustained water damage and stains, insect damage, tears and rips to the canvases, build-up of dust and grime and over-painted areas from previous restorations. It was determined that it would not be possible to complete the necessary work on the Stations without first removing them from the Cathedral and transporting them to Stein & Co's art restoration studio.

"Patience and a Steady Hand: Increasing Diversity in Art Conservation," *Yale News*, 06/11/2019

Fifteen students from historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) recently received a hands-on introduction to art conservation during the 2019 Yale-HBCU Student and Mentor Institute in Technical Art History (SMITAH), a program that exposes scholars from HBCUs to careers in the cultural heritage sector with a focus on preservation and conservation.

A partnership between Yale and the Alliance of HBCU Museums and Galleries, the program is aimed at increasing diversity, equitable representation, and inclusion in the museum field, which is predominantly white.

Over the course of the weeklong program, the students learned about conservation issues museums and galleries face, the analytical tools and techniques used to examine art objects and diagnose problems, and the relationship between making art and conserving it.

There is a glaring lack of diversity in the cultural heritage sector. African Americans represent about 1.5% of cultural-heritage professionals, while whites account for 85%, according to the Andrew W.

Mellon Foundation. In 2017, Caryl McFarlane and Jontyle Robinson, curator of the Tuskegee Legacy Museum at the Tuskegee University, formed the HBCU Alliance of Museums and Art Galleries to promote diversity in the cultural heritage sector, targeting preservation and conservation.

The effort is already producing results, McFarlane said. "Building on what was established in 2017, we are now seeing our undergrad students begin to move into the profession and into graduate school," she said. "We've had students receiving offers and scholarships from graduate schools that would not have happened without the program. In short, this program is working."

"Conservation Project Channels Thinking of Angkor's Original Builders," *The Art Newspaper*, 06/13/2019

The World Monuments Fund (WMF) is celebrating a milestone in its ongoing work at the Angkor archaeological park in Cambodia: the completion of a decade-long \$4.8m conservation effort on the eastern side of Phnom Bakheng, one of the site's oldest temples.

Constructed as a stepped pyramid atop a hilltop in the late ninth and early tenth centuries, it was the state temple of the first Khmer capital and is considered one of the world's greatest architectural treasures. Angkor was the seat of the Khmer Empire from the ninth to the 15th century.

In recent decades a shift in the flow of water across Phnom Bakheng amid heavy tourist traffic had jeopardised its long-term viability, prompting the WMF to seek a solution. Devotional shrines erected on the various levels had become destabilised because of a gradual change in the pitch at the ground level of the various terraces, says Lisa Ackerman, the interim chief executive of the WMF.

After detailed studies beginning in 2004, the fund set out in 2008 to stabilise and restore the site

by "deconstructing all of the terraces and repitching them so that the water rolled in the direction we wanted", she explains. "It was really a complicated jigsaw puzzle."

Using two cranes, a team of 80 to 90 conservation technicians removed hefty terrace stones—some weighed as much as 600 pounds—and waterproofed the foundation by laying a PVC membrane atop the dirt, Ackerman says.

Then the stones were cleaned and put back, sometimes with slight retooling, along with new stones retrieved from the side of the hill at Phnom Bakheng and inserted in places where stones had been lost.

The next challenge is to embark on the restoration of the western half of Phnom Bakheng, which could take eight years including the research and planning phase, Ackerman says.

"2D-IR Spectroscopy for Oil Paint Conservation: Elucidating the Water-Sensitive Structure of Zinc Carboxylate Clusters in Ionomers," *Science Advances*, 06/21/2019

The molecular structure around metal ions in polymer materials has puzzled researchers for decades. This question has acquired new relevance with the discovery that aged oil paint binders can adopt an ionomer structure when metal ions leached from pigments bind to carboxylate groups on the polymerized oil network.

The characteristics of the metal-polymer structure are expected to have important consequences for the rate of oil paint degradation reactions such as metal soap formation and oil hydrolysis.

Two-dimensional infrared (2D-IR) spectroscopy was used to demonstrate that zinc carboxylates formed in paint films containing zinc white pigment adopt either a coordination chain— or an oxo-type cluster structure. Moreover, it was found that the presence of water governs the relative concentration of these two types of zinc carboxylate coordination.

AYMHM, continued

The results pave the way for a molecular approach to paintings conservation and the application of 2D-IR spectroscopy to the study of polymer structure.

“Historic Mural Unveiled at Fairfield Museum,” *Fairfield Citizen*, 06/22/2019

A nearly-lost piece of local history — the stunning 8-foot by 20-foot mural of Black Rock Harbor by renowned muralist Robert Lambdin — has been restored to its former glory. The \$40,000 restoration of Old Black Rock Harbor, a mural painted in 1948 by the Westport muralist, has been completed and the mural was unveiled today at the Fairfield Museum & History Center.

Lambdin’s work originally hung at the Black Rock Bank and Trust Co., located on the corner of Fairfield Avenue and Brewster Street in Bridgeport until 2017, when the long-abandoned building underwent a renovation. The Fairfield Museum worked with the building’s new owner Tom Quinn to rescue the mural, which had been damaged through years of neglect.

Bank of America had a special interest in this project, as the bank acquired Black Rock Bank and Trust Co. in the 1990s. The careful restoration of this rare icon of Black Rock’s history was conducted by the Williamstown Art Conservation Center in Massachusetts, one of the top art conservation labs in the country.

During the 1930s and 40s, Lambdin (1886-1981) had been one of Connecticut’s most sought-after muralists, winning several commissions through the Works Progress Administration to depict American life in public buildings such as libraries, schools and post offices.

In the mid-1940s he spent two months researching Black Rock’s history at the Fairfield Historical Society (now the Fairfield Museum) and then three months working on the piece. It depicts Black Rock Harbor as he envisioned it in the early 1800s, with a ship unloading its cargo onto

the docks and Black Rock Harbor Lighthouse in the background. The mural was presented at an open house in 1948.

“The Secret Tech Problem at Modern Art Museums,” *Popular Mechanics*, 06/24/2019

This year, two people will receive master’s degrees in the conservation of time-based media from New York University.

It might not seem like much, but they’re the first with that type of specialization. Most time-based media conservators were trained in other media and ultimately fell into the field. Glenn Wharton, for example, was trained as a sculpture conservator before moving into time-based media at New York’s Museum of Modern Art (MOMA). He’s now the professor of museum studies at NYU.

As the 21st century dawned, time-based media started to have problems with its technology. Computers continued to offer new operating systems. The digital cameras that supplanted film were then supplanted by bigger cameras.

“There’s this misconception that all digital photo files are the same,” says J. Luca Ackerman, an associate conservator with the Better Image, a New York firm dedicated to photo conservation, “but digital photos could become archaic as file sizes get bigger.

At some point, old digital photos won’t be usable. We’re constantly facing the idea of data migration.” The most vexing time-based media conservation issue may be software-based art. If an artist uses commercial software to create a work, the copyright to the software needs to be acquired, and the software must be monitored for updates to properly display the art.

Additionally, any digital medium carries with it the possibility of corruption. Says Ackerman, “There’s a concerning push to replace materials with digital prints. They won’t last more than five to 10 years, and people aren’t investing enough in preservation. Digital prints are

replacement, not preservation.”

Wharton says digital art, like all other art, needs a safe repository. “We need a server, we need it backed up off site, and we need a high manner of integrity,” But the process and the safeguards require the right type of person.

Beyond the technical issues in archiving and safeguarding time-based media, there are also ethical implications. A piece of art can have a variety of stakeholders in addition to its creator, including people who are involved on a transactional level, like gallery representatives, auctioneers, insurance appraisers, buyers, and sellers.

One of the hallmarks of time-based media is the concept of variable art, a term that came into the art lexicon in the early 2000s and also poses its own ethical issues.

“Every time the artwork is installed, it’s going to be different,” Wharton says. “What’s the variance? What kind of interpretive authority is the artist giving to the owner? Ackerman says, “When it comes to time-based media, we’re definitely still in an era of discovery,” he says. “But this is where things are going.”

“Infamous Botched Art Restoration In Spain Gets Makeover,” *AFP News*, 06/24/2019

A 16th century sculpture of Saint George in Spain whose amateur restoration left it looking like what many said was a cartoon character has been brought back to its original state, regional authorities said Monday.

The botched restoration sparked anger when it came to light last year, drawing comparisons with a similar infamous renovation in 2012 by an elderly parishioner of a fresco of Jesus Christ which resembled a pale-faced ape with cartoon-style eyes.

The wooden statue of St George charging a horse in the San Miguel church in Estella, a town in Spain’s northern Navarra region, had turned a dark brown with age. But its restoration by a local crafts business left the soldier with a pink face and a surprised look. Authorities fined the

church and the crafts business 6,010 euros (\$6,840) each.

Now, after three months of work in an official laboratory in the nearby city of Pamplona for a cost of 30,000 euros paid by the parish, St. George is back to normal, the government of Navarra announced. Or almost. There is irreversible damage, with some of the sculpture's colours lost forever, Fernando Carrera, spokesman for Spain's art conservation-restoration association, told AFP.

He said this was just "the tip of the iceberg of so many cases that don't appear in the press." "It's constant," he added. "There is a problem in management of Spain's historical heritage," said Carrera, pointing to the law that doesn't clearly state "who must intervene" when a work of art needs to be restored, on top of general rule-breaking.

"How a Concierge Restored 200 Van Gogh Paintings, Including The Sunflowers," *The Art Newspaper*, 06/28/2019

Jan Cornelis Traas, the caretaker of a museum building in The Hague, was entrusted with restoring around 200 Van Gogh paintings between the wars.

Revelations about his role were given in a paper presented by Ella Hendriks, the Van Gogh Museum's former senior conservator, at a symposium in Amsterdam last Friday.

Until now Traas has remained an obscure figure, since he never published anything and apparently kept no records of his work. In 1922, at the age of 20, he was taken on as the caretaker of the Mesdag Museum in The Hague. In 1924 Traas began by repairing frames and the following year he began simple work on paintings. The museum director asked the Rijksmuseum to train Traas, but their restorers responded that they were "too busy".

In early 1927 Traas was entrusted with restoring a group of the Van Gogh family's pictures, including the version of the Sunflowers which

is now in the Van Gogh Museum. He undertook a comprehensive restoration of the still life, which extensive structural work, including cleaning and lining, which explains why the Amsterdam Sunflowers has lost much of its original vibrancy.

Later in 1927, after treating the Sunflowers, Traas undertook his first organised training at the Kunsthistorisches Museum. In 1961 Traas also restored the Sunflowers for a second time. Earlier this year conservators at the Van Gogh Museum considered further work to try to bring the painting back closer to its original condition, but this was ultimately deemed inadvisable because of the consequences of the 1927 and 1961 restorations.

The 200 Van Gogh paintings which Traas restored for the family between 1926 and 1933 represent nearly a quarter of the artist's works. Hendriks, now a professor at the University of Amsterdam, says that the Traas treatments should be seen in the context of his time. But it remains highly disturbing that a restorer with virtually no formal training and with little experience should have been given the task of restoring so many of Van Gogh's paintings.

"You Can Finally Swim in the Hearst Castle Pools," *Architectural Digest*, 07/01/2019

Hearst Castle's Neptune Pool is now the hottest place to take a dip along California's Central Coast. Only it will require you to join The Foundation at Hearst Castle with a minimum donation, which helps fund the castle's art conservation and education programs (and the minimum amount for a members-only swim event is \$950).

But can you really put a price on the opportunity to swim at this storied San Simeon landmark? Open for only five pool nights this summer and fall, it's a rare chance to float and frolic where famed stars like Howard Hughes, Joan Crawford, and Charlie Chaplin have. Admission is capped at 40 people.

The new form of fund-raising

is a more casual way to bring in money, a shift from the traditional ball gown attire of fund-raisers of the past. Last October, the outdoor 104-foot-long Neptune Pool—designed by the castle's overall architect Julia Morgan—reopened after a \$10 million renovation.

Four Italian-relief sculptures, Vermont marble, colonnades, and the Greco-Roman style (part of the original design) are a testament to both Hearst's and the architect's appreciation for their home state of California.

The Roman Pool, which is the castle's indoor pool, will feature its own fund-raiser on October 20 for up to 20 people who have also made a minimum donation to the foundation. Built to mimic an ancient Roman bath, as Hearst requested, it's a veritable sea of blue and orange, thanks to shimmery glass mosaic tiles inspired by the Mausoleum of Galla Placidia in Ravenna, Italy, and created by British muralist Camille Solon.

The walls are all marble and the ceiling a faux evening sky with stars. Eight marble statues of Roman gods and goddesses (copies carved by Carlo Freter in Italy) are your view while you swim.

"How Alexander Calder's Wee Circus was Brought Back to Life," *Vulture*, 07/03/2019

Last Friday, American artist Alexander Calder's beloved Circus reemerged at the Whitney Museum of American Art. Made between 1926 and 1931, it had been falling apart and had been in storage. But now it's back in all of its wee glory.

On a June afternoon three weeks earlier, Calder's cowboy and acrobat were still backstage — in the Conservation Room at the Whitney. Eleonora Nagy, conservator of three-dimensional art, is the ringmaster of the restoration of Calder's Circus, along with archivist Anita Duquette and art historian Joan Simon, who have worked for the past six years to restore the piece.

Overseen by Carol Mancusi-Ungaro, associate director for

conservation and research at the Whitney, the team researched the history of Calder's Circus extensively, studying videos of Calder performing the Circus, and even meeting with acrobats to learn about the physical motions that inspired Calder's miniature performers.

Nagy lifts the cowboy's silk scarf, and underneath a vibrant, deep green shade is revealed. The once-brilliant colors are essential to understanding the piece, Nagy explains.

"Calder wrote about this — or at least mentioned it in several interviews and other things — that the circus was really vivid and that the intense color effect was a very important part of the circus for him." To revive the color of the piece, the conservators consulted with Swedish scientist Jacob Thomas. Using a machine invented by Thomas, they employed 3-D laser imaging and photogrammetry to collect data and then determined the best conditions for displaying the piece without causing further damage.

"It stays faded," Nagy says. "Nothing happens to it [physically]." What may be the greatest feat in restoring Calder's Circus is, in effect, an optical illusion. The restored Circus will be displayed in a darkened room — as it was in Calder's original performances — under a new lighting system invented by the German-Italian firm OSRAM Clay Paky that has a wide and precise color temperature range, which allows the piece to be shown under lower light levels, while still enhancing the vividness of the objects.

"Like a Military Operation': Restoration of Rembrandt's Night Watch Begins," *The Guardian*, 07/05/2019

The restorers, data experts and art historians at the Rijksmuseum call it Operation Night Watch. "Because it is like a military operation in the planning," said Taco Dibbits, the museum's general director.

In a specially constructed seven square metre glass chamber, a

team of 12 experts will work to bring back to its former glory one of the world's most spectacular paintings: The Night Watch by Rembrandt. The process will not only be performed in front of the public, in the building built in 1885 as a "cathedral of the arts", where The Night Watch occupies the "high altar" in the museum's gallery of honour, but will be livestreamed to millions around the world.

Beyond conserving the painting for generations to come — it was last restored in 1975 following a knife attack by a Dutch teacher — it is hoped that an initial 10-month research stage using the most sophisticated technology will bring new insights into how Rembrandt van Rijn made his masterpiece in 1642, whether he did, as is believed, make a preparatory sketch across the vast canvas and what changes he made along the way.

On Monday morning, Dibbits will offer the gathering crowds and online viewers an introduction to the team working on the masterpiece. "And then we will let them get to work," he said. "What we will do over the coming 10 months [is] map it layer by layer and pigment by pigment, and then on the basis of that we will make a plan for the conservation and then after that the conservation will start," Dibbits said.

"Moscow Kremlin Museums Say 'Bravo!' to Restorers," *The Art Newspaper*, 07/10/2019

When the Moscow Kremlin Museums hosted the 2013 exhibition The Art of Restoration, it was a chance to see the normally hidden efforts of its conservation workshops. It proved to be one of the museum's most popular shows, with around 300,000 visitors.

For a few months, "restorers were like movie stars", says Elena Gagarina, the museum's director since 2001 (and daughter of the first cosmonaut, Yuri Gagarin).

The workshops will come into the spotlight once again this summer in the exhibition Guardians of Time: Conservation at the Moscow Kremlin Museums (12 July-13 October). Conservators from all departments—

metal, paintings, textiles, and books and paper—have been involved in preparing the selection of 87 objects.

Among them are the first three items of Russian state regalia in the museum ever to undergo restoration, including the diamond-studded, fur-trimmed coronation cap of Peter the Great.

The ongoing conservation campaign anticipates the museum's expansion from the Kremlin complex—a Unesco World Heritage site, with monuments dating back to the 14th century—to a converted shopping arcade in Red Square. The move was ordered by decree of another Kremlin resident, President Vladimir Putin, in 2015.

The Red Square facility, which will house new exhibition galleries, conservation workshops and part of the collections, is scheduled for completion in late 2022, Gagarina says.

"Brilliant Assemblage: Pratt Practitioners and Students Help Restore Louise Nevelson's NYC Landmark", *Pratt News*, 07/12/2019

Over the past five years, Pratt chemistry professor Cindie Kehlet, conservator Sarah Nunberg—whose teaching at Pratt introduces topics that relate to conservation, such as materials degradation—and Pratt students, have worked on a project that has required partnership across a range of fields and practices: the restoration of Louise Nevelson's Chapel of the Good Shepherd, the artist's immersive sculptural work at Saint Peter's Church in Manhattan.

Nunberg, Kehlet, and, most recently, student Lauryl Sandman have helped in the effort to painstakingly peel back the accumulated years from the 42-year-old Nevelson Chapel, as it is known today, while Pratt alumna Jane Greenwood, BArch '87, Principal of Kostow Greenwood Architects, has led renovations to the architecture of the space.

Since the chapel opened in 1977, the cut wood sculptures, covered with white alkyd paint, have degraded badly. The humidity and temperature

of the space fluctuated over the years and, making matters more difficult, the sculptural objects were repainted and touched up with a different type of paint several times since the 1980s.

Pratt student Lauryl Sandman, an art history major who joined the project last year, worked extensively with Nunberg and Kehlet on the investigative and hands-on work of restoration. She worked to carefully remove the water-soluble PVA overpaint to reveal Nevelson's original alkyd paint using a special cleaning gel created at and imported from the University of Florence.

In addition to installing a dedicated HVAC and humidification system, this work also entails the construction of a new environmental and acoustical envelope and a new lighting system with smart technology. The art and environmental restoration of Nevelson Chapel is expected to be completed in December.

“Conservation of “Still life with Bust” (1936) by Mark Gertler from Southampton City Art Gallery,”
True Vue, July 2019

Still life with Bust, painted by British artist Mark Gertler in 1936, was acquired by Southampton City Council in 1953. The gallery is located in a major port in the southern shoreline of England.

The painting recently came to the Department of Conservation and Technology at The Courtauld Institute of Art for study and conservation treatment. While the structure was in good condition, the surface of the painting was covered by a layer of dirt that obscured the colours and gave the image a flat matte appearance. There were also white crystalline deposits on the surface.

Technical examination of the painting was undertaken to help determine the artist's techniques, paint analysis, and identification of the white deposits before deciding on an approach to the conservation treatment. Analysis revealed that the white deposits were composed of epsomite, a degradation product of magnesium carbonate added to the

paint by the manufacturer.

The formation of epsomite probably occurred when the painting was exposed to air containing the pollutant gas sulfur dioxide from diesel combustion. This is likely to have been produced by ships in the port, which is very close to Southampton City Art Gallery, where the painting was stored. Cruise ships release 1000 ppm of sulphur dioxide at idle, that is 60 times more sulphur dioxide than eighteen trucks.

Epsomite is water-soluble and could be removed from most areas of the painting relatively easily using a cotton swab. However, the surface of some paints were sensitive to water swabbing. In these areas special methods had to be developed to remove dirt without affecting the paint.

As part of the conservation of the painting a plan was made to prevent further deterioration and preserve the work for future generations. This included display of the work in a frame with Tru Vue 6mm Optium Museum Acrylic® sheet.

“A Wall Street Lobby Restored to its Former Glory,” *The Art Newspaper*, 07/19/2019

For 18 years it has been sealed off from the New York public: a soaring mosaic-clad lobby that represents the pinnacle of Art Deco design in a 1931 office tower that invites comparisons with the Chrysler Building or Empire State Building.

Now, after a yearlong \$1m restoration, developers are planning to feature the 33-foot-high lobby as a selling point in a mammoth conversion of the 51-storey Wall Street structure from office building to residential tower.

Known as the Red Room, the ground floor features a 13,000 sq. ft floor-to-ceiling mosaic stretching from floor to ceiling in oxblood red, orange and gold-leaf that attests to a striking design collaboration between the architect Ralph Walker and the often-overlooked muralist Hildreth Meière.

The restoration team scrubbed

the tiles with a nonabrasive cleaning solution, and all of the metal weaving through the lobby was stripped to make way for a new lacquer. Pieces of brass were refabricated, and window handles in the lobby that had disappeared were replaced.

There was a bit of serendipity: before the restoration, when workers were emptying the office building, they discovered two big boxes of unused tile dating from the 1930s. Restorers used them to replace tile that had degraded. Once the building is occupied, the lobby will function as a retail space, and will be open to the public.

“The Iconic Murals of Millard Sheets are Disappearing from LA,”
LA List, 07/31/2019

On June 17, scaffolding went up at 2600 Wilshire Blvd. in Santa Monica to begin the meticulous process of removing “Pleasures Along the Beach,” a mural that has adorned the Home Savings Building since its construction in 1970.

Depicting the history of Santa Monica's seaside pleasures, the 16.5-foot by 40-foot glass mosaic was assembled by artist Nancy Colbath on behalf of the Sheets Design Studio. Both the mural and the building were designed by Millard Sheets, an artist and architectural designer who created some of California's most recognizable public art fixtures.

His works include the Scottish Rite Masonic Temple (now Marciano Art Foundation) as well as the “Angel's Flight” painting at LACMA.

Over the last three decades, his murals have been removed from buildings in Beverly Hills, Pasadena, San Jose and San Antonio. In Long Beach and Redwood City, they've been painted over.

The Santa Monica mosaic's removal, overseen by Brian Worley, an art and restoration expert who Sheets mentored, should take more than two months. Then, it begins the journey to its new home, the Hilbert Museum of California Art at Chapman University.

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To many, the mural's removal marks the end of a hard-fought battle to preserve the Home Savings Building, a Santa Monica landmark from an era when banks weren't just interchangeable stucco boxes but civic edifices meant to connote security, stability and a bedrock faith in capitalism. The mural was the exterior centerpiece of Sheets' 25th Home Savings Building.

"Santa Monica as a beach city is the theme of the artworks — the colorful mosaic on the facade, the sculpture of a child riding on a dolphin at the east entrance and the stained glass," a press release from the Santa Monica Conservancy explains. The building remained a bank until 1998 when it was taken over by a retail tenant.

The trouble began in 2013 when the building was approved for landmark designation by the Landmarks Commission, but the City Council reversed the decision in 2016 on a technicality. The Santa Monica Conservancy appealed that decision. The City Council again granted the site local landmark status in 2017 but revoked it in September 2018.

Instead, Santa Monica paid the owner \$250,000 in damages, and he agreed to remove the artwork and donate it to a nonprofit or the city. The city, it seems, never intended to take the art, hence its new home in the city of Orange. That fact is cold comfort to historic preservationists in Santa Monica.

"This Chemist is Preserving Art—Before it's too Late," *National Geographic*, September 2019

Eric Breitung works at the intersection of art and science—literally. A conservation scientist at New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, he uses analytical chemistry to help preserve priceless artwork.

But where others concentrate on specific paintings or sculptures, Breitung—a lifelong art lover and former General Electric research scientist—takes a broad approach: "My focus is the environment of the whole museum." That means

preparing the Met for some 60 exhibitions each year, in spaces that range from 100 to 20,000 square feet.

Design elements for each exhibit contain chemicals that could be damaging, depending on the art. For instance, acetic acid in a fabric display-case liner might be safe for a clothing exhibit but would corrode metallic art. Breitung and his three-member team are trying to develop a first ever "Rosetta stone of volatile chemicals that are in modern materials, so we can determine what levels are problematic for different types of art."

Breitung's lab is at the forefront of preventive conservation in the museum world. "Conservation started by looking at how to treat objects that have been damaged... Now we're thinking about how to set up displays and storage so that kind of damage doesn't happen in the first place."

The concept isn't new, says Breitung. But the focus is. "We're sharing everything we're learning on the web in hopes that others will apply the same principles to their cultural heritage." That goes for anyone with art, whether it's in a museum or a home.

'How 40 Kgs of Onions were Used to Restore Paintings on the Life of Adi Sankaracharya,' *The Hindu*, 08/02/2019

In 2018, when artist Saju Thuruthil, head of the Fine Arts Department, Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit (Kalady), saw for the first time, after the floods, the condition of the University's 31 oil paintings based on the life of Adi Sankaracharya, he was shocked.

"College had re-opened after the floods, and we had opened the Kanakadhara auditorium. Cleaning was being done and we had opened it for classes. That's when we discovered the paintings — some had fallen off, the frames of some had broken. It was a very sad spectacle," recalls Saju.

A trained art conservationist and art restorer, from the National Museum Institute (Delhi) Saju

offered to restore the paintings as was possible. On getting the go-ahead from the University VC, Dr Dharmaraj Adatt, he embarked on an eight-month long effort to restore the 6ft by 4ft paintings.

The oil paintings by Thiruvananthapuram-based artist JR Palakkal, in the hybrid Indo-European style called 'company painting', were done 25 years ago for the University. The series has 32 paintings (32 is symbolic of the years the philosopher lived).

He hadn't expected the restoration to take so much time. "I thought, at the most, it would take two months, but I had misjudged the damage. There were several layers of dirt and fungus on the paintings. The restoration had to be executed carefully; in this case it was more conservation. The 51-year-old artist explains, "We had to first remove mud and dust from the paintings, only then did we remove the paintings from the frame.

After which we dried the canvas in the sun, not under direct sunlight which was followed by rubbing the paintings with onions, to remove fungus and bacteria. Then wiped with isopropyl alcohol (diluted in water) and also acetone — these don't damage the works." He offers as an interesting nugget that they used 40 kilos of onion for the conservation. Primarily a mural artist, Saju has restored murals in 14 temples across the State.

"Saint Louis Art Museum is Almost Finished Restoring 169 Year Old Painting After 8 Years of Work," *Knox Radio*, 08/05/2019

The Saint Louis Art Museum has nearly completed its conservation project of a massive panorama painting after eight years. The painting is called the "Panorama of the Monumental Grandeur of the Mississippi Valley," and is the only known Mississippi River panorama that exists today.

It was in a state of disrepair until the museum began its conservation in 2011, and since then has slowly been restored. The work

was created in the mid-19th century by John J. Egan and consists of 350 feet of fabric that was scrolled horizontally from one roller to another to display 25 unique painted scenes. Over time, the repetitive scrolling process caused sections of paint to wear off, as well as other damage.

“Golden Touch Up: King Tutankhamun’s Coffin Undergoes First Ever Restoration at New Grand Egyptian Museum,” *The Art Newspaper*, 08/05/2019

One of the world’s most famous ancient artefacts is currently undergoing its first restoration in Egypt.

The golden coffin of King Tutankhamun, the young pharaoh who ruled Ancient Egypt from around 1332-23BC, was transferred from its tomb in Luxor to the soon-to-open Grand Egyptian Museum (GEM) in Cairo on 12 July.

It is the first time it has been moved since it was famously discovered in the king’s intact, treasure-packed tomb by the British archaeologist Howard Carter in 1922.

The two-metre-long coffin was transported on the 650km journey from the Valley of the Kings in the south of the country to the GEM, which is located close to the Pyramids of Giza. The decision to move the coffin was made after preliminary examinations inside the tomb revealed that it had developed cracks in its gilded layers of plaster, particularly on the lid and base.

The moving team used anti-vibration units to protect the weak structure of the piece and packed the space around it with acid-free materials that absorb humidity, a statement says. After arriving at the museum, the coffin was isolated in a separate room for seven days and then fumigated.

The restoration work, which is being carried out in the museum’s state-of-the-art conservation centre, will include non-invasive repairs to the plaster and gilding and is expected to take at least eight months.

The coffin is part of a set of three, nestled within one another, that were discovered in Tutankhamun’s tomb. The innermost coffin, which is mummy-shaped and made of solid gold, and the middle coffin, which is made of gilded wood, were removed soon after their discovery and taken to Cairo’s National Museum of Egyptian Civilisation, where they remain on display today.

When conservation on the outer coffin is complete and the new museum opens some time next year, the three pieces will go on show together for the first time since 1922.

“Louvre Abu Dhabi Undertakes First Artwork Restoration On-Site,” *The National*, 08/06/2019

Montaine Bongrand, who specialises in the conservation of tapestries and fabrics, is currently conducting the first on-site artwork restoration at Louvre Abu Dhabi.

Inside the museum’s heavily guarded conservation centre, Bongrand and her assistants are carefully restoring a large-scale tapestry that dates back more than three centuries. The piece is one of a series of 12 works, woven onto which are scenes from the hunting parties of Maximilian I.

Produced by Gobelins Manufactory, a tapestry factory in France, between 1665 and 1673, each large-scale piece corresponds to a month of the year. Of the dozen in the series, only four are known to still exist, all of which were acquired by Louvre Abu Dhabi last year. Two of these pieces, depicting the months of August and September, are currently on display at the museum.

In line with preserving these works, a timeline was devised to ensure that their exposure to damaging elements is limited. At present, Bongrand is restoring *The Month of January*, which depicts hunters and their hounds gathering around a bonfire, preparing their captured game. She and her team work once a week and require 500 hours to complete each tapestry.

The decision to bring this

restoration endeavour to the UAE hints at Louvre Abu Dhabi’s aim to expand its conservation and restoration programme. The museum is also gearing up to launch its research and development centre, which will include a library, in November. It will serve as an educational resource for those in the field of museum studies, along with preservation, restoration and assessment of endangered collections.

“Afghans Restore Art Destroyed by Taliban as Peace Deal Nears,” *CBS News*, 08/20/2019

The Taliban fighters arrived with hammers and hatred. What they left behind is laid out on tables at the National Museum of Afghanistan, 18 years later: shattered pieces of ancient Buddha figurines, smashed because they were judged to be against Islam.

Museum workers in Kabul have been trying to fit them together again as a nervous country waits for the Taliban and the U.S. to reach a deal on ending America’s longest war. The agreement is expected to lead to intra-Afghan talks in which the extremist group would play a role in shaping Afghanistan’s future.

As the workers pick with gloved hands through hundreds of neatly arranged shards labeled “ears,” “hands,” “foreheads” and “eyes,” that future feels especially fragile. Sherazuddin Saifi remembers the day the Taliban arrived at the national museum in 2001, a period of cultural rampage in which the world’s largest standing Buddha statues in Bamiyan province were dynamited, to global horror.

For several days, the Taliban set upon the Kabul museum’s trove of artifacts from Afghanistan’s millennia-old history as a crossroads of cultures: Greek, Persian, Chinese and other. They selected offending items that showed human forms, even early Islamic ones, shattered them with hammers or smashed them against the floor.

“We could not prevent them. They were breaking all the locks,

entering each room and smashing all items into pieces,” said Saifi, who is part of the restoration team. Much of the museum’s holdings, thousands of pieces, were looted and the building was shelled, though some treasures were hidden in the presidential palace in Kabul and elsewhere.

The museum’s recovery began in earnest in 2004, during the period when the defeated Taliban quietly began to regroup. A few hundred objects have been restored in recent years.

Now the museum and the University of Chicago’s Oriental Institute are compiling as complete an inventory as possible in the hope of tracking down missing artifacts - and saving a digital record of the collection in case of further threat.

That database is more than 99% complete, with more than 135,000 surviving pieces, the Oriental Institute says. For the missing artifacts it hopes to create digital “wanted” posters with their images to post online, “so that these objects can be spotted, and ideally recovered and repatriated.”

Experts and advocates of Afghanistan’s rich history have expressed dismay that cultural preservation apparently has not been on the agenda in the U.S.-Taliban negotiations, which have been focused on a U.S. troop withdrawal and Taliban guarantees that the country will not be used as a launching pad for global terror attacks.

“Suzanne Deal Booth Gives University of Chicago \$1 Million for Art Conservation,” *Art Forum*, 08/06/2019

The University of Chicago’s department of art history has received a \$1 million gift from activist, philanthropist, and Napa Valley vintner Suzanne Deal Booth in support of its art conservation program.

The funds will be used to establish an endowment that builds upon the university’s five-year conservation initiative, which launched in the spring of 2018. The pilot program created a new professorship, courses, and other opportunities for

students to learn about art conservation and conservation science on campus and includes an annual internship in the field.

Open to both undergraduates and graduate students, the conservation courses—called the Suzanne Deal Booth Conservation Seminars—focus on the research and treatment of objects in the collections of the university and the Art Institute of Chicago. They also draw upon available resources from UChicago’s Pritzker School for Molecular Engineering, an interdisciplinary research institute.

Maria Kokkori, an associate conservation scientist for scholarly initiatives at the Art Institute of Chicago, taught the first class offered by the university, titled The Material Science of Art.

“Preserving Art Through Tech: Conservators can now Adjust Museum Conditions Remotely,” *Hypepotamus*, 08/26/2019

Museums have the high-pressure task of keeping the world’s most-valuable art in pristine condition for current and future visitors to enjoy. To preserve their charges, museum curators must stay on top of humidity, vibration, lighting, and temperature to make sure the art doesn’t suffer any decay.

When Nathan McMinn and Austin Senseman went on a walkthrough of an Alabama museum, they saw how many museums check environmental levels by manually plugging a USB into sensors every single day. “The issue is that wi-fi doesn’t work in most collection spaces as the spaces are big and the buildings don’t carry the signal very well,” he explains.

For the museums that did have working sensors, the data provided was often intensely complex. Only a highly-trained art conservation professional could decipher the insights. Senseman and McMinn started exploring how low-frequency, long-range radio frequency networks could allow for remote monitoring in galleries.

They identified one network with advantages like excellent range and great power performance, and founded Conserv to commercialize the technology. Conserv combines proprietary radio frequency sensors with a real-time digital dashboard to identify and flag sub-optimal environmental conditions and provide insights to fix them.

Rather than on-boarding each individual piece of art, Conserv approaches environmental monitoring from a high view, on a per-room basis. Conservators can see overall humidity, vibration, temperature, and lighting factors and adjust them using a drop-down menu.

The platform operates on a freemium revenue model, so if a museum already has their own sensors, they can enroll with Conserv to just use the platform. The Birmingham, AL-based team has been beta testing with 10 customers, including large art institutions and organizations across the country. They will publicly launch at the end of September.

“The Chemistry of Art: Scientists Explore Aged Paint in Microscopic Detail to Inform Preservation Efforts,” *Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory*, 08/29/2019

The formation of metal soaps in artwork composed with oil paints can cause “art acne” which poses a pressing challenge for art conservation around the globe.

To learn more about the chemical processes involved in aging oil paints in microscopic and nanoscale detail, an international team led by researchers at the National Gallery of Art and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) conducted a range of studies that included 3D X-ray imaging of a paint sample at the Advanced Light Source (ALS), a synchrotron at the Department of Energy’s Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (Berkeley Lab).

“An estimated 70 percent of oil paintings might already have or will have these metal-soap problems,” said Xiao Ma, Charles E. Culpeper

Fellow at the National Gallery of Art who was the lead author of the team's study, published in the journal *Angewandte Chemie International Edition*.

"We're trying to get a handle on the very beginning processes to understand where the soaps might be forming and where they might be moving – if they're moving," said Barbara Berrie, who leads the Scientific Research Department at the National Gallery of Art and served as a co-leader of the study.

Dula Parkinson, a staff scientist at the ALS who participated in the study, said the X-rays revealed the size, shape, and distribution of tiny spots resembling bubbles in a paint sample that measured just a couple of millimeters across. Besides the X-ray exploration of a paint sample at the microscale, the team also used a technique known as photothermal induced resonance (PTIR) that exceeded the magnification limits of conventional light-based microscopes.

PTIR couples infrared (IR) lasers with an atomic force microscope to provide a nanoscale window into the paint's chemistry at a scale much smaller than is achievable with conventional IR microscopes.

Andrea Centrone, a project leader for the Nanoscale Spectroscopy Group at NIST who co-led the study with Berrie, noted that the PTIR technique provides chemical mapping with resolution similar to that of atomic-force microscopy – which offers a scan of the sample via a process that is similar to a record player's needle moving over a surface and mapping it.

"We are able to capture very small details down to 10 or 20 nanometers," or billionths of a meter, Centrone said. "We were able to detect which kind of metal soap had formed in the paint samples."

"Does Art Restoration Risk Erasing the Past?," *Frieze*, 08/30/2019

When Paris's Notre-Dame cathedral became engulfed in flames earlier this year, its timber spire split

into pieces, sparking a debate about how best to approach its restoration.

Pitching his design for a replacement roof, leading British architect Norman Foster noted the building's long evolutionary history. Originally completed in the 13th century, Notre-Dame was ravaged by fires several times in subsequent centuries, prompting experimental 19th century architect Eugène Viollet-le-Duc to design the now-ruined spire in 1844.

His version, which shaped the image of the cathedral as we know it today, differed from the original, being taller, sharper, and more decorative. Viollet-le-Duc did not seek to replicate the original; instead, he aimed for, as Foster described it in an interview with the *Guardian* earlier this year, 'a combination of the dominant old with the best of the new'.

In stark contrast, French architect Roland Castro called for an identical reconstruction of the spire, claiming: 'Parisians just want it to be the same.'

The argument touches on questions of identity: if an object's parts are replaced over time, does it remain the same object? If restoration is merely replication, then does it not become an act of enshrining, fictionalizing or even fetishizing the past – a nostalgic theatre of authenticity? Or, rather, in merging the old with the new, can it provide us with a teleological understanding of time, whereby the present improves the past as much as the other way around?

"130-Year-Old Painting Will Hang Again Following Restoration," *US News & World Report*, 09/02/2019

After spending more than half a century in storage, a massive oil painting will once again hang in the Ringling Museum of Art after undergoing major restoration made possible by a grant awarded to the museum.

"Emperor Justinian," created by Jean-Joseph Benjamin-Constant in 1886, is a towering 13.3- by 22-foot oil on canvas piece depicting the

Byzantine Emperor atop his throne in the company of his consuls. Barbara Ramsay, the chief conservator at The Ringling said the painting was on display in The Ringling museum in the 1940s, but has spent most of the past few decades tightly rolled with the painted side facing in, causing cracking and lifting.

The Getty Foundation awards grants to museums directed toward many areas of need, including specific aspects of conservation. The Ringling was invited to submit a proposal in the "Conserving Canvas" initiative. The project targets conserving artwork painted on canvas, with an educational focus of providing new teaching experiences for mid-career painting conservators in structural treatment.

The Ringling Museum of Art Foundation was awarded a grant of \$176,800 to combat the deterioration and structural damage the painting experienced over the years and to provide training residencies for several museum conservators.

The restoration will include structural treatment such as repairing tears; attaching canvas edge strips to fortify the fragile tacking edges; lining the original canvas; and mounting the lined painting onto a new stretcher.

An integral aspect of the "Conserving Canvas" grant is the focus on educating mid-career conservators on the technical processes such as tear repair and application of a lining canvas to promote structural integrity.

Over the years, a trend toward minimal intervention methods adopted by conservators internationally has created a knowledge gap for many younger conservators who have not had much opportunity to line or remove the lining of a painting.

What I learned was ... part of how you can win, and deserve to win, is to know what's worth more to you than winning.

Pete Buttigieg