ICOM-CC

International Council of Museums - Committee for Conservation
Paintings: Scientific Study, Conservation and Restoration

Triennium 2023-2026
NEWSLETTER ISSUE 1 - OCTOBER 2024

ISSN: 2708-6747
Editors: Aimee Hawker, Nikita Shah and Mine Diri

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ICOM-CC Paintings Working Group Coordinator Letter of Introduction

Dear Paintings Working Group members,

I am very pleased and honored to introduce myself as the new Coordinator of the ICOM-CC Paintings Working Group for the current 2023-2026 Triennium. First, I must thank the past Coordinator and Assistant Coordinators of the preceding Triennium for shepherding the Paintings Working Group during an unprecedented period of challenge: Jae Youn Chung (Korea), Tiarna Doherty (USA), Aimee Hawker (UK), Josefina López (Colombia), Aleksandra Orlovskaya (Russia), Laura Rivers (USA) and Joanna Strombek (The Netherlands). They organized virtual programmes and created a stimulating programme for the meeting in València. It was just a year ago that we gathered together in the spectacular Palau de les Arts and on the campus of the Universitat Politècnica de València. How time flies! If you missed it, you can always find the papers and posters online through this link: https://www.icom-cc-publications-online.org/search?wg=0&vy=2023+Valencia&t=0&page=1

Collaborating with me in the current Triennium are six fantastic Assistant Coordinators, two of whom are returning, who you will learn more about below. We are spread across 12 time zones and 4 continents, representing museums, regional centers, private practice and government. Together, we are planning a variety of offerings for the membership including virtual presentations in the lead up to the Triennial Conference in Oslo, Norway 14-18, 2026. So, mark your calendars! Visit the official conference website for more information: https://icom-cc2026.org (By the way, it's never too early to think about submitting an abstract for the call for papers which will come out in early 2025).

For the 2023-2026 Triennium, we are focusing on the themes of Training, Sustainability, 'Work in Progress' Research Series, and Structural Conservation. In this newsletter you'll find content that features all of these themes in the form of thesis abstracts, conference and workshop reviews and articles from painting conservators across the globe. If you have work that you would like to share in the next newsletter, please reach out to us at icomccpaintings@gmail.com. And please continue to email us with professional development announcements that we can share with the membership in a timely fashion. We hope you enjoy reading our first newsletter of the 2023-2036 Triennium!

With very best wishes,

Sue Ann

Introducing the team: 2023-2026 ICOM-CC Paintings Working Group

Sue Ann Chui
National Gallery of Art
Washington, District of Columbia, USA

Sue Ann Chui joined the National Gallery of Art in 2019 where she is a Senior Conservator with a specialization in the structural conservation of panel paintings. She helped to organize the 2009 symposium "Facing the Challenges of Panel Paintings Conservation: Trends, Treatments, and Training" held at the Getty Center, Los Angeles and was a co-editor of the proceedings. She enjoys mentoring fellows and interns, and advocates for building community and continual professional growth in our field.

Beyond her work at the "bench", Sue Ann has volunteered for several conservation organizations. A Professional Member of the American Institute for Conservation (AIC), she was the program chair of the Paintings Specialty Group (PSG) in 2009, and has most recently served AIC on the Poster program committee from 2022 to the present. From 2013-2019, Sue Ann served on the board of the Western Association for Art Conservation (WAAC) where as Vice President and President she led the planning of two annual meetings (2018, 2019) which had some of the highest attendance in recent memory. She currently serves on the Board of the Washington Conservation Guild (WCG).

Prior to moving to Washington, DC, Sue Ann was an Associate Conservator at the J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles. She earned her MA in Art History and Diploma in Conservation from the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University after completing her final year internship at the Hamilton Kerr Institute, a department of the Fitzwilliam Museum at the University of Cambridge.

Cover image credit: Detail from François Boucher, *Allegory of Painting*, 1765, Samuel H. Kress Collection, 1946.7.1. Courtesy National Gallery of Art, Washington.

Aimee Hawker
Hamilton Kerr Institute
Whittlesford, Cambridgeshire, UK

Aimee Hawker is a painting conservator originally from Victoria, Canada. Aimee completed her undergraduate degree at the University of Victoria in Art History and Visual Studies with a minor in Italian Studies. During her degree Aimee undertook additional courses in advanced mathematics and physics, organic chemistry, computer science and Latin. She also studied conservation and traditional painting materials in Italy before attending Queen's University in Canada to complete her Master of Art Conservation in the painting stream. Aimee has held internships at the Lunder Conservation Center at the Smithsonian American Art Museum, the National Gallery of Canada, and the Royal Ontario Museum. Following graduation Aimee has worked on contract both in private practice and in institutions, including the Canadian Conservation Institute and Legris Conservation Inc. She now lives in Cambridge, United Kingdom, where she is completing the post graduate internship at the Hamilton Kerr Institute. During the last triennium she temporarily served as the acting coordinator and a moderator for the ICOM-CC Triennial Conference in Valencia, where she was delighted to meet the numerous conservators who attended and presented. She is happy to be an Assistant Coordinator for this triennial term and work on an upcoming interim online program. Aimee is a member of the Canadian Association for Conservation of Cultural Property – Association canadienne pour la conservation et la restauration des biens culturels (CAC-ACCR). She follows the Code of Ethics and Guidance for Practice set out by the CAC-ACCR and The Institute of Conservation (Icon).

Joanna Strombek
Stichting Restauratie Atelier Limburg (SRAL)
Maastricht, The Netherlands

Joanna Strombek is a Conservator specializing in canvas paintings, currently at SRAL in the Netherlands. She treats paintings coming from various collections and facing different conservation problems. Joanna has presented and published internationally on conservation topics, including at the Yale Conserving Canvas Symposium, New Haven, in 2019 and the BAPCR "Tales of the Unexpected in Conservation" at the Wallace Collection, London in 2020.

Joanna earned an MA with honors in Conservation and Restoration of Painting and Polychrome Wooden Sculpture with a minor specialization in Conservation of Modern and Contemporary Art from the Academy of Fine Arts, Warsaw amplifying her conservation training at the National Museum in Warsaw and the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Torun. During her studies she also aided in the treatment of UNESCO Byzantine frescoes in Sucevita Monastery, Romania. Before working at SRAL she treated paintings for various institutions: the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC, USA (2017-2018); the National Museum in Warsaw (2012), Poland; the Wilanow Palace in Warsaw, Poland (2013-2019).

Joanna is continuously participating in the international workshops on up-to-date methods. Her major interest and is the structural treatment of the paintings on canvas and practices tear mending and Mist-Lining regularly in the SRAL studios. She is an instructor teaching the technique around the globe together with another SRAL expert Kate Seymour.

As an Assistant Coordinator for the ICOM-CC Paintings Working Group (2020 to 2026), Joanna played a key role in organizing the "Virtual Courier Oversight" meeting in April 2021, which adapted courier work to the COVID era by virtualizing previously in-person tasks. A significant aspect of her role included co-organizing and moderating sessions for the Triennial Conference in Valencia. Joanna values the early access to submitted publications and the opportunity to connect with authors and learn about their research.

Laura Hartman
Dallas Museum of Art Dallas,
Texas, USA

Laura Eva Hartman is the Paintings Conservator at the Dallas Museum of Art. Hartman undertakes the examination and treatment of paintings in the DMA's collection as well as loaned works for special exhibitions. Notable projects include contributions to the *Van Gogh and the Olive Groves* exhibition and catalogue, and significant treatments for works in the DMA's permanent collection including Jackson Pollock's *Cathedral*, Louis Anquetin's *Woman at Her Toilette*, and Rufino Tomayo's *Nude*, to name a few. Hartman has published widely on the use of new and innovative treatment techniques and has a particular expertise in the treatment of paintings on textile supports.

Hartman received her Masters of Science degree from the Winterthur/University of Delaware program in Art Conservation. She has held positions at institutions including the Museo Nacional del Prado in Madrid, Spain, the Mauritshuis Royal Picture Gallery in Den Haag, Netherlands, the Yale University Art Galleries in New Haven, Connecticut, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Her work at each institution ranged from complex structural treatment of large-format and easel paintings to complex cleaning projects with significant research components.

Mine Diri
Department of Culture And Tourism – Abu Dhabi
Abu Dhabi, UAE

Mine Diri is a paintings conservator currently focused on working with new acquisitions, exhibitions and loans. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Visual Arts and Visual Communication Design and a Minor degree in Art Theory and Criticism from Sabancı University in İstanbul, Türkiye. She completed undergraduate internships at Sakip Sabanci Museum in İstanbul and Galeria Joan Prats in Barcelona, Spain. She received training in conservation by pursuing a Master's degree in Conservation of Easel Paintings at Northumbria University in Newcastle, UK. She completed graduate internships at the Kunstkonserveringen (The Art Conservation Center) in Silkeborg, Denmark and National Maritime Museum in London, UK. She began her career as a conservation professional at ARTER İstanbul, a contemporary art institution where she performed as the in-house conservator working with collections, exhibitions and loans. She currently resides in the UAE and works as Associate Paintings Conservator at the Department of Culture and Tourism - Abu Dhabi, which acts as an umbrella organization for museums, exhibition venues, cultural institutions and events within the Emirate. Some of the projects she is actively involved in are Abu Dhabi Art Fair, Cultural Foundation, Guggenheim Abu Dhabi, House of Artisans, and Manarat al Saadiyat. She looks forward to collaborating with the team to organize interim activities and work towards the 2026 ICOM-CC Triennial Conference in Oslo, Norway.

Nikita Shah
J. Paul Getty Museum
Los Angeles, California, USA

Nikita Shah has been trained as a conservator of painted surfaces.
Originally from India, she started her training in art conservation at the Indian Institute of Heritage formerly the National Museum Institute of Art History, Conservation and Museology (New Delhi, India). She then specialized in paintings with an MSc in Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Heritage from the University of Amsterdam (UvA) with a full-ride scholarship from the Inlaks Shivdasani Foundation (Mumbai, India). She has held internships at the Stichting Restauratie Atelier Limburg (Maastricht, The Netherlands), Yale University Art Gallery (New Haven, Connecticut, USA) and J Paul Getty Museum (Los Angeles, California, USA). Through her work, Nikita has been gaining experience on how conservation is approached in different parts of the world. Her interest lies in finding practical solutions to conservation problems that can be applied in practice for painted surfaces, by bridging the gap between conservation science and conservation practice and disseminating this information in an easy but scientific manner. Her current research is in the structural conservation of canvas paintings with a focus on cold-lining techniques. Nikita is very excited to be part of the ICOM-CC team and organize activities for the Paintings Working Group. She especially looks forward to the Triennial Conference, meeting colleagues across different specializations and learning from them.

Victor Marques
Marques Restauro
São Paulo, Brazil

Victor Marques has been a restorer in Brazil since 2017. He holds a degree in Visual Arts from Fundação Armando Álvares Penteado (FAAP) since 2016 and specialized in Easel Painting Restoration and Conservation at the Museu de Arte Sacra. He also completed a technical course in Museology from Escola Técnica Estadual Carandiru (ETEC) in 2018. Currently, he is Cultural Director on APCR - Associação Paulista de conservadores e restauradores, 2024-2027.

Victor's career began as a Conservation Intern at the Museu da Imigração, where he worked from 2017 to 2019. Participated in the restoration project of the Museu Paulista, conserving 22 historical paintings from the collection in 2022. In 2020, he treated the largest panel painted by Di Cavalcanti for the Museu Afro. He has experience restoring artworks for all the major museums in São Paulo, including Museu Afro, Museu de Arte Moderna (MAM), Piancoteca do Esstado São Paulo, and Farol Santander. He also worked on restoring artworks for the Fundação Édson Queiroz at UNIFOR- Universidade de Fortaleza in Ceará from 2021 to 2024.

Complementing his education, he participated in various courses, including Mist Lining Mexico Edition in 2023; Chemistry for Conservators by International Academic Projects (IAP) (England) in 2020; and Identification of Expertise Techniques by GIVOA - Art Consulting in 2021. He also took the seminar Solvents and Solvent Gels with Mathew Cushman at IAP in 2021, Conservation Status Assessment of Artwork at Pinacoteca in 2018, and Introduction to Conservation: Museum Collections and Private Collections by Fundação Escola de Sociologia e Política de São Paulo (FESP-SP) in 2018.

Victor has participated in important conferences, presenting the work "Cleaning in Private Collections" at the Luso-Brazilian Conservation and Restoration Congress in 2019, and a poster on "New Methodologies for Trecker" at the same congress in 2023. He also teaches courses. He was a professor in the Easel Painting Conservation course at Instituto Pachamama in 2021, in both the 1st and 2nd editions.

ICOM-CC Paintings Working Group Triennial Programme 2023 – 2026

Specific Themes for Investigation/Research

We are interested in exploring the following themes as a series. Within every theme there will be a sub-focused topic where we will design online meetings with the aim of increasing global networking, disseminating knowledge, discussing sustainability and supporting emerging conservators.

Training Programmes

This theme recognizes that training takes place at different experience levels from pre-program to mid-career and beyond employing various models, but training is also not always accessible. How can access be increased where it is needed? What are different ways that colleagues engaged in preservation can be supported where it is difficult to access training?

Sustainability

One of the five objectives guiding ICOM-CC's Strategic Plan 2023-2026 is sustainability. This was one of themes of our Working Group's last Triennium and we will continue to focus on this crucial topic. Areas to be addressed include sustainable conservation materials and methods within a studio setting, climate change and managing collections, as well as packaging in transit for paintings on loan.

Research 'Work in Progress'

Programmes focused on sharing on-going research and/or treatment projects will be designed to create a forum for conservators to exchange ideas and expand their networks. Submissions will be matched based on similar themes/time periods, expanding from Old Masters' to modern and contemporary art.

Structural Conservation

Recent initiatives in the structural conservation of paintings on wood and canvas have increased training, practical knowledge, innovation and networks in this area. By highlighting this theme, it is hoped additional opportunities to explore and expand on this essential topic will be created from adhesives to auxiliary supports to proper display and storage and more.

Triennial Programme

Cultural Connections in Conservation.

Cultural connections touch upon the very reasons we conserve cultural heritage. Both societal and professional connections – as well as our links to the past and future – are vital to unlocking and supporting the cultural identities embodied in our material culture. As global changes and societal shifts continue, it becomes increasingly important to understand, respect, and advocate for diverse voices and communities, including Indigenous cultures. Adapting to new challenges, forging new paths, and fostering inclusive collaborations can align with our commitments to conserving our material heritage, whether from the past or contemporary in origin. We must also acknowledge that one of the unintended consequences of conservation could be increased cultural distance. By integrating rigorous methods, insightful perspectives, and relevant technology in ethical and dynamic new ways, we can ensure that conservation knowledge is accessible and impactful – both professionally and societally.

Projects

Organisation and Planning

- Offer virtual programmes during the Triennium in the form of online lectures.
- Collaborate with at least one other Working Group, such as Textiles, on a thematic programme or other activity to expand our audiences and increase member engagement.
- Record meetings as appropriate to increase accessibility. Recordings will be GDPR compliant and available for a limited period to registered participants only.

Communications

- Maximise the potential of the new ICOM-CC website by making it as our main platform for communication with members and update relevant news.
- Maintain and share information on our Facebook Page and other allowed social media
- Regularly email membership with relevant announcements regarding professional development opportunities.

Engage Emerging Professionals

- Inspire emerging conservators to contribute by organising interim meetings with the sub-focus on emerging professionals.
- Increase opportunities to participate and to present at meetings.

- Give emerging professionals the chance to harness the knowledge passed on from previous generations of conservators.
- Share information on job postings and available funding opportunities via email, Facebook and authorized social media.

Increase Group Diversity and Global Participation

- Encourage participation from underrepresented countries across the globe by approaching them ourselves and inviting them to speak at our programmes.
- Maximise the potential of online platforms; ICOM-CC website, Facebook and other authorized social media.
- Create a less formal environment for discussions to encourage participation.

Article

(Re)discovering the artistic life of 18th century Queretaro, Mexico, through the restoration of an oil painting

MSc. Rodrigo Villalobos Ruiz

Not so long ago, the art of the Spanish Americas in the 18th century, particularly painting, was the object of a kind of contempt, being sharply compared to that of the Iberian Peninsula, even though it was in that century that a local identity was developed in New Spain, as is well demonstrated in the book *Pintado en México, 1700-1790: pinxit Mexici* (Painted in Mexico, 1700-1790: pinxit Mexici).

With the research that has been carried out in recent years, a revaluation of it has been favored, taking as emblems certain artists active in the main cities of the viceroyalty: Mexico City, Puebla, Oaxaca, Morelia (Valladolid), among others.

In this sense, some other production centers have been left out of the research and we have yet to focus our attention on them. This is the case of Querétaro, a city very close to Mexico City, which is known to have had a medium pictorial production, with representatives such as Antonio Camacho, Diego Sanabria, or the best known, Tomás Xavier de Peralta.

Even so, there are other artists who have not had the attention of curators, conservators and art specialists yet. Research in the future could lead to the analysis and understanding of how the painters' guild developed in the city at that time. One of them is Pedro José Noriega, a painter who has been mentioned in some research, but who has not been properly investigated.

In 2017, as part of the conservation activities at La Zacatecana House Museum, we found the hidden signature "Noriega f^{t} 1723" (Figure 1) on an oil on canvas showing a scene of the Catholic Stations of the Cross (Figure 2).

La Zacatecana House Museum is a historic house museum hosted in an 18th century building that recreates the domestic spaces of a 19th century

Figure 1. Detail of the signature under UV light. ©Rodrigo Villalobos Ruiz

Mexican house (called "casonas", which literally means big house), with objects of decorative arts and fine arts from the 16th to the 20th century. These pieces belonged to Mr. José Antonio Origel Aguayo, who bought the building in 1990 and donated part of his art collection for the creation of the museum, which happened until 2001.

As a result of the discovery, we began a series of investigations that led us to find about 13 signed works, both in Mexico and in the United States. Most of them are kept in Catholic churches and convents in the city of Querétaro, some others in private

Figure 2. "*Via Crucis. Fall of Christ*". Oil on canvas. Noriega, 1723. La Zacatecana House Museum, Queretaro, Mexico. ©Rodrigo Villalobos Ruiz

collections and others in museums, such as the Museo Nacional del Virreinato (Mexico) and the Denver Art Museum (USA).

In fact, thanks to this research, it was discovered that a work signed by Noriega will be part of the 2024 exhibition “Saints & Santos: Picturing the Holy in New Spain” at the New Mexico Museum of Art.

Figure 3. Rodrigo and Andrea, part of our conservation team who received the grant. ©Rodrigo Villalobos Ruiz

Now, 7 years after the discovery of the signature, and exactly 300 years after the work was finished, our studio, Lepus. Conservation and Collections Management has started with the conservation project, thanks to the support of the Carl and Marilynn Thoma Foundation, an institution that seeks to encourage the professional conservation and study of artworks from the Spanish Americas by supporting and promoting conservation programs and research efforts. This project, which will last for about one year, has two main objectives: first, to recover the structural stability of the painting, since it is tacked to its stretcher directly through the paint layer, and has a series of cuts and perforations that compromise it, in addition to a very dark and yellowed varnish that prevents us from properly appreciating the image; on the other hand, and parallel to the direct intervention on the piece, we will carry out a historical investigation of the possible artist, to recreate his artistic life based on his relational networks in the city of Querétaro, since it is very likely that he painted for different religious orders.

Figure 4. Detail of the deteriorations in the painting Via Crucis, *Fall of Christ.* Specifically, the tacks on the pictorial layer, the paint losses and the deformations in the bottom edge. ©Rodrigo Villalobos Ruiz

Therefore, it will be an interdisciplinary work between art conservators, historians, art historians, and a collaboration between La Zacatecana House Museum, Lepus. Conservation and Collections Management and the Dominican Institute of Historical Research, through historian Marco A. Peralta.

Figure 5. Initial analysis of the canvas. ©Rodrigo Villalobos Ruiz

Initially, only the painting "*Via Crucis. Fall of Christ"* will be part of this research, but it is intended that the results of it serve as a foundation for a larger project that will allow the study of the rest of the paintings, from a material, technical and iconographic point of view and, consequently, allow the treatment of those whose state of preservation requires it.

This project will not only contribute to the knowledge of the artistic life in the New Spain of the 18th century, but it also intends to lay the foundations for the study of the evolution of the guild or local school of painting in the city of Querétaro, to allow

extrapolating to other artists and arts active in the same space.

Author biography:

Rodrigo Villalobos Ruiz is an art conservator from the San Luis Potosi Autonomous University, Mexico, and holds a Master's degree in Diagnosis of the State of Preservation of Historical Heritage from the Universidad Pablo de Olavide of Seville. He specializes in the conservation of canvas paintings.

He is head of the restoration studio of La Zacatecana House Museum, and a founding member of Lepus. Conservation and Collection Management, a private conservation studio that provides services to collectors, galleries and cultural spaces in the city of Queretaro, Mexico, and is the first recipient of the Carl & Marilynn Thoma Foundation Conservation Grant.

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Article

Preserving the Legacy: Art Conservation Project for the Theosophical Society, International Headquarters in Adyar

Anupama Gaur

Historic organisations often hold important art collections that await rediscovery and conservation. This article discusses the conservation efforts undertaken at the Theosophical Society's International Headquarters in Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India, and sheds light on the process of establishing a conservation laboratory within its premises. During its heydays in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the headquarters was home to many leading historical figures such as Annie Besant, Jiddu Krishnamurthi, and Jinnarajadasa. It served as a cosmopolitan hub for spiritual enthusiasts from around the world, acting as a focal point in South India for cultural and intellectual gatherings that attracted personalities like Nicholas Roerich, Rabindranath Tagore, Rukmani Devi, and Venkatachalam, among others, fostering transcultural exchanges in philosophy, arts, and spirituality. The art conservation project is a result of the current president, Mr Tim Boyd's vision to re-establish the lost connection between art and spirituality and to uncover these lesser-documented connections between artistic heritage and the Theosophical Society, highlighting the pivotal role it once played in 20th-century Indian artistic traditions.

The Theosophical Society (TS) Museum collection consists of a diverse range of materials and mediums, including paintings, prints, photographs, sculptures, and decorative items, among others. However, the ongoing collaboration between TS and the ARC Conservation Studio focuses on documenting and conserving its collection of paintings by early 20th-century Bengal and Madras school artists. Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras, now known as Kolkata, Mumbai, and Chennai, were the main three colonial port cities of British India. The Bengal School of Art originated in Calcutta and Shantiniketan (an art school established by Rabindranath Tagore) as a form of resistance against British rule, ushered in a sense of Indian nationalism and an aesthetic modernity in Indian art practices that flourished across colonial India during the early 20th century. In 1929, Devi Prasad Roy Choudhury, a renowned modern artist from Bengal, became the Principal of the Madras School of Arts & Crafts, marking the arrival of modern art in South India and giving rise to the Madras art movement.

The Theosophical Society (TS) Art Conservation project is an interdisciplinary collaboration involving the concerted efforts of the conservators from ARC Resources and Services, a Delhi-based conservation studio, working in conjunction with the international members of TS, Elif Kamisli and Erica Georgiades. In addition, it includes the support of dedicated Adyar-based members who are non-conservation professionals but play a crucial part in this expansive project. Over the years, the TS museum has been looked after by members and volunteers. Therefore, it was important to develop an approach that

Figures 1 and 2. Views of the rooms before being remodelled into a conservation Laboratory. ©Anupama Gaur

Figures 3 and 4. After being remodelled into a conservation laboratory. ©Anupama Gaur

considers their dedication and emotional connection to the cause. A preservation model was designed to meet global preservation standards and establish a sustainable ecosystem where the local community plays a critical role. To achieve this, the establishment of an active conservation laboratory was proposed within the campus ensuring a long-term collection management plan overseen by a dedicated team of ARC conservators.

Our primary objective was to incorporate three key actions to improve and revive museum operations: document, preserve, and educate. At the onset of the project, we identified one of the key challenges ahead of us. There was no established and well-connected network of local resources and professionals whose roles are integral to a successful conservation initiative. Over time, we built the infrastructure by approaching local framers, chemical and stationery suppliers, storage unit providers, insurance advisors, and art lawyers. Securing these collaborations within Chennai was one of our priorities so that the TS conservation lab can be supported in all its operations in the present as well as in the future.

Another challenge was to deal with the biological infestation in the collection. Before the institution of the conservation lab, the collection was housed within the same building in a compact, air-conditioned room. However, in the absence of proper climate control measures and fluctuating humidity levels in the coastal city of Chennai, the air conditioning caused more problems than it solved. The paintings were infested with fungus and other biological agents, which prompted us to isolate the infected works. Our work plan included taking the works out of their current storage, photographing

Figure 5. Condition assessment.
©Anupama Gaur

Figure 6. Microscopic analysis in process.
©Anupama Gaur

Figure 7. Installing the photo set-up.
©Anupama Gaur

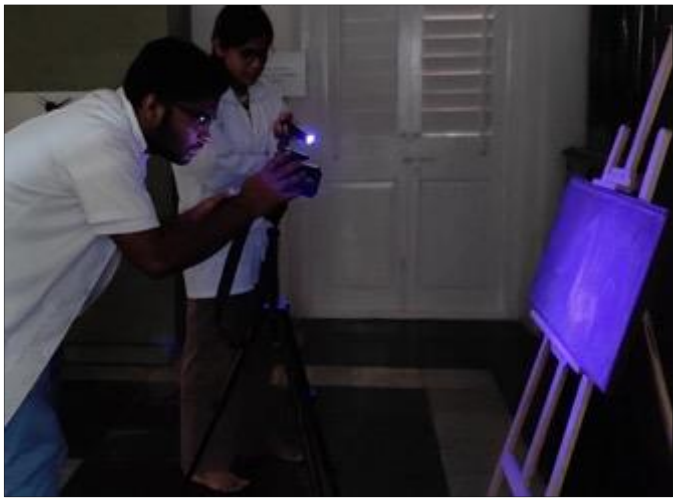

Figure 8. Examination under UV light.
©Anupama Gaur

Figure 9. Quarantine room.
©Anupama Gaur

them, preparing a condition assessment report, cleaning the fungus, and then relocating them to the quarantine room to keep a check on any remaining fungus pores and other infestations. It was decided that the works would remain in the quarantine room until they were conserved, after which they would be transferred to a newly constructed storage space located on the same premises. The new storage is equipped with an HVAC climate control system and adheres to the museum standards for temperature and relative humidity levels. Simultaneously, a conservation priority list was prepared, keeping in mind the condition of the artworks.

This is an ongoing project and the ARC conservators will remain on-site until the major conservation work is completed. In addition to this, they will be training an in-house team of conservators and archivists equipped with the necessary tools and expertise to monitor the museum collection regularly. The goal here is to ensure that any damage or deterioration can be promptly addressed, preventing the current situation from recurring in the future.

Additionally, a volunteer program has been implemented to encourage society members to actively engage with the conservation lab and its activities. Furthermore, “Open Studio Days' on Friday afternoons, a novel outreach initiative, allows visitors to interact with the conservators. People are usually surprised to learn how much time goes into caring for each object and responding to its unique conservation needs. Such conversations open a crucial dialogue between practitioners and the wider community, which in turn allows an exchange of knowledge and an appreciation for our efforts.

Figure 10. Interactive sessions with the volunteers on assessing the condition of the paintings. ©Anupama Gaur

Figure 11. Visitors attending the Open Studio days. ©Anupama Gaur

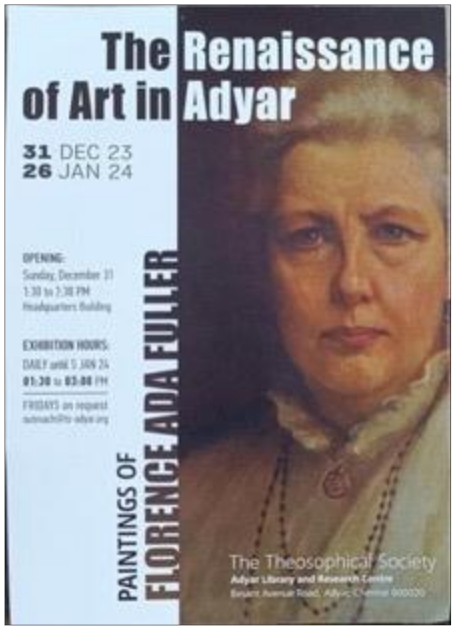

Figure 12,13. Highlights from the exhibition. ©Anupama Gaur

Another important part of our initiative is enabling access to these conserved artworks through exhibitions. During the Society's 148th annual convention in January 2024, an interactive exhibition, "The Renaissance of Art in Adyar", was organised to highlight the ongoing efforts. Through curated shows, exhibitions, and walkthroughs, we aim to display these artworks regularly to raise awareness and preserve them for future generations.

Author biography:

Anupama Gaur practices as a painting conservator and is the founder of ARC Resources and Services, a private conservation studio based in New Delhi, India. She obtained her M.A. in Conservation from the National Museum Institute in New Delhi. Enhancing her skills further, she pursued an internship in painting conservation at Northumbria University, UK. Additionally, she completed a brief residency in preventive conservation at the British Library in London and engaged in the Icon-Getty continuing professional development program in the UK. Over the past two decades, she has collaborated with institutional and individual clients, overseeing numerous conservation projects spanning across India.

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Workshop Review

Gels and Nanofluids: How Colloids and Soft Matters Preserve Works of Art

Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation Center for Conservation at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, February 12-14, 2024
Reviewer: Patricia Favero - The Phillips Collection, Washington, DC, USA

On February 12-14, 2024, the Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation Center for Conservation at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (MFAH), Texas, USA, welcomed Dr. Piero Baglioni and Dr. Giovanna Poggi from the Center for Colloid and Surface Science (CSGI; https://www.csgi.unifi.it/), Italy, to present the workshop "Gels and Nanofluids: How Colloids and Soft Matters Preserve Works of Art." The MFAH and CSGI are two of thirty global partners participating in the GreenArt project (https://www.greenart-project.eu/) to develop and evaluate effective, environmentally friendly, and sustainable systems for conservation and preservation of cultural heritage. The GreenArt initiative builds on the research and progress of previous projects NanoForArt (http://www.nanoforart.eu/) and NanoRestArt (https://www.nanorestart.eu/), and seeks to both enhance existing systems and develop new cleaning, coating, and consolidation options using 'greener' materials for preservation of cultural heritage. GreenArt is guided by objectives of the European Commission's 'European Green Deal' program (https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en) and the United States Environmental Protection Agency's 12 Principles of Green Chemistry (https://www.epa.gov/greenchemistry/basics-green-chemistry), among others.

The purpose of the workshop in Houston was to share current research into the use of gels and nanofluids for conservation of cultural heritage and to review the use of some of the Nanorestore® products developed by CSGI in previous research initiatives. Each morning featured lectures by Dr. Baglioni and Dr. Poggi that were also available online for registered participants around the world via live-streaming. Each afternoon, on-site workshop participants gathered in the painting studio of the Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation Center for Conservation to gain practical experience with a selection of Nanorestore® gels and nanofluids.

Gels

Lectures focused on the theory behind and development of gels and nanofluids for conservation. On the first day, Dr. Baglioni spoke about gels, including the many factors that determine the properties of a gel cleaning system. In particular, he differentiated between physical gels and chemical gels, both of which may be rigid or soft. Physical gels range from "thickened fluids" to porous matrices held together by weak hydrogen bonding or dispersion forces. Chemical gels are formed by polymerization reactions and are more strongly held together by covalent bonds. Depending on the materials used and the gel formation process, a gel's structure may be modified to affect flexibility, porosity, and properties of water retention. In previous research, CSGI developed its Nanorestore® hydrogels for conservators to use with aqueous solutions or water-based nanofluids. They are currently working on developing organogels to be compatible with solvent-based systems, and are focusing on 'greener' solvents.

Nanofluids

On the second day of the workshop, Dr. Baglioni discussed the use of nanofluids, including micellar solutions and micro-emulsions, as an alternative to free solvents for cleaning and removal of coatings. He reviewed the role of surfactants and micelles in forming emulsions where a hydrophobic solvent may be suspended in an aqueous continuous phase or vice versa. Many conservators are familiar with emulsions that are typically cloudy, that separate and require periodic shaking, and where droplets of the suspended phase are large enough to be visible in the continuous phase. However, it is also possible to create homogenous and thermodynamically stable "microemulsions" by selecting the right combinations and proportions of surfactant, solvents, and aqueous solutions. The micelles in these nanofluids are between 5 and 150nm compared with greater than 200 nm for typical emulsions, making them optically transparent. The cleaning action of

microemulsions, which combine the cleaning properties of both liquids and the surfactant, can be very powerful and effective depending on their application. The cleaning mechanisms are complicated, and somewhat dependent on the nature of the soiling or coating to be removed as well as the properties of the surface to be cleaned. Because they are stable, microemulsions can be loaded into an appropriate gel to better control their cleaning action.

Selecting the right surfactant/solvent/aqueous combinations to create stable microemulsions can be a complex process. For this reason, CSGI developed a series of four nanofluids, called Nanorestore Cleaning®, geared toward removing polymer coatings, such as aged varnishes or consolidants, from a variety of substrates. Two of the Nanorestore Cleaning® microemulsions use a non-ionic surfactant and two contain an anionic surfactant. All are water-based, so they are compatible with hydrogels, but because of the solvent component, fume extraction or other safety measures are recommended when using.[1]

Hands-on

The hands-on portion of the workshop included two types of Nanorestore® hydrogels: Nanorestore® Dry and Nanorestore® Peggy.[2] Nanorestore® Dry is a transparent, rigid chemical gel synthesized from poly(2-hydroxyethyl methacrylate) (p(HEMA)) and poly(vinylpyrrolidone) (PVP).[3] It is available in two varieties: Medium Water Retention (MWR) and High Water Retention (HWR). Nanorestore® Peggy is a translucent and flexible physical gel made of poly (vinyl alcohol) (PVOH) using a freeze-thaw process that encourages the formation of a porous polymeric network.[4] The result is an elastic gel that holds its structure, has moderate water retention, and conforms to an irregular surface.

Peggy gels are available in two forms: higher water retention Peggy 5 and lower water retention (and slightly softer) Peggy 6. Both Nanorestore® Dry and Nanorestore® Peggy gels are available as sheets approximately 2mm thick; Peggy gels are also available as 'Peggy Gum' - blocks approximately 5mm thick - or as stubby, tapered 'Peggy Pens'. The hydrogels are supplied in purified water but can absorb and hold other aqueous cleaning solutions or water-based micellar solutions, as well as some polar solvents. Like contact lenses, they should not be allowed to dry out, but they can be rinsed, re-loaded, and used multiple times. The materials should be refrigerated as supplied and after opening; Peggy gels in particular are susceptible to mold or other types of biodegradation.

The gels provided on the first day were soaked in purified water and in a tri-ammonium citrate solution. Artificially soiled mock-ups prepared by MFAH conservators were available for use, and some participants brought their own samples to try with the gels. On the second day, workshop participants also had access to gels loaded with three of the Nanorestore Cleaning® microemulsions. The microemulsions could also be use on a swab or with a poultice material.

Figure 1. Workshop station: how it started. ©Patricia Favero

[1] See https://www.csgi.unifi.it/products/cleaning.html for more information and technical data on all Nanorestore Cleaning® products.

[2] See https://www.csgi.unifi.it/products/gel.html for more information and technical data on all Nanorestore® Gels.

[3] Joana A. L. Domingues, Nicole Bonelli, Rodorico Giorgi, Emiliano Fratini, Florence Gorel, and Piero Baglioni, "Innovative Hydrogels Based on Semi-Interpenetrating p(HEMA)/PVP Networks for the Cleaning of Water-Sensitive Cultural Heritage Artifacts," *Langmuir*, 2013, *29 (8)*, 2746−2755.

[4] Nicole Bonelli, Giovanna Poggi, David Chelazzi, Rodorico Giorgi, Piero Baglioni, "Poly(vinyl alcohol)/poly(vinyl pyrrolidone) hydrogels for the cleaning of art" *Journal of Colloid and Interface Science*, volume 536 (2019) 339–348.

Figure 2. Workshop station: how it's going. ©Patricia Favero

Working with both types of hydrogels and the microemulsions together allowed comparison of their properties and evaluation of which surfaces they were most suited to. It took some practice to get used to handling the gel materials and applying them correctly – for instance, don't forget the step to blot excess liquid off the gel before placing it on the "artwork". Chatting with other workshop participants was helpful, whether about their previous experience working with hydrogels in their respective specialties or comparing results on similar mock-ups. It was also valuable to have the scientists and other experienced users present to guide our attempts. Bringing one's own samples – mock-ups, flea-market finds, a painting from art school, even a kitchen decoration with oily residue – is highly recommended.

A highlight of the workshop was a presentation by Soroya Alcalá, Conservator of Paintings at the MFAH, of two complex projects she had worked on previously with other conservators. The first was the removal of layers of overpaint from a site-specific work by Louise Nevelson, and the second was the removal of multiple coatings from painted Tsimshian

Figure 3. Silicone-tipped mini tongs. ©Patricia Favero

house posts at the American Museum of Natural History.[5] Along with the remarkable results of each treatment, Alcalá described the practicalities, complexities, and limitations of designing methodologies using gel systems, such as determining timing, keeping track of the order of multiple treatment steps, and cleaning and reusing the gel sheets. She also provided potentially the best tip of the workshop: the use of mini, silicone tipped tongs for handling the slippery and delicate hydrogels.

The experience of the hands-on workshop was necessarily limited, but provided a glimpse of what is possible using the Nanorestore® products and gel and microemulsion systems in general. In-person participants received a Nanorestore® test kit to take home for further experimentation. In addition to the theory behind gel systems and microemulsions, lectures touched on other research into the use of nanofluids for deacidification of paper and consolidation of masonry and wall paintings, and teased current research into organogels. As it was a very full three days, participants also received a digital compilation of articles from the past 20-plus years for further review and study.

[5] For more on these treatments, see:
Soraya Alcalá, Michele Baglioni, Samantha Alderson, Madeleine Neiman, Snxakila Clyde Tallio, Rodorico Giorgi. "The use of nanostructured fluids for the removal of polymer coatings from a Nuxalk monumental carving – exploring the cleaning mechanism," *Journal of Cultural Heritage*.
Volume 55 (2022), pp 18-29.

Sarah Nunberg, Soraya Alcalá, Carolyn Tomkiewicz, Cindie Kehlet, Christopher W. McGlinchey, Jens Dittmer. "Conservation of a White Louise Nevelson Installation: Gel Systems Explored" in *Gels in the Conservation of Art*. (L. Angelova, Bronwyn Ormsby, Joyce Townsend, and Richard Wolbers, eds.) London (United Kingdom): Archetype Publications Ltd. (2017), pp 299–305

Workshop Review

From tear mending to alternative lining processes in conservation: war damaged paintings at the National Museum in Gdańsk

Conserving Canvas Initiative, The National Museum in Gdansk, Poland, May-June 2024
Reviewers: Anna Żychska - Paintings Conservator
Cátia Viegas Wesołowska - Head of Conservation

The National Museum in Gdańsk received a significant grant from the Getty Foundation in 2023 to host the Conserving Canvas Initiative. This project, titled "From tear mending to alternative lining processes in conservation: war damaged paintings at the National Museum in Gdańsk," aims to address the conservation challenges of canvas paintings that have been damaged by wars. The two-year initiative (2024-2025) focuses on developing and implementing advanced techniques in tear mending and alternative lining processes to restore and preserve these culturally and historically valuable artworks.

The Gdansk initiative includes experts meetings and three workshops led by experts from England, Germany, Holland, USA and Italy. It focuses on training painting conservators from Poland, Ukraine and the Baltic States and aims to create a network of professional contacts. The project includes study visits to Institutions such as the National Museum in Warsaw, National Gallery in London, Royal Collections and Hamilton Kerr Institute, as well as Rijksmuseum, University of Amsterdam and hopefully SRAL are opportunities to share methodologies and expertise.

The first two workshops which took place in May and June this year were led by experts in the field of paintings conservation and trained 32 early to mid-career conservators.

The first workshop led by Petra Demuth from Cologne Institute of Conservation Sciences was entitled *Single Thread Bonding – Minimal Invasive Methods for the Conservation of Textile Supports of Paintings.* . The workshop consisted of 2 online meetings and a 4 day wonderfully well-structured combination of lectures, and practical exercises focusing on the microscopic view of the canvas structure and minimal intervention approach in treatments on canvas. During practical sessions we worked on reweaving and reconnecting threads with different adhesives such as the traditional Heiber recipe (sturgeon glue and wheat starch paste), sturgeon glue and cellulose fibres mixture, methyl-cellulose ethers and EVA dispersion. What was new to most of the participants was working with Consolidation Pen Winnie.

In June the National Museum in Gdansk hosted *The Mist-Lining technique* workshop led by Kate Seymour and Joanna Strombek from The Stichting Restauratie Atelier Limburg. The four-day workshop was preceded by 4 in-depth online sessions during which we had the opportunity to learn about the theory, ethics and detailed step-by-step instructions.

During the practical sessions we discussed and conducted some pre-treatments (canvas consolidation, mitigating planar distortions) followed bythe Mist-Lining technique. and were able to test the system on many different kinds of mock-ups presenting different painting techniques and different materials.

The system proved to be low cost and easy to build. The only slightly expensive pieces of equipment were a compressor and a spray gun. The procedure itself requires more preparation than working with a heated suction table, but can be carried out with less limitations. It definitely requires a different mindset when it comes to planning and methodology. The lining is very light and it forms a contact bond. The adhesive is in the form of activated solvent vapours and the pressure is minimal, so any deformations in the painting have to be treated before the lining.

During the workshop we lined many samples and test paintings, as well as a painting from the National Museum’s collection, so we will be able to witness how it ages.

The success of the workshops relied fundamentally on Kate Seymour, Joanna Strombek and Petra Demuth’s dedication to imparting knowledge and their generous attitude to sharing their extensive experience.

Organising the Conserving Canvas Initiative at the National Museum in Gdansk has brought together

conservators from all over Poland, Ukraine and the Baltic states to meet, discuss and share methodologies, and we only hope that these contacts will continue in the future. Exchanging views, learning about tools and materials used by colleagues, and even the use of local traditions has been incredibly valuable as it opens up new ways of thinking. This brings one of our main aims to light: connecting and building a network of professionals in this part of the world.

Our project will finish with a seminar in 2025, where we hope to be able to invite participants of the three workshops to present their experiences and how the new methods have helped, or hindered, their work.

We are immensely grateful to the Getty Foundation, and in particular to Antoine Wilmering for believing in our project and encouraging us to stretch our boundaries.

Conference Review

Review of Wood Science and Technology III

Bonnenfanten Museum, Maastricht, The Netherlands, 19-21 October 2023
Reviewers: Silvia Tagliante - former Conservation Fellow
Rachel Billinge - Research Associate, Conservation Department, National Gallery, London

In autumn 2023 we were delighted to attend the symposium Wood Science and Technology III at SRAL, in Maastricht, organized jointly by Stichting Restauratie Atelier Limburg (SRAL, NL), University of Florence (UniFi, IT) and Science and MechAnics in Conservation of Heritage (S-MA-C-H, FR). We followed this thrilling 3-day conference in the amazing location of the Bonnenfanten Museum, in one of the most characteristic and old cities in the Netherlands.

During these days we learnt about the most recent studies from experts in the field from many different countries, both from the practical and the scientific side. Each day focused on a different theme, with an alternation of very stimulating presentations and new posters every day, which made us regret there was not enough time to hear more about all the different case studies.

Figure 1. Welcome remarks from Kate Seymour. ©Sue Ann Chui

The Symposium opened with a day concentrating on the more theoretical, scientific modelling projects, with papers presented by leading scientists in the field from Europe and the US. The welcome lecture, given by the team from University of Florence (one of three hosts along with SRAL and S-MA-C-H) helpfully laid out the problems that we are all trying to deal with and how the results of theoretical tests and modelling can be interpreted to be useful when considering real works of art. To help put these ideas into perspective we were then treated to the only purely practical paper of the first day as Britta New presented an overview of how the approach to structural work on panel paintings at the National Gallery has changed in recent years, using several case studies to illustrate different problems and how they were treated. The rest of the morning was spent in the theoretical worlds of mathematical modelling and macro mechanical testing. In this relatively young field the need to study the materials that make up paintings and to get a better understanding of how they behave under different conditions was stressed by several speakers. Some early results were presented but it is clearly still too early for concrete solutions. Still in the world of modelling and testing, the afternoon's papers helped to make clear how difficult it is to use results gained from models to predict how a real panel will behave, including what for this reviewer was the best paper of the day from the team in Dresden.

The second day, called "The Conservation Project" focused more on practical experience, methods and techniques used in panel paintings. Contributions were made by different conservators not only talking about panel paintings, but also on different themes

Figure 2. Poster session second day. ©Sue Ann Chui

such as wood painted ceilings or different approaches to treat uncommon supports like plywood. The Metropolitan Museum of Art presented how they revisited structural conservation of panel paintings and how things developed in the history of the Museum, from the old models to the current systems. Not just the institutions, but all the specialists, remembered the work of Ray Marchant and how his ideas are still alive today and his legacy carried on by professionals all over the world. Part of the day focused on the Italian approach, where conservators presented insights on the treatment of crossbar systems on panel paintings and how the conservation practice changed during time, especially in institutions like the Opificio delle Pietre Dure.

The third and last theme was "Preventive Conservation", where the focus was on sustainability and prevention of damages in artworks. This theme had been anticipated during the second day by a poster about microclimate enclosures and how this method, currently used by more and more institutions, can protect the paintings from climate fluctuations during loans and travel. The Rijksmuseum closed the conference presenting the ongoing research and the current results over a multidisciplinary effort towards a sustainable museum climate, considering the current focus on climate change, and how the field is changing.

The three days of papers and poster presentations gave everyone a lot to think about, but symposia of this type are not just useful for the formal presentations, the social opportunities are as, if not more important. With coffee and lunch provided on site there were plenty of opportunities for speakers to mingle and chat; theoretical scientists to talk to conservators; old friendships to be reaffirmed and now ones formed.

Professionals in an early-stage career were able to meet new people and hear directly from them and asking questions during break time allowed young conservators to build a stronger network. With different institutions and conservation programs all over the world following different curricula, these international meetings are essential to have a full view on what's happening in every country, which are the recent discoveries and the ongoing study but also how different materials are used to treat artworks.

The first Wood Science and Technology symposium took place in 2014 and was followed in 2016 by symposium II, there was then a long gap, not helped by a global pandemic making any in-person meetings impossible for a while, but the success of Symposium III confirmed the desire and need for such a platform to allow experts, practicing restorers and researchers in the field to meet, to discuss and exchange insights. Towards the end of proceedings the question was raised – do we want to meet again in a few years time? – to which the answer was a resounding YES.

Postprints are forthcoming from the University of Florence. For the full program please visit:

We would like to thank everyone involved for organizing such a great symposium, where we had the opportunity to hear the recent advances in conservation of panel paintings from such a wide and varied number of professionals, allowing us to have a view not only on the museum practice but also the best private practice.

Figure 3. Evening reception on the last day. ©Sue Ann Chui

Conference Review

Not a waste of time: Recycle Lectures by Restauratoren Nederland

Vice President and Author: Michelle Vergeer

In an innovative response to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, Restauratoren Nederland (RN) introduced the concept of Recycle Lectures. Initially conceived as a way for members to safely attend missed lectures from the comfort of their homes, this idea quickly gained traction. Enthusiastic feedback from members led to the realization that past lectures could be repeated and presented on a smaller scale for peers, fostering a sense of community and continuous learning.

Even after the pandemic, RN's board members recognized the lasting value of the Recycle Lectures. During the ICOM-CC conference in Valencia, the Dutch-Belgian delegation, comprising over 100 conservators and presenting 30 lectures, saw a perfect opportunity to expand this concept. This inspired the launch of an XXL edition of Recycle Lectures, allowing members in the Netherlands to attend the missed presentations in person, enhancing networking and social interactions.

RN joined forces with the Alumni Circle for Conservation and Restoration from the University of Amsterdam for the organisation. With the full support of ICOM-CC board members, the event took place in February 2024, offering 150 members the chance to participate at no cost. The event took place at Villa Jongerius, once home to the business of the largest Ford dealer in the Netherlands, Jan Jongerius. This sustainably restored and family-run venue, with its unique blend of Modernist and unconventional Art Deco elements, provided an inspiring backdrop for our gathering. Since the presentations were initially prepared in English for the ICOM-CC conference, the event also welcomed non-Dutch-speaking members, adding an international flair. The day was filled with inspiring lectures, with both speakers and attendees expressing their enthusiasm and looking forward to future editions.

Among the presentations, the variety of topics highlighted the richness of our field. From reconstructions studying the degradation of smalt in

Figure 1. The Dutch-Belgian delegation at ICOM-CC.
©Restauratoren Nederland 2024

Figure 2. The historic venue of Villa Jongerius.
©Restauratoren Nederland 2024

Rembrandt's 'The Night Watch' by Jessica Carter, to examining the materials used by Jan Schoonhoven in his reliefs as discussed by Inez van der Werf, the depth of knowledge shared was remarkable. Marjolein Hupkes tackled decision-making in conserving religious painting ensembles, while Mireille te Marvelde and Paul Kisner delved into the history and ethics of conservation, discussing topics like the transition from glue-paste to wax-resin lining at the Frans Hals Museum and the use of tinted varnishes in the Mauritshuis. Sabrina Meloni's presentation on educating the public about conservation underscored how museums can involve visitors in the fascinating world of conservation through dedicated exhibitions.

Restauratoren Nederland is grateful to ICOM-CC for the opportunity to reproduce these lectures, making valuable knowledge more accessible to a broader audience within our field. The Recycle Lectures have proven to be far from a waste of time, fostering a vibrant and engaged community.

Figure 3. Inspiring lectures at the RN Recycle Lecture event. ©Restauratoren Nederland 2024

Figure 4. Inspiring lectures at the RN Recycle Lecture event. ©Restauratoren Nederland 2024

For more information about Restauratoren Nederland, visit [www.restauratorennederland.nl] (http://www.restauratorennederland.nl).

Author biography:

Michelle Vergeer is vice-chair of Restauratoren Nederland, the Dutch association for conservation, and a freelance paintings conservator. She graduated in 2015 from the University of Amsterdam's program in Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Heritage, specializing in Easel Paintings and Painted Objects. During the post-graduate track Michelle worked at Stichting Restauratie Atelier Limburg in Maastricht, Museo Nacional del Prado in Madrid, and Frans Hals Museum in Haarlem. After earning her Master's and Professional Doctorate, she continued working for both museums and private clients in the Netherlands and abroad. Michelle now operates her own company, Atelier Vergeer, as an independent painting conservator.

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Thesis Abstracts

Belgium

Eveline Vandeputte
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Masters 2021-2022

Unveiling a World of Dreams: A multi-technical study on the materials of The Pink Bows (1937), a Flemish Masterpiece by Paul Delvaux in the collection of the KMSKA

The Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Antwerp (KMSKA) holds an extensive collection on Belgian modernist painters. The Pink Bows by Paul Delvaux (1897-1994), created in 1937, is one of its key pieces.

Delvaux's work makes up an important part of Belgian art history as his oeuvre spans from the early Interwar period to the end of the 20th century. However, no systematic research has been conducted yet on the studio practice or built-up of Delvaux's paintings. The information that is currently available on his work consists mainly of biographical books, (video) interviews, and photographs of his (later) workspace. Therefore, the KMSKA sought assistance from master thesis research, dovetailing with ongoing conservation treatments, to initiate research on Delvaux.

The main goal of this thesis is to investigate the modus operandi of the painter by characterising the painting materials and reconstructing the build-up of The Pink Bows. Additionally, the application of transparent layers, such as varnishes and oil layers, is explored. To this end, an extensive research campaign consisting of non-invasive methods was set up. Results were compared with those of previous analysis on samples. The combination of (chemical) imaging techniques, analytical research, experiments on mock-ups and descriptive research provided a comprehensive view on how the painting was built-up and what materials the artist used.

Results show that Delvaux applied a traditional palette, concurrent with the time of creation. Examples of colours are iron-based earths, ivory and carbon black, vermillion red, Prussian and ultramarine blue, and a red lake. They have been applied either dry-on-wet or wet-in-wet, depending on the artists' intent. Wet-in-wet was mostly applied to mix colours or soften the edges of shapes. Several findings indicate the paint was created by Talens, a Dutch manufacturer of artists' materials. However, further research is needed for more clarity.

The paint layers were applied on top of an industrially prepared ground, containing zinc and lead white, followed

by an underdrawing or lay-in. The presence of an underdrawing could not be confirmed conclusively. A pentiment was found under a transparent layer, indicating Delvaux changed his mind at a certain point in his working process.

Additionally, the study proposes to distinguish the transparent layers based on their function, by employing a clear terminology: A top varnish was applied, some time after the paintings' creation, to protect it from environmental conditions, an intermediate layer was added to act as a base, after a change in composition, and several oil layers were employed to re-saturate the colours which appeared matte upon drying. This oiling out technique provides an overall even gloss but does not have the capacity to behave as a protective layer.

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Brazil

Maria Amália

Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais (UFMG)
Bachelors 2021

The terminology used to name ink applications in treated eased paintings and the related problem

This article discusses the terminology associated with one of the last and eventual steps undertaken in the conservation-restoration treatment of easel paintings, and its objective would be to mitigate the aesthetic interference resulted of losses in the pictorial layer. Its objectives are the compilation and the critical analysis of the terms used by the main references in the area to name the procedures of ink application in artworks of that typology. And they were achieved by the comparison of the words presented in the literature, also analyzed from their etymology and their lexical meanings. As result, we present an objective glossary that aims to clarify some possible vocabulary inconsistencies and their possible theoretical and/or practical negative results and, through it, we expect to benefit the dispersion and expansion of works in the area.

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Rita Cavalcante

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Masters 2022

Transmission of knowledge and circulation of in Maria Amália Lourenço Torres formation in a varnish recipe book from the 18th century

The recipe book "Arte de Brilhantes Vernizes" was written by João Stooter, in Portugal, in the first half of the 18th century. The book was published for the first time in 1729 by the renowned printing house of the Verdussen family, based in Antwerp. Dedicated to Portuguese master turners, painters, sculptors and other artists, the main objective of the book was to teach them how to give an aesthetic finish to their works, with comparable quality to what was being done in the cities of Amsterdam, London and Paris. The author has carefully gathered the description of a wide range of ingredients from distinct parts of the world, with the identification of woods, oils, resins, gums and natural dyes, materials for sanding and finishing pieces of wood, metal, ivory and "coquilho"; recipes for varnishes, tinctures and ornamentation techniques, which were diligently described with the quantities and preparation procedures. This research aims to understand the mechanism of transmission and circulation of information in the field of art, from a copy of the first edition of "Arte de Brilhantes Vernizes", belonging to the collection of Erfgoedbibliotheek Hendrik Conscience, in Antwerp, which contains highly relevant written notes added by the author. A study was carried out on the mechanisms adopted by João Stooter to transmit artisanal knowledge through writing, at a time when teaching was largely carried out in workshops. Through the analysis of the informational content of the book and the reproduction of selected recipes, it was possible to connect with the textual strategies adopted by João Stooter and verify their efficiency in sharing knowledge. In addition, it was possible to compare the information of the raw materials used by the author and the ingredients used in the reproductions of the recipes. Through the study of materials and techniques presented by João Stooter and comparative analyzes with the books "Tesouro descoberto no Rio Amazonas" written by the Jesuit priest João Daniel, and "Crônica da Missão dos padres da Companhia de Jesus no Estado do Maranhão", by priest João Felipe Bettendorff, relevant data was obtained regarding information of circulations, transfers and displacements of information in the universe of the arts between different places and cultures, bringing evidence of raw materials from tropical forests and the techniques adopted by the native peoples of Brazil, which contributed to the development of the arts in the Modern World. The research concludes with a glossary, the aim of which is to assist in the reading of the book *Arte de Brilhantes Vernizes* through the restitution of terms used in its recipes.

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PhD 2022

THE CONSERVATOR AS MANAGER: Possibility of political action at the institutional interface

The aim of this doctoral research is to assert that the activity of the conservator of museological institutions is of great importance, emanating from a paradigm shift that places the conservator at the centre of discussions regarding decision-making on works of art belonging to the collections of these institutions. As an alternative, it is proposed that the conservator must be recognised as a kind of manager, who seeks to react to the various problems related to the decision-making process for the benefit of the works of art. The hypothesis asserts that the conservator, as an individual possessing the power to operate as a political interlocutor at the interface between the various subsystems of the museum system, is the person best-placed to lead discussions and give opinions on the various aspects related to the objects that confer an identity upon the museum institution. The aim is to present the treatment of a painting from the period of Brazilian Concrete Art by the artist Lygia Clark, which was presented in chapter IV of the thesis on case studies in an attempt to demonstrate the thesis. The work was produced using the industrial automotive painting technique (nitrocellulose and alkyd) on carboard. After following the methodological proposal of the thesis, the decision was made to clean and reintegrate the colour to balance the tonal values. However, after cleaning, it became apparent that some areas of the work had been repainted, which caused a chromatic imbalance. The proposal was to reintegrate the area of the painting that had been repainted with a spray-dyed varnish. This proposal met the demands of all stakeholders and restored the aesthetic integrity of the artwork.

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Czech Republic

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Masters 2022

Conservation of the altarpiece oil painting of St. Barbara on canvas from the church of St. John the Baptist in Radomyšl and historical and contemporary methods of tear mending in canvas support of easel paintings with a focus on the bridging method

The practical part of this diploma thesis presents a comprehensive conservation intervention, including detailed surveys of the altarpiece of St. Barbara from the church of St. John the Baptist in Radomyšl. It is an oil painting on linen canvas by František Julius Lux from the middle of the 18th century. The theoretical part deals with historical and contemporary methods of tear mending in canvas support of easel paintings. It collects information about the development of methods and materials used in practice, features literature and published articles related to the topic. In the experimental part, the bridging method was examined in more detail, which was critically evaluated on the basis of several factors, including uniaxial tensile stress tests.

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Netherlands

Nikita Shah

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Advanced Professional Program in Paintings Conservation 2022

A comparative study of the bond strength, reversibility, and (simulated) long-term stability of a selected few lining techniques for canvas paintings

Lining techniques have been invented, developed, and refined over the years and disseminated into different parts of the world. From the multiple lining techniques available, the choice is usually dependent on empirical knowledge, especially for the newer cold-lining methods than on technical data. Comprehensive data comparing different lining techniques is scant which allows for certain techniques to be prevalent. This research project aims to address this gap and initiate a standardized reproducible study of different lining techniques. The lining techniques chosen are - Wax-Resin, Glue-Paste, BEVA ®371, Plextol™ B500 and Mist-Lining. Samples prepared according to standard studio practice were exposed to cyclic RH and temperature fluctuations to artificially age them. Unaged and aged samples were subjected to lap-shear and T-peel tests according to ASTM standards. Results show that each lining technique has its own caveats and the decision of which lining technique is the best is dependent on the needs of the painting being treated. From the data obtained, conservators can extrapolate trends and make decisions accordingly.

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Portugal

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The inpainting of contemporary pictorial surfaces with matte finishes: A technical study based on the reversibility criteria

Inpainting contemporary artworks is a task that presents many challenges, which are results from the utilization of new techniques and materials by the artist, many not meant for an artistic use, or of new concepts and ideas, raising specific questions regarding the paradigms and the needs of conservation itself. When dealing with artworks with a matt finish, the surfaces are more susceptible to damages and the presence of homogenous, uniform texture and colour fields ensue an increased hardship obtaining a satisfactory result, based in theoretical criteria and professional ethics, aiming towards maintaining the formal, material, and conceptual unity of the artwork. Thus, it's intended to circumscribe the main legibility issues present in contemporary artworks through the identification of the main challenges faced by conservators while inpainting this kind of work and the analysis of materials normally used that, after testing, allow promising, possible solutions. To achieve this, the thesis is based on bibliographical research and a questionnaire sent to the professional community, through which six binders were chosen based on the reversibility criteria and were evaluated and tested through spectrophotometric readings, accelerated aging and solubility tests. Through cross-referencing the information obtained on the different stages of the research, the applicability and efficiency of the materials are tested on the inpainting treatment for two contemporary artworks representative of the issues under study.

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Study and restoration intervention of the painting Flight to Egypt, attributed to Francisco Antolínez y Sarabia

The main objective of this project was to carry out the study and restoration intervention of the painting *Flight to Egypt*, an oil on canvas painting from the collection of the National Museum of Ancient Art in Lisbon, Portugal (MNAA). The painting was selected because it was in an unstable condition, which justified its conservation and restoration treatment. According to the existing records, the painting had never been exhibited or restored in the museum, resulting in a lack of information about it. With this project there was an aim to contribute to the knowledge of the painting and enable its preservation and future exhibition in the museum's galleries.

The project work was carried out during an internship at the MNAA's painting conservation and restoration laboratory, between April and December 2023.

Before starting the restoration intervention, the assessment of the painting's conservation requirements was conducted, and a treatment proposal was defined. The condition assessment of the painting *Flight to Egypt* revealed that it was unstable. Among other problems, the painting presented fungal colonization on the support, a highly degraded lining, and a layer of varnish that was very yellowed, oxidized and with a layer of surface dirt, that interfered with the reading of the image.

After the condition assessment, the treatment proposal was defined, and the restoration intervention was initiated. The treatment consisted in cleaning the back and consolidating the flaking paint, followed by aqueous cleaning, varnish removal and structural treatment of the support. During the intervention there was a bigger focus on the study of the varnish removal. The restoration intervention was not finalized, but the next steps were established, which involve applying a strip lining, conducting loss reintegration, and applying a final varnish layer.

Research on the materials and artistic technique of the painting was also executed, and the preparatory layers were characterized through scientific analyses on micro-samples and cross-sections, using techniques such as micro-X-ray Fluorescence (μ-XRF), micro- Fourier Transform Infrared Spectroscopy (μ-FTIR), and micro-Raman spectroscopy (μ- Raman). Since no documentation regarding the materials and techniques of Francisco Antolínez y Sarabia was found in the literature, this project made a first approximation to the study of this painter.

By studying the artistic technique, it was possible to contribute with information about the painting's stratigraphy, image construction, and materials in the preparation layers. The preparatory system was characterized as consisting of a red oil-based preparation layer with red ochre, carbon black, and gypsum, followed by a light-colored imprimatura with red ochre, carbon black, and lead white. The modeled application of the imprimatura, with light colors to influence the luminosity of the painted layers, proved to be a characteristic aspect

of this artist's technique that may be important in future studies of other works attributed to Francisco Antolínez.

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Taiwan

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The Applicability and Effects of xPVAc-Borax Gel Cleaning for Acrylic Emulsion Painting– Using Taiwanese Brand PVA

Innovative and effective cleaning tools and treatment have developed in the field of restoration methods nowadays. Especially when dealing with objects with aqua-sensitive surface, cleaning is always the most challenging part. In recent years, the method of gel cleaning has been widely discussed; however, so far, the method of polyvinyl alcohol-borax gel (xPVAc-borax) mainly appears only in European and American articles. xPVAc-borax can be applied to various non-porous media surfaces, for example, metal, acrylic emulsion paintings, and gilded objects.

Polyvinyl alcohol-borax gel has the characteristics of being flexible, high moisture control and no residue of gel. With various types of polyvinyl alcohol, preparation of gel is a skilled conduction. So far, articles and research with xPVAc-borax could be found in the conservation field are all from Kuraray®, Japan and Sigma –Aldrich®, USA.

Taiwan has an independent polyvinyl alcohol production and supply chain, and has developed a series of products suitable for various applications. Polyvinyl alcohol is a low price, stable properties, non-toxicity materials, and has been widely used in various industries except the conservation field.

The purpose of this article is to evaluate the use of polyvinyl alcohol produced by Taiwan Changchun Petrochemical Co., Ltd. to make polyvinyl alcohol-borax gel. Compare the materials features with recent literature, and prepare cleaning gel with deionized water, non-ionic surfactant, and chelating agent. Three kind of gels were applied on the GOLDEN® Heavy Body Acrylic emulsion acrylic samples with light exposure ageing. With 1 minute and 3 minute applications, the CIELab color, roughness, gloss, and microscopic surfaces images of acrylic emulsion films were all tested and recorded before and after cleaning. To evaluate the surfaces data with images record to understand the feasibility and effectiveness of using this xPVAc- borax recipe for cleaning acrylic emulsion film.

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