WAAC Annual Meeting: Presentation Summaries

The 2003 WAAC Annual Meeting was held October 9 - 11 in Hawai'i, at the Honolulu Academy of Arts. The papers from the meeting are listed below along with summaries prepared by the speakers.

Ukiyo-e Renewed: Conservation of the Michener Collection of Japanese Wood Block Prints

Susan Sayre Batton

The Honolulu Academy of Arts has been the fortunate beneficiary of a long-term grant from the Robert F. Lange Foundation for the conservation of the James Michener Collection of Japanese Woodblock Prints (ukiyo-e). The Michener Collection is one of the Academy's great treasures and includes over 9000 prints which illustrate the history of printmaking from the 17th century to the mid-20th century in Japan.

Strong in quality as well as quantity, the Michener Collection is the third largest ukiyo-e collection in America, containing exquisite works by Sharaku, Utamaro, Hokusai, Harunobu, and includes the largest collection of works by Utagawa Hiroshige outside of Japan. The collection has been central to many well-known international exhibitions, publications, and important scholarship, including work by Richard Lane, Roger Keyes, Howard Link, Tadashi Kobayashi, and Stephen Little.

While dominated by the American novelist James Michener's generous gift of over 5400 prints, the ukiyo-e collection actually began at the time of the museum's founding in 1927, with major gifts from the founder, Mrs. Charles M. Cooke. Mrs. Cooke dedicated the Academy's opening with this wish:

"*That our children of many nationalities and races, born far from the centers of art, may receive an intimation of their own cultural legacy and wake to the ideals embodied in the arts of their neighbors….the Honolulu Academy of Arts will open it doors to this community, so situated that it calls East the West and West the East....*"

This paper will explore the history of the print conservation program at the Academy and trace its history and collaboration with the Pacific Regional Conservation Center (PRCC). In addition, the paper will present the challenges of implementing a conservation program in a tropical location; and the satisfying opportunity to study, research, conserve, and exhibit these exquisite and delicate works of art.

Creating Early Photographic Views of Hawai'i: Examining Images and the Collodion Wet Plate Negative

Lynn Ann Davis

Most early photographers arrived in Honolulu with little experience in handling the challenging chemistry and processing technique of the collodion wet plate negative. They learned how to adapt to the island conditions by trial and error. This presentation will tour the islands between 1860-1880 and examine the prints and negatives of the early photographers.

Preserving Collections in Hot and Humid Climates Using Controlled Ventilation and Heating

Vincent L. Beltran

Due to the prevailing climatic conditions, museum collections in tropical and subtropical regions are at risk of microbiological attack. While traditional use of chemical defenses (e.g., fungicides, disinfectants) has declined as a result of their toxicity, further attacks by fungi and bacteria can be significantly reduced or halted by improving the collection environment, particularly by maintaining relative humidity below 75%.

Despite their ability to regulate the interior environment, air conditioning systems can be very intrusive to the superstructure and interior of historic buildings, where many collections are housed. In addition, air conditioning is very expensive to properly install, operate, and maintain and does not guarantee the desired collection environment will be achieved.

In response to these issues, the Getty Conservation Institute has developed the use of controlled ventilation and heating for the preservation of collections housed in historic buildings in hot and humid climates. This approach provides museums with a viable alternative to air conditioning systems that is economically sustainable, robust, and technologically simple to operate.

Giving Things a Light Clean: Recent Research into the Use of Lasers in Rock Image Conservation

J. Claire Dean

Recent and continuing conservation research has included a focus on alternative uses of laser technology beyond its established applications in the conservation of architecture and other forms of art. This paper will address recent research into the use of lasers in rock image conservation - especially as a potential tool for graffiti removal - providing an environmentally friendly and culturally more acceptable and appropriate means of treatment. Examples of recent demonstrations of its use in the field at John Day Fossil Beds National Monument and on Native American reservation lands will be included.

Kiwala'o Cloak – Conservation Revisited

Diana Hobart Dicus

In 2000, the Bernice P. Bishop Museum of Anthropology and Natural History and the Iolani Palace entered into a loan agreement, whereby the Kiwala'o Cloak (BPBM 6829, dimensions: 60" x 144") would be loaned for exhibition at the palace in the *Ancient Regalia* exhibit. For conservation examination, freeze sterilization, treatment, and exhibition preparation, Linda Hee, Textile Conservator in Honolulu, and Diana Dicus, Objects Conservator in Boise, Idaho, each of whom had worked previously for the Pacific Regional Conservation Center at the Bishop, were contracted to work with the cloak.

Michael Jones, Mount Designer in Honolulu, was contracted to design and fabricate the mount.

The conservators and the mount designer worked collaboratively with Valerie Free, Cultural Resources Collections Care Manager at the Bishop Museum, Corrine Chum, then Curator at the 'Iolani Palace, and Janet Ness, Collections Manager at the 'Iolani Palace.

Conservation documentation was provided to the Bishop Museum and to the 'Iolani Palace. Any materials removed from the cloak were appropriately contained. They are currently kept at the 'Iolani Palace.

Keeping that Bronze Tan at Waikiki & Kewalos

Carol Hasegawa

The big winter meets are held on the north shore of Oahu but even south shore waves attract surfers, especially beginners at Waikiki or locals at Kewalos. When the surfer is the bronze Duke Kahanamoku at Kuhio Beach and wave spray at high tide reaches the cast pueo's (owl) at Kewalos, even the great and airborne redden and blister. This talk combines the treatment of sculpture in a marine, volcanic, and urban environment as well as the human component of maintaining these conservation efforts, including the care and nourishment of technicians and user-friendly maintenance report formats.

The Role of the Conservator in the Griffith Observatory Renovation and Expansion

Linnaea Dix Dawson

The Griffith Observatory, a major Los Angeles landmark, is currently undergoing an $83 million renovation and expansion that is scheduled to be completed in 2005. This talk will discuss the role of the conservator in the project.

The primary responsibility of the conservator is to advise the general contractor and subcontractors on the removal, packing, storage, and treatment of the building's historic fabric elements which range from light fixtures to wall murals. The conservator also acts as a liaison between the contractor, owner, and architects in all matters relating to the building's historic fabric.

A secondary function of the conservator is to document the over 1,100 items of historic fabric identified in the specifications and architectural drawings, and to track those objects through the course of the project. Documentation for the project includes extensive photography, written condition reports, tagging, inventory, tracking, test result data interpretation, and report preparation for all phases of the work that involve the historic fabric. The talk will also discuss lessons learned for future projects.

Outdoor Sculpture in Hawai'i: A Conservator's Perspective

Laura Gorman

A selective survey of outdoor sculpture managed by various agencies (federal, state, city, private) in Hawai'i, with attention to their commissioning and maintenance programs. Many different conservators have successfully treated outdoor sculpture in Hawaii over the years, but in the end it is up to the owners to give the community art they can care for and to support a maintenance program for it. Some successes and failures will be explored.

Stories in the Folds: Shaping an Exhibition Featuring Pacific Island Tapa Cloth

T. Rose Holdcraft

This presentation will discuss the diverse resources consulted and utilized in the planning and implementation of a recent exhibition *Embedded Nature: Tapa Cloths from the Pacific Islands* at the Peabody Museum-Harvard University. Results from an IMLS funded conservation and rehousing project, involving nearly 275 cloths, including several dating to the first quarter of the 19th century, served as impetus for the exhibit.

This presentation will provide an overview of the conservation project goals and working approaches, as well as about the exhibition development process. Documentation, cleaning, and treatment options along with storage and display solutions will be illustrated. Information from an initial preliminary phase of analytical study of selected original manufacturing materials and/or environmental pollutants associated with specific cloths will be summarized.

Finding appropriate solutions to improve research access and to expand and share new understanding about this significant material culture resource was initiated through broad collaboration and consultation with specialists of Pacific Island material culture, contemporary kapa/tapa makers, conservation professionals, and botanists, with museum and university technical support.

GC-MS Analysis of Gums and Mucilages in Historic Kapa Cloth

Joy Keeney

Plant gums are important binding media in works of art, and they function by gluing the pigment to a support. Mucilages are found in building materials such as lime mortar and plaster. The Getty Conservation Institute's (GCI) analytical team developed a method to identify plant gums and mucilage by Gas Chromatography Mass Spectrometry (GCMS). Mucilages are in the roots, stems, or leafy part of a plant or seaweed. Chemically plant gums are polysaccharides, and are identical to mucilage, but mucilage can contain up to 90% water.

Kapa cloth is made from the inner bark of several Hawaiian plant species. It is pounded into a paste and dried in the sun. Puanani Van Dorpe, a Hawaiian kapa cloth artist, has spent most of the last 20 years striving to recreate ancient Hawaiian techniques. She has devoted countless hours researching and developing methods at the Bishop Museum and at her home workshop on the Big Island.

Even though she is a successful and sought after artist, she wants to accurately recreate her techniques on video to pass on to future generations. Her art is on display at hotels, the Bishop Museum, and in private collections.

She asked the GCI if a plant gum could have been used as a binder in 200 year old kapa cloth samples she had collected. She provided kapa samples she prepared as well as botanical reference materials for analysis. The samples were analyzed

by GCMS, and all the kapa samples were found to contain a mucilage found in Hawaiian tree barks. Starch is a main additive to several of the samples, and none of the historic samples, except one, contained added mucilage or plant gum. Results of the analysis and the implications will be discussed.

Carving Our History: Preservation or Perpetuation?

A panel discussion regarding the care of Hawaiian Images

Panelists: Dr. Guy Kaulukukui, Vice President, Hawaiian and Pacific Studies, Moderator;

Dr. Bill Brown, President & CEO, Bishop Museum;

Valerie Free, Museum Conservator; Keone Nunes, Cultural Practicioner, Kumu Hula, Kakau (tatoo) Artist; and Gordon Umi Kai, Traditional Carver.

Toxic Pigments: Current Findings of a Research Project

Nancy Odegaard

Pigments, like pesticide residues, may present an unforeseen danger. In recent years, conservators, tribal communities, and museum professionals have been faced with an urgent situation: sacred objects and objects of cultural patrimony eligible for return under the 1990 NAGPRA law have been found to be contaminated with pesticide residues.

Previous and on-going research at the ASM have been involved in the development of standards for testing, documentation, and possible residue removal techniques. Funding from the NCPTT has enabled a study involving a portable XRF. Using the XRF, FTIR, and SEM-EDX we have also begun to study the properties of pigments.

Specifically, we are looking at pigments in the archaeological and ethnological record of the Southwest with special interest in those with toxic metals such as arsenic, mercury, and lead. Commercial artist pigments and laundry bluing products have also been included for comparative purposes. Museum workers, tribal members, artisans, and scholars to these cultural collections should benefit from the knowledge gained through this research effort.

Dealing with Water Stains on Contemporary Paintings

Elisabeth Schlegel

This talk will focus on the reduction of stains caused by water damage. Three different 20th-century paintings that have been executed in three different techniques will be discussed to show basic considerations and to give an idea of possible approaches in how to deal with water stained paintings.

Using Mixtures of Concentrated Stock Solutions and a Database to Arrive at an Optimal Cleaning System

Chris Stavroudis & Tiarna Doherty

The Modular Cleaning Program is a database system and a series of concentrated stock solutions. This system has been developed to assist conservators in their approach to cleaning with solvents, solvent gels, or water-borne systems. While the solvent and solvent gel portions of the system are still under development, the aqueous cleaning system is ready for prime time. While developed from the perspective of paintings conservation, the methodology is universal and applicable to any cleaning environment.

The Modular Cleaning Program is an outgrowth of the long collaboration between Richard Wolbers and the Getty Conservation Institute, most recently manifested in the Gels Research Project. A final component of the Project was the discussion of a "logic tree" approach to selecting cleaning systems - intended to be an insight, as it were, into Professor Wolbers' thought process when selecting a cleaning system. The nascent system was modified by Chris Stavroudis and built into a FileMaker Pro® database system.

The guiding principals behind the program are: working from fundamental constants and using concentrated, modular, stock solutions that can be mixed to create a nearly infinite variety of cleaning solutions for testing.

The program is a set of interrelated databases, which function as a repository of physical constants, as an aid for formulating the stock solutions, and as a guide to mixing, testing, and clearing solutions. In addition the database serves to document the decision process that leads to a successful cleaning.

The program allows the conservator to control the buffer system, pH, ionic strength, chelating agents, surfactants, gelling agents, and optionally, co-solvents, ionic buffers, and metal-ion buffers. The use of concentrated modular stock solutions allows small amounts of a test solution to be prepared, tested, and evaluated in very little time.

After testing a number of permutations, the conservator selects the test solution which yields the best aesthetic results. From this selection, the program generates the formula for the mixture, mixing instructions in plain English for a user specified quantity, and finally, a label for the container.

The Modular Cleaning System is offered as both a practical tool and an opportunity to integrate the theoretical and material properties into our daily conservation practice.

NCPTT-Out of the Laboratory and into the Field

Mary Striegel

The explosion of technology in the world today effects the way in which we work, live, and play. It also provides us with new opportunities to tap into technology for preserving our past. Preservation technology is the application of technical tools for the preservation of cultural heritage. What are the latest developments in preservation technology and how are they impacting the way conservators and preservationists work?

The National Center for Preservation Technology and Training (NCPTT) is a National Park Service office established by Congress to be a catalyst for technologies to assist in preserving and conserving our historical and cultural landmarks.

NCPTT's mission is to identify critical challenges to the preservation of our na-

tion's cultural heritage, to seek solutions through the innovative application of technology, and to provide training and information on preservation technology to the preservation community. NCPTT operates four main programs including Architecture & Engineering, Environmental & Materials Research, Archeology & Collections Care, and Historic Landscapes. In addition, NCPTT operates an annual grants program that supports research, training events, meetings and conferences, and publications that involve the application of technology to the preservation of cultural resources.

In this session conservators will learn about NCPTT's new and on-going projects. We will present how our efforts impact cultural resources from materials conservation to historic landscapes. Conservators will discover the resources available through NCPTT.

Pele's Painted Pyrotechnics

Dawne Steele Pullman

Pele, Goddess of Fire, is an integral part of Hawai'i's folklore. Her home on the Big Island of Hawai'i, Kilauea, continues to wreak havoc with volcanic activity as well as inspire awe. Today, and as far back as the 19th century, artists have tried to capture her power on canvas. Many of such paintings have come through Larry Pace's studio during the years. In limited time this presentation hopes to give an introduction to the importance of Pele's Legend, show paintings from the 19th century by the artists known as the "Volcano School," and explain the conservation challenges of some of these works.

Shared Endeavors and Disciplinary Boundaries: A Study of Collaboration in Archaeology and Conservation

Jackie Zak

Archaeologists and conservators both claim stewardship of the past as an essential purpose. In recognition of this commonality, many have called — through the literature, workshops, and special conferences — for greater integration of the two professions. In spite of these efforts, true collaboration between archaeologists and conservators remains a rare event, particularly in the US.

When asked about this phenomenon, archaeologists and conservators provide ready answers involving issues of awareness, time, money, and training. However, what are the specific core differences in professional values that may inhibit collaboration? Do similar values exist that, once identified, could be used to strengthen ties between the professions?

This paper presents a work in progress exploring the nature of these professional values using a mixed methodology of textual analysis, case study research, and participant observation of archaeologists and conservators during joint activities and individual problem solving.

Laser Overview & Project Update

Meg Abraham

Architectural Conservation in Hawai'i: Hurdles and Impediments in the Island Context

William Chapman

Stucco Facades in the Ancient Maya Region and Current Approaches to their Restoration

Eric F. Hansen

Dirty Pictures in Paradise

Larry Pace

Extreme Conditions Shangri La: A Textile Conservator's Overview

Ann Svenson Perlman

Controlled Laser Cleaning of Paintings

Read by Odile Madden for Hans Scholten who was unable to attend the meeting.

Site Management at Kalaupapa National Historic Park

Gretchen Voeks

Outdoor Sculpture in Hawai'i

Donna Williams