

---

---

## Annual Meeting Abstracts

---

*The 2008 WAAC Annual Meeting was held October 24-26 in Los Angeles, California. The papers from the meeting are listed below along with summaries prepared by the speakers.*

---

### Evaluation of Fiber Samples from Early Victorian Dyed Woolen Yarns

Terry Schaeffer and Charlotte Eng

LACMA recently received a gift of an early Victorian yarn sample book in which the majority of the samples are accompanied by recipes. The dyed woolen yarns represent a very wide color palette created completely, according to the recipes, from colorants and dyeing assistants that were available before the advent of coal tar dyes. More than one person contributed samples and recipes to the book, which appears to have been a personal reference work rather than a sample book for perusal by customers. The yarns were intended for carpet manufacture in England.

Many of the large number of color groups in the book are represented by several yarns with a range of hues and depths of shade. The recipes often indicate that the relative amounts of ingredients were varied in a systematic way, suggesting that the makers of the samples were experimenting to broaden the range of their color palette. The majority of the colors do not appear to be significantly faded.

The availability of this large collection of samples provides an unusual opportunity to apply noninvasive and nondestructive analytical techniques to the yarns and fiber samples. These results can then be compared to data obtained from microchemical analyses performed on very small fiber samples. Our goals have been to confirm the presence of ingredients in the samples with recipes and to identify ingredients in yarns without recipes, while consuming as little fiber as possible.

One method we have used is reflectance spectroscopy of small clusters of fibers from the yarns, using a Cary 50 spectrophotometer with a Barreline accessory. Although the reflectance spectra tend to be relatively featureless and the reflectance of the fiber samples placed on a white background is high, we were able to deduce specific information from the Kubelka-Munk transforms and derivatives of the transforms of the spectra. Interpretation of these results has been aided by comparison of the data to spectra of some of Helmut Schweppe's dyed woolen yarns in the reference collection at the Getty Conservation Institute.

Fourier-Transform Infrared, Raman and x-ray fluorescence spectroscopy, and x-ray diffractometry, have also been applied to selected samples from the Victorian yarn collection. Results have indicated that a few of the samples were not dyed according to their accompanying recipes.

### Ten Years of Treating Russian Icons from the Aleut and Pribilof Islands

Cynthia Lawrence

This paper discusses an ongoing conservation project involving icons from the Aleutian and Pribilof Islands. The conservation project is coordinated, organized, and overseen by the Aleutian Pribilof Heritage Group, a non-profit entity created by an amendment to the Aleutian Islands Restitution Act passed by congress in 1988, to be responsible for the restoration of six Russian Orthodox churches, which were pilfered and damaged during World War II. Once the church buildings had been restored, the Heritage Group began the icon conservation project.

The majority of these icons are of 19th-century Russian origin; however, they range considerably in terms of style, materials and construction, and condition. Prior to World War II, the icons were exposed to relatively extreme environmental conditions typical of Alaskan islands, where churches were generally heated only for services.

During the war, environmental conditions worsened for paintings left behind in the churches when residents were evacuated to internment camps, while others were buried in barrels or "boxes" in the ground nearby for three years, and still others were carried to the internment camps in the hopes of being placed in chapels in the camps.

Having been part of the conservation efforts of a large collection of closely related objects over a period of time has allowed for an opportunity to continually re-evaluate the needs of the objects, necessary ethical considerations, and the treatment approaches chosen, and to gain a better understanding of their relation to each other and to the needs of the communities of which they are a part. How the uniqueness of these works of art has helped form a general conservation approach and guided specific treatment choices is examined in this presentation.

I have been conserving icons from the Aleutian and Pribilof Islands for approximately 10 years, after having first been approached by Vera Espinola, an icon conservation specialist, in 1997. She had completed a survey of churches, icons, and religious objects earlier, as part of a restoration effort begun by the Aleutian Pribilof Heritage Group. With monies paid by the US government as restitution to the Aleut people, along with grants from the National Park Service, and American Express, the Heritage Group has overseen the restoration of six churches and rebuilding of one chapel, and continues to administer to the conservation of their numerous icons.

This on-going project has been a collaboration among Vera, members of the Heritage Group, the Aleut and Pribilof people - priest and lay - who have devoted themselves to caring for these icons, colleagues in both objects and paintings conservation, and myself. The experience has caused me to truly appreciate the uniqueness and integrity of each artwork I treat; has given me a greater respect for the significance an artwork may hold for its owner, steward, or community; and continues to challenge my skills, perspectives, and creativity as a conservator.

x

---

---

## Annual Meeting Abstracts, continued

---

### Addressing Previous Repairs of a Konaig-Style Baidarka

Dana K. Senge

The Kodiak Island Historical Society in Kodiak, AK owns and exhibits one of the five known remaining Koniag-Style three hole Baidarkas (Kayaks) in the world. This historical artifact was extensively examined and treated in 1978 by graduate students of the George Washington University Conservation Program. While this was a sound conservation treatment, the piece is on permanent exhibit in an historic structure with little climate control, causing this wood and skin artifact to continue to change shape with time. By the early 2000s the 20+ year old repairs had separated from the skin shell in several locations, and a new course of treatment was desired by the museum staff. The treatment of this piece in the fall of 2007 became a major project for this small historical society and museum and included several educational opportunities for the conservator, staff, and community in the structure, history, and preservation of the watercraft.

### The Saites in San Diego

David A. Scott

A coffin from the collections of the San Diego Museum of Man is described and examined in this talk. The coffin is one of a group of six donated to the Museum of Man in 2001. None of the group has yet been published, and this is the first account of one of these coffins. Three of them are suffering from insect infestation and will later have to be treated by anoxia fumigation using humidified nitrogen, but at present the pigments, grounds, previous restoration, binding media, wood identification, and aspects of the hieroglyphic inscriptions on the coffin will be discussed.

This study forms part of the technical art historical investigation of ancient Egyptian pigments, particularly green pigments, which have often proved to be difficult to characterize, and which forms part of an on-going research

project. In the coffin described here, the pigments and binding media used are quite conservative, reflecting the continuation of earlier traditions in the 26-28th Dynasties. The flesh-coloured face however, contains titanium-based pigments and is probably a later restoration, which confounds some art historical interpretations of the color of the face of this coffin.

### Conservation at Kaman Kalehöyük

Alice Boccia Paterakis  
Director of Conservation  
Kaman Kalehöyük Excavation  
Japanese Institute of Anatolian Archaeology, Turkey

A summary of several projects that have been carried out in the Conservation Laboratory of the Kaman Kalehöyük excavation in Turkey since 1992 will be presented including the conservation treatment and stabilization of archaeological iron and bronze. The expansion of the site into an international center for the study of Anatolian archaeology, under the auspices of the Japanese Institute of Anatolian Archaeology, will be presented with numerous images.

Plans for the future of conservation at Kaman Kalehöyük consist of moving into the new conservation laboratory in 2009, the renewal of the annual conservation student internship program, and holding a workshop in 2010 and a conference in 2011 for archaeological conservators.

### Preserving Los Angeles - SurveyLA: the Los Angeles Historic Resources Survey

Ken Bernstein

Despite its perennial image as a "city of the future" with little real history, Los Angeles boasts a diverse and fascinating architectural heritage. The city of Los Angeles is now taking a significant step to identify and protect this rich heritage by embarking on SurveyLA - its first-ever citywide historic resources survey.

SurveyLA will be a comprehensive inventory of a city that comprises 466 square miles and 880,000 legal parcels - an area larger than eight of the nation's largest cities combined. The citywide survey is partially funded by a generous \$2.5 million, five-year grant from the Getty Foundation. The survey project will make historic resource information readily accessible on the city's website to shape decisions by policy makers, developers, urban planners, and property owners.

This presentation will explain how SurveyLA marks a coming-of-age for historic preservation in Los Angeles and can serve as a model for other cities' efforts to preserve their own fragile heritage.

### Melting Moments: A Technical Note on the Use of Steam to Remove Hand Soiling from Stone Surfaces

J. Claire Dean

Current renovations at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County have called for the rapid de-installation and redisplay (in a new location) of the museum's Ancient Latin American Hall, all in the space of three and a half months. After decades on open exhibit, many stone items are discoloured and heavily soiled, the result of thousands of hands touching exposed surfaces. The compressed exhibit schedule called for a fast, effective but safe way to remove this dirt. The use of a hand held jet steamer to help break up and remove the dirt was investigated with pleasantly surprising results.

### Coordinating a Three Year Study on Federally-Compliant Protective Clear Coatings for Metals

Tami Lasseter Clare and P. Andrew Lins

The conservation and preservation professions in the US and in Europe face the real prospect that in the near future there will be no viable clear coating systems to protect outdoor monuments, sculptures,

---

---

## Annual Meeting Abstracts, continued

---

buildings, and other significant artifacts made of copper or iron alloys against corrosion and degradation.

If regulations outlawing the use of solvents common to the formulation and application of such coatings are expanded in the next two or three years, the only options available may be short lived wax pastes that typically require reapplication every one to three years and contain some percentage of solvents that are also likely to be restricted.

The goal of this project is to develop and evaluate a new clear coating for metal that will be environmentally safe and long lasting, thus saving museums time and money, as well as reducing hazards for conservation staff. Over the course of this three-year project, a double-blind study of candidate coatings will be undertaken with participation of volunteer conservators who will evaluate the coatings based on qualitative parameters, such as ease of use, appearance, and workability.

Concurrently, accelerated and natural weathering studies of the candidate coatings on bronze and iron (both patinated and bare) samples will be undertaken. The performance of the coatings during exposure will be analyzed using electrochemical impedance spectroscopy and other scientific methods as required. In this presentation, the authors wish to share the goals of the project with the conservation community and to solicit participants in the double-blind study.

### Car Trouble: The Mass Fumigation of an Infested Automotive Collection

Tania Collas

The discovery of a moth infestation within the Automotive Collection of the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County required a broad-sweeping response. Webbing clothes moths had infested the horse-hair upholstery in several vehicles and appeared to be spreading among the 45 historic cars housed in the same storage space. Adding to the

urgency, the Automotive Collection was scheduled to move into a new storage facility within the year.

After careful consideration, museum staff determined that mass fumigation would be the safest, most effective, and most practical means of eradicating the moths before moving the cars into their new pest-free location. Because of the large number of infested and potentially infested cars, fumigation took place in two rounds; experiences from the first round led to improvements in the second round.

The fumigation process, while adding a new level of complication to an already challenging collection move, proved to be the best solution to an otherwise overwhelming problem. The lessons learned from this mass treatment may help guide decisions for the treatment of similar large-scale infestation problems.

### Built Heritage Conservation Education in Southeast Asia

Kecia Fong

Heritage conservation = education + culture + relevance. Education = knowledge + skills + culture.

The Education department of the Getty Conservation Institute has recently launched a regional education and training initiative for the conservation of built heritage in Southeast Asia. This initiative takes into account that heritage conservation as both concept and act is multivalent by nature and that education is informed by culture. Consequently, the task of improving heritage conservation demands a multi-faceted approach.

The Southeast Asia initiative has been designed in multiple components, each characterized by a particular activity and directed towards a specific audience. These are: field workshops for conservation professionals; practicing professionals in the field; didactic materials for conservation education; educators and trainers; convening meetings of topical interest for conservation professionals who are both directly and indi-

rectly related to heritage conservation.

Throughout these components the issues of cultural perspective and values are considered in the framing of the content and communication of the information.

### Rediscovering a Danish Medieval Polychrome Altarpiece

Conny Hansen and Marcelle Andreasson Lunau  
National Museum Copenhagen

In 2006–07, a large scale conservation project took place at the National Museum in Copenhagen, Denmark. A polychrome altarpiece originally dated 1470, was brought in for conservation. The altarpiece consists of 12 apostles, 4 scenes from the life of St. Andrew, and one large figure of St. Andrew. Furthermore, the doors of the altar are painted with eight scenes from the life of Christ. The quality of the woodwork as well as the paint layers that emerged is outstanding considering that the altarpiece still stands in the small village church it originally was made for, on the island of Møn.

This talk is a discussion of the treatment and the many decisions that were made throughout the project. Two layers of over-paint covered the entire altarpiece, one applied in 1859 and one applied in 1937, and it was clear that the over-paint caused tension and flaking throughout. It was of course not easy to define the state of the original paint layers. One figure had however been tested and cleaned a few years earlier and the result was promising.

A thorough scientific examination of the colors, paint layers, and original as well as conservation materials, took place before the conservation work started. The treatment consisted mainly of consolidation and structural stabilization prior to the removal of the two layers of over-paint. Some surprising scenes and facts about the altar were revealed and the age was redefined by both scientists and art-historians. The project involved 5 conservators and ended up taking close

---

---

## Annual Meeting Abstracts, continued

---

to two years.

### Still Pictures: Pictures of Stills and Other Images from the History of Turpentine

Alan Phenix

In more than one sense, turpentine is the disappearing artists' material. Demand for and use of the material has declined considerably in recent decades as a consequence mostly of economic and environmental pressures.

Despite being a "green" solvent, in the sense of being carbon-neutral, production of oil of turpentine has diminished considerably in the western world. China is now the world's leading producer of this material. Manufacture of oil of turpentine and rosin (colophony) from pine resin obtained by scarring of trees effectively ceased in August 2001, so ending America's oldest continuous export industry, older even than tobacco.

Oil of turpentine disappears in other ways too. It is the traditional thinner or diluent for artists working with oil-based paint media and resinous varnishes. But unlike pigments and binding media, the use of oil of turpentine (or any other volatile solvents, such as mineral spirits, oil of spike lavender, etc.) cannot usually be detected now in old works of art by modern techniques of instrumental analytical chemistry for the simple reason that all molecular traces have effectively disappeared from the object by evaporation.

In the absence of chemical analytical data which might indicate the history of use and manufacture of such materials, we are reliant on historical and documentary sources for understanding of this subject.

This talk will present some initial findings from casual research into the history of these volatile solvents which started when the author was a visiting research scholar at the Getty in 2005-6 and which he continues on an informal basis. The focus will be very much on pictorial evidence: selected images from the history of the distillation of volatile oils from

its beginnings in classical times through to the present day. In addition to conventional sources of technical art history, the survey takes in material from a wide range of subject areas including: naval stores; their commercial and socio-economic history; marine archaeology; the history of chemistry and alchemy; the history of medicine, surgery, and pharmacology; herbs and ethnobotany; forest products and forest management; warfare and incendiary weaponry; history of fire-fighting; perfumery, amongst others.

Particularly valuable sources of historical evidence have been found for the pine resin (naval stores) industries of the south-eastern United States and south-western France (Les Landes, Gascony), the latter dating back at least to Romano-Celtic times.

Important clues to the early development of essential oil distillation have also been found in medical and pharmaceutical treatises of the late Middle Ages, especially in herbals. Accordingly, the author believes that it can now be argued convincingly that knowledge of distilled volatile oils existed at least as early as the turn of the fourteenth century and that distilled oil of turpentine would have been available to painters through apothecaries by this date. Even if it cannot be proved that they actually used it, oil of turpentine would almost certainly have been known to the early painters in oil.

The emergence of distilled volatile oils, it will be suggested, probably follows from the discovery of the distillation of strong alcohol (aqua ardens, aqua vitae) in which the medical schools of Italy (Salerno, Bologna) played an important role.

### The Modular Cleaning Program: Changes and Updates

Chris Stavroudis

In the last year, the MCP has been updated to a newer version of FileMaker Pro (a much more arduous task than it sounds). At the same time, a number of improvements were made and incor-

porated into the database. In addition, after co-teaching a 4 day workshop in Montreal with Richard Wolbers, some of Richard's more recent thoughts and concerns have been incorporated into the database. Richard's use of micro-conductivity and pH meters to measure the ionic environment of a painting surface will be discussed. How these measurements can guide a cleaning and how they have been incorporated into the MCP methodology will be discussed.

### The Conservation of the *Born to the West* Movie Banner

Paulette Reading and Camilla Van Vooren

The novel *Valley of the Wild Horses* by early 20th-century Western novelist Zane Grey was adapted to film and released by Paramount Studios as *Born to the West* in 1926. Paulette Reading of Textile Conservation and Camilla Van Vooren from the Western Center for the Conservation of Fine Arts, both in Denver, Colorado, collaborated on the treatment of a fabric banner with a lithographic image advertising the silent movie, in the collection of the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City.

The paper outlines the testing and lining of the banner. It includes issues and choices relating to the adhesive and adhesive carrier, the choice of lining fabric, and how the fabric was altered to better integrate with the object as well as alignment, registration, handling, and compensation of the banner.

### Into the Wild: WAAC'S Next Annual Meeting in Alaska

Scott Carrlee

WAAC's incoming President, Scott Carrlee, will present a short DVD highlighting the venue for next year's meeting. If you have ever thought about going "North to Alaska," here is your chance. Glaciers, mountains, eagles, and bears, there is a good chance you will see all of these and more at the meeting in Juneau as well as hear many informative talks.

---

---

## Annual Meeting Abstracts, continued

---

The theme for next year's meeting is "Conservation in the Extreme," and the extreme landscape of Alaska will serve as a fitting backdrop. So start your planning NOW!

### **Light after Dark: A Second Homecoming for Louise Nevelson's *Night Presence II***

Donna Williams

In 2006 Williams Art Conservation and the San Diego Museum applied for and received an Institute for Museum and Library Services grant to restore *Night Presence II*, a sculpture by Louise Nevelson, which has been in the museum's permanent collection for 32 years. Past treatments as well as years of exposure in their outdoor sculpture garden had resulted in serious aesthetic and structural damage to the piece.

The 3000-pound structure was trucked to a facility in North Haven, CT. Working with the sculpture's original fabricators Alfred and Donald Lippincott, the conservator designed specific treatment methods to remove overpaint and repair surface pitting as well as perforations in the steel itself. Following completion of structural treatment in June 2008, the artwork was re-located to Donald Lippincott's property for "weathering" to expedite surface corrosion and color.

In December 2008, the piece is scheduled for trucking back to the San Diego Museum of Art, where it will be installed in a new location for continued public exhibition in an exterior location.

### **Working with Large Format Photographs at the Getty**

Sarah Freeman, Marc Harnly, and Lynne Kaneshiro

With the 2007 exhibition *Recent History: Photographs by Luc Delahaye*, conservators and framers at the J. Paul Getty Museum were required to prepare photographs in excess of 4' x 5' (48 x 60") for display in the Center for Photo-

graphs. This project gave Getty staff an opportunity to challenge the new space and to learn new strategies for the display and care of contemporary art, a relatively new aspect of the museum's collection.

The experience of mounting, framing, glazing, and lighting these large photographs will be described. A review of materials currently available for use with photographs of this scale will also be presented. This will include adhesives and rigid supports for mounting, as well as glazing and other materials for framing.

### **A Presentation on Cast Bronze Mounts for Temporary Exhibits**

Mark Mitton and Adrienne Pamp

This talk will address the challenge of making robust mounts for loan objects while faced with limitations of time and limited access to objects. Solutions discussed involve the manufacture of a large number of mounts that need to be custom fitted in a short span of time. If profiles of objects can be obtained in advance, the mounts can be produced in large numbers prior to the arrival of a loan exhibition.

The presentation will chronicle the steps taken from initial design, stages of manufacture, and final installation. This includes the final fitting of the mounts upon the arrival of objects at the Getty Museum. We will use examples from the installation of three temporary exhibitions at the Getty Center featuring stone, bronze, and ceramic sculpture.

### **What is Washi? Looking into Basics of Materials, Manufacture, and Terminology of Contemporary Japanese Paper**

Soko Furuhashi

Although Japanese paper, known as Washi, is one of the most common materials used in the field of paper conservation, conservators often are not really aware of all materials and the details of the methods for making it.

Terminologies commonly used in association with the word Washi are quite often misused from the lack of understanding. In April 2008, a tour to Japan was organized by Hiromi Katayama of Hiromi Paper International Inc. and Betty Fiske, former Winterthur Museum Adjunct Professor of Winterthur/ University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation. Paper conservators on the trip were given an opportunity to visit several papermaking sites. Through images taken during the tour, basics of several contemporary Japanese papermaking techniques will be presented.

### **Searching for an Answer – Some Possible Alternatives to PhillySeal R Epoxy Putty**

Jeff Maish, BJ Farrar, and Mara Schiro

An epoxy putty produced by Philadelphia Resins, PhillySeal R (formerly Pliacre), has been used widely in conservation and mountmaking for the past two decades. The epoxy product provided a useful substrate for fills as well as a mountmaking interface layer for a range of object types.

A replacement search was initiated following the cessation of PhillySeal's production in 2007. This search highlighted the difficulties of replacing proprietary products but also presented the opportunity to explore and test a broader range of epoxy pastes and putties. Preliminary review of properties and costs coupled with Oddy testing points to some possible alternative products.

### **Ultraviolet-Excited Fluorescence Photography and Reflectance UV Photography in Art Conservation**

Yosi Pozeilov

This talk reviews traditional methods for the photography of works of art using UV radiation as a source and updates these procedures for use with current digital imaging equipment. The use of off-the-shelf cameras, lights, and filters, will be highlighted and examples provided.