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## Articles You May Have

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**“Climate Change Threatens Archaeological Treasures,”**  
*Discovery News*, 12/07/2010

Mummies decaying in Siberia, pyramids vanishing under the sand in Sudan, Maya temples collapsing: Climate change risks destroying countless treasures from our shared past, archaeologists warn.

Melting ice can unlock ancient secrets from the ground, as with the discovery in 1991 of “Oetzi”, a 5,300-year-old warrior whose body had been preserved through the millennia inside an Alpine glacier. But as ice caps melt, deserts spread, ocean levels rise and hurricanes intensify, archaeologists fear a heavy toll on world heritage.

Experts warn that rising ocean levels -- which some forecast could jump a meter (three feet) by 2100 -- stand to wipe out dozens of coastal archaeological sites.

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A forecast spike in unpredictable weather events -- hurricanes chief among them -- is another major source of concern, says Dominique Michelet, a specialist of American archaeology at the CNRS. He cites the case of Chan Chan in Peru, former capital of the Chimú civilisation and the largest pre-Colombian city in Latin America, which is already severely exposed to flooding linked to the El Niño weather pattern.

Sand is one of the worst enemies of archaeological sites, as in Sudan where dunes are encroaching on the burial pyramids of Meroe, the capital of a flourishing kingdom from the 3rd century B.C. to the 4th A.D.

**“Roman Statue Discovered in Ashkelon after Storm Damage,”** *Haaretz.com*, 12/14/2010

The massive storm that swept through Israel over the weekend caused a great deal of damage to archaeological sites all along the Mediterranean coast, but also uncovered an impressive statue of a woman between 1650 and 1800 years old in Ashkelon.

The statue, a 1.2-meter high figure of a woman with her head missing, has been dated to Roman times and is thought to have stood erect in a bath house. The statue was discovered when a cliff crumbled into the water at a sea-side archaeological dig in Ashkelon.

Among the chunks of earth that broke off from the cliff were parts of a large building that apparently were once a part of a Roman bath house. Sections of a colorful mosaic floor were also ruined.

Archaeologist Dr. Yigal Israel of the Israel Antiquities Authority in the Ashkelon region explained, “It is a lovely white statue that is missing its head and part of a hand. It was apparently imported from Italy, Greece or Asia Minor, and may have represented the goddess Aphrodite.” The statue had fallen from a relatively high precipice, but was surprisingly unharmed. Dr. Israel estimated that the statue’s head and hand were missing even during Roman times.

**“Reconsidered, a Met Velázquez is Vindicated,”** *The New York Times*, 12/20/2010

For nearly 60 years the portrait of a baby-faced Philip IV by Velázquez

hung in the Metropolitan Museum of Art’s European paintings galleries, a stunning example of the only 110 or so known canvases by that 17th-century Spanish master. It was the earliest known portrait of Philip by Velázquez, who, as the king’s court painter, went on to record his image for decades.

So it was quite a shock when, in 1973, the Met, reconsidering 300 of its most treasured works, declared that the painting was not a Velázquez and was probably executed in his studio by an assistant or follower. But in the museum world, 37 years is several lifetimes.

Now, after a year of examination and restoration, curators, conservators and scholars have changed their minds. They are convinced that this full-length portrait of the 18-year-old king is indeed by Velázquez.

The painting had last been cleaned and restored around 1911, when it was in the possession of Joseph Duveen, the legendary dealer who encouraged restorers to tone down paintings to make them look more serious (hence more salable) and to repaint any areas that were worn or damaged. As a result, this painting had decades of yellowed varnish and considerable repainting. In fact, so much painting had been done over the original that it was impossible to tell what the initial image had been.

When the varnish and over-painting were removed for the first time, details in the composition emerged — the delicate hands, the strongly characterized head, the simple white collar, the elaborate gold chain, the draping of the clothes — that had the unmistakable characteristics of the artist.

**“Coit Tower Murals Fading Away,”** *San Francisco Examiner*, 12/26/2010

Thousands of visitors trudge by the murals that ring the inside of Coit Tower each year as they head to the elevator to go to the top of the historical structure. If they stopped to look closely at the frescos, however, they might see scratches in the paint or the grime that has built up over the years.

“There are no barriers in front of them and people can touch them. If they were hanging in a museum somewhere, they wouldn’t need to be preserved,” said Senior Registrar Allison Cummings of the San Francisco Arts Commission.

It has been 15 years since the 27 murals from 1934 were touched up, and city agencies are looking for the money to do the needed work on the historical paintings. The work by the 26 artists under the theme “Aspects of California Life” is widely considered to be a precursor to the Works Progress Administration era that created about 8 million jobs for public projects through federal money.

An icon of the New Deal, the murals were inspired by famed Mexican painter Diego Rivera, husband of renowned painter Frida Kahlo.

The Recreation and Park Department owns Coit Tower, which is perched on Telegraph Hill and overlooks the Bay and nearby North Beach. The agency is working with the Arts Commission to find funds for the restoration work.

**“Slavery Murals Ordered out of Georgia State Office,”** *Los Angeles Times*, 12/31/2010

Murals of slaves harvesting sugar cane on a Georgia plantation and picking and ginning cotton are coming off the walls of a state building on the order of a new agriculture commissioner.

The murals are part of a collection of eight works painted by George Beattie in 1956 depicting an idealized version of Georgia farming, from the corn grown by prehistoric American Indians to a 20th century veterinary lab. In the Deep South, the history in between includes the use of slave labor.

“I don’t like those pictures,” said Gary Black, the newly elected agriculture commissioner. Slavery was indisputably part of 19th century farming in Georgia. By 1840, more than 280,000 slaves were living in the state, many as field hands. Just before the Civil War, slaves made up about 40% of the state’s population.

Beattie’s murals tell part of the story. There are no signs of the whippings, beatings, shackles or the other brutality used to subjugate the slaves, who appear healthy, muscular, even robust.

Few have openly protested the murals, maybe because the Agriculture Department is not heavily visited. Black’s plans after the inauguration next month include painting rooms, cleaning offices, patching walls — and taking down those murals.

**“Attempt to Slash Los Angeles Graffiti Removal Budget Sparks Criticism,”**  
*Los Angeles Times*, 01/08/2011

Los Angeles city officials have long used the “broken windows” theory to justify the \$7 million spent each year on graffiti removal. The logic goes like this: Safe and prosperous communities start with clean streets.

But this week the fate of the effort was called into question when the top financial advisor to Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa recommended that the city slash the graffiti-removal budget in half as part of a round of short-term cuts. The graffiti-removal cut would last through the rest of the fiscal year and would save the city \$1.5 million - a critical step in balancing the city budget.

Some City Council members have reacted with alarm, saying eradicating graffiti is both an economic and a safety imperative. So far, Santana’s suggestion to cut back on the program has gotten little public support.

The city has long paid to clean up graffiti. These days the Department of Public Works contracts with 14 groups - all but one of them nonprofits - to cover more than 32 million square feet of graffiti scrawled on buildings, walls and overpasses.

The Central City Action Committee, an Angelino Heights-based organization that works with youth, sends six teams out to scour the streets each day. Special scanners allow crews to record the exact color of the surface defaced by tags. The crews bring along a tinter that helps them mix the paint to match. A new program involving the LAPD and the city attorney’s office would give clean-up crews cameras to document graffiti to help prosecutors convict taggers. It’s supposed to launch this month.

**“Bhutan’s Endangered Temple Art,”**  
*The Guardian*, 01/02/2011

British art experts have been given unique access to the hidden heritage of the Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan, including spectacular 16th- to 19th- century wall paintings from its 2,000 temples and monasteries.

Specialists from the Courtauld Institute have been amazed by the exquisite quality and technical sophistication of paintings that were largely unknown and unrecorded in the west. Stephen

Rickerby of the Courtauld, described their technique as unrivaled in the west and spoke of being overawed by the miniaturist detail, achieved through a unique layering of colours and coatings.

Despite their intricacy, some of the paintings are huge, extending across hundreds of square metres.

Bhutan, a kingdom of 700,000 people with a Tibetan Buddhist heritage, is one of the world’s most insular countries. Access to the sites was granted as part of a three-year research collaboration between the Courtauld and the Bhutan department of culture, through funding from an anonymous US benefactor. The last stage of fieldwork and scientific analysis has just ended.

Although the paintings are largely sacred in subject and are restricted to religious worship, the Bhutanese have looked to the Courtauld’s expertise to ensure the paintings’ preservation for posterity. Some of the buildings in which they have survived have been damaged over the centuries by fires and floods. The Courtauld study will lead to an understanding of how the art deteriorates and how it can be preserved.

**“A Triage to Save the Ruins of Babylon,”**  
*The New York Times*, 01/02/2011

The damage done to the ruins of ancient Babylon is visible from a small hilltop near the Tower of Babel. Across the horizon are guard towers, concertina wire, and dirt-filled barriers among the palm trees; encroaching farms, and concrete houses; and the enormous palace that Saddam Hussein built in the 1980s atop the city where Nebuchadnezzar II ruled.

For the first time since the American invasion in 2003, archaeologists and preservationists have once again begun working to protect and even restore parts of Babylon and other ancient ruins of Mesopotamia. New sites are being excavated, mostly in secret to avoid attracting the attention of looters.

The World Monuments Fund, working with Iraq’s State Board of Antiquities and Heritage, has drafted a conservation plan to combat any further deterioration of Babylon’s mud-brick ruins and reverse some of the effects of time and Mr. Hussein’s archaeologically specious re-creations.

The Fund has created computer scans to provide precise records of the damage to the ruins and identified the

most pernicious threats, starting with erosion caused by salty groundwater.

Another of the more dire threats to the site has been unchecked development inside the boundaries of the old city walls, enclosing nearly three square miles. The fund’s project has plotted the old walls on a map, causing trepidation among Iraqis who live along them now. They fear the preservation of Babylon’s ruins will force them from their homes and farmlands, as when Mr. Hussein expelled residents of a local village to build his palace.

**“A Fresh Look at a Masterpiece,”**  
*Boston Globe*, 01/09/2011

When Isabella Stewart Gardner bought a large portrait of Spain’s King Philip IV in 1896, she believed it was by the hand of Diego Velázquez. She had bought the picture, painted in 1626-28, on the advice of the great Renaissance scholar Bernard Berenson. Berenson (not a Velázquez expert) noted that it was a replica of a painting in the Prado Museum in Madrid, but said the replica was “better in execution.”

The portrait as a whole combines a sense of sharp austerity with dizzying power. The Gardner’s head of conservation, Gianfranco Pocobene, explained that the last time the painting was restored was in 1948, when its surface was cleaned and a synthetic varnish that was new for the time was applied. The canvas was also re-lined.

The status of the Gardner’s portrait of Philip IV is not clear. Since the 1930s, experts have tended to agree that it is a combination of workshop and Velázquez himself. So little is known about Velázquez’s relationship with his studio that it has been impossible to say what degree of involvement he had.

Pocobene is one of Boston’s most experienced conservators, but he stresses that he is not a Velázquez expert. Having just spent several months with the painting, he is, however, understandably curious. What he would like to see is a deeper analysis of the picture by qualified scholars.

Distracted by costly building and restoration projects, the Gardner remains without a curator, and has so far made no attempt to bring in outside experts. In an e-mail to the *Globe*, Jonathan Brown, the leading Velázquez scholar in the United States, said, “it has been ages

since I last saw the picture. I didn't know it was being restored, but obviously the time has come to have another look."

**"While Pompeii Crumbles,"** *Wall Street Journal*, 01/12/2011

The scandal over conditions at the ancient Roman city of Pompeii has yet to die down since a structure known as the "School of the Gladiators" collapsed there in early November. At least three other major collapses occurred in the past two months.

Italy's President Giorgio Napolitano has called the situation a "national disgrace"; opposition parliamentarians continue to press for Culture Minister Sandro Bondi's resignation. Yet experts and activists say that Pompeii's perilous current state is just one dramatic example of a widespread national emergency.

Later this month, the Italian government is expected to approve tens of millions of euros in emergency funds to address the Pompeii crisis.

Money is not the only problem, however. Administrative costs are the one area in which culture spending has risen, but the returns on that investment have been disappointing. In recent years, as the basic maintenance that might have prevented the collapses at Pompeii was left undone, administrators there focused on multimedia shows and live performances in a first-century B.C. Amphitheater.

Pompeii was granted a special autonomous status in 1997, allowing it to control its own revenue, but the administration there left €70 million (\$90.3 million) unspent that could have gone to maintaining the structures and grounds.

**"Restoring a Masterwork,"** *Yale Daily News*, 01/14/2011

Those who have yet to see "The Education of the Virgin" at the Yale University Art Gallery have only a short time left. The painting was officially attributed to Spanish master painter Diego Velázquez last July after sitting for 80 years in University storage, and is currently on view in the Yale University Art Gallery, but it will not be there for long.

On Feb. 21, the work, which is believed to be among the earliest known works by the painter, will go into conservation, a restoration effort that could take up to four years, said Laurence Kanter, the gallery's curator of European art.

Because it was in stable condition and at no risk of further deterioration, the painting received minimal treatment before it was placed on view in early December. But, Kanter said, the painting is far too damaged to stay on public view. The painting shows areas of cracked, worn and altogether absent paint — two horizontal creases revealing the bare canvas run across the center of the piece — while the outline of a cat is dissolved into a faint gesture in the lower left corner.

Chief conservator for the University Art Gallery Ian McClure said the edges of the painting have likely been cut down on three sides, with marked shortening on the top and left sides.

Despite the excitement whipped up by the discovery of a Velázquez, the conservation of "The Education of the Virgin" is a secondary goal for the University's conservators at the moment, McClure said. Their top priority is preparing collections of ancient mosaics and roughly 30 mural paintings that are to be ready for the opening of the renovated art gallery in late 2012.

**"Leaning Tower of Pisa's Kaleidoscope Effect to Be Restored,"** *Discovery News*, 01/14/2011

The Leaning Tower of Pisa is about to add a new effect to its oddball geometry, according to restorers working on Italy's most iconic monument. Restoration work on the seventh tier of the tower, just below the bell chamber at a height of about 164 feet, has returned a unique optical effect which was conceived at the tower's construction.

At this tier, a series of decorative arches allow sunlight to stream into the tower in intricate patterns, producing a kaleidoscope-like effect on the tower's white marble. "For decades they have remained closed because of several wooden doors. They were installed to prevent pigeons intruding inside," Gisella Capponi, director of the Institute for Conservation and Restoration at the Ministry of Cultural Heritage.

The complete view upwards of the interior was also obstructed by a floor on the first tier. It was built in 1935 to house bulky instruments to monitor the tower's tilt. Basically an empty cylinder covered by a great vault, the tower's interior will boast unique light effects. They will be particularly striking at dusk or

dawn, when the marble inside the tower turns pink because of the sun's rays filtering through the arcades. Much whiter -- the restorers have removed centuries of grime and dust from the tower's marbles -- the tower is also very stable.

**"US Bank Funds Restoration,"** *Irish Times*, 01/15/2011

Banks have been getting such a bad press it would be churlish not to give credit when they do something good. Bank of America Merrill Lynch is sponsoring the restoration of *The Marriage of Strongbow and Aoife*, one of the most popular exhibits in the National Gallery of Ireland.

The famous painting by Cork-born artist Daniel Maclise dates from 1854 and is viewed by approximately 750,000 people every year. The exceptionally large canvas (10ft x 16ft) depicts the marriage of Norman invader Richard de Clare, known as Strongbow, to Aoife, daughter of Dermot McMurrugh, the King of Leinster.

The event was traditionally regarded as pivotal in Ireland's history as the marriage symbolised the start of 800 years of British rule in Ireland. Valerie Keogh, a spokeswoman for the National Gallery of Ireland, said the painting had been removed from display and the project would take two years to complete.

The painting has been unrolled and placed on a purpose-built platform to allow the conservation treatments to be carried out. The conservation work in progress will be visible on the gallery's new website in March.

**"Heritage Lovers Fume over Temple Restoration,"** *Times of India*, 01/30/2011

The restoration of the centuries-old Saptakoteshwar temple at Opa has left heritage lovers aghast. They allege that the unique monument has been defaced and the introduction of new elements in it are against conservation ethics.

The state archives and archaeology department had entrusted architect K D Sadhale to carry out the conservation of the small but beautiful temple dating back to pre-Portuguese times.

"The introduction of pilasters, door frame and additional window above the door are against universally-accepted conservation ethics," archaeologist Varad

Sabnis told TOI. The three elements were not part of the original structure.

In addition to the three elements, a new retaining wall, though artistically done on its three sides, has been erected around the temple. “This mars the heritage ambience of the place and period look of the monument,” Heritage activist Sakhardande said.

Sadhale denied that the ambience of the heritage site has been altered. The unique temple with a three-tier structure has a kalash in the shape of a bud and a dome sits atop the structure. Two laterite stone nandis (bulls) and elephants can be seen in each corner.

**“Egypt’s Treasures: Assessing the Damage,”** *Discovery News*, 01/31/2011

Concern about Egypt’s priceless antiquities continues to grow, and Egyptologists around the world are issuing high-alert statements about the risk of Egyptian antiquities being smuggled abroad.

Salima Ikram, professor of Egyptology at the American University in Cairo, told Discovery News the Egyptian National Museum is safe at the moment, thanks to the Egyptian people who have bravely defended their national treasures. Meanwhile, holding together on social networks, the Egyptologist’s community is trying to assess the damage at the Egyptian National Museum by scrutinizing the footage shot just after looters broke into the building on Friday.

Watching the footage, experts have been able to produce a map of the museum rooms where looting and vandalism took place, showing that the attack occurred on three sides. According to a faxed statement by Zahi Hawass, who on Monday has been appointed Minister of State Antiquities in the new government named by President Hosni Mubarak, 13 Late Period cases were smashed, and several antiquities were thrown on the floor.

**“Damaged Ancient Egyptian Artifacts to Be Restored,”** *Discovery News*, 02/07/2011

The artifacts damaged at the Egyptian National Museum in Cairo last week will be restored in five days, Zahi Hawass, Egypt’s Minister of Antiquities, said on Monday.

Among the 70 artifacts vandal-

ized during anti-government protests, the most significant are a statue of King Ahkenaten wearing the blue crown and holding an offering table, King Tutankhamun’s gilded walking stick and a wooden statue of King Tut standing on the back of a panther.

The damage was caused by about six people who broke into the museum through its windowed ceiling using ropes. According to Hawass, the thieves were “ignorant” people who took out the objects from their showcase and dropped them on the floor when they realized that they were not made of gold.

The thieves also ransacked and vandalized the newly opened museum gift shop, which they believed was the real museum.

“The funny part of the story is that only the books of the gift shop remained untouched. Looters are never interested in books, I guess,” Hawass said. The newly appointed Minister of Antiquities also clarified what happened to the two mummies whose heads were photographed lying on the floor among scattered bones. “They were two already disembodied heads being temporarily stored next to the CT scanning lab in the museum’s grounds,” Hawass told Discovery News. A team of 11 members has already begun the restoration work, starting from the statue of Akhenaten carrying an offering tray.

**“Restoring a Piece of Surfing History,”** *Daily Pilot*, 02/07/2011

Cannery Village art conservator, Ardenia Capannelli, has restored a painting on a board owned by Duke Kahanamoku, considered the father of modern surfing.

Capannelli honed her skills in Italy, where she studied and practiced conservation of Renaissance-era paintings. When the Surfing Heritage Foundation of San Clemente asked her to restore an oil painting of a Hawaiian chief atop a long wooden surfboard, she had no idea who Kahanamoku was.

Kahanamoku traveled the world as an Olympic swimmer and became an “ambassador” of surfing. Hollywood agents were taken by his striking profile and physique, and Kahanamoku soon became a supporting actor in Hollywood productions.

The chief on Kahanamoku’s board has a ubiquitous presence in Ha-

wai — his image can even be found on street signs, said Dick Metz, founder of the Surfing Heritage Foundation, who acquired the board from the Honolulu-based Outrigger Duke Kahanamoku Foundation in the late 1960s.

This board is special because of its painting, Metz said. Depicted is a chief wearing a mahiole, a traditional Hawaiian feather helmet. Painted on the board when it was built in the early 1930s, the image is sealed by a heavy coat of varnish. But the finish began to chip over the years. After some of the paint began to chip off with the varnish, Metz decided to get it restored.

**“Breathing Life into Fading Paintings,”** *Deccan Herald*, 02/2011

A series of about 50 mural paintings in the ancient ninth century Lord Shiva Temple in Tamil Nadu’s composite Thanjavur district have been saved from the tentacles of total destruction after long years of bio-degradation and neglect.

‘Sri Thyagarajaswami Temple’ is an early Chola period architectural marvel. The ‘monkey-faced’ valorous King Mucukunda Chola, as the legend goes, took a great leap of faith to bring back the image of ‘Somaskanda’ from Lord Indra’s abode, making Tiruvarur a unique hallowed ground. It is this Mucukunda Chola’s story which was beautifully captured in detail in a set of paintings on the ceiling of the ‘Devasriya Mandapam’ inside the temple.

These paintings, which throw light on the temple’s pre-history and philosophy, were in a ‘shockingly dilapidated condition’. What worsened the paintings’ condition was “irresponsible digging up” of the Hall’s terrace on the pretext of water-proofing. But that work was abandoned, causing water seepage and fungus leading to irreparable damage.

Ranvir R. Shah, founder-trustee of the ‘Prakriti Foundation’ managed the painstaking work of cleaning, reviving and restoring the paintings. A 10-member team led by Ms. K. P. Madhu Rani of Bangalore-based ‘Intach Chitra Kala Parishad Art Conservation Centre (ICKPAC)’ restored the paintings over three years. Though there has been “lot of loss” in the murals, in the renewal process, some new paintings were also discovered on one of the walls.

**“Art Needs a Preservation Law,”** *Daily News & Analysis (Mumbai)*, 02/20/2011

Recently, union minister of culture Kumari Selja, declared that conservation and public art initiatives would be given priority on a long list of imperatives vis-à-vis an appropriate preservation of culture.

News reports state that the ministry may even contemplate the enforcement of a registration law that will list public art and heritage relics - this, being different from monument protection - in the capital. It is likely that additional stringent laws would be framed to prevent desecration of public art.

The minister was quoted by a news service as saying, “People must learn to respect public art. I want to see more installations across the country. Art should be brought out from the confines of the museums to public spaces so that they become more interactive and mass-oriented.”

She rued the fact that despite an existing policy that declares 2% of the cost of all building projects to be allocated for executing works of art, very little note-worthy art work has actually been created in public places.

A recent visit to Hampi, listed as a world heritage site, reveals the extent of the problem that the ministry and individuals are up against. Despite funds from several international agencies, and a few well-known Indian corporations, work appears to be proceeding at snail’s pace. The restoration and conservation efforts can be described as patchy.

**“Murals Conserved for Art Gallery Reopening,”** *Yale Daily News*, 02/21/2011

When the newly hired curator of American paintings and sculpture took her first tour of Yale’s art storage facility 31 years ago, she found a set of damaged canvases wrapped up around two-by-four blocks of wood. She realized that the paintings were some of the only surviving works from the first years of the late 19th-century American muralist movement.

The murals, taken from the Huntington Mansion in New York, spent 85 years at Yale in storage and on the walls of a secret society. They are comprised of 28 semi-circular lunettes and three ceiling paintings. Though they are works done in oil on canvas, the artists gave their paintings of muses and other

classical figures a matte surface in order to make them look like frescoes.

Patricia Garland, the gallery’s paintings conservator, said the team has dealt with a range of issues, from simply cleaning off surface dirt to contending with tears and the removal of white lead paint from the backs of the canvases. Garland said the conservators will attach the canvases to the walls of the Art Gallery using reversible methods -- the team has sandwiched removable adhesive and cushioning materials between the canvas and a sheet of aluminum honeycomb.

The team is still testing cleaning methods to determine the best course of action. One difficulty is that the matte paint has absorbed more dirt than a varnished painting would.

**“Sparing our Treasures an Art Attack,”** *The Age*, 02/22/2011

Art galleries and museums around the world spend billions of dollars every year conserving and protecting their often priceless objects by ensuring they are kept in high-tech, air conditioned environments.

At the University of Melbourne, PhD student Caroline Kyi is exploring how free radicals can be used to counter the actions of harmful micro-organisms that cause the art works to deteriorate. In particular, Ms Kyi is investigating the use of nitric oxide to prevent the growth of the micro-organisms that cluster together as “biofilms” on art works and monuments such as marble statues.

“In situations where sustenance for the micro-organisms is scarce, more nitric oxide is released to signal that the organisms in the biofilm should disperse rather than remain aggregated. I’m taking advantage of this natural process by developing methods to artificially encourage the production of nitric oxide, which will boost biofilm dispersal and so prevent its growth.”

Biofilms not only cause staining on paintings, or unwanted changes in pigmentation, they can also create habitats for higher organisms such as mould or fungi to develop. Ms. Kyi studies patterns of growth by cultivating cultures of micro-organisms taken from art works then uses them as an “inoculant” on samples of art works.

Ms Kyi says nitric oxide is used in communication between cells and when bacteria are communicating with

other species in a community they are more susceptible to biocides — substances that destroy them. She is exploring what she calls “a polyphasic approach” where the nitric oxide would help disperse the organisms and this would be followed with a biocide or some other treatment.

**“Mosaics Inspire Innovative Technology,”** *Yale Daily News*, 02/22/2011

Thomas Philips, the senior materials assistant at the Yale University Art Gallery, prepares to grind a layer of concrete off the backs of five pieces of a sixth-century Byzantine mosaic.

The tiled works were excavated in the 1930s from Gerasa, now present-day Jerash, Jordan. The modified concrete cutting and mounting techniques that will be used in the restoration of the mosaic demonstrate some of the ways in which the Yale University Art Gallery’s conservation department is employing innovative technologies to restore a number of artworks coming out of storage for the collection’s reinstallation in the renovated wing of the gallery.

Conservators are experimenting with materials from the airplane and marine industries to construct sturdy backings, and for the first time ever they are modifying computer-controlled industrial cutters for use in art restoration.

Philips breaks through the concrete using a Computer Numeric Control tool, a machine with a computer-controlled drill bit. The concrete was added to the mosaic by Yale conservators in 1933 as a standard conservation practice of the day, but when the heavy backing began to damage the work, the mosaic was put back in storage.

The backing that will replace the concrete will be made of more experimental materials, as it must be both lightweight and extremely strong. The newly backed mosaics will weigh about a fifth of what they did. This mosaic will bring experimental techniques to a renovated gallery full of traditionally conserved pieces.

**“Restoring a Part of History,”** *The Daily Home*, 02/23/2011

Talladega College held its Hale A. Woodruff Mural Restoration Signing and Exhibition Agreement Signing in Savery Library Wednesday. The of-

ficial signing of the contract with the High Museum of Art in Atlanta signified the finalization of a nationwide tour that will send the college's historical Amistad murals to several museums across the country after being restored at the Atlanta Art Conservation Center.

Talladega College is Alabama's oldest private historically black liberal arts college, founded in 1867. The murals are by Hale Aspacio Woodruff, who in 1937 taught at Atlanta University, currently known as Clark-Atlanta University, and then came to Talladega College to teach classes in the humanities department.

The "Amistad Murals" are depicted in three scenes "The Revolt," "The Court Scene," and "Back to Africa." The other three panels depict an Underground Railroad scene, a scene of the first day of registration at Swayne Hall, and the construction of Savery Library.

The murals will be detached from Savery Library in early March and then transported to the Art Conservation Center where they will be cleaned and re-stretched during a period of eight to 12 months. After the restoration process, they will be on display at the High Museum.

**"Restoring the Unrestorable,"** *Yale Daily News*, 02/23/2011

Some art works are destined for decay. While the Yale University Art Gallery conservation department is hard at work restoring pieces of the collection for a 2012 reinstallation in the renovated wings of the gallery, conservators say there are some art works that have damage that simply cannot be reversed because of the ways in which they were constructed.

The most fragile works, such as a Syrian knitting sample dating from the third century, must be rotated off view every six to 12 months in order to slow its deterioration. Ancient artifacts are not the only concern: 20th century works such as a plastic sculpture created in 1926 by Antoine Pevsner are also at risk.

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*Believing in progress does not mean believing that any progress has yet been made.*

Franz Kafka

For pieces like Pevsner's sculpture, conservators can only hope to slow the pace of the object's deterioration, as they cannot stop it entirely.

The best way to accomplish this, says Ian McClure, chief conservator at the Art Gallery, is still unclear. Storage at very low temperatures will slow the sculpture's degradation. But storage in an enclosed space poses its own issues, as the plastic emits harmful gases. To neutralize the effect, carbon filters were added to the sculpture's case to absorb pollutants in the air.

While certain art works are difficult to preserve — some pieces are just not meant to last. Modern-day conservators deal with the issue of contemporary artists constructing works from unconventional materials with intentional disregard for longevity.

While Yale's conservation department is employing innovative technologies to restore the gallery's collection to a condition in which the wear and tear of time does not impede the viewer's experience, sometimes the team has to settle for a less-than-perfect facelift. As McClure said: "Conservation should be about finding equivalent materials so that it can look how it looked, rather than worrying about making it exactly the same."

**"Restoration Reveals the Madonna's Royal Blue,"** *The Examiner*, 02/24/2011

Around 1485 AD, Filippino Lippi created a masterpiece entitled Madonna and Child. Commissioned for Filippo Strozzi, a prominent and successful Italian banker, the painting was meant to hang on the walls at the Strozzi villa in Santuccio.

Almost five centuries after its completion, in 1949, the painting was gifted to the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Originally featuring vibrant blue, red and green colors, the painting had acquired a thick layer of grime and varnish in its half a millennia. According to Keith Christiansen, chairman of the Department of European Paintings, this varnish was intentionally applied in the nineteenth century in an attempt "to tone down its color".

The Met's new exhibition, entitled A Renaissance Masterpiece Revealed: Filippino Lippi's Madonna and Child, is only half a room, located

in the European paintings galleries on the second floor. Flanking the painting are items that were used by the Strozzi family — marriage chest, tapestry, corbel stone, and a wooden chair — taking the viewer back in time to the decorated palace of a wealthy fifteenth-century Italian family.

Madonna and Child was restored this past fall by Associate Conservator Karen Thomas, overseen by Conservator in Charge Michael Gallagher.

**"Conservation Scientists Mull Reconstruction of Buddhas,"** *Science A Gogo*, 02/28/2011

Coordinated by UNESCO and the International Council on Monuments and Sites, a group of scientists is examining the debris left from the Taliban's destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas and considering whether reconstruction of the giant statues might be feasible.

Located on the Silk Road, the 1,500 year-old works of art once formed the centerpiece of one of the world's largest Buddhist monastic complexes. Since the destruction of the statues by the Taliban regime, restoration experts have been endeavoring to secure the remains and restore access to the statues.

Examination of several hundred fragments from the 55m and 38m tall statues has yielded some surprising insights. Professor Erwin Emmerling, from the Technische Universitaet Muenchen, discovered that prior to the conversion of the region to Islam, the statues were over-painted several times, presumably because the colors had faded.

The statues themselves were hewn out of the cliff, but the flowing garments were formed using clay, which was applied in two or three layers up to eight centimeters thick. The conservators working on the project have stacked the ruins in temporary warehouses. Larger pieces have been covered over in situ. "However, that will only last for a few years, because the sandstone is very porous," Emmerling explains.

He hopes to refine a new process that injects an organic silicon compound into the stone. Conservation of the fragments would require the construction of a small factory in the Bamiyan Valley - alternatively some 1,400 rocks weighing up to two tons each would have to be transported to Germany. A conference

to be held in Paris this week will further consider the fate of the fragmented Budhas.

**“The Chapel of Aragon in St John’s Shines again in all its Glory,”** *The Malta Independent*, 03/2011

The restoration of the Chapel of the Langue of Aragon, Catalonia and Navarre in St John’s Co-Cathedral has now been completed. The project consisted of the restoration of the dome and wall carvings and the marble funerary monuments, as well as the restoration of the lunette painting The Martyrdom of St Lawrence and the painting of St Francis Xavier, both the work of Mattia Preti.

The chapel, like the rest of the church, had suffered from the ravages of time. The main cause of deterioration was due to the infiltration of rainwater from the dome, which caused an irreparable loss of gilding and the erosion of some carvings.

The first stage of restoration consisted of the careful cleaning. Any linseed oil applied during the 20th century was removed using poultices of alkaline solutions. This was followed by the consolidation of the loose stone carvings, after which the walls were prepared for re-gilding, which was carried out using 24-carat gold leaf adopting the same gilding process that had been used in the 17th century.

The restoration of the lunette revealed that the canvas had sustained severe damage and was torn in several places. The restoration procedure consisted of detaching the canvas from the wooden support followed by the removal of several layers of discoloured varnish and over-painting. The canvas was relined and fitted on a new stretcher frame.

**“Down Come the Murals,”** *The Daily Home*, 03/07/2011

Tuesday marked the beginning of the end for Talladega College’s prized Amistad Murals’ display in Savery Library. All six murals painted by artist Hale Aspacio Woodruff have been hanging in TC’s Savery Library since the 1930s, and are undergoing a detachment process from its walls before being restored at the Atlanta Art Conservation Center.

Larry Shutts, associate conservator of paintings at the Atlanta Art Conservation Center, had the task of carefully detaching the canvases from the walls of the library. Weak spots on the paintings were covered with strips of Japanese tissue that were adhered to the paintings with a wax resin to prevent any damage in the detachment and transportation of the murals.

Upon arrival at the conservation center, the murals will be adhered to another piece of fabric and then onto enormous wooden stretchers where they will be cleaned and restored.

“It’s an exciting day for me to be the president of this institution as the murals come down to be restored,” said TC President Billy C. Hawkins as he looked on during the detachment process. “This will be the last time these murals hang in this library. March 7, 2011 is certainly a day to be remembered.”

After the restoration process, the murals will be presented at the High Museum of Art in Atlanta in an exhibit titled “Rising Up: Hale Woodruff’s Murals at Talladega College” from June 2 to Sept. 2, 2012.

**“British Museum Buys Assyrian Treasures Cleaned by Agatha Christie,”** *The Guardian* 03/07/2011

Despite the best efforts of Agatha Christie and her pot of face cream, many of the ivory treasures just acquired by the British Museum from the Assyrian city of Nimrud are still scorched by the fire that brought one of the great palaces of the ancient world crashing down on top of them 2,600 years ago.

The ivories were discovered in the 1940s by the archaeologist Max Mallowan, Christie’s second husband, and have been in storage since 1963, never seen by the public.

Agatha Christie knew the carvings intimately. She spent long periods on site in the eight years Mallowan spent excavating the enormous site in northern Iraq. He built her a special writing hut but she also helped with site work, including cleaning the beautiful ivories using a pot of expensive face cream.

The museum conservators who have been working on them wouldn’t recommend the technique, but it appears to have done no harm to the tiny sphinxes, lions, serpents and flowers, once inlaid

with precious stones or covered with gold foil, which originally completely covered elaborate pieces of furniture.

Nimrud was first excavated by the archaeologist Henry Layard in the 19th century, and the giant winged stone bulls and lions he brought back to the British Museum caused an international sensation. He had dragged them across the desert by ox cart and shipped them down river on rafts supported by thousands of inflated goat skins.

Since then the museum has acquired pottery, inscriptions and metal work from the site and the greatest Nimrud collection in the world is now in Bloomsbury.

Some of the pieces have notes on the back in ancient Aramaic, which appear to be the Ikea flatpack instructions of almost 3,000 years ago on how to assemble the furniture.

**“Jefferson Bible Restoration Shows Surprising Religious Views,”** *The Examiner*, 03/16/2011

The Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History is currently performing a specialized conservation treatment to ensure the long-term preservation of Thomas Jefferson’s bible, a small handmade book that provides an intimate view of Jefferson’s private religious and moral philosophy.

At age 77 and living at Monticello in retirement following his two terms as President, Jefferson assembled what he titled *The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth*. Using excerpts from the Four Gospels of the New Testament, Jefferson arranged the text to tell a chronological and edited story of Jesus’ life and moral philosophy, removing sections of the New Testament containing supernatural aspects, as well as perceived misinterpretations he believed had been added by the Four Evangelists.

Using a razor, Jefferson cut and arranged selected verses from the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John in chronological order, mingling excerpts to create a single narrative. Jefferson had no intention of publishing his work, rather intending it to be private reading material. The book stayed in Jefferson’s family until the Smithsonian’s librarian purchased it from Carolina Randolph, Jefferson’s great-granddaughter, in 1895.

After nearly 200 years, the book



has become fragile and requires treatment to ensure its long-term preservation. Because of its age and the glue used to adhere the clippings to the blank paper, the pages are extremely stiff and inflexible and the tight binding has led to cracking and some tearing of the pages. One of the main goals of the conservation is to stabilize the book in such a way that will provide increased access to the American public.

**“Conservation of Paintings at Eastern State Penitentiary Begins,”** *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 03/17/2011

Lester Smith would probably not rank 1955 as his best year. He spent it in notorious Eastern State Penitentiary, so mortified by the bad decisions that had led to his armed-robbery conviction and incarceration that he rarely, if ever, spoke of the experience before his death in 2003.

But 1955 was, in a way, his *annus mirabilis*, his miracle year. Not only did he turn his life around, but he also embraced Catholicism, and, in an explosion of creativity, painted 23 murals in the prison’s two-room Catholic chaplain’s office.

Smith covered the plaster surfaces with scenes from the life of Jesus and images of Mary, St. Peter, and St. Martin of Porres. In one poignant image, he showed a kneeling inmate, hands over face, seeking absolution as Jesus hovers above.

But if Smith turned his life around in 1955, it’s been a downhill slide for his prison artwork since. So much so that on Wednesday, a conservation team led by Cassie Myers of Milner & Carr Conservation removed the seriously deteriorated painting *The Penitent Prisoner* from the wall, carefully rolling it onto a cylinder for conservation and later reattachment.

It was the first step in what is hoped will be the complete renovation and restoration of the chaplain’s office at the prison, a National Historic Landmark. During the next year or so, all the remaining paintings will be conserved in place.

**“Getty: Expertly Saving Antiquities,”** *Palisadian-Post*, 03/17/2011

Associate Conservator Jeff Maish is analyzing a Roman bronze figure of Eros -- patina, color and texture,

and even unusual corrosion -- all things that reveal its history.

The statue had been on display at the Getty Center until the Villa reopened in 2006 and all the antiquities were relocated. That transfer offered an opportunity for this in-depth technical study. The bronze Eros will remain in the laboratory for several months.

The best example of a complete, seamless conservation effort that clearly demonstrates the Getty’s approach to restoration is the Apollo Saettante, now on display at the Villa. This project is collaboration with Italian colleagues at the Museo Archeologico Nazionale in Naples as part of the cultural exchange agreement made in 2007 between the Italian Ministry of Culture and the Getty Museum.

Using archival research, X-ray, ultraviolet photography and endoscopic examination, investigators discovered not only how Apollo was made in antiquity, but also the methods used to restore it in the 19th century. Erik Risser, assistant conservator on the project, decided to honor the later restoration by preserving the Apollo’s matte black surface patina, which is not how the ancient surface would have looked. The conservation work at the Getty encompasses important academic scholarship as well as hands-on restoration.

**“Libya’s Ancient Heritage Sites Suffer from Neglect,”** *The Daily Star*, 03/28/2011

A toga-clad statue lies half buried among cow dung at the ancient Greek city of Cyrene in eastern Libya, where the country’s wealth in antiquities has suffered decades of neglect.

Goats and cows graze among the towering Greek and Roman columns of the ruined city, a UNESCO world heritage site perched on a mountain side with stunning views over verdant plains and the Mediterranean Sea beyond.

Founded in the 4th century B.C. by Greek colonists and later ruled by imperial Rome, Cyrene’s souvenir kiosks, restaurants and protective barriers usually found at such sites are absent. The dilapidated village of Shahaat, which does surround it, does not appear to be geared to the tourist trade. “It’s been the same here since the revolution in 1969,” said Shahaat tourism policeman Hamdy

Hamed. “There’s been investment in oil, but none at all in tourism.”

The people of east Libya complain that there has been little investment in their part of the country since Moammar Gadhafi came to power in a military coup 41 years ago. The region is now largely held by anti-Gadhafi rebels after mass protests and bloody fighting in the past month, much of it around the key oil exporting towns of Ras Lanouf and Brega.

“Most of the artifacts are still buried. Tourism has been neglected,” said Shahaat resident Hamdy Bzeiwi, who is unemployed and has seen little of the income that would usually come from living close to a site such as Cyrene.

At the ruins, bags of rubbish litter the second-century Arch of Marcus Aurelius. An amphitheater likely to have been used for performances of Greek tragedies is now apparently being used as a sheep pen judging by the hoof prints and droppings.

**“Tam Alumni Rally for Return of Mosaics,”** *Mill Valley Patch*, 05/02/2011

Much of Tam High’s storied history is on display throughout its campus, adorning its walls in the form of banners, trophies and historical photos. But two massive relics of that history have received decidedly less conspicuous treatment, stuffed into a dirty, moldy storage facility at the back of campus for more than three decades.

A pair of huge mosaics, each 13 feet tall, six and a half feet wide and weighing one and a half tons, served as cornerstones of Mead Theatre until the theatre was demolished 37 years ago because of safety concerns. The mosaics depict Greek comedy and tragedy.

The stone-tesserae mosaics were built by William Jurgen Hesthal, a noted painter, lithographer and etcher, as part of the WPA’s Federal Art Project in the 1930s, with the help of student volunteers. The mosaics were stored in fairly miserable conditions underneath Benefield Hall.

The Tam Alumni Association hired Tam parent Jantine Neuwirth, an expert in art restoration and a professional art conservator and appraiser, to restore the mosaics. Tam High parent and architect Deepak Dandekar has designed a stainless-steel box in which to frame the mosaics.