

The
ETHNOGRAPHIC CONSERVATION NEWSLETTER
of
The Working Group on Ethnographic Materials
of
The ICOM Committee for Conservation

Number 6

June, 1990

**TO THE READERS
FROM THE EDITOR**

Dear Readers,

You may have gathered from our last issue, as we approach the Triennial meeting of our Working Group of Ethnographic Materials this August in Dresden, we will be considering new ways of accommodating the growing interest and transformations in our community of ethnographic conservators and colleagues in related fields. One of these areas of growth in our Working Group is in the membership, as reflected in the subscription list for the Ethnographic Newsletter; I think by now we are now up to or over-the 300th person mark!

We are seeking new ways of producing, editing and distributing the Newsletter, which has increasingly demanded a substantial commitment in time and resources. As your Editor I have embarked from the shores of Vancouver for the Environmental Studies Program here at York University and due to time limitations have accepted the offer of the Australian Museum conservation staff to co-edit this issue.

The Museum may agree to be involved in future newsletter production. Carole Dignard, of the Canadian Conservation Institute has kindly offered to assist the Newsletter with its French-English translation. I would like to thank Ms. Dignard for her offer of assistance.

As for upcoming issues, depending on how we proceed, I would like to suggest that in the near future we select as one of our feature topics, material culture studies; this will enable us to report on our Projects for the Working Group, and would provide a venue for some of the work currently in progress in Australia, Bangladesh, Canada and elsewhere. As in all of our newsletters to date, articles on all subject areas are welcome, of course.

It is a role in uniting us in our professional interests and in identifying our specialisation as a strong and vibrant presence in the conservation community. The Newsletter will evolve as our community does; that is the nature of growing things.

Other positive developments are taking place. This can be judged by the growing accessibility and quality of training and education in the field of ethnographic conservation. Training is thus featured in this issue and we begin to explore education as a significant topic for us. We will be hearing from other educational programs in the future,

of course, as an area of on-going interest.

At this time I send my fond appreciation to Andrew Todd and colleagues from the Royal British Columbia Museum for their support in the mail-out from British Columbia over the years, especially Richard Beauchamp, Mary-Lou Florian, David Hillman, Valerie Thorp and all those of the "mail-out team" who folded, licked and stamped every one of your ethnographic missives from Canada's west coast in good spirits.

So now, dear Readers, on with your Newsletter!

ANN HOWATT-KRAHN, EDITOR

From Australian Museum Co-editors;
Authors may find that their articles have been edited to save space. We have made every effort to include all vital information though this has sometimes necessitated a degree of rewriting.

We hope that members attending the Dresden conference will propose themes for future newsletters so please start thinking about it now. We would like to see more brief technical notes which may include diagrams, material culture information, research updates, as well as your requests for information.

COORDINATOR'S REPORT

Sue Walston

As you know, the 9th Triennial Meeting of the ICOM Committee for Conservation will be held next month in Dresden and I hope to see many of our Members there. This year the Meeting program has been reorganized to allow for Plenary sessions to be held in the mornings and Working Group sessions to be held in the afternoons. The aim behind this is to provide delegates with a broader view of developments within the overall profession than was possible at previous Meetings, where simultaneous Working Group sessions were held throughout the day, making it impossible for people to attend many of the sessions. An excellent series of papers will be presented at the Ethnographic Materials Working Group session, which is provisionally scheduled for the first afternoon of the Meeting, Monday, 27 August. Papers will address the Working Group's triennial program topics on painted surfaces and material culture, as well as aspects of pest control (see program). Eric Hansen, of The Getty

Conservation Institute, will present the Plenary session paper titled "A review of problems encountered with paint on wooden ethnographic objects and potential remedies". The final program for the Meeting has not yet been confirmed, so delegates should check the conference centre notice board in The Palace of Culture when they arrive in Dresden. The Working Group will also hold a short meeting on the Sunday afternoon, 26 August beginning at 14:00. The location will be posted in the conference centre.

I should also like to remind Members that the election of Coordinator will take place during the Working Group session. I will be resigning after six years (two triennial periods) and would like to encourage interested people to stand for this position. Nominations will be taken from the floor and, following election, the Coordinator will nominate one or more Assistant Coordinators.

This Newsletter, therefore, provides a timely opportunity for me to thank all of the many people that have supported the activities of the Working Group over the past six years. I particularly thank Ann Howatt-Krahn, Assistant Coordinator and first Editor of the Newsletter. Information is the life blood of any profession, and for ours, still in its developmental stages, it is vital that we develop our own body of information if we are to overcome the many problems unique to ethnographic objects and stabilize the huge and irreplaceable resource of cultural information contained in ethnographic collections in all parts of the world. Ann has made a critical contribution in the information area through the establishment of the Newsletter. She will be stepping down as Editor after giving a great deal of her time and talent to this project. The staff of the Materials Conservation Division, who have assisted with the production and distribution of this edition of the Newsletter, have generously offered to take over the full production for the next triennium. This group has always supported the work of the Working Group and I would like to thank them for the talent and energy that they have given over the last six years. Also the Regional Coordinators, who, particularly during the 1984-87 Triennium, provided the basis for a strong communication network for the field around the world. I should also like to welcome a new Regional Coordinator, John David Lee (United Kingdom) of the Organics Section of The British Museum Conservation Department, London, who has kindly offered to take over the position from Margaret McCord, who is spending two years in Australia. Also Gertrude Blasum (Federal Republic of Germany) of the Hamburgisches Museum für Völkerkunde in Hamburg who was appointed since the publication of the last Newsletter.

On a personal note, last March I resigned from the Australian Museum where I have worked for nearly 20 years. During that time I have greatly appreciated all the support that that fine Museum has shown both for the activities of the Working Group and for my work on the Directory Board. The main reason for my involvement in ICOM is because I have always believed that any contributions that conservators make towards the development of the profession, often through professional organizations like the Conservation Committee, will, inevitably, result in benefits to themselves and to their institutions. These benefits are evidenced primarily by the increased amount of information on ethnographic conservation that becomes available through publications, workshops and conferences, as well as through individual contacts that develop as a consequence of these

activities. They also occur, though more gradually, through the numbers of conservators and training opportunities increasing as museums and government authorities become more aware of the needs and advantages of preserving ethnographic collections.

Over the years I have been fortunate enough to have met a large number of talented ethnographic conservators from many different countries, most of whom are tackling diverse and complex object problems with collections that are often housed under poor conditions and supported by inadequate funds. I hope that through the Newsletter and through an increase in the number of national and professional meetings, published items and training opportunities, that the collective knowledge and skills of these people can be recognised and shared to enable the ethnographic conservation profession to continue on its course of healthy growth.

Change of address:

Sue Walston can be contacted at the following addresses:

1 October to 31 December 1990

P. O. Box 271
Balmain, N.S.W. 2041
AUSTRALIA

1 January 1991 to (approximately) 1 January 1993

P. O. Box 3008
Shepherdstown, WV 25443
U.S.A.

FEATURE: EDUCATION

**TEACHING PREVENTIVE CONSERVATION
TO NON-CONSERVATORS**

Conservators involved in teaching conservation to non-conservators met in St. John's, Newfoundland, (Canada) in May, 1989, (prior to the annual meeting of the International Institute for Conservation-Canadian Group [IIC-CG]). Instruction was provided on appropriate teaching methods for adults, and common concerns were discussed. More and more conservators are called upon to teach conservation to non-conservators. A non-conservator might be, for example, a curator, archaeologist, or museum volunteer.

Issues which were discussed at length included, what are appropriate topics to teach non-conservators? When teaching preventive conservation, what topics should be addressed? Should treatments be taught to non-conservators? Many felt no treatment should be taught, while others felt that if you did not provide some treatment guidelines non-conservators would 'fix/conservate' artefacts themselves, perhaps resulting in damage. Others felt that only after a solid grounding in good preventive conservation practices could the topic of treatment be addressed and only to those who demonstrated an aptitude. Another iron in the fire... How do you define treatment? Is dusting a basket considered treatment or preventive conservation? Possible repercussions-the basket may have loose pigment on its

exterior, or fragments on the interior indicating its original use-lost through a procedure as simple as dusting.

An outcome of the workshop was the formation of a standing committee of IIC-CG (Canadian Group). The Training Committee of the IIC-CG has the mandate: "To establish through consultation, guidelines for the curricula for teaching conservation to non-conservators in Canada." The initial goals of this group are to:

- 1/ Define appropriate topics to be taught to non-conservators.
- 2/ Define training parameters
- 3/ Suggest a sequence for presenting the topics defined
- 4/ Survey current activities and perceived needs of the Canadian conservation community regarding the training of non-conservators
- 5/ Formulate and recommend course content for each topic defined.

The Committee will be sending out a questionnaire to the CG Membership during July/August 1990. If you are not a member of the IIC-CG and would like to have input and/or receive a copy of the questionnaire, write to the address below. Your input is most welcome.

CORRESPONDENT and LIAISON:

SANDRA LOUGHEED,
Conservator
Ontario Ministry of Culture and Communications
Heritage Branch
77 Bloor Street West, 2nd Floor
Toronto, Ontario.
CANADA. M7A 2V4.

Telephone: (416) 965-3937.

TRAINING IN ETHNOGRAPHIC CONSERVATION

IN THE UNIVERSITY CONTEXT:

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY AT KINGSTON (ONTARIO, CANADA)

In recent years there has been considerable discussion concerning the need for specialised training in ethnographic and archaeological conservation in the United States, and a curriculum addressing these requirements has been proposed. (1) However, to date, Queen's University in Kingston, (Ontario,) Canada, continues to offer the only graduate-level training program in North America which includes an emphasis on ethnographic conservation.

At Queen's, training in ethnographic conservation is provided within the context of a two-year general program in artefact conservation. Of the three specialisations offered at this University, (i.e. paintings, paper and artefacts), artefact conservation covers the broadest range of materials. The curriculum has been designed to emphasise a different class of organic or inorganic materials in each of the four teaching terms. A student entering the Program will be introduced to conservation techniques for pottery and glass. A second term, concentrating on the conservation of inorganic materials,

features metal and stone. Two terms are devoted to the conservation of organic materials-one with a principal emphasis on textiles, and the other including a variety of organic materials such as skins, leather, wood, bone and ivory. Lectures discussing the history, technology and conservation of specific materials are closely linked to practical work in the laboratory, where students gain experience on materials under consideration in class.

Designing the curriculum with an emphasis on materials allows flexibility in the selection of objects for laboratory projects. Students are offered opportunities to diverge into areas of special interest. For example, while all students are required to complete at least one project in the area of wood conservation, the assigned object could be a Hepplewhite games table, or, for a student with the appropriate interest and background, the choice could be a Chi wara headdress from Mali.

Queen's University is fortunate in being able to utilise a variety of nearby resources. For some years, students have been able to perform conservation treatments on an extensive collection of Copper Eskimo clothing belonging to the Canadian Museum of Civilisation in Ottawa. Assembled during the First World War by the Arctic explorer, Diamond Jenness, the collection contains some of the earliest and finest examples of Inuit skin clothing to be found anywhere. The Agnes Etherington Art Centre, located on the Queen's University campus, possesses an outstanding collection of African art, as well as numerous ethnographic items from Southeast Asia and other locations, and which have been donated by Queen's Alumni during the early years of the Twentieth Century. In addition, the Art Conservation Program accepts items for treatment from the general public. Some of these objects fall into the category of ethnographic artefacts.

The Program curriculum stresses preventive as well as interventive aspects of conservation for all categories of materials. A growing awareness among professional conservators of the damage which may occur when inappropriate methods or products are applied to ethnographic artefacts imparts an increasing importance to preventive conservation in the context of ethnographic materials. Appropriate techniques for storage and display are discussed at length. Students may be required to construct display mounts or storage enclosures for fragile items to enlarge the scope of their laboratory experience. "Low-tech" versus "high-tech" solutions are considered, taking into account the differing resource levels which exist in Canadian cultural institutions today.

Instruction at Queen's stresses the ethics of ethnographic conservation, as well as the technologies of native cultures. In addition, students are encouraged to explore and discuss the moral and political issues inherent in the collection and care of ethnographic artefacts.

Efforts are made to raise the awareness of the special needs of ethnographic collections within the University at large. The Art Department at Queen's offers an annual graduate-level course focussing on the issues of collecting in Canada. Students enrolled in the course are required to mount an exhibition of professional standard for display at the end of term in the Agnes Etherington Art Centre. Because Inuit art was chosen as the focus of last year's exhibition, faculty from the Art Conservation Program provided instruction in the care and handling of Inuit ivories and stone carvings. Condition reporting of the items required for display was carried

out under the guidance of a faculty member in the artefact conservation laboratory.

Conservation students are offered an additional opportunity for specialisation during the summer internships, which must be of twelve weeks' duration each year. In the past, students wishing to obtain further training in ethnographic conservation have completed internships at Canadian institutions, such as the Canadian Conservation Institute in Ottawa, the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, and the Glenbow Museum in Calgary, as well as at institutions outside the country, such as the Bernice Pauhi Bishop Museum in Hawaii.

Providing training in ethnographic conservation within the larger context of a general program in artefact conservation offers students a broader knowledge base, and also ensures that non-specialist graduates will have sufficient expertise to enable them to cope with those ethnographic artefacts, which, almost inevitably, are found in general museum collections. Students entering the Program with a background in material culture or anthropology are at an obvious advantage; however, graduates from other disciplines could address any deficiencies by seeking out specialised courses, which are offered at most large universities. Recent graduates, as well as experienced professionals, can benefit from short, special-interest courses, which are offered from time to time, such as the recent workshop on Inuit methods of skin preparation presented by the Canadian Conservation Institute in Churchill, Manitoba.

In the future, as laboratories become increasingly materials-specific, the training of artefact conservators may have to be directed toward the achievement of well-defined goals. However, the present employment situation in Canada does not appear to warrant the establishment of a separate, specialised program of studies at this time. In the authors opinion, training in general artefact conservation remains an effective strategy in education today.

(1) A Suggested Curriculum for Training in Ethnographic and Archaeological Conservation, National Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Property, Inc., Washington, D.C., 1984.

Queen's University at Kingston

Master's Degree in Art Conservation

FACT SHEET

PROGRAM LENGTH:

Two years, including four terms of academic studies and practical work on campus, and two summer internships, each of twelve weeks duration, at recognised conservation laboratories in Canada or abroad.

FACULTY:

Four full-time professors
Three adjunct professors

ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS:

- Four year honours degree or equivalent in the humanities or sciences.
- One full university course in General Chemistry and a minimum of a one term course in Organic Chemistry.
- Demonstrated manual skills.
- Studies in related fields (eg., Museology, Anthropology),

and prior conservation or museum experience are considered assets.

ADMISSIONS:

Up to thirteen students are admitted per year, including five specialising in artefact conservation.

FACILITIES:

The Art Conservation Program is housed in the Agnes Etherington Art Centre. There are separate laboratories for the conservation of paintings, paper and artefacts. Other facilities include microscopy and research laboratories, a photography studio, darkroom and woodworking shop. Students have access to the extensive holdings of the Art Department Library, which include publications and audiovisual materials relating to art history, technology and art conservation.

CORRESPONDENT:

PROFESSOR KRYSIA SPIRYDOMICS,
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Kingston, Ontario.
CANADA. K7L 3N6.

ETHNOGRAPHIC CONSERVATION TRAINING:

ONE STUDENT'S EXPERIENCE

I would like to describe the means by which I've entered the profession, and to offer thoughts and observations on the field of ethnographic conservation in general.

I am a member of the Delaware band of the Six Nations Indian Reserve of Oshweken, Ontario. Prior to entering Algonquin College of Applied Arts and Technology in Ottawa, Ontario (Canada), I served for four years in the Canadian Armed Forces.

Having always had an interest in history, and in the cultures and traditions of my own people, and being aware of the existence of the Museum Technology Program at Algonquin College, in September, 1985, I received my honourable release from the military and commenced studies at Algonquin's Woodroffe Campus. I successfully completed a 3 year course in Museum Technology. After academic field placements and terms of summer employment at, among others, the Canadian Conservation Institute (CCI) and the Canadian Museum of Civilization (CMC) Shortly after my graduation from Algonquin, I began a two-year term of employment with the Conservation Services Division (CSD) of CMC, under the sponsorship of the National Indigenous Development Program (NIDP). The NIDP program is an employment equity program of the Public Service Commission of Canada (PSC), aimed at increasing the number of qualified individuals of native Canadian ancestry employed in technical and managerial level positions in all departments of the Canadian federal civil service. Successful applicants must possess the academic qualifications and the necessary practical skills to enable them to participate fully in the internship programs designed for them by their NIDP advisors and their immediate supervisors within the hosting government department. The salary and the person-year requirements

for the participant are shared equally by the PSC and the host department, in this case, CMC. I am currently the only such participant employed in the conservation department of a federal museum or art gallery.

The Conservation Services Division of CMC is composed of a central administration/registration unit, a photography unit, and four separate conservation laboratories: Artefacts; Textiles; Fine Arts and Works on Paper; and Furniture and Wooden Objects. The staff of each conservation lab works closely with all curatorial and collections staff, as well as with the Design and Technical Services Division, which oversees preparation and installation functions for the Museum. I myself am an Assistant Conservator, with the Artefacts Lab, and frequently assist the Collections Management team of the Canadian Ethnology Service (CMC's ethnology division). I have also worked in the other three CSD labs to familiarise myself with their areas of expertise and approaches to the treatment of objects.

I entered the NIDP program at a most opportune time, as June 29, 1989 marked the official opening of CMC's new exhibition facilities at Parc Laurier in Hull, Quebec. This provided me with a rather intensive introduction to the division's responsibilities and capabilities that would not have been possible under more routine circumstances. My basic training schedule is the same as that of any intern from a recognised conservation training program. Under the supervision of the lab's senior conservator, I condition report, propose treatments, and perform approved treatments on the entire range of artefacts from the Museum's Folk Culture, History, and Archaeology, as well as Ethnology collections. Related tasks include proper documentation for all artefacts treated, assisting with photography, and ordering conservation supplies. Conducting routine checks of environmental conditions in collections storage and exhibition areas is also part of my responsibilities, as is meeting with collections managers and exhibition designers to recommend appropriate storage or display techniques. Ethnographic conservation treatments that I've performed since the start of this internship have included restoration work on contemporary Inuit soapstone sculpture, consolidation and tear repair on beaded, native-tanned skin garments, and consolidation treatments on polychrome wooden dance masks from the Pacific Northwest Coast of Canada. I have also gained experience in as electrolytic reduction and the repair and restoration of ceramics.

Through funding resources set by the NIDP, since the start of the internship, I have attended a CCI-hosted paper conservation symposium at the National Gallery of Canada (NGC); an Inuit skin preparation workshop in Churchill, Manitoba; and most recently, the Shared Responsibility conference (1) at the NGC. One purpose of which was to foster a greater understanding between conservators and curators.

During the course of the Shared Responsibility Conference, frequent reference was made to the International Institute for Conservation-Canadian Group's (IIC-CG) Code of Ethics and Guidance for Practice. Section 2 of this document defines the responsibility of the conservator to the originator of the cultural property as follows:

"The conservator shall endeavour to understand the intention of the originator in creating or using a cultural property, and take this into consideration in

the conservation of the cultural property."

This directive is applicable, I feel, to all aspects of museum work, and, by, extension, includes the obligation of the curator to exhibit and present cultural property in such a manner as to ensure its most accurate interpretation by researchers and the viewing public. With reference to the duties and responsibilities of the ethnographic conservator, I offer the following for consideration.

Certain recent museum exhibitions of native North American art and artefacts have sensitised people to the dichotomy that often exists between the reality of aboriginal cultures and their presentation and interpretation within the Euro-North American museum context. These exhibitions include the Fluffs and Feathers exhibition (2) of the Museum of the Woodland Indian in Brantford, Ontario, and the Glenbow Museum's, The Spirit Sings exhibition (Calgary). On the one hand, fluffs and feathers consciously sought to address the issue of stereotypical perceptions of native peoples and their cultures, while on the other, The Spirit Sings, and the controversy surrounding it, drew attention to the sometimes less-than-positive relationship that exists between some aboriginal groups and the Euro-North American museum community.

In response to the need for a more productive dialogue between the native peoples of Canada and the Canadian Museums community, the Preserving Our Heritage symposium (3) was co-hosted by the Assembly of First Nations and the Canadian Museums Association at Carleton University in Ottawa from November 3 to 5, 1988. Topics discussed ranged from combating stereotypical representations of native peoples and cultures in non-native operated museums, to the re-patriation of unethically or improperly collected objects of native material culture, and the potential return and reburial of illegally obtained human remains (which, in many cases, were surreptitiously removed from graveyards which were still in use.)

One of the recommendations put forward at the symposium was that a greater effort must be made to recruit and train native Canadians in the various fields of museology, with a view increasing the number of natives directly involved in the presentation and interpretation of their own cultures within the museum context, at regional, provincial and national level. I wholeheartedly support this resolution. Should the Canadian museum community continue to deny itself the full participation of trained native museum practitioners, it denies itself a valuable cultural and professional resource. As a Canadian Indian who happens to be a museum conservator, I feel it is well to point out that the idea of artefact conservation is not entirely foreign to our cultures. Among those Iroquoian tribes constituting the Confederacy of the Six Nations, the hereditary title, "Ho-no-we-na-to," was traditionally bestowed upon that Onondaga sachem charged with ensuring the safety and well-being of the wampum belts, which recorded the traditions of the body politic, while among certain Plains tribes, specific warriors' societies were tasked with the preservation of the sacred medicine bundles which ensured the continued prosperity of the band. For countless centuries my own people, the Lenni Lenape (Delaware), maintained and preserved the "Walum Olum," a series of pictographs incised onto a set of wooden tablets, which recorded the tribal migration route. The tablets were somehow obtained by an American scholar in about 1820, and have since disappeared. Euro-American

successes in preservation of priceless cultural properties have not always been on a par with those of ourselves.

This is not an entirely esoteric observation on my part, for it has specific practical applications. I feel our profession would do well to re-evaluate the ethics of using so many synthetic polymers and other man-made materials in the conservation of ethnographic artefacts. From observations made during experiments performed on test samples, it is evident that natural animal sinews remain a viable option in the tear repair treatment of sufficiently strong and pliable native-tanned skins. Certainly the utilisation of such materials during many conservation treatments would be more in keeping with the aesthetic integrity of the majority of native-tanned artefacts, provided, of course, that detailed written and photographic documentation is maintained, lest the conservator's use of like materials later be confused with the original materials of manufacture.

Similarly, Euro-North American conservators, unfamiliar with traditional native technologies, have been known to treat certain features of ethnographic artefacts, which initially appeared to be damages arising from recent biological activity or improper museum techniques. Upon subsequent re-evaluation, it has sometimes become apparent that what, for example, formerly appeared to be a recently occurring hole in a skin garment, was, natural warblefly damage, or loss resulting from original use. Thus, treatment reversibility notwithstanding, the intervention has altered the character of the artefact, and has lessened its value as an authentic object of aboriginal material culture. Likewise, the treatment of marine mammal gutskin garments with such consolidants as polyethylene glycol has been shown to be inappropriate, in that gutskin garments, such as kayaking frocks, were kept in a dry and brittle condition, and were only rendered flexible immediately prior to use, when they were lightly moistened with water. Clearly, increased dialogue between ethnographic conservators and native consultants is called for.

To conclude, I have found my NIDP-sponsored term with the Conservation Services Division of the CMC to be an extremely valuable addition to my training; indeed, it forms the core of my practical conservation experience thus far. I would hope that other natives who are interested in a career in conservation, or any other aspect of the museum profession, have the opportunity to benefit from the NIDP program as I have. The increased participation of native peoples in museological endeavours can only be of advantage to the accurate study, presentation and interpretation of North American aboriginal cultures within the museum setting.

CORRESPONDENT:

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Editor's Notes:

My thanks to **TOM STONE**, Chief, Archaeology, Ethnology and Wooden Objects Division, Canadian Conservation Institute, for the following information which supplements the promising references in Mr. Moses' article, above.

AHK

1. Preserving Our Heritage:

To date there is no final publication from this seminar, however, it has been reported that selections from the transcripts have been made available for participants. For further information, please contact:

National Indian Brotherhood
Association of First Nations, (Ottava Office)
47 Clarence Street, Suite 300
Ottava, Ontario.
CANADA. K1N 9K1.
Telephone: (613) 236.0673 FAX:(613) 238. 5780

2. Shared Responsibility

Published materials from this conference, jointly sponsored by the National Gallery of Canada and the Canadian Conservation Institute, are in production. For further details, please contact:

Barbara Ramsay-Jolicoeur
Conservator
National Gallery of Canada
Conservation Division
380 Sussex Drive
Ottava, Ontario.
CANADA. K1N 9N4
Telephone: (613) 990-1944

3. Fluffs and Feathers

For further information on this exhibition, please contact:

Mr. Tom Hill, Curator
Woodland Indian Cultural Centre
P.O. Box 1506
Brentford, Ontario.
N3T 5V6
CANADA.
Telephone: (519) 759-2650

**CONSERVATION CENTER OF
THE INSTITUTE OF FINE ARTS,
NEW YORK UNIVERSITY**

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A FOUR-YEAR PILOT PROJECT TO DEVELOP SPECIALISED INSTRUCTION IN THE CONSERVATION OF ETHNOGRAPHIC AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL ARTEFACTS

BACKGROUND

As a result of a comprehensive evaluation of the curriculum begun in September, 1987, at the request of James R. McCredie, Director, Institute of Fine Arts, a pilot project was formulated to develop specialised instruction in the conservation of ethnographic and archaeological artefacts. The project revolves around two elective advanced conservation seminars first offered in the academic year 1988-89. Complementing these two seminars are numerous guest lecturers for the entire student body, research projects tailored for each student eligible for independent study credits, and summer archaeological fieldwork opportunities.

This pilot project was developed primarily to address a nationally recognised need for improved instruction in this area within the structure of our existing curriculum. As the National Institute for Conservation (NIC) pointed out in their recent survey of the field, "...it has been wrongfully assumed that conservators trained in the treatment of art objects can handle the preservation needs of anthropological objects as a matter of course...It is short-sighted and potentially damaging both to the profession and to the artefact to assume that treatments applicable in one discipline can be transferred readily to another."

(Ethnographic and Archaeological Conservation in the United States, National Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Property, Inc., 1984, p. 6)

Our pilot project, as a whole, is intended to correct that assumption, and to familiarise all our students, especially those concentrating in objects conservation and related disciplines, with the unique conservation problems of ethnographic and archaeological objects, and the differences in approach required to treat them sympathetically. Furthermore, it will provide a strong foundation for those students planning to focus on one or both of these areas. The pilot project is not intended to supplant more comprehensive studies in ethnographic and archaeological conservation, nor necessarily to produce ethnographic and archaeological conservators in and of itself. As enrolment in the coursework component of this project has already proven, there has been no shortage of eager participants.

In the past, no formalised instruction specifically addressing the problems of ethnographic and archaeological artefacts has been available to our students. Specialised internships and advanced conservation fieldwork have been arranged for students wishing to specialise in these areas. Anthropology courses and courses on archaeological methods have also been arranged to supplement art history studies. While this approach has proved satisfactory and has, in fact, been incorporated into the pilot project design, it is now recognised that all objects conservators (and allied specialists, such as textiles conservators) should be thoroughly acquainted with the differences in approach, treatment, display considerations and aesthetic perspectives required for ethnographic and archaeological objects. As many practicing art conservators have discovered in hindsight, these attitudes and approaches should be an early lesson in professional training.

In the planning stages of the pilot project and during its initial year, it became apparent that the Conservation Center is particularly well-suited to offer such specialised instruction.

Facilities: The Stephen Chan House, home of the Conservation Center, provides state-of-the-art facilities which were easily adaptable for the two seminars in practical instruction. For this pilot project, one floor of the Center was reorganised to allow for flexible work areas; a former office on the same floor was refitted to accommodate objects during storage.

Area Collections: Vast collections of ethnographic and archaeological materials available for examination are housed in nearby institutions such as The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Brooklyn Museum, The American Museum of Natural History, The Museum of the American Indian,

The Hispanic Society, The Asia Society, The Brooklyn Children's Museum, The Center for African Art, The Newark Museum and numerous important private collections.

Instructors: The Conservation Center's large faculty of distinguished conservators and conservation scientists represents all aspects of the profession and includes, on an adjunct basis, many eminent conservators from area museums. In addition, the Center has access to many leading conservators specialising in the treatment of ethnographic and archaeological objects. All the conservators involved in the planning of this project have endorsed the urgent need for such education, and have indicated their willingness to contribute to its success.

Curatorial Consultants: As an integral part of the Institute of Fine Arts, known for its excellence in art history studies, the Conservation Center has easy access to curators and scholars in area museums and universities.

Existing Conservation Curriculum: In place since its inception, the Conservation Center offers Technology and Structure of Works of Art and Materials of Art and Archaeology, a two-year cycle of required courses for all students enrolled in the conservation training program. Over four terms, all major organic and inorganic materials found in art and archaeology are considered, including stone, ceramics, glass, metals, cellulosic materials, proteinaceous materials, resins, waxes and gums. Traditional techniques and procedures historically used to fabricate works of art are also covered. These courses alternate between organic and inorganic from year to year, with first and second year students working together. Thus, students begin their conservation training by studying whichever material is scheduled during that year.

Supplemental Studies: In addition to its conservation curriculum, the Institute of Fine Arts can provide excellent courses in classical studies, which complement seminars of archaeological conservation. For example, this semester, a seminar on the technical aspects of Greek and Roman Sculpture is being offered. Furthermore, anthropology and art history courses on primitive art are readily available to our students at Columbia University through a longstanding university exchange agreement.

Excavation Opportunities: The Conservation Center has been actively involved with important archaeological excavations since 1963. To date 34 students have been sent to excavations when funding was available; others have gained field experience through arrangements made by internship hosts or after graduation. The Institute of Fine Arts sponsors excavations at Samothrace, Greece, and al-Hiba, Iraq (to be resumed in 1990), and members of the conservation faculty are affiliated with the Archaeological Explorations of Sardis, Turkey. To ensure that students are properly prepared for summer fieldwork, an IFA/CC graduate, specialising in archaeological conservation, has been retained to review treatment procedures prior to the students' departures, on-site, and again after their return to school.

THE FOUR-YEAR PILOT PROJECT (First year 1988-89)

Components of the initial year of the project were:
-two introductory practical seminars organised by materials (inorganic, organic)
-supplemental guest lecturers for students enrolled in the seminars and for the entire student body

- summer archaeological fieldwork opportunities
- related research projects

The Seminars: Two elective conservation seminars (3 hours/class, 15 weeks each) were offered on an experimental basis in the academic year 1988-89. The Fall 1988 seminar concentrated on the conservation problems of ethnographic and archaeological objects derived from organic materials, such as leather, fiber, feathers, wood, bone and ivory. The Spring 1989 seminar focused on the conservation problems associated with ethnographic and archaeological artefacts composed predominantly of inorganic materials, for instance, metal, ceramics and stone. These seminars are ordered sequentially in order to follow the introduction of the materials used to fabricate works of art in Technology and Structure of Works of Art and Materials of Art and Archaeology. Enrolment in the seminars is limited to students who have completed the appropriate semester or semesters of the above courses.

In planning the two seminars, numerous conservators and curators were consulted. Adjunct Associate Professor of Conservation, Lawrence Becker, also Associate Conservator in Objects Conservation, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, was selected to provide the bulk of the instruction for both seminars and to coordinate special lectures and field trips. Marian Kaminitz, Assistant Conservator, Department of Anthropology, American Museum of Natural History, was retained to complement Professor Becker's archaeological expertise with her ethnographic focus. Margaret Holben Ellis, Chairman, coordinated the many-faceted supplemental activities for the project.

The two seminars centered around actual case studies, classified according to the nature of their components. Objects from cooperating collections were chosen for treatment and brought to the Conservation Center. They were selected to represent a general cross-section of conservation problems typically encountered, and to provide a level of treatment appropriate to the students. Objects included Oceanic and African masks, one African door lock, five ancient Egyptian polychromed wooden artefacts, Peruvian, Greek and Islamic ceramic vessels, a Veracruz figure, Luristan bronze and iron objects, and an Eskimo wood pipe, among others.

The teaching method was predominantly by lecture, extensive examination and discussion, and supervised treatment.

Because it was felt that extensive knowledge of comparable materials was essential before treatment of any kind was undertaken, the initial weeks of each seminar were devoted to examining and discussing related objects in New York Museums and private collections. These discussions focussed on the artistic and cultural traditions from which the objects derive, how the objects were originally intended to look, how and why their appearance has subsequently altered, and how these changes and our aesthetic perceptions influence their conservation. One additional objective of the gallery talks was to illustrate, using museum examples, the difference in the final appearance of objects using a variety of conservation treatments.

Specialised bibliographies, covering categories such as "Bark and Barkcloth," "Shell," "Cellulosics," and various ethnic material cultures were also completed and distributed.

Complete documentation including photographs, x-radiographs, and instrumental analysis (EDS) results was an important aspect of the seminars, and, along with the quality of the treatment and final examination, determined the final grade achieved by the student. All documentation was forwarded to the owners/custodians of the objects.

Supplemental lectures: Four guest lecturers supplemented topics discussed in the two seminars. Ten visiting conservators addressed the entire student body on subjects related to ethnographic and archaeological conservation. Five curators examined the objects under consideration and helped the students in questions of cultural context.

Archaeological Excavation Opportunities: In order that they experience first hand the conditions under which the art objects that they will later treat are handled in the field, students were encouraged to take advantage of excavation opportunities. Two students had such experience prior to enrolling in the seminars; two signed up for excavations in Turkey after taking the seminars. One, who has since returned to New York, reports that she found the seminars to be "invaluable," and that she took along a good portion of her class notes. Furthermore, the creative approach in considering all treatment options helped in dealing with the limited supplies and resources typical of excavation sites.

Related Activities: The design of the overall conservation curriculum allows for flexibility in arranging supplemental activities for students interested in ethnographic and archaeological conservation. For instance, while taking the seminars, one student pursued an independent research project on Mangebetu/Azande iron artefacts under the supervision of Judith Levinson, Conservator, Department of Anthropology, American Museum of Natural History. Also under the supervision of Ms. Levinson, in 1989-90 this student will begin an investigation of organo-metallic corrosion products. She will also carry out the treatment of a Navaho Indian leather and silver bridle under the supervision of Ellen Pearlstein of the Brooklyn Museum. Another student enrolled in the seminars spent the summer in Ankara, Turkey, studying wooden objects excavated from the tomb of Gordion. An internship has been arranged for her in the Objects Conservation Department of the British Museum in 1989-90, which will allow her to continue working in ethnographic and archaeological conservation.

Pilot Project Evaluation: Lengthy discussions with students and faculty, and a review of course materials, documentation and, most importantly, the actual treatments, resulted in proposed changes in the course design, which will be implemented in 1989-90. On a purely administrative level, improvements need to be made in the ordering of supplies and specialised equipment and the coordination of the deliveries of the objects to be treated.

Academic modifications include an even greater emphasis on "looking" exercises in order to appreciate cultural contexts; improved coordination of the introduction of the topics with Technology and Structure of Works of Art and Materials of Art and Archaeology; and a more realistic allotment of time for treatments which generally took longer than expected. The quality of the treatments was uniformly excellent, as attested by the owners/custodians of the pieces. Their testimonials were

most gratifying for everyone involved in the planning of this project.

THE FOUR-YEAR PILOT PROJECT (Second Year 1989-90)

Five students have registered for the Fall seminar. Of these, two spent their summers on archaeological excavations and a third worked on Peruvian textiles under the supervision of Vuka Roussakis of the American Museum of Natural History. This same student supplemented her art history studies last year with an anthropology course on Northwest Coast Indian Art, a topic which she is presently developing into a qualifying paper for the Master's degree. A fourth student spent the summer on an Islamic tiled spandrel under the supervision of Ellen Pearlstein of the Brooklyn Museum, a project to be continued this semester. Objects requiring treatment have been assembled, and include a pre-Columbian ceramic figure urn of Monte Alban, Mexico; a stone pipe from the mound-building Culture, Ohio; a gold alloy Chavin crown; several Islamic ceramics; an Egyptian plaster mask; a silver Hellenistic calves head; and a number of gold alloy Equidorian nose ornaments. Visiting conservators scheduled to date include George Wheeler and Ellen Howe. Additional lecturers will be scheduled.

THE FOUR-YEAR PILOT PROJECT (Third and Fourth Years)

While the basic structure of the project is expected to remain the same, modifications in course content will be made in response to periodic evaluations. At the end of its final year, a decision will be made concerning its permanent inclusion in the curriculum.

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PREMA; PREVENTION IN THE MUSEUMS OF AFRICA

The PREMA Training Project is a ten year training programme of six activities carried out annually. These are: an eleven month course leading to a Diploma in Conservation Management of the Museums of Sub-Saharan Africa run by ICCROM in Rome. The working language is English in even years and French odd years. The course content, choice of lecturers and examination procedures are supervised by the relevant university, (The University of London, Institute of Archaeology or the University of Paris I); two three-month courses, one in English and one in French held in a museum in Sub-Saharan Africa aimed at teaching basic preventive conservation principles and re-organizing the storage areas of the host museum; a training trainers program; a technical assistance program to ex-participants' museums and a regional seminar on preventive conservation for museum directors.

THE GHANA COURSE;

The 1989 course in Accra was the first of the series of

twenty to be held in different African countries. It was aimed at all levels of workers within the National Museums of Ghana system who carried out the following projects related directly to the collections of National Museum in Accra:

- a) complete the inventory of the 12,000 piece ethnography collections -
- b) complete 40% of the cataloguing of these collections
- c) disinfest the collections and storage furniture -
- d) organise a functioning storage area -
- e) organise a basic conservation workshop -
- f) demonstrate basic conservation treatments -
- g) present the results of the sessions to the public through a small temporary exhibition -

For further information regarding the Newsletter and the PREMA PROGRAM, please contact:

CATHERINE ANTONMARCHI
COORDINATOR PREMA Program
ICCROM
Via di San Michele 13
00153 ROME

Correspondent. M.E.A. McCord, Materials Conservation Division, The Australian Museum.

CONGRATULATIONS to the PREMA* NEWSLETTER on the occasion of its first issue,

June 1989.

*** Prevention in the Museums of Africa.**

According to Editor, **MUBIANA R. LUMILA**:
"This Newsletter is a result of the desire by PREMA '87, (i.e. participants to the 1987 course, Prevention in Museums in Africa at ICCROM, Rome) to:

- a) maintain professional contacts among themselves
- b) create and broaden professional contacts between PREMA '87 and continental and international institutions and bodies with interests in conservation and the training of Conservators, and
- c) inform the conservation fraternity about the conservation efforts being made in their museums.

It is desired that this newsletter develops into an ideas and information mouthpiece, not only for PREMA conservators, but for all conservators in Africa."

The PREMA Newsletter is a significant initiative in Africa, and for the development of conservation and museology generally. I know that I speak for all of us in wishing our colleagues every success in this work.
The Editors

For further information on the Newsletter, please contact:
MUBIANA R. LUMILA, Editor
PREMA NEWSLETTER
Livingstone National Museum
P.O. Box 60498
LIVINGSTONE,
ZAMBIA

**ETHNOGRAPHIC CONSERVATION
COLLOQUIUM,
MUSEUM OF MANKIND, LONDON
November 9 and 10, 1989**

The Department of Conservation of the British Museum and the U.K. Museum Ethnographers Group were co-organisers of this two day meeting held in the film theatre of the British Museum Department of Ethnography at the Museum of Mankind. The Museums and Galleries Commission Conservation Unit provided finance to cover the travel and accommodation costs of speakers from abroad. Abstracts and allied information were provided for the participants by the British Museum Department of Conservation and the Museum Ethnographers Group will publish the complete proceedings in a special edition of its Journal.

The program was as follows:-

DAY 1.

- Suzanne Kuchler - The Development of Malangan Art over 150 years.
Winnie Odder, National Museum of Denmark, Reorganising the Collections (Video).
Maureen Robson, Birmingham - Passive and Interventive Conservation of West African Sculptures and Masks in a Travelling Exhibition.
Aarne Bakken, The Ethnographic Museum, University of Oslo. The Conservators role in the making of a museum for the King of Barozeland, Zambia.
Alain Godonou, ICCROM & Musee National du Benin. Transferring Knowledge in the Field of Conservation.
Sue Bradley, British Museum - The effects of light on Ethnographic material.
M. Belcher, Berkshire College of Art. The use of daylight as the main source of lighting exhibitions.
D. B. Pinniger, MAFF - Insect pests, identification, prevention and housekeeping.
Vincent Daniels, British Museum - Methods for the Eradication of Insect Pests in Museum Objects.
Cololine Allington, Fan Museum Trust- Freezer Disinfestation.
Alan Carter, British Oxygen. On-Site Nitrogen Generation for the Museum Service.
Bob Child, Welsh Folk Museum St. Fagans - The Effects of Biocides on Historic Artefacts.
Peter Gathercole Cambridge, (Chair), Dale Idiens Royal Scottish Museum, Derek Gillman Sainsbury Centre UEA. Panel Discussion Cultural Constraints on Handling.

DAY 2:

- Margaret McCord, BM. Harold Gowers, an appreciation.
Malcolm McLeod, Keeper, the Museum of Mankind, Harold Gowers Memorial Lecture: Curation and Conservation in Museums: Unnatural Acts?
D. Miller, University College London. The Value of Mass Consumption Artefacts.
Dick Ryan, British Museum - Tinplate and its Treatment.
Bill Hall, British Museum, - Ventilation & Humidity within Museums and Galleries - Normal Requirements
May Cassar, MGC - Rh and Temperature Control, The Ideal and the Possible: the Use of Microclimates.
E. Pye, Institute of Archaeology - Pottery - What makes ceramics ethnographic?
Christine Daintith, British Museum - Conservation of

- Ethnographical Pottery from Papua, New Guinea.
Kerry Head, British Museum - Approaches to the Conservation of objects made from Treefern and Pith.
Barbara Wills, British Museum - Basketry Conservation.
Carolien W. Van Es 'NAMBAN' Volendam Holland. Japanese Lacquerware & Conservation.
D. J. Lee, British Museum - The Technology and Conservation of Lac Ware from the Maldive Islands.

The addresses for enquiries about publication of the Meeting are:-

The Journal of Museum Ethnography
Editor, Lewis Hill, The Centre for South-East Asian Studies, University of Hull, HULL, HU6 7RX, ENGLAND
Distribution Manager; Miss Veronica Johnston, Leeds City Museum, Calverley Street, LEEDS LS1 3AA, ENGLAND

Correspondent, M.E.A. McCord,
Materials Conservation Division,
The Australian Museum.

PHILADELPHIA MUSEUM OF ART

Benjamin Franklin Parkway,
Box 7646, Philadelphia,
Pennsylvania 19101-7646.
Telephone: 215 763-8100.
Fax 215 236-4465.

**POSTGRADUATE FELLOWSHIPS AT THE
PHILADELPHIA MUSEUM OF ART.**

The Philadelphia Museum of Art will offer postgraduate fellowships in paintings and objects conservation to begin September 1, 1990. They are intended for individuals who have completed a graduate training program in art conservation or have equivalent experience. Each fellowship includes a stipend of \$18,000 plus health insurance and a travel supplement of \$3,000.

Applicants should submit to the address below: statement of the candidate's interest in applying for the fellowship; resume; transcripts of undergraduate courses of academic study; and several samples of examination reports and treatment records with photographs. Two supporting letters from conservation professionals familiar with the candidate's work and one letter of personal reference should be sent directly to Marigene H. Butler, Head of Conservation, Philadelphia Museum of Art, P>O> Box 7646, Philadelphia, PA 19101-7646. Application deadline is March 1, 1990. Final decisions will be made by March 31, 1990.

**TRAINING IN CONSERVATION IN
THE U.K.**

The following information is taken from the UKIC publication Training in Conservation and checked with the Museums and Galleries Commission Conservation Unit. It includes only courses where some experience with ethnographic or folk-life objects or organic material may be available. There are no courses specialising in ethnographic conservation in the UK although an in-service qualification may still be available through the Museums Association.

Degree and Post-graduate Training

Opportunities for training are very limited, and existing courses are usually over-subscribed. Applicants who hold sound basic qualifications in science (particularly chemistry) or practical art subjects will usually be preferred. Two 'A' levels should probably be regarded as a minimum requirement with chemistry as an advantage together with practical aptitude. Certain courses demand entry at graduate level.

General Conservation, Arts and Crafts Courses

One or two universities and technical colleges offer general courses in museum conservation and related studies. Employers are unlikely to accept either type of course as providing sufficient qualifications for conservators, although both may offer useful background experience for further training.

FORMAL CONSERVATION COURSES AND USEFUL ADDRESSES.

(The academic level of the courses varies widely)

Camberwell College of Arts
The London Institute
Department of Art History and Conservation
Peckham Road
London SE5 8UF
Telephone 071-703 0987/2923 Fax 071-703 3689

Paper Conservation
Qualifications:
a) BTEC (ND) Conservation
b) BA Hons Conservation
c) MA Conservation

(The BTEC HND Diploma Course in Paper Conservation will be phased out)

*
Carmarthenshire College of Technology and Art
Faculty of Art and Design
Job's Well Road
Carmarthen
Dyfed SA31 3HY
0267-235855

a) Sculpture/Restoration Sculpture
b) Design Crafts (Sculpture/Restoration Sculpture)
Qualification:
a) College Diploma
b) BTEC Higher National Diploma

*
City & Guilds of London Art School
124 Kennington Park Road
London SE11 4DJ
01-735 2306 or 5210

Restoration and Conservation Studies
Qualification:
City & Guilds of London Art School Diploma

*
Institute of Archaeology
University College London
31-34 Gordon Square
London WC1H 0PY

Enquiries should be addressed to the Conservation Admissions Tutor
071-387 7050 ext 4774 (Tutor) ext 4721 (Secretary)

Archaeological Conservation
Qualifications:
a) BSc Degree
b) Diploma

c) Certificate

*
Lincolnshire College of Art and Design
Lindum Road
Lincoln LN2 1NP
Telephone 0522-512912 Fax 0522-542167

Conservation and Restoration Studies
Qualifications:
a) BTEC National Diploma
b) BTEC Higher National Diploma

*
London College of Furniture
41 Commercial Road
London E1 1LA
01-247 1953

Furniture (Restoration)
Qualification:
BTEC Higher National Diploma

*
Royal College of Art/Victoria & Albert Museum
Faculty of Humanities
Kensington Gore
London SW7 2EU
071-584 5020

Conservation
Qualification:
MA (RCA) Degree

*
Textile Conservation Centre
Apartment 22
Hampton Court Palace
East Molesey
Surrey KT8 9AU
081-977 4943

a) Textile Conservation
b) Apprenticeship Tapestry Conservation
c) Apprenticeship Upholstery Conservation
Qualifications:

a) Postgraduate Diploma of Courtauld
Institute of Art
b) and c) TCC Certificate

*
University of Durham
Department of Archaeology
46 Saddler Street
Durham DH1 3NU
091-3743621

Archaeological Conservation
Qualification:
MA in Conservation of Historic Objects

*
University of Wales College of Cardiff
School of History and Archaeology
PO Box 909
Cardiff CF1 3XU
Telephone 0222-874249 Fax 0222-371921

Archaeological Conservation
Qualification:
BSc Degree

*
West Dean College
West Dean
Chichester
West Sussex PO18 0QZ

- a) Antique Furniture Restoration
- b) Porcelain and Ceramic Conservation
- c) Bookbinding and the Care of Books
- d) Antique Clock Restoration
- e) Conservation of Fine Metals

Qualification:

- a) West Dean/BADA Diploma
- b) West Dean/BADA Diploma
- c) Advanced Diploma
- d) West Dean/BADA Diploma
- e) West Dean/BADA Diploma

*

York College of Art and Technology
School of Technology
Carpentry and Joinery Section
Dringhouses
York YO2 1UA
0904-704141

Antique Furniture Restoration

Qualification:

City & Guilds accreditation

*

Editor's note: the English translation of the following article will be published in the next newsletter. Space constraints precluded publishing in this issue.

Atelier sur les techniques inuit de préparation des peaux

par Tom Stone

L'Institut canadien de conservation a organisé un atelier de cinq jours qui portait sur les techniques inuit de préparation des peaux de phoque et de caribou, tenu à la fin d'août 1989 au Northern Studies Centre à Churchill (Manitoba), «Capitale mondiale des ours polaires». Les participants venaient de musées du Canada, des États-Unis et d'Europe.

Les moniteurs de l'atelier étaient Jill Oakes et Rick Riewe, tous deux de la University of Manitoba à Winnipeg, ainsi qu'Elizabeth Nibgoarsi et Leah Okatsiak, d'Arviat dans les Territoires du Nord-Ouest. Jill et Rick ont tous deux une vaste expérience de la préparation, de la fabrication et de l'utilisation de vêtements en peau dans l'Arctique. Quant à Elizabeth et Leah, ce sont des couturières inuit expertes qui comptent de nombreuses années d'expérience dans la fabrication de vêtements traditionnels en peau. Les différentes techniques exposées, dont celle du grattage, étaient, pour la plupart celles-là mêmes qui sont employées sur la côte ouest de la baie d'Hudson, région d'origine d'Elizabeth et de Leah. Étant donné, cependant, que Jill Oakes et Rick Riewe ont appris différentes façons de préparer des peaux dans de nombreuses régions de l'Arctique, les participants ont eu la chance de faire l'essai de techniques et d'outils divers, utilisés à divers endroits du grand Nord, du Groenland à l'Alaska. Les participants ont pu aussi travailler des peaux de caribou, de phoque annelé et de phoque barbu. Il a été utile notamment de constater par soi-même que la difficulté varie d'une peau de caribou à l'autre, et qu'elle n'est pas non plus la même selon qu'on

traite une peau de caribou ou une peau de phoque.

Les monitrices inuit nous ont fait remarquer que les peaux traitées auraient probablement été plus pâles et plus souples si la température avait été plus froide au moment du grattage. Bien que ce fût sans doute vrai, nous avons eu l'impression que cette explication masquait aussi charitablement notre maladresse de débutants.

Nous nous sommes rendus dans un petit gîte qui se trouvait à environ cinq ou six cents mètres du centre pour enlever la graisse des peaux de phoque, afin de ne pas attirer les ours vers le complexe principal; en effet, la graisse de phoque est l'aliment préféré de l'ours polaire. Il s'agissait sans doute du premier atelier de formation où un gardien armé devait assurer la protection dans la zone de travail.

Après avoir enlevé la graisse des peaux, ce qui a été une tâche ardue, nous avons tendu les peaux sur des châssis et les avons laissés sécher; il y avait une peau avec sa fourrure intacte, une peau dont nous avions rasé les poils sans enlever l'épiderme, et une troisième peau dont les poils et l'épiderme avaient été rasés. Nous avons ensuite procédé à l'assouplissement des peaux, soit en les mastiquant, soit en piétinant les peaux enroulées en boule. Les peaux de caribou ont été préparées en prattant du côté fleur pendant plusieurs heures à l'aide d'un outil dont la lame de métal avait été émoussée; un deuxième grattage a ensuite été effectué pendant de longues heures, au moyen de l'outil dont la lame était cette fois aiguisée.

Parce que le Northern Studies Centre est un complexe isolé dans la toundra, à dix milles de Churchill, la journée de travail durait de treize à quatorze heures. Les journées étaient consacrées au travail des peaux et les soirées, à des conférences, des films ou des discussions portant sur diverses techniques de préparation des peaux dans l'Arctique, sur la culture et la technologie inuit et sur la conservation des objets en peau ou en cuir.

Jill Oakes avait apporté une partie de sa collection de vêtements inuit contemporains provenant de diverses régions de l'Arctique. Au cours de la dernière soirée, un défilé de mode inuit a donc été organisé. Chacun a pu essayer les divers vêtements. Pour ces restaurateurs qui, souvent, doivent traiter des vêtements en peau de caribou ou de phoque très anciens et très fragiles, c'était une sensation extraordinaire que de pouvoir enfiler des parkas et des bottes en peau, de constater par soi-même la souplesse de ces vêtements et la liberté de mouvement qu'ils procurent et de voir avec quelle rapidité on s'y réchauffe.

Puisque les participants ont trouvé l'atelier utile, l'IIC pourrait bien l'offrir à nouveau.

Report on "The Consolidation of Painted Ethnographic Objects", held by the Getty Conservation Institute, 11-29 June, 1990

I am pleased to be able to report on the GCI course held in June 1990, on the Consolidation of Painted Ethnographic Objects. This course provided a rare opportunity to gather together 21 conservators and focus attention on ethnographic conservation and more specifically the problems related to the consolidation of painted ethnographic objects.

Participants : Rogelio Aquino (Philippines), Sharon Blank (USA), Gertrude Blasum (West Germany), Lesley Bone (USA), Jeanne Brako (USA), Robin Blair Chamberlain (USA), Natalie Frinhaber (USA), Joan Gardner (USA), Sue Gatenby (Aust), Julia Gresson (New Zealand), Suzanne Hargrove (USA), Charles Hett (Canada), Kulpanthada Janposri (Thailand), David Lee (UK), Lisa Mibach (USA), Catherine Milikan (Aust), Emmanuel Mbandoo (Tanzania), Nancy Odegaard (USA), Willaim LaCroix Phippen (USA), Toby Raphael (USA), James Ssebadduka (Uganda).

This course aimed to provide the participants with an increased knowledge which would enhance their ability to select an appropriate treatment. This aim was achieved by presenting :

1. Methods of documentation- condition and treatment reporting including photography were discussed as well as methods to obtain and assess information. The Conservation Information Network was demonstrated as a tool for this purpose.

2. Technology of painted surfaces- various geographical areas were presented to demonstrate differences in preparation techniques, pigments and binding media, which can influence the type of deterioration and subsequent treatment procedures. Detailed presentations and demonstrations were given on the identification of pigments (W.C.McCrone, The Microscopical Identification of Artists Pigments. JIIC-CG, vol 7, Nos 1-2, Spring 1982, p11-34) and binding media (Identification of Binding Media, Manual for the Test Kit, Analytical Section, Scientific Program, GCI). The binding media kit was a series of tests, originally developed by the medical profession. Basic chemical tests (distinguishing lipids, carbohydrates and proteins) easily performed, could identify starch; oil or lard; egg; honey; gum; milk; glue or blood. Although this kit is still at a developmental stage it shows incredible potential as a tool which could be used in conservation labs with basic chemical equipment and expertise. There is no denying that such tests require verification using sophisticated analysis.

3. Causes of Deterioration and Conservation Treatment- a detailed framework was presented which held close associations with "First Aid" procedures (S. Michalski GCI, copyright). Such as - in understanding the problem, it is necessary to look at the symptoms, immediate causes and antecedents. An example of this would be delamination. This may be due to excessive stress at the paint interface or inadequate bonding at the interface (either adhesion or cohesion failure). Antecedents for stress increases could be environmental conditions or ageing, while inadequate bonding may be due to poor surface penetration, fatigue or ageing.

Conservation procedures were broken into- intent; action; side effects and mitigation. This framework provided a straightforward understanding and means of interpreting the problem. As well as that, the choices available in treatment and the long and short term effects of the treatment could be evaluated.

4. General properties of resins and solutions and factors to be considered in the choice of materials and methods - emphasis was on the use of resins with the highest level of stability (Class A materials-Feller). Properties such as chemical composition; molecular weight; solubility and solvent choice; mechanical, thermal and physical ageing as well as optical properties were discussed (Hansen, Sedoff, Lowinger. A Review of the Problems encountered in the Consolidation of Paint on Ethnographic wood objects and potential Remedies. ICOM 1990, Dresden, Preprints). Interestingly solvents played an integral role on the

effect on physical properties, designating "good" and "bad" solvents. Starches, gelatin and cellulose ethers were discussed in detail along with Class A materials such as some PVA resins and Paraloid B-72. Recommended procedures for experimental design were discussed according to Reedy & Reedy-Principles for Experimental Design for Art Conservation Research.

5. Practical Sessions- all participants contributed to a list of materials and techniques known to be in use and time was available to test them. Examples : "ATMOS" bag, tea bag technique, application of film or web under flake followed by reactivation, use of an ultrasonic humidifier to deliver the consolidant to the painted surface, heat setting, brushing and spraying etc. It is anticipated that this information should be available in the near future. A multitude of facsimile objects suffering from the same number of problems were available for experimentation. The role of facsimiles were also discussed as an aid in the testing phase. At the end of the course participants presented a treatment procedure for their particular objects.

CONGRATULATIONS to all who contributed to this challenging course and provided the opportunity for us to focus our attention on this problem. Through the information presented, a better understanding and hence resolution can be possible. No one product or procedure could be wholeheartedly endorsed but a framework to aid in the better selection of an appropriate treatment has been provided. All participants have been identified so that interested people can follow up this information.

Sue Gatenby, Conservator, Materials Conservation Division, Australian Museum, 6-8 College Street, Sydney, 2000, Australia.

Another Technique for Cleaning Feathers

A simple but effective cleaning method was developed to remove considerable amounts of grime from a plume of feathers, part of a military dress uniform hat. A bundle of red feathers supported a fountain-like overlay of white contour feathers, each constructed of three separate overlapping sections bound at the rachis with thread, thus creating a feather approximately 30cm in length.

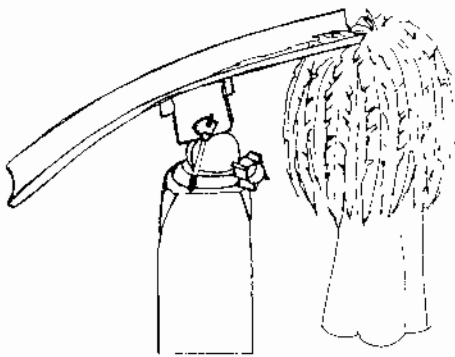
It was not possible to dismantle the plume, so the initial cleaning method suggested was the application of a detergent solution with a brush to each feather while it was supported with several layers of blotting paper. This method removed considerable amounts of dirt - the evidence was on the paper, but tide lines were numerous even after two days of cleaning.

Total immersion in a washing solution was not possible but a complete washing was necessary to remove all of the dirt. Therefore each feather was washed and dried on a solid support, eliminating the usual manipulation and handling during drying and preening operations.

Feathers were placed in a slightly curved trough with concave sides made from a strip of Lexan, a rigid polycarbonate sheet. The trough was held in a vice that is attached to a ball joint, which allowed some vertical movement of the trough (see diagram). The supported feather was sprayed, using a pump spray bottle, from top to bottom and from the rachis along the length of the barbs. Liquids naturally drained away since the trough

was held at a downward sloping angle. After spraying with a solution of less than 1% Synperonic (non-ionic detergent) and about 5% ethanol in water, a final rinse of distilled water was sprayed over the feather. This final spray was used to align and position the barbs. The first feather was left to air dry overnight but for practical reasons the drying process was speeded up by gently blotting the feather with a layer of paper towelling or blotting paper. Final drying was done with a warm stream of air directed over the feather. When dry the feather was simply lifted from the trough. This method also worked well on plumose feathers but some steaming was necessary to restore its three dimensionality.

The time spent drying and preening a feather into some semblance of its former self was reduced considerably with this method, as was the handling of the feathers. Troughs can be constructed to any length or curvature to suit the shape of the feather.



Janet Mason
Ethnology Lab
Canadian Conservation Institute

Russian Visit to Canada

In November of 1969 a USSR delegation of five, including three artisans of Chukchi Eskimos and Yakut background and two representatives of The Institute of Art Industries in Moscow toured eight communities in Canada, five of them in the Arctic, to observe the Inuit art and craft industry. The exchange visit (the Canadian delegation will visit the USSR in September of 1990) was organized by Chris Stevens, the director of the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories. The purpose of the Canadian Conservation Institute's presence on this visit, represented by Carl Schlichting of the Ethnology Section, was to act as material consultant and to draw out discussion of materials and techniques used by polar groups.

The group toured various workshops and met with local craftspeople to discuss carving, the manufacture of jewellery and the use of local materials. Retail outlets and galleries were toured to observe and discuss marketing strategies.

One major difference between the USSR artistic philosophy of Siberian art and that of the Inuit toward their art is the adaptation of new materials and stylistic change. The USSR delegates represent a very conscious effort to maintain as much as possible, the skills and artistry of their heritage. For example, many of the traditional clothes in Siberia are still being manufactured on a large scale and kept by the private sector. In Canada this is

not the case. Manufactures of contemporary costumes make much more use of modern materials creating very attractive blends of the old and new. The Russians were interested in these adaptations, but their comments seemed to imply that because non-traditional materials were being used the product would lack respect. In Canada some traditional costumes are still being made and used but in increasingly fewer cases. The young Canadian Inuit women and girls do not have the organized production-oriented shops and teachers that have been established in the USSR.

In the Canadian Arctic, carving-stone is a raw material which is continually undergoing change in source and type. Carvers are seeking larger and more diverse supplies. This is due particularly to influences in the market but also as a result of their own artistic development. The Government of the Northwest Territories is very eager to diversify the craft industries of the northern peoples. In trying to solve the shortage of quality carving stone, it is supporting the search for new sources and is training Inuit craftsman quarrying techniques through venues such as a programme at the Arctic College in Iqaluit.

Working with stone was not familiar to the Soviet delegation but they were very interested in the Canadian use of whale bone. They stated that they had a vast source of this material, as it litters their beaches. A discussion developed on the problems encountered when sculptures are worked in bone that still contains fats and oils.

It was interesting to hear how ivory is handled in the USSR. Ivory tusks are collected by the State from the subsistence native hunters and housed for a minimum of three years. During this time they are protected from the elements simply by a roof for one year. They are kept cool and the relative humidity kept stable for the remaining two years. The tusks are then distributed to the local workshops where they are processed in a factory-like system of carving production. The artisans are on salary and are obligated to fulfil a quota which is predetermined by a distant bureaucracy for a market unknown to them. The designs they duplicate are typically traditional and quite realistic in depiction of local lore. Their carvings do not seem to experience much splitting, but the artisans have little or no information coming back to them as to how the ivory behaves in non-arctic climates.

The description of the three year ageing process of ivory in the USSR was quite amazing to the Canadian carvers. Here, walrus or narwhale ivory is frequently carved very soon after harvesting. Folk remedies are applied such as boiling the ivory in salt water prior to carving or the application of baby oil to prevent cracking.

A two day symposium, open to the public, was held in Yellowknife. During the first day, the Soviet delegation described their arts and crafts industry, commented on techniques they had observed during the Canadian tour, and answered questions. On the following day a number of people from the Government of the Northwest Territories department of Economic Development and Tourism, Arts Council, Arctic College, museums and private dealers presented information on development, teaching, marketing, promotion and preservation of fine arts and crafts of the Canadian Arctic.

Before returning to Moscow, the delegates spent one day

at the CCI discussing the conservation of artifacts from the arctic covering materials such as caribou and seal skins, ivory and whale bone.

Carl Schlichting
Conservator Ethnology
Canadian Conservation Institute.

ICOM COMMITTEE FOR CONSERVATION 9th Triennial Meeting

WORKING GROUP ON ETHNOGRAPHIC MATERIALS

PROVISIONAL PROGRAM

Monday, 27 August 1990, Palace of Culture, Dresden

- 14:00 - 14:30 Review of Triennial Program
SUE WALSTON & ANN HOWATT-KRAHN
- 14:30 - 14:45 "A survey of pest control techniques used
at The Textile Museum from 1925-1090"
SARAH WOLF GREEN
- 14:45 - 15:00 "Food irradiators as a method for
sterilization for severe mold infestation
on archaeological artifacts"
JAMES ROBERTS
- 15:00 - 15:15 "Art and a sense of place: materials,
culture and meaning in the natural
environment"
ANN HOWATT-KRAHN
- 15:15 - 15:45 BREAK
- 15:45 - 16:00 "Traitements traditionnels des objets
ethnographiques dans divers pays
Africains"
COLETTE JOURDAIN
- 16:00 - 16:15 "An investigation into cleaning procedures
for mould-stained Australian Aboriginal
objects painted with modern media"
SUE GATENBY
- 16:15 - 16:30 "The properties and degradation
characteristics of PVAC medium used in
contemporary Australian Aboriginal bark
paintings"
PENNY EDMONDS (presented by Sue Gatenby)
- 16:30 - 16:45 "Binding media identification kit for
ethnographic painted objects"
DUSAN STULIK
- 16:45 - 17:30 Election of Coordinator and discussion of
future activities.

CALENDAR

26 - 31 August 1990
ICOM-CC90
9th Triennial Meeting of the ICOM Committee for

Conservation will be held in Dresden. Details from: ICOM-CC90, ICOM-Nationalkomitee der DDR, Wildensteiner Street 7, Berlin 1157, German Democratic Republic.

5 - 9 September 1990
Conservation for the 21st Century
To be held in Montreal organised by the Association of Preservation Technology. Details: Heritage Montreal, 406 Notre Dame East, Montreal Quebec, Canada H2Y 1C8 Tel: 518-842 8678

15 - 22 September 1990
Gaborne Botswana
ICOM Committee for Education and Cultural Action (CECAO) annual conference. Theme: "Museum Education and Environment, cultural and natural". CECAO Conference Coordinator, Hans Schopping, Centraal Museum, Postbus 2106, 3500 GC Utrecht, The Netherlands. Tel: 030 315541

14 - 19 October 1990
Conservation of Earthen
Architecture
Organised by the Museum of New Mexico State Monuments, ICCROM and GCI. For further information contact Michael Taylor, New Mexico State Monuments, PO Box 2087, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87504, USA.

15 - 26 October 1990
Harare, Zimbabwe.
ICOM- Committee for Ethnography Museums (ICMED) annual meeting. Theme: "The Cultural Dimension of Development: Folk Arts and Crafts in Africa. Contact: Peter Bettenhausen, Head of the Ethnological Dept, MUSEON, PO Box 72, 2501CB The Hague, The Netherlands.

22 October 1990
Managing Conservation
UKIC and Museum of London meeting, to familiarise conservators with general management concepts, and how they can be applied to the preservation of historic objects. This is becoming more and more important as museums move into the world of objectives, performance indicators, and the full management toolkit. Venue: Museum of London. Further details from Suzanne Keene, Conservation Department, Museum of London, London Wall, London EC2Y 5HN

27 October - 3 November 1990 Lisbon
Portugal
Joint meeting of the ICOM Committee for Regional Museums (ICRO) and the International Movement for a New Museology (MINOM). Theme: "The function of local museums in society". Further information from Bridget Yates, Secretary ICOM/ICR Norfolk Rural Life Museum, Beech House, Gressenhall, Dereham, Norfolk NR20 4DR, UK

8 - 9 November 1990
Textiles and Costumes on Parade:
Exhibition Successes and Disasters.
10th Preservation Symposium of the Harpers Ferry Regional Textile Group to be held at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History

20 - 25 March 1991
Beidiahe, China.

ICOM Committee for Natural History Museums. International conference on museums and environmental issues. Organised jointly with the Chinese Association of Natural Sciences. Contact; Craig C. Black, Director, Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, 900 Exposition Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA90007, USA.

The ETHNOGRAPHIC CONSERVATION NEWSLETTER of the Working Group on Ethnographic Materials of the ICOM Committee for Conservation is available free of charge to those with a professional interest in the care and research of ethnological collections.

The publication date and deadline for the next issue is pending new publishing arrangements; however, ARTICLES ARE WELCOME AT ALL TIMES!

Authors are asked to submit articles in either English or French. As an option, one is also invited to send an additional copy of the same article in the language of his or her country of origin, if it is other than the two languages, above, in order to share this published work with colleagues at home. We prefer that articles, notes and letters for publication be typed and double-spaced. Black and white illustrations are welcome.

PLEASE PROVIDE CHEMICAL COMPOSITION IN ADDITION TO THE BRAND NAMES OF COMMERCIAL PRODUCTS AND CONSERVATION MATERIALS, SINCE COMMON NAMES AND TRADEMARKS VARY INTERNATIONALLY.

INQUIRIES OR SUBMISSIONS FOR NEWSLETTER

Please forward inquiries regarding the Newsletter, as well as articles to:

!!!!!! NEW ADDRESS, BELOW !!!!!!

Ann Howatt-Krahn,
ICOM-CC Working Group on

Ethnographic Materials
c/o Faculty of Environmental
Studies
York University
4700 Keele Street
North York, Ontario.
CANADA. M3J 1P3.

For information regarding the International Council of Museums (ICOM), and the ICOM Committee for Conservation, please contact;

ICOM
Maison de l'UNESCO
1 Rue Miollis
75732 Paris Cedex 15, FRANCE.

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