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ICOM-CC Paintings Working Group

Letter from the Coordinator

Dear Paintings Working Group members,

I hope everyone is having a good summer or winter depending on where you are. If it is 27°C/81°F or cooler where you are or if the heat index is similar, I am officially jealous.

Since the last newsletter, we were busy organizing our first virtual activity of the Triennial co-hosted with the Graphic Documents and Scientific Research Working Groups on “PERCEIVE: A new approach to the simulation of color change in paintings and works on paper”. The two webinars in March presented by Irina Crina Anca Sandu, Conservation Scientist, MUNCH Museum, Project lead for PERCEIVE on behalf of MUNCH museum; and Irina Ciortan, Postdoctoral Researcher in Imaging, Colourlab, NTNU, Gjøvik were very well attended and included lengthy Q&A’s afterwards. Many thanks go to Assistant Co-ordinators Mine Diri and Nikita Shah for taking the lead in coordinating the webinars. We hope to have a detailed review in our next newsletter, so if you attended and would like to share your thoughts, please reach out to us.

Speaking of Assistant Coordinators, you may have noticed location changes for Aimee Hawker and Mine Diri on our webpage. I am happy to share that Aimee returned to her home country of Canada landing at the Canadian Conservation Institute while Mine moved back to the UK where she studied, to take up a position at Tate. Please join me in congratulating the both of them not only for their new roles, but for also surviving moves of thousands of miles/kilometers!

The deadline for the Call for Papers for the 21st ICOM-CC Triennial Conference came and went in April, so we are now in the throes of reviewing the abstracts. Many thanks to all who submitted abstracts. It’s wonderful to see the breadth of your work, be it innovative materials and methods for treatment or enlightening technical studies centered on artists who deserve more attention, from all parts of the world. We are excited to put together a dynamic program

which reflects the theme of the 2026 Triennial Conference of “Cultural Connections in Conservation”, and the Paintings Working Group themes of Training, Sustainability, ‘Work in Progress’ Research, and Structural Conservation. After the first round of reviews is completed early July, a selection of abstracts will be invited to write a full paper.

The call for posters is now open, so please consider this additional opportunity to contribute to the Triennial Conference. If an abstract had not been accepted for a paper, it may be re-submitted for a poster. Authors may only submit one poster as the main author. For more guidelines on submitting a poster abstract visit: https://preprints.icom-cc2026.org/docs/content/ICOM-CC_Call-for-Posters_2026.pdf. Submit an abstract here: <http://preprints.icom-cc2026.org>.

Keep in mind that another Working Group may be a better fit for your poster if it’s more about a technical study, or focuses on theory or education and training, etc. Feel free to reach out to me if you’re not sure which Working Group is best for your poster. We look forward to reviewing your submissions!

In this newsletter we continue to share content that highlights our Working Group themes in the form of articles, conference and workshop reviews, and thesis abstracts from painting conservators around the world. If you have work that you would like to share in the next newsletter, please reach out to us at icomccpaintings@gmail.com. And please continue to email us with announcements that we can distribute to the membership in a timely fashion.

With very best wishes,

Sue Ann

On the cover: Related to Figure 3 of article by Iris Schaefer, Caroline v. Saint-George, and Kristin Krupa, a “curtain view” with fluorescence in UV light on right of William August Theodor Steinhausen, *Self-portrait of the painter with his wife*, 1892/93, Wallraf-Richartz-Museum & Fondation Corboud, Cologne.

Article

Time after time. Treatments on a Viceregal painting at the National Museum of History, Mexico

Nathael Cano, Jeniffer Ponce, Elia Botello
Museo Nacional de Historia-INAH [National Museum of History-INAH]

Abstract

After the creation of the *Regional Laboratory and Training Center for the Conservation of Cultural Property* in Mexico City (1966), Mexican and Latin American state institutions pursued a policy of professionalizing conservation practices and the long-term preservation of deteriorated artworks. Since then, several Viceregal paintings of the National Museum of History (MNH-INAH) have been restored using the wax-resin lining technique, often sacrificing technical elements in favor of the pictorial system. Nowadays, concern for the preservation of materials and techniques through research and less invasive treatments is a major issue.

This text focuses on the restoration of *Gregorio Lopez*, an 18th-century canvas from the MNH-INAH collection. It was funded by the Thoma Foundation at the New Mexico Museum of Art (NMMA) to allow the work to be displayed at the *Saint and Santos exhibition. Picturing the Holy Spirit in New Spain* in 2024.

The project was based on Technical Art History and Conservation Science to develop three axes: archival and documentary research; the visual recording of technique and alterations through imaging and optical microscopy; finally, the production of mock-ups to test conservation treatments to solve structural problems on the canvas.

Both the data collected, and the production of mock-ups were considered in the decision making process for the selection of appropriate conservation treatments. This case establishes a line of work for the development of a material reference database and reflects an update of the current conservation approach to the con-

servation of the Viceregal paintings from New Spain in the museum.

1. Approach to painting conservation in the National Museum of History (MNH)

In Mexico, the creation of the Conservation Center in 1966 led to the implementation of new techniques of conservation in canvas painting taught by professionals from Europe. An innovative treatment at that time was wax-resin lining, a method that was adopted because it allowed for solving structural problems by providing consolidation of the pictorial strata and reinforcement of the fabric support. The result was that 17th- and 18th- centuries Viceregal paintings had a neat appearance, and their structure gained strength.

To achieve this result, often it was necessary to sacrifice elements that were considered less important than the painting itself: the stretchers were substituted by new ones and the back of the works were often covered by the new canvas. Since these were rarely documented, information of materials, technology and inscriptions were lost or hidden. Two undesirable aspects of the wax-resin are: in first place, the visual darkening of the canvas and painting; second, there is not enough data on the long-term physicochemical behavior and aging. This is an issue that should be studied deeper to face retreatments on wax-resin lined paintings in the future.

Despite there being several Viceregal paintings with wax-resin lining in the MNH collection, there is a concern to carry out more conservative treatments. The case of the portrait of Gregorio López shows the aim to preserve the painting and its structural elements as long as possible, considering them part of its conformation as a cultural and technological object of its time.

2. Gregorio Lopez case: a new approach

This oil painting from the 18th century is a vertical double portrait of Gregorio Lopez and Francisco de Loza on a medium-sized rectangular canvas; both were hermits and priests in New Spain in the 16th century.

On the right side, Gregorio Lopez is depicted half-length with arms crossed, behind a wooden

table on which there is a pen and inkwell; from his mouth emerges the gloss *SECRETVM MEVM MIHI*, (my secret to me). On the left, there is the full-length image of Francisco De Loza in advanced age, dressed in a black habit with a red stole, holding a reliquary in his right hand and resting his left on a book with the inscription *Apocalypsis*. In the lower area there is a cartouche framed with golden moldings describing their biography. Another inscription, applied later, announces the donation of this painting to Congregation of San Pedro in 1839.

The condition of the painting did not allow it to be exhibited, as it had a broken stretcher, tears in the canvas, yellowed varnish, and previous treatments. This painting was selected for the *Saint and Santos. Picturing the Holy in New Spain* exhibition at the New Mexico Museum in 2024, therefore, its restoration was necessary. Minimum treatment conservation criteria were chosen to stabilize the painting without sacrificing structural elements.

3. Methodology

This project had two phases: the first one was based on archival, documentation and material research through Imaging with visible and UV light, and Surface Optical Microscopy; the second was based on the construction of a mock-up to test materials for consolidation treatments.

Archival and documentation research

A search was carried out in bibliographical sources, and archival data was recovered to contextualize the making of the work, explain its life story and its incorporation into the MNH collection.

Material research

Visible and UV images of the front and back of the work, as well as close-up details, were obtained to characterize materials and their alterations. For this purpose, a UV light a Cole-Power (800) 323-4340 UV Lamp-Cat #9762022 6-Watt, 302/365 nm / 115 V / 60 Hz / 0.16 was used as illumination.

Surface Optical Microscopy (SOM) was performed with a Zaberco MiScope USB portable microscope with manual focus

adjustment and LED illumination. The acquisition of micrographs was performed using Video ToolBox Pro by ZephaVision version 2.12.5 (4dv) software.

Production of mock-up

The canvas was dirty, rigid and fragile; therefore, it was necessary to clean and consolidate it. For this purpose, a mock-up was prepared, with a linen canvas mounted on a frame dividing the surface in sections. Three consolidants were tested in different proportions: agar-agar, methylcellulose and Klucel G® (hydroxypropyl cellulose) 3%, 7%, 10% for each one. The results were recorded by Imaging Vis-UV and Surface Optical Microscopy to compare the effectiveness of the consolidants, flexibility, color change, and residues.

4. Results by documentation: a cultural biography

Gregorio Lopez and Francisco Loza lived in the 16th century and they were depicted in different formats and formal compositions between the 17th and 19th centuries. Today, these works can be found in public and private collections in Mexico.

The inscriptions were relevant to obtain an insight of its historical context: this canvas was donated by the presbyter of Guadalajara to the V Congregation of San Pedro, a confraternity founded in the 16th century, which had a significant social weight for secular life.

In the early 20th century, before the opening of the MNH in 1944, the painting was part of the exhibition in the *Hall of Iconography of Historical Figures* in Chapultepec Castle. The *Catalog of Colonial Iconography* by Jesus Romero Flores, printed in 1940, indicates that the painting was in *Room No. 2*.

5. Technology

The canvas is formed of two pieces of linen; single medium density taffeta sewn in vertical direction and was adhered with animal glue to a fixed box and dowel-joints stretcher. The mounting was reinforced with nails that have disappeared today. Also, with the SOM was recorded a thin red priming, covered with thin layers of earth tones mixed with an oil binder.

6. Condition

The Gregorio Lopez painting had severe structural problems: one corner of the stretcher was fractured, the linen canvas lost tension and appeared rigid, brittle, dirty, with little holes and tears. There were patches that distorted the canvas, made of different materials like paper, leather and fabric glued to cover the tears and losses. At the front there were extended areas with a thick and hard infilling plaster covered with ink and oil inpainting.

7. Structural Conservation Treatments

Consolidation

After the observation with Imaging Vis-UV and SOM of the results on the mock-up, the most suitable material was Klucel G® 3%. It was applied with a painter's spatula on the linen canvas in squares of 8x8 cm² for a minute and was removed with the same tool, and then, the area was covered with blotting paper and weight to dry and restore the tension of the distorted areas.

Other treatments

Each process was chosen to solve structural issues of the stretcher and canvas, seeking not to modify or hide them. The stretcher was reinforced with a wooden graft and infillings of sawdust paste. The patches that distorted the canvas were removed and instead, linen threads were adhered with Beva D18 to join tears, small losses were filled with linen paste, the hard and thick infillings were removed, and an acrylic backing was placed to prevent any impact that could damage the canvas and protect it from dust and environmental changes.

8. Results

The methodology applied to the mock-up and the original canvas allowed documentation and evaluation of the characteristics of the surface before and after consolidation in macro and micro levels.

The aim of making the mock-up was to understand the behavior of the three consolidants and to define the amount ratio, suitable time of application and more efficient removal method. Klucel G® was selected

because it was the most suitable material for cleaning and consolidating the fibers, providing flexibility and strength without leaving visible residue on the canvas.

The reinforcement of the stretcher, the removal of past interventions, like patches and infillings, and the adhesion of linen threads on tears contributed to recovering the tension of the canvas. After these treatments the strength and stability of the structure of the painting were effectively recovered while keeping the original elements.

9. Conclusions

Decision-making regarding restoration of cultural heritage raises dilemmas about the benefits versus the loss of elements with a documentary and technological value. Most likely, if Gregorio Lopez's painting had been addressed some years ago, the wax-resin lining method could have been chosen to achieve maximum structural stability for its safe handling, transport and exhibition.

On the contrary, in this case, it was decided to keep the original structure and carry out a methodology to provide enough data for choosing suitable conservation treatments and less invasive techniques. In this way, future specialists will be able to study a painting in a condition closer to its original features, since to date, the replacement of stretchers and linings have reduced the access to the original elements of Viceregal paintings.

Compared to the resin-wax lining, the treatments carried out have resulted in medium structural strength; this must be considered for the conservation of the painting, during the exhibition, transfer, handling and storage.

The Gregorio Lopez case not only reflects an important update of restoration criteria implemented on Viceregal paintings in the MNH, but the methodology establishes a reference for future conservation painting projects.



Figure 1. Painting before and after treatment.
© Article authors

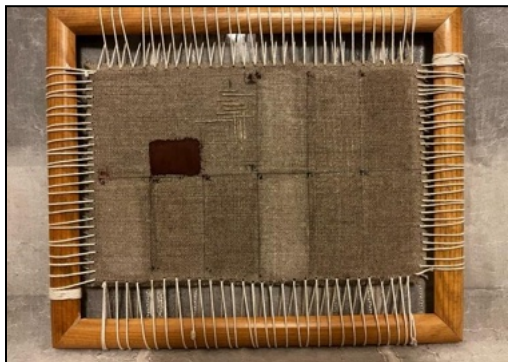


Figure 2. Mock-up and consolidation tests. © Article authors



Figure 3. Adhering linen threads. © Article authors



Figure 4. Verso of painting before and after treatment.
© Article authors

Article

Mapping Color in History: Tracing the Legacy of Pigments in South Asian Art

Anjali V. Jain

Color is a powerful storyteller. It weaves together history, geography, and cultural exchange, offering insights into artistic practices across centuries. The *Mapping Color in History* (MCH) project, led by Professor Jinah Kim at Harvard University, is revolutionizing the study of historical pigments in South Asian paintings by creating an open, searchable database that traces the movement of colorants, and transcultural exchanges across the Indian subcontinent.



Professor Jinah Kim with her HAA colleagues and students of HAA100r Sophomore excursion seminar-India view historically important manuscripts in the Asiatic Society, Mumbai that have been analyzed and rehoused in the context of the MCH-India project. © Marin Grey

A New Perspective on Pigments

Traditionally, Western art history has shaped much of what is known about pigments. The MCH project aims to expand this knowledge by focusing on South Asian materials. The platform brings together interdisciplinary experts—including scientists, conservators, art historians, and software engineers—to document, analyze and present the information about historical pigments on a searchable database. With support from Harvard's Faculty of Arts and Science, the Mittal Institute, the Radcliffe Institute, and the National Endowment for the Humanities, the project is growing into a

global resource for the study of historical color usage.

The MCH-India Initiative

A significant component of the project is *MCH-India*, which focuses on conducting non-invasive analysis of collections in India. This is particularly crucial to addressing biases in art collections, as many historically significant works were relocated to Western museums. By studying materials that remained in India, MCH provides a broader perspective on the artistic traditions of the region.

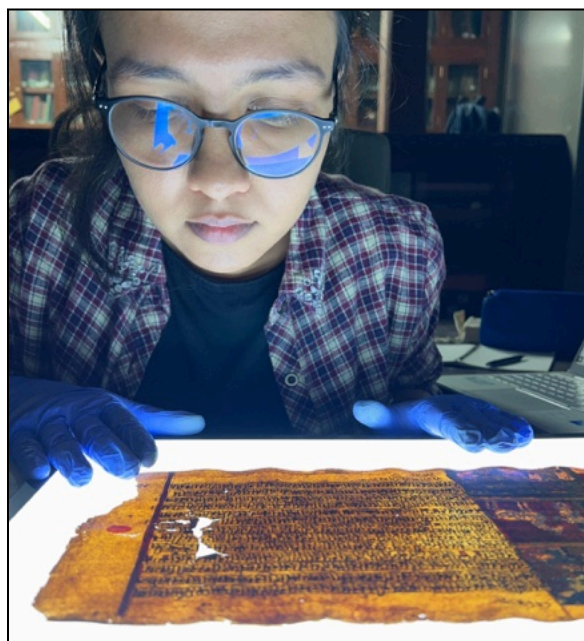


Figure 1. Anjali Jain (MCH India research manager) examines an illustrated manuscript folio at the Asiatic Society of Mumbai in transmitted light. © Anjali Jain

The initiative deploys a Mobile Heritage Lab to conduct on-site research in museums and archives, collecting invaluable data for conservation and historical study. Established in 2019 through a Tata-Mittal Institute grant, the lab has expanded with additional funding. One of its landmark achievements is a collaboration with the Asiatic Society, Mumbai (ASM), where researchers analyzed five historically significant manuscripts. The mobile lab is currently deployed in Jaipur, where the historically important collections of the City Palace Museum are being studied.

In order to maintain the integrity of historical manuscripts, MCH employs a variety of

non-invasive scientific techniques to analyze artworks, including:

- Imaging Methods: visible, infrared, and ultraviolet imaging help researchers identify the distribution of various pigments across a painting.
- Microscopic Examination: high-magnification observation detects minute differences between pigments and reveals areas of inpainting or restoration.
- Fiber Optic Reflectance Spectroscopy (FORS): a valuable tool for identifying organic reds and blues like indigo and ultramarine.
- X-ray Fluorescence (XRF): an in situ non-destructive technique that provides elemental composition data, helping to identify pigments without needing to take samples.



Figure 2. Top: multispectral imaging (or technical photography) kit components from the MCH India mobile heritage lab.

Bottom: Setup to undertake the non-invasive X-ray fluorescence analysis of an illustrated Aranyakaparva manuscript folio (right) using a Bruker Tracer SD - III analyser (centre) and a printed annotated point map (bottom left). © Anjali Jain

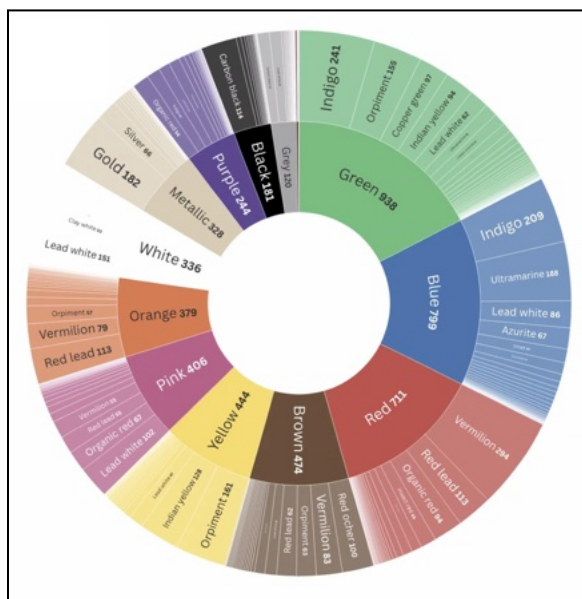
Through these methods, the database assigns varying certainty levels to the identified pigments, reflecting the limitations of non-invasive analysis.

MCH-India also supports collaborations with traditional artist workshops. For instance, pigment samples from a workshop in Jaipur were analyzed in collaboration with the Harvard Art Museums' Straus Center, leading to academic publications and contributions to the Forbes Pigment Collection.

Rediscovering the Palette of the Past

Through its database, MCH is uncovering fascinating trends in pigment use across history. The project has identified indigo as the most commonly used blue pigment in pre-1600 Indian manuscripts. Vermilion, a brilliant red, ranks second in frequency, while orpiment—a bright yellow mineral composed of arsenic trisulfide—is the most prominent yellow pigment.

The MCH database also allows researchers to trace the historical adoption of new pigments. During the 17th century, Indian yellow, lead white, and red lead were rapidly incorporated into Mughal and Rajasthani court paintings, particularly in Bikaner and Bundi. However, their adoption was much slower in Malwa and Orchha.



A color wheel representing the number of visible colors and pigments found in the MCH database as of 2024. Created by Dr. Tracy Stuber, Digital Humanities Specialist in Arts and Humanities Research Computing at Harvard University. © Dr. Tracy Stuber

The Global Impact of MCH

MCH's significance extends beyond South Asia. As the project expands, it aims to accommodate pigment data from various geographic and cultural contexts. With more data integrated into the MCH platform, researchers anticipate discovering broader trends in pigment trade and artistic exchange. The ability to quantify changes in pigments across time and place will offer deeper insights into cultural interactions, technological advancements, and the material choices of artists.

Another exciting initiative is the development of a dictionary of local pigment names, encouraging archival research into historical texts that describe pigment preparation and use. Understanding these local terminologies helps bridge gaps in knowledge and connects traditional artistic practices with modern scientific analysis.

Ultimately, *Mapping Color in History* is more than a database—it is a transformative initiative that redefines how we understand and study color in historical art. By bringing together science, history, and digital humanities, the project ensures that the vibrant legacy of pigments continues to inform and inspire future generations of scholars, artists, and conservators.

Learn more about the Mapping Color in History project:

[<https://mappingcolor.fas.harvard.edu/>]

Note: The information this article is based on previous project presentations given by the following people

- Dr. Jinah Kim, George P. Bickford Professor of Indian and South Asian Art and Professor of South Asian Studies, Department of History of Art and Architecture, Harvard University, Cambridge.
- Dr. Katherine Eremin, Patricia Cornwell Senior Conservation Scientist, Straus Center



for Conservation and Technical Studies, Harvard Art Museums, Cambridge.

- Dr. Tracy Stuber, Digital Humanities Specialist in Arts and Humanities Research Computing, Harvard University, Cambridge.

Author Biography: Anjali V. Jain is an objects conservator based in India. She completed her MA and MSc in Conservation at the Institute of Archaeology, University College London. Thereafter, she worked with the Science Museum and Cliveden Conservation in London before moving back to India. As the Research Manager (Arts Program) at Harvard Global Research Support Centre India, she manages the on ground operations of the Mapping Color in History India project. She also works as a consultant conservator at the Jaipur City Palace museum for the ongoing gallery redevelopment project.

Article

New Website on Painting Techniques Reveals Secrets of the Old Masters

Iris Schaefer, Caroline v. Saint-George, Kristin Krupa

Painting Conservators at the Wallraf-Richartz-Museum & Fondation Corboud, Cologne

Promoting public understanding of the science of conservation, restoration and art technology is one of the most important missions of our profession. In recent years, museums around the world have provided the general public with exciting insights in many different projects, including major restoration campaigns such as *Operation Night Watch* at the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam or exhibitions such as *Facelifts & Makeovers* at the Mauritshuis in The Hague in 2022, and ensured at the same time that these events have a lasting impact on the museum's website.¹ The Wallraf-Richartz-Museum &

Fondation Corboud in Cologne followed a similar path in June 2024, transforming a recent special exhibition on materials, techniques and production processes of easel paintings from the Middle Ages to early modernism into a digital story (figure 1).

Background

The oldest museum in the Rhine metropolis, the Wallraf, is home to one of the world's leading collections of medieval painting, famous works by Baroque masters, German Romanticism and French Realism. Thanks to the permanent loan by the Fondation Corboud, the Wallraf-Richartz-Museum has the largest holdings of Impressionist and Neo-Impressionist art in Germany.

Research on painting material, techniques and artistic production processes, whether in the context of general restoration projects or as technical examinations of individual works of art or corpus of paintings, has a long tradition at the museum. An important goal has always been to make the results of research and treatment accessible to a broad audience via special exhibitions and a range of different publications.



Figure 1. Home page of the digital story 'Revealed! Painting Techniques'. © Wallraf das Museum

A few years ago, the idea came up to bring together the results of many years of research with the examination of further paintings and to present an overview of the technique of European easel painting from the late Middle

¹ See Sabrina Meloni, Quentin Buvelot 'Facelifts & Makeovers: Educating a larger audience about the mysteries and challenges of conservation'. In: 'Working Towards a Sustainable Past'. ICOM-CC

20th Triennial Conference Preprints, Valencia, 18–22 September 2023, ed. J. Bridgland. Paris: International Council of Museums.

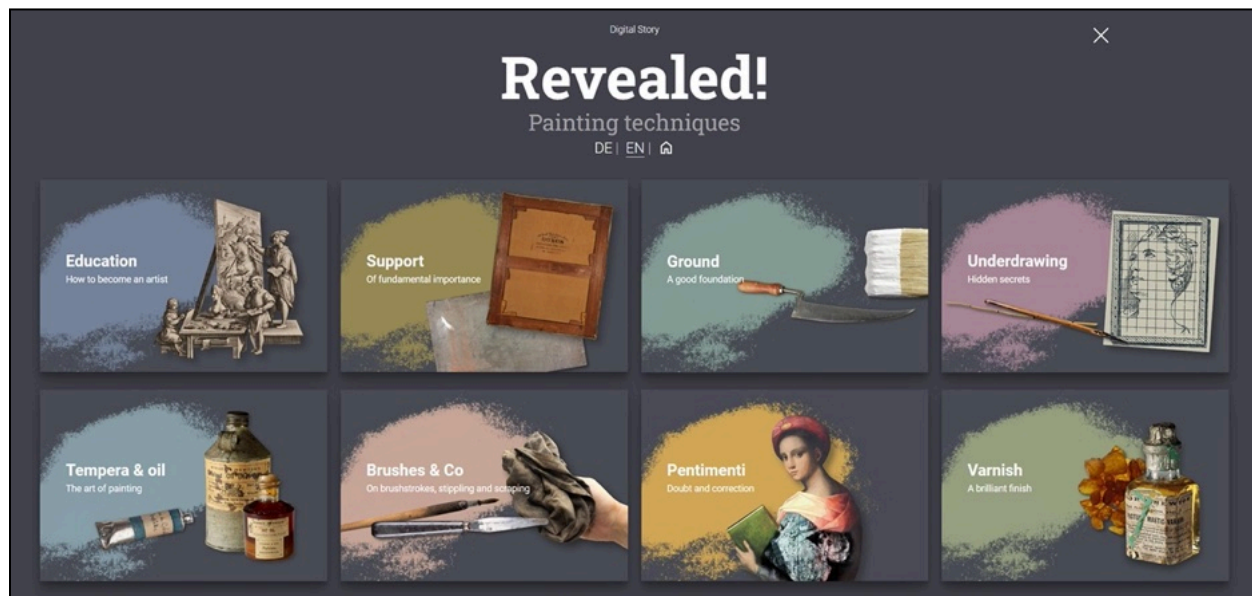


Figure 2. Each of the exhibition's eight themes is explored in the digital story, which can be selected by clicking on the corresponding button. © Wallraf das Museum

Ages to the early Modern Period, based on selected objects from the Cologne holdings. Attention was not only paid to masterpieces, but also to lesser-known paintings from the collection. This was the background for the exhibition 'Revealed! Painting Techniques from Martini to Monet' which took place at the Wallraf-Richartz-Museum & Fondation Corboud in Cologne from 8 October 2021 to 13 February 2022. Featuring 65 paintings, mainly from the museum's own collection, the exhibition highlighted 600 years of European easel painting, focusing on the materials, techniques and creative processes. Initiated and curated by the museum's conservators, the exhibition was divided into eight chapters.—Starting with the topic of the painters' training, it demonstrated step by step the process of creation, from the various painting supports to the final varnish or the deliberate renunciation of varnish (fig.2).²

The exhibition was accompanied by a targeted visitor survey conducted as part of the graduate programme 'Rahmenwechsel, Kunstwissenschaft und Kunsttechnologie im Austausch'

(Changing Frames. A dialogue between art history and art technology) at the Universität Konstanz and the Staatlichen Akademie der Bildenden Künste Stuttgart (University of Constance and the Stuttgart State Academy of Fine Arts), funded by the VolkswagenStiftung (Volkswagen Foundation) from 2018 to 2022. Audience response across all age and gender groups clearly showed a high level of interest in painting techniques. The visitors' reactions were extremely positive, including emphatic comments in the guest book such as 'Fantastic exhibition! So informative. Should be shown permanently or in an online version. Great information.'

Transformation of the exhibition into a digital story

Due to the great response, the idea was born to transform the exhibition into a digital format in order to make it permanently accessible to a broad audience. This was a new challenge for us as the curators of the exhibition, since we had no previous experience of creating a digital story. The first step was to formulate the objectives. The concept had to be tailored to different needs and approaches of the audience. A clear structure and navigation was necessary to ensure that the individual chapters could be grasped and

² Exhibition catalogue 'Entdeckt! Maltechniken von Martini bis Monet', Iris Schaefer in cooperation with Anna Bungenberg and Caroline von Saint-George, Cologne 2021.

accessed step by step in different levels. Firstly, headlines and short introductions in juxtaposition with visual material are meant to provide a first look and quickly accessible idea of the content (figure 3). Once interest has been aroused, a more in-depth discussion of the content should be offered. An even more interested reader should then be able to open up additional hidden text or image material (figure 4). The integration of film sequences and interactive elements was considered to be crucial. It is thanks to the expertise of an experienced communication design agency (Waldmann + Weinold, Augsburg) that our ideas were not only adapted, but also enriched in many ways. With their support it was possible to create a digital story that - like the exhibition itself - comprises eight chapters dealing with the following topics: The Training of Painters, Support, Ground, Underdrawing, Tempera & Oil, Brushes & Co, Pentimenti and Varnish (see figure 2). There is also an extensive glossary linked to labelled technical terms (figure 5).



Figure 3. Concise headlines, short texts and lots of interactive images, such as the 'curtain view', make the website easy and fun to use. © Wallraf das Museum

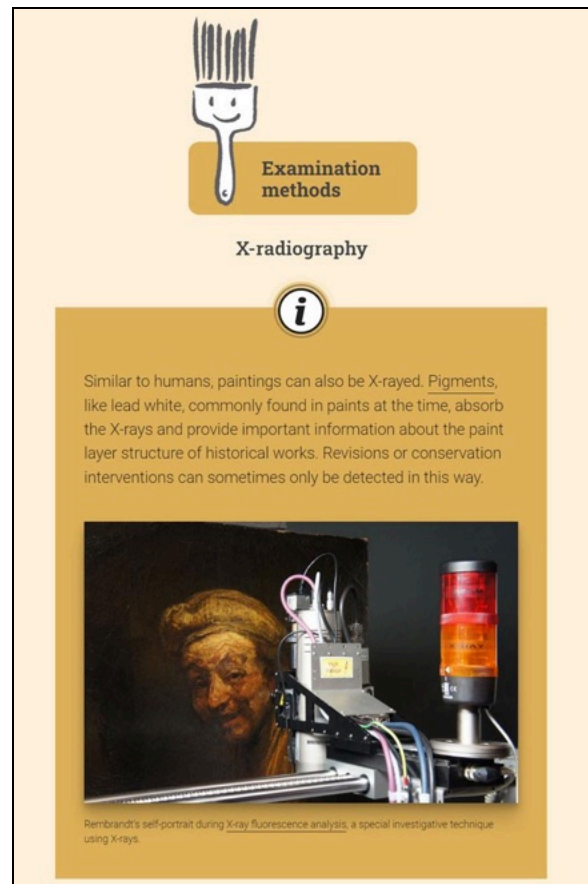


Figure 4. Additional information can be clicked and opened separately, such as explanations of specific examination methods. © Wallraf das Museum

The resulting digital story about painting techniques from the Middle Ages to modernism shows the making of masterpieces as well as lesser-known works in the Cologne collection. It uncovers forgotten painting techniques, demonstrates advanced research methods and provides fascinating insights through 'curtain views' and numerous fun facts and videos.

While viewing artworks in museums will always be important, the digital format offers many advantages, such as the possibility to visualize the reverse of a painting or technical information to a much greater extent than is possible in an exhibition. Zoom functions magnify important details and, finally, the 'curtain viewer' unfolds several image levels of technical photographic methods and demonstrates their differences (figure 6). In this way, the digital story can appeal to a wider audience and be of interest to students of art history, restoration and

conservation, but hopefully also to all people interested in art, including young audiences.

Digital Story ‘Revealed! Painting techniques’ link

www.maltechnik-wallraf.de



Figure 5. Example of a page from the chapter ‘Support’ with visible glossary that pops up when the user clicks on underlined words. © Wallraf das Museum

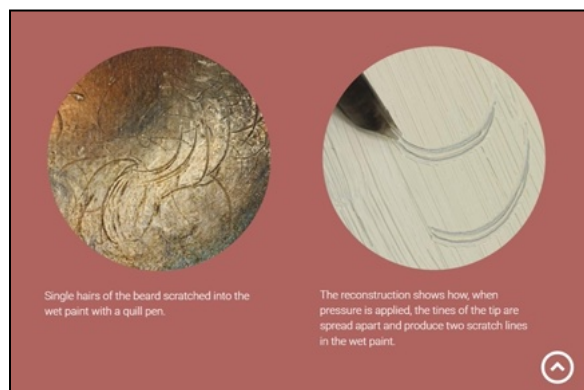


Figure 6. Enlarged detail of a painting by Jan Lievens in comparison with a reconstruction, to explain his technique as clearly as possible to a wide audience. © Wallraf das Museum

Author Biographies: Iris Schaefer (born 1963) completed her studies in the restoration and conservation of paintings and painted wooden sculptures at the Cologne University of Applied Sciences in 1990. Since 2002 she has been head of the Art Technology and Conservation Department at the Wallraf-Richartz-Museum & Fondation Corboud in Cologne. In recent years, she has paid particular attention to co-operative research projects with a focus on art technology. She was responsible for the conception and realisation of three major exhibitions on art technology, most recently ‘Revealed! Painting

Techniques from Martini to Monet’ (2021-2022). Iris Schaefer has been a lecturer at the Institute of Art History at the University of Cologne for many years.

Email: iris.schaefer@wallraf.museum

Caroline von Saint-George (born 1971) is a diploma graduated painting conservator and has been working in the Department of Art Technology and Conservation at the Wallraf-Richartz-Museum & Fondation Corboud in Cologne since 2002. She studied art history at the Westfälische - Wilhelms - Universität of Münster and conservation and restoration of paintings and sculptures at the Hamilton Kerr Institute in Cambridge and the Cologne Institute for Conservation Science. In addition to the conservation and restoration of European paintings from the Middle Ages to Classical Modernism, she has specialised in art technological research. As a co-curator, she has been involved in three major art technology exhibitions at the Wallraf.

Email: saint-george@wallraf.museum

Kristin Krupa (born 1971) studied conservation and restoration of paintings and painted wooden sculptures at the Cologne University of Applied Sciences, graduating in 2000. Since 2001 she has been working in the Conservation Department of the Kölnisches Stadtmuseum and since 2020 she is part of the Art Technology and Conservation Department at the Wallraf-Richartz-Museum & Fondation Corboud in Cologne (Germany). She has also been working as a freelancer for many years and has acquired great expertise in the field of restoration of gilt leather. In recent years, she has focused in depth on art technological content.

Email: kristin.krupa@wallraf.museum

Workshop Review

Workshop on Conservation of Paintings on Canvas: Science and Ethics at Assam State Museum, India

Antareen Talukdar
Laboratory Chemist (Conservation)
Directorate of Museums, Assam, India

The Assam State Museum under the Directorate of Museums, Assam has a valuable collection of paintings that showcase the state's rich art history and heritage. The museum's painting collection features a variety of support including *sanchipat* (bark of Sanchi tree or aloes wood or agarwood), *tulapat* (made by pressing cotton), paper, canvas, and board with varying traditional pigments, binders, and additives. Preservation attempts at the museum include preliminary scientific study and analysis to identify the original materials and techniques used in these artworks, preventive and remedial strategies, as well as conservation outreach to the local stakeholders.

However, the process of decision making in conservation is complex - preserving authenticity, integrity and to maintain reversibility. These issues are further compounded by limited training opportunities as well as a general lack of awareness about the conservation field, what it encompasses and how one goes about becoming a trained conservation professional. To address this, the Directorate of Museums, Assam hosted a six-day workshop titled "Conservation of Paintings on Canvas: Science and Ethics" from 22nd to 27th October 2024. The workshop was designed to introduce conservation to undergraduate and post-graduate students and to be a professional development and capacity building opportunity for the employees of the Assam State Museum. The workshop was led by Ms. Nikita Shah, Assistant Conservator of Paintings at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, USA. The workshop offered valuable scientific insights into the processes involved in conservation of paintings on canvas, providing participants with a thorough introduction to the key principles and methods.



Figure 1. Participants engaging in insightful theoretical sessions with Ms. Nikita Shah © Directorate of Museums, Assam

The workshop commenced with a public talk titled "Conservation of Oil Paintings: Art and Science" aimed at raising awareness and establishing a foundation for the scientific approach to conservation of paintings. During the talk, Ms. Nikita Shah discussed the ethical considerations involved in conserving oil paintings and emphasised the importance of using analytical methods to understand artistic techniques and materials through case studies. She also explained the need to scientifically assess all the factors contributing to the deterioration of paintings. The speaker highlighted the role of trained conservation professionals in addressing conservation challenges and ensuring ethical practices. The talk not only covered the art and science of painting conservation but also provided the audience with valuable insights into preventive conservation and care of paintings.



Figure 2. A glimpse into the documentation and assessment of original paintings by participants © Directorate of Museums, Assam

Over the course of six days of this introductory workshop, participants were introduced to all the fundamental aspects of conservation of canvas paintings. The workshop was conducted using both theoretical and practical approaches using a two-pronged approach with original paintings from the museum's collection as well as mock-ups prepared by the participants. The participants were divided into five groups with each group assigned an original canvas painting to assess its values, significance, condition and to develop a conservation methodology. They evaluated the condition and documented their findings using photographs, microscopy, and graphical documentation. Each group discussed their treatment proposals with Ms. Nikita Shah and conservation professionals of Assam State Museum, addressing the unique conservation challenges observed in each painting. Every participant also painted a mock-up which was used for practicing remedial conservation methods that they learned over the course of the workshop.



Figure 3. Remedial conservation and restoration on mock ups prepared by participants © Directorate of Museums, Assam

Starting with surface dirt removal, where they learned the process of mechanical cleaning using soft brushes, grated erasers, kneaded erasers, and smoke sponges. They also learned to address factors such as powdering, cracks and the de-adhesion of paint layers from the support. This was followed by basics of tear mending and filling of losses using compatible materials and methods (cloth patch, thread bridges, tissue strips etc.). They were able to practice what they had learned on the mock-ups they had prepared. Last but not the least, the participants were introduced to chromatic reintegration and

different methods of in-painting. Once the remedial and restoration processes were completed, the participants were taught preventive methods including protecting the paintings from moisture and packing them using conservation grade materials and practices.



Figure 4. Participants showcasing and presenting their work and methods they learned © Directorate of Museums, Assam

Each participant presented their work and what they had learned over the week at the concluding ceremony of the workshop. While this was an introductory workshop, its ultimate objective was to build a conscious community of conservators and conservation enthusiasts dedicated to ensuring the long-term preservation of paintings of Assam. The Directorate of Museums, Assam is dedicated to organizing more such initiatives where specific conservation challenges can be addressed through capacity-building and awareness workshops for art conservators and enthusiasts.



Figure 5. Capturing the spirit of learning: a group photo of the participants © Directorate of Museums, Assam

Author Biography: Antareen Talukdar is an Art Conservator currently serving as a Laboratory Chemist at the Directorate of Museums under the Indigenous and Tribal Faith and Culture Department, Government of Assam, India. His work involves conserving collections at the Assam State Museum, India and district museums under the Directorate. He holds a postgraduate degree in Art Conservation from the National Museum Institute of History of Arts, Conservation and Museology, India and a Post Graduate Diploma in Preventive Conservation from the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, India. He is also engaged as the Assistant Coordinator of the Documentation Working Group of ICOM-CC.

Workshop Review

Una experiencia nueva en la forma de aprender técnicas de restauración en Cusco, Perú.

Fiorela Guerrero Sayes
Estudiante del noveno semestre de la Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos

José Luis Quispe Béjar
Director del Centro de Arte y Conservación IQONO

Cusco posee un rico legado artístico y patrimonial, con expresiones de arte representativas de la historia del arte peruano. Estos bienes requieren de la conservación y restauración, especialmente *mediante el trabajo* de profesionales bien formados y actualizados, quienes los recuperan para el disfrute de la comunidad y aseguran la sostenibilidad del legado cultural. Con este fin, se organizó el coloquio académico internacional titulado: "Coloquio Internacional de Conservación y Restauración del Patrimonio: Desafíos desde la teoría de la restauración hacia la praxis". Este evento, que tuvo lugar los días 30 de septiembre y 1 de octubre de 2024 en la ciudad de Cusco, fue una iniciativa de Iqono Centro de Arte y Conservación del Perú, liderado por José Luis Quispe, en colaboración con la profesora Ana Lizeth Mata Delgado de la ENCRyM y con el valioso apoyo de instituciones de Perú, Chile,

México y Estados Unidos, especialmente la Fundación Thoma. Tuve la oportunidad de participar, pues me pareció muy interesante, y con mis compañeros de la universidad y algunos profesores nos organizamos con mucho entusiasmo para poder asistir a este evento. Además de visitar una ciudad histórica como Cusco, que siempre es toda una experiencia, fui incluida en el valioso grupo de becarios y dentro de la organización para participar moderando algunas mesas desarrolladas durante las charlas del primer día.



Figure 1. Visita técnica al Centro de restauración de Tipón Ministerio de Cultura Cusco DDC, como parte de las actividades del coloquio. © Jose Luis Quispe Bejar

El coloquio reunió a profesionales de diversos países y niveles de experiencia, desde profesores con amplia trayectoria hasta profesionales de media carrera. Participaron profesionales de Canadá, México, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador y Bolivia, junto con restauradores locales de varias zonas del Perú y de Cusco, intercambiando experiencias teóricas y prácticas. Los estudios presentados abarcaron desde arte virreinal hasta arte moderno y contemporáneo.



Figure 2. Primer día de ponencias, primera mesa de debate sobre teoría de la restauración, Capilla de Nuestra Señora de Loreto. © Vicente Sonco

Experiencia del taller de "mist lining" y comentario general del evento:

El taller impartido por el destacado profesor brasileño Humberto Farías sobre el método de "mist lining" para entelados, al que tuve el privilegio de asistir durante el Coloquio realizado en Cusco el año pasado, me permitió observar cómo esta técnica realiza una intervención mínima sobre el lienzo. El profesor, con materiales didácticos implementados y traídos por él mismo, nos presentó esta técnica que, particularmente, *vi por primera vez*. Este proceso previene el debilitamiento y la exposición a factores externos que podrían comprometer la integridad de las obras, especialmente cuando el lienzo se encuentra en un estado de fragilidad avanzada. A diferencia de otras técnicas aprendidas y replicadas en las diversas universidades del Perú, como es mi caso en la Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos, la técnica del "mist lining", según mi perspectiva, da una alternativa de intervención a la gama de técnicas que tradicionalmente se han usado, al menos en nuestro medio, las mismas que usaban temperaturas y técnicas invasivas como la *técnica de cera-resina*, técnicas que podrían alterar tanto la capa pictórica como la estabilidad del soporte. Además, he notado que el "mist lining" facilita una adhesión uniforme y segura entre el soporte original y la nueva tela, garantizando que no queden áreas sin adhesivo ni zonas que se desprendan durante el proceso. En la medida de lo posible, es un método hasta cierto punto reversible y su uso es poco conocido en nuestro medio, pero fue una valiosa experiencia la que tuve por primera vez y me permite seguir investigando más acerca de *esta* y otras técnicas.

En general, el evento ofreció una valiosa oportunidad para reflexionar sobre la ética del restaurador profesional al intervenir una obra, y en varias ocasiones, según mi experiencia en el campo de la intervención, las teorías y normativas aprendidas en clase son dejadas de lado durante los procesos de restauración. Esta primera reflexión fue una de las cosas que quedaron más presentes en mí durante el evento. También se presentaron métodos de intervención alternativos a los que estudiamos en el aula, como el método de entelado "mist lining", que

propone una serie de procedimientos más compatibles con la estabilidad tanto del soporte como de su capa pictórica. Además, los participantes tuvimos la oportunidad de conocer técnicas de restauración innovadoras, como la técnica del "mist lining", y se abordaron por primera vez temas de conservación de arte contemporáneo, un campo poco explorado en el medio peruano y tema relevante en la práctica actual de la restauración. Este taller, dictado por la profesora Ana Lizeth Mata, destacó la importancia de comprender no solo la naturaleza material del soporte, sino también el significado que el autor otorga a la obra y cómo ésta es percibida por el público. Junto a estos talleres, también pudimos ver los talleres de conservación de ornamentos litúrgicos, fundamentos de conservación preventiva, técnicas de parches y suturas, y el reentelado con pasta florentina.

Pienso que, como primera experiencia, *la organización de todo el evento fue una buena iniciativa*, pues conocer este tipo de técnicas permite resolver y tener los medios necesarios para aplicar en cada caso que tenga la oportunidad de intervenir. El coloquio cumplió con el objetivo de complementar la formación teórica y práctica del público asistente, y ofreció la oportunidad de conocer nuevas perspectivas y enfoques de estudiantes y profesionales especializados de otras instituciones, pero sobre todo, permitió establecer redes con ellos y que esta red pueda ser replicada para el desarrollo de nuestra región y mejorar nuestros métodos.



Figure 3. Segundo día, Taller de Mist lining. Prof. Humberto Farías. Patio del Museo Histórico Regional del Cusco. © Jose Luis Quispe

Biografía del autor: Fiorela Guerrero Sayes, estudiante del noveno ciclo de la especialidad de Conservación y Restauración en la Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos. Participa actualmente en proyectos de restauración en el Centro Histórico de Lima, enfocados en la intervención y salvaguarda de bienes culturales. Fue becaria en el IIC Lima Congress, realizado en la Universidad de Ingeniería y Tecnología (UTEC), y en el Coloquio Internacional de Restauración y Conservación organizado por IQONO, ambos espacios dedicados a la difusión e intercambio de conocimientos en el campo de la conservación del patrimonio.

Thesis Abstracts

Canada

Tirza Harris

Queen's University

Masters of Art Conservation 2023

A Technical Investigation of an 18th-century British Portrait

An 18th-century oil on canvas portrait received preliminary attribution by Stephen Gritt, the National Gallery of Canada, to English portrait painter John Vanderbank (1694—1739). A technical analysis was performed and compared against literature discussing 18th-century artist's materials to provide a firm dating. A comparative analysis of known Vanderbank's and working contemporaries, housed at various global institutions, was made. Scanning-XRF mapped the painting's elemental distribution and indicated the artist used pigments consistent with this period and modified the painting to remove a hat, the composition comparable to attributed Vanderbank paintings. These results guided strategic sampling to examine cross-sections under polarised and fluorescent light to distinguish material stratigraphy. SEM-EDS further illuminated layer components and revealed the artist's gradual build-up of grounds and dry-on-dry application of paint and glazes. A lack of technical research into Vanderbank portraits means the research outcomes establish the groundwork for future lines of inquiry.

tirza.harris@gmail.com

France

Marie Godot

Panthéon-Sorbonne University, Paris

Painting Conservation Program

Du fragment au panorama... et du panorama au fragment. Conserver, restaurer, valoriser une pratique artistique tombée dans l'oubli

La restauration du fragment n°24 « Lignard et Uhlan, tués », du Panorama de la bataille de Rezonville, partie exécutée par Alphonse de Neuville, huile sur toile, 107,5 x 220 cm, 1881-1883 conservé au musée des Beaux-arts de Caen.

From fragment to panorama... and from panorama to fragment. Preservation, Conservation and Promotion of a Forgotten Artistic Practice

The conservation treatment of fragment 24, « Lignard and Uhlan, Killed », from the Panorama of the Battle of Rezonville, part executed by Alphonse de Neuville, oil on canvas, 107,5 x 220 cm, 1881-1883, Caen, Museum of Fine Arts.

The Panorama of Rezonville, monumental artwork from the XIXth century was painted by two of the most famous artists of their times: Édouard Detaille (1848-1912) and Alphonse de Neuville (1835-1885). Representing a very common practice at this time, being part of an entertainment dynamic within society, these paintings were not made to be forever displayed or preserved. The Panorama of Rezonville, about 15 meters high and 120 meters long was cut into 115 pieces at the end of its exhibition. These fragments were sold by auction in 1896. This fortuitous event, between destruction and last chance to preserve the memory of a way more complex practice still allows us to enjoy it and to study all its aspects. Through the conservation of the fragment number 24 : « Lignard and Uhlan, Killed », painted by the hand of Alphonse de Neuville, this master thesis retraces the history of the panorama and questions the conservation and accessibility of those fragments.

mgodot.restauration@gmail.com

Italy

Margherita Morello

Opificio delle Pietre Dure, Firenze
Scuola di Alta Formazione e Studio
Masters 2021-2022

The restoration of the panel painting of the Holy Family with the Infant Saint John and Saint Elizabeth attributed to Domenico Beccari: a complex history of execution and conservation. Treatment of waxy residues and research on the compatibility of materials for material integration

This thesis focused on the study and restoration of a mid-16th-century oil-on-panel painting depicting the Holy Family with St. John and St. Elizabeth, from the Pitti Palace collection. The restoration process involved significant experimentation with materials and methods due to the painting's high structural reactivity and the presence of waxy residues. New, eco-friendly solvents were tested for removing beeswax used in previous restorations. Various filling materials were also experimented with to address different types of losses, ensuring compatibility with the substrate. A key refinement was the development of an elastic "diaphragmatic" layer placed between the support and the filler, which could help to offer greater chemical and physical compatibility with wax residues and good flexibility to accommodate the wooden support's movements. Moreover, diagnostic investigations revealed an underlying image, initially a copy of Michelangelo's Leda and the Swan, further contributing to the understanding of the artwork's unique history and technique.

morello.margherita@gmail.com

Japan

Saki Kunikata

Tokyo University of the Arts
PhD 2023

Partial Delamination of Wax-Resin Lining on Oil Paintings

This study investigates partial delamination in wax-resin linings applied to oil paintings. In Japan, many paintings were treated using this method in the 1970s and 80s. While most linings

remain in good condition, some show signs of detachment.

Using non-destructive examination methods— infrared active thermography and terahertz time-domain imaging — delaminated areas were visualized, in combination with traditional examination techniques like visual inspection and palpation. They revealed two key contributing factors: uneven reverse-side surfaces and insufficient adhesive impregnation.

Additionally, chemical and physical analyses of historical wax-resin adhesives revealed that aging reduces peel strength due to oxidation, potentially resulting in delamination. Upon reheating, the adhesive undergoes irreversible phase separation and thus ceases to function as a hot-melt material during re-treatment.

These findings offer insights into the mechanisms of delamination and support more informed conservation decisions, contributing to the development of effective strategies for the care of wax-resin lined oil paintings.

s.kunikata926@gmail.com

Netherlands

Audrey Boivin

University of Amsterdam
Conservation and Restoration of
Cultural Heritage Programme

Cracking the Case – The Possibilities of Support Identification Through the Language of Craquelure

Keywords

Craquelure, Cracks, Transfer, van Eyck, Computational Analysis

This thesis examines the potential to identify a painting's original support - panel or canvas - through its craquelure. By studying transferred artworks, it investigates how paint layers may retain cracking patterns that reveal a hidden or lost substrate. Combining visual inspection, imaging techniques, and computational analyses, the author developed a standardized approach to map and interpret craquelure networks. The research focuses on seven Jan van Eyck case studies, comparing intact panel works, confirmed transfers, and suspected Tüchlein paintings. Findings highlighted the complexity

of crack formation and the interplay of materials, environment, and historical restoration practices. Ultimately, the study shows how craquelure can offer vital clues about a painting's structural past, underlining the value of support - and transfer recognition for both preservation and art historical understanding.

Supervisors: Dr. Emilie Froment (University of Amsterdam) and Dr. Robert Erdmann (University of Amsterdam)

Audrey.boivin@hotmail.be

Jessie Carter

University of Amsterdam
Advanced Professional Program in
Paintings Conservation 2022

Assessment of nine Evolon® CR application methods for varnish removal

This research compares Evolon® CR application methods for varnish removal on oil paintings which build on techniques presented in earlier publications on the procedural possibilities of tissue-compresses. Variables include impregnation of Evolon® with free-solvent or solvent-gel, number of tissues used and rinsing. Before testing, the varnishes were characterized using gas chromatography-mass spectrometry (GC-MS) and cross-section microscopy. The experimental results were assessed through stereomicroscopy, visual examination and photography in visible and ultraviolet light. Assessments were made on the scales of level of varnish removal, physical changes to paint and practicality. Methods influenced the result on all scales and the contributing factors were complex. It was found that cleaning parameters must be carefully chosen to reduce the risk of paint flake removal and that Evolon® methods alone never led to complete varnish removal; performance was especially poor over textured paint. The most effective cleanings were achieved with combined Evolon® and swab use.

kunstrestauratiecarter@gmail.com

Chloe Chang

University of Amsterdam
Conservation and Restoration of
Cultural Heritage Programme

Those that do not meet the eye: Detecting support-related sub-surface defects in a multilayered cradled painting using stereoradiography and shearography

Condition assessment comprises a crucial component in modern conservation practice. Establishing a comprehensive and holistic understanding of the condition is not always straightforward, especially when the damages are hidden. This thesis investigates an integrated method to detect sub-surface defects related to the support (i.e., cracks and delamination) in multilayered paintings by using Jean-François Raffaëlli's *The Old Officers* (1884) as a case study. Stereoradiography and shearography have been tested on defects - simulating reconstructions. Results demonstrate that stereoradiography can produce satisfactory detection of obscured cracks in the panel. Using shearography coupled with thermal loading to inspect cardboard-panel delamination yields limited detection, but a detailed improvement plan has been supplied. Overall, this research delivers a prototypical tool for the structural diagnosis of multilayered paintings. By detecting defects that the eye cannot reach, the method can not only enhance the understanding of *The Old Officers*' structural condition but also similar multilayered structures alike.

chloechang48@gmail.com

Camilla Dongelmans

University of Amsterdam
Conservation and Restoration of
Cultural Heritage Programme

Evaluating Soft Particle Blasting and Atomic Oxygen for Cleaning Sensitive Unvarnished Modern Paint Surfaces

Keywords

Soft particle blasting, atomic oxygen, dirt removal, unvarnished modern paint surfaces, oil paint, acrylic paint

Safe removal of surface dirt from unvarnished, water-sensitive and chalking paint is challenging using traditional methods. This study investigates the efficacy and risks of soft particle blasting (SPB) and compares it to atomic oxygen (AO), a non-contact dry-cleaning technique. Artificially aged oil and acrylic paint samples

were soiled with soot and artificial dirt. Cleaning assessment included visual observation, (3D) digital microscopy, and SEM-EDX. SPB and AO have potential for cleaning sensitive paints. SPB effectively removes soot and loose dirt from chalking oil paints and acrylics, though it risks pigment loss and paint erosion. It demonstrates greater success removing embedded dirt from oil paint with minimal surface change. Compared to saliva and sponge tests, SPB is a safer, more effective alternative that reduces the risk of paint solubilisation and mechanical damage. AO excels at non-contact soot removal from chalking oil paint but has limited performance on artificial dirt and acrylic paint.

camilla.dongelmans@student.uva.nl

Noah van der Meer

University of Amsterdam
Advanced Professional Programme in
Paintings Conservation 2022

Using SEM-EDX to study the influence of heat and moisture on lead soap migration in an oil paint structure

Keywords

Lead soaps, migration, heat, moisture, SEM-EDX, quantitative analysis

The formation and migration of lead soaps in oil paint layers are well-known issues in art conservation as they can cause both aesthetic and structural problems. Research has shown that heat and moisture both play a role in the formation of lead soaps, but their contribution to the migration of lead soaps is not fully understood yet. Both factors are regularly used in conservation practice, which makes their influence important to research. For this paper, lead soap containing paint samples were heated to different temperatures and/or exposed to moisture. Their cross-sections were analysed with SEM-EDX and ATR-FTIR imaging. A quantitative study on elemental EDX maps for lead indicated that increasing heat and moisture exposure promotes lead migration across layer interfaces in the paint stratigraphy. The findings give insight into the consequences of past consolidation campaigns and should warn conservators of today for the use of heat and moisture.

Supervisors: Dr. Emilie Froment (University of Amsterdam) and Dr. Joen Hermans (University of Amsterdam)

Conducted in partnership with: Dr. Ineke Joosten (Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands - Rijksdienst voor het Cultureel Erfgoed)

noahvandermeer@live.nl

Poland

Kinga Brückman de Renstrom

Jan Matejko Academy of Fine Arts in
Krakow

Faculty of Conservation and Restoration

The study and treatment of two landscapes attributed to Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot from the collection of the Wawel Castle in Krakow

Keywords

Conservation, oil painting, painting on canvas, 19th-century, analytical techniques, MA-XRF, signature, Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot

The scope of the master's thesis in progress includes an in-depth technical study of two 19th-century oil paintings on canvas attributed to the French landscape painter Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot. By comparing the artist's materials (identified using optical microscopy, SEM-EDX, FTIR) to the current state of knowledge concerning Corot's working technique, as well as through careful examination of the signatures, some insight into the authenticity of the paintings is hoped to be gained. The non-invasive MA-XRF rendering of element maps, which provided a visualisation of how the artist used his colours to build up the composition, has arguably never before been applied to any (alleged) Corot painting. Among other conservation treatments, such as the removal of old varnish and overpainting, the borders of both canvas supports were lined. In one case, however, the painting was not removed from the stretcher in order to preserve the original mounting and the hand-wrought nails.

Supervisor: Prof. Marta Lempart-Geratowska

k.bruckman1@gmail.com

Joanna Dziduch

Academy of Fine Arts, Warsaw
Masters 2022

Conservation and historic issues concerning Portrait of G. A. Hollander (formerly Portrait of a man in the interior) by Julius Gottfried Siegmund from the collection of the National Museum in Poznań

Keywords

Oil painting, conservation, restoration, fabric support, local repairs of fabric support, lining, strip lining, retouching, technique, technology

The thesis statement presents the conservation and historical issues regarding the oil painting from the 3rd/4th quarter of the 19th century. The dissertation has a descriptive and scientifically researched character. The thesis primarily discusses the review of techniques relating to historical methods of repairing damage of canvas supports. The summary of the mentioned issues was particularly relevant, as mechanical damages of all technological layers of the painting were the main problem of the conservation. The front of the painting was cut with a sharp tool from many angles. The second part describes the aspect related to the history of the painting. The identity of the portrayed and the place of depiction were not recognized. The archival research was aimed at establishing the theme of the painting representation. The third part of the thesis is the documentation of the conservation and restoration process. Additionally, the artifact was subjected to non – invasive technological research.

dziduchjoanna@gmail.com

Portugal

Lúisa Santos

Universidade Católica Portuguesa, Porto
Masters 2023

Double-sided paintings: challenges and conservation strategies

The double-sided painting was held between a double fixed wooden structure, allowing for the visualization of both sides of the canvas. However, this system did not ensure adequate tension and, consequently, its flattening, significantly compromising the integrity and conservation of the work. The constant

fluctuations in relative humidity and temperature contributed to the fragility of the support, especially at the attachment points. As a result, the margins of the canvas were without mechanical resistance and were partially detached from the several nails that held it together. It was required to devise conservation strategies adapted to the needs of the work, with particular reference to the repairing of tears in the textile support and the stretching of the artwork. The need to keep the elements of the original frame made it possible to develop an adjustable tension system adapted to the structure and the placement of double strips-linings.

luisa.santosf@hotmail.com

Spain

Laura Román

College of Conservation and Restoration
of Cultural Heritage of Catalonia
(ESCRBCC)
Bachelors 2023

Study of biocidal efficacy in the addition of essential oils in fillings for canvas paintings

In-filling of pictorial layers is a critical and recurrent intervention in the conservation -restoration processes of pictorial works. Despite its importance, the intrinsic materials of fillers and their potential consequences have not received sufficient attention, with a tendency to follow traditional workshop practices.

Given the increasing interest in recent decades in sustainable and green materials, and their gradual introduction into the cultural heritage sector, this study aims to test different fillers with and without biocidal substances under the same conditions. The tests measured pH, color changes, and other physical and mechanical properties. The results indicated that essential oils presented promising results in different aspects. Tea tree oil showed potential in maintaining pH balance and preventing fungal growth, while absinthium oil also showed promising results. However, further tests are necessary to conclusively determine the biocidal efficacy and safety of these materials, given that

environmental factors influenced fungal growth in the samples.

lauraromani.maal@gmail.com

Taiwan

Pan Yi-Ling

National Taiwan Normal University
PhD 2023

Conservation of Cultural Relics Optimized by Scientific Analysis — Lu Tieh-Chou's Eastern Gouache Painting Backyard Example

Keywords

Conservation of cultural heritage, Lu Tieh-chou, Eastern gouache painting, conservation Science, folding screen

This study examines the conservation treatment of "Backyard" (1931), an Eastern Gouache painting by Lu Tieh-Chou, created during Taiwan's Japanese colonial period. The painting, known for using the Japanese technique "moriage," suffered from cracking after previous conservation efforts. To understand the cause of damage and ensure proper treatment, scientific analysis was conducted. Pigment and binder composition were identified using Micro-FTIR and EA-IRMS, and non-destructive methods, such as UV fluorescence and IR imaging, revealed structural issues from previous treatments. The conservation process included stabilizing the primary support, reinforcing cracks, and restoring the artwork to its original folding screen format. This study presents a novel, scientifically-driven approach to cultural heritage conservation, offering a more effective and evidence-based methodology for preserving historical artworks.

b8921009@gmail.com

United Kingdom

Zuraida Akma

Northumbria University
Masters 2021

19th-century artists materials and tropical climate

The research looked into the painting materials used by Javanese artist Raden Saleh, throughout his career in 19th century Europe and Batavia

(Indonesia), including their historical use and origins. With the lack of publications on the technical art history of Saleh's artworks, this research focused on painting methods and style employed by his mentors and peers using existing analysis and publications in order to explore the plausible influences they might have on Saleh's artworks. This research also focused on the contemporary challenges faced by heritage institutions in the Southeast Asia region that collect and store Saleh's paintings with pressing tropical climate issues.

zuraidaakma@gmail.com

Recent Publications and Podcasts

Dutch and Flemish Painting at The Nivaagaard Collection

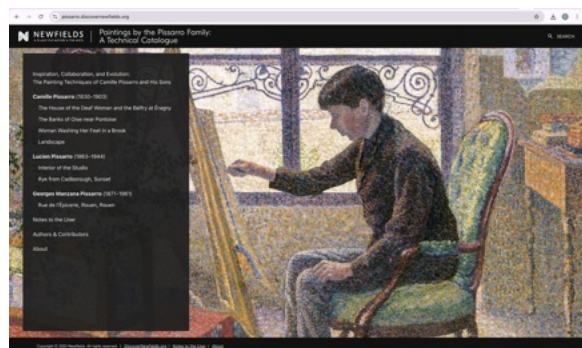
Dr. Jorgen Wadum and Dr. Angela Jager



Synopsys from the RKD website: The book *Dutch and Flemish Painting at The Nivaagaard Collection* was released in November. This richly illustrated collection catalogue brings renewed attention to a remarkable group of 57 Dutch and Flemish paintings. For the first time in over a century, this part of the Danish collection has been thoroughly studied, resulting in new insights and discoveries in both art history and technical research.

Paintings By the Pissarro Family; A Technical Catalogue

Published online by the Indianapolis Museum of Art at Newfields

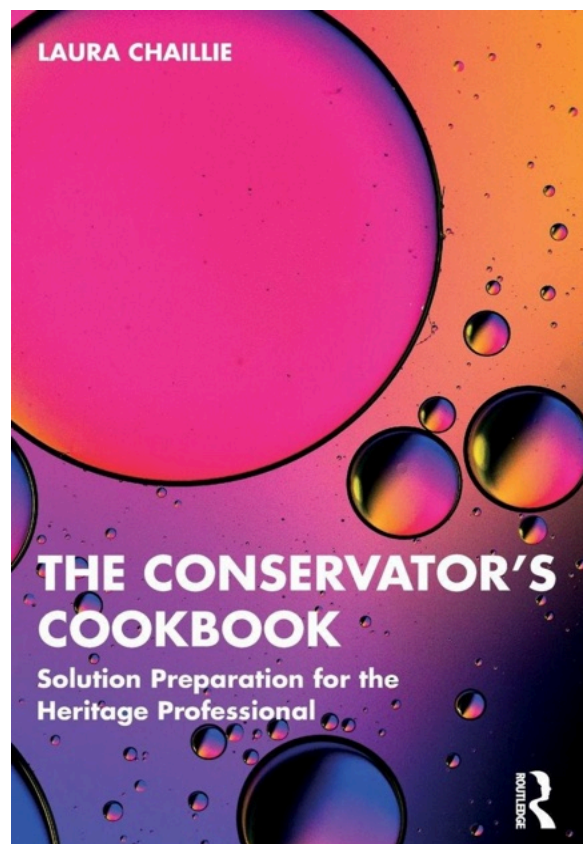


A collection of technical studies completed on the Indianapolis Museum of Art at Newfields' paintings by Pissarro family members. Includes technical data, conservation histories and condition reports. Available online:

<https://pissarro.discovernewfields.org/>

The Conservator's Cookbook: Solution Preparation for the Heritage Professional

Laura Chaillie

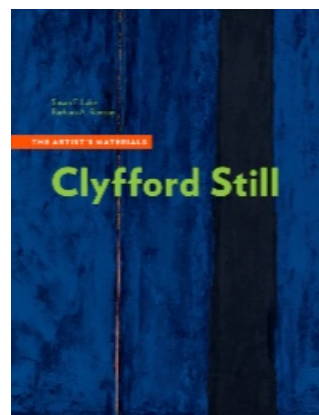


Synopsis: *The Conservator's Cookbook* is a collection of practical, step-by-step guides outlining how to prepare various solutions, adhesives, gels, and other mixtures used in heritage conservation. While most conservators learn the chemical rationale of solution making during their training, the actual process of preparing these compounds can be neglected or eventually forgotten. This “cookbook” provides a non-exhaustive and adaptable resource, compiling practical recipes from across heritage conservation literature into a single volume. Drawing from techniques used in furniture, paper, paintings, textiles, and other conservation specialisms, each “recipe” in the Cookbook begins with a short summary of key chemical ideas, before relating step-by-step instructions. The solutions range from simple dissolutions (adhesive resins), to more complex cleaning systems (utilising surfactants, chelation agents, and enzymes) and gelled carriers. Each “recipe” is followed with collections of technical data which help to bridge the gap between chemical understanding and practical application. The Cookbook also provides important notes on health and safety and laboratory best practice, addressing some common misunderstandings and encouraging more sustainable approaches.

Intended for the experienced professional and conservation student alike, *The Conservator's Cookbook* is a crucial reference work that provides a starting point for practical experimentation and interaction between different conservation specialisms.

Clifford Still: The Artist's Materials

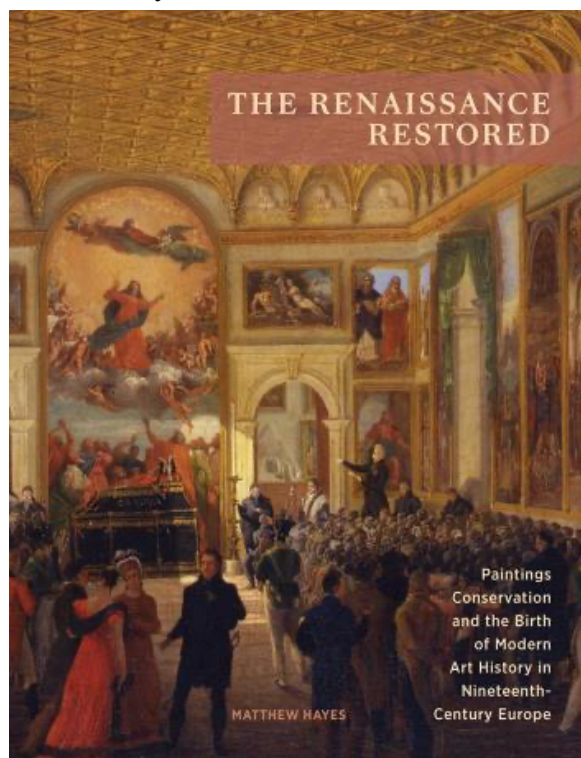
Susan F. Lake and Barbara A. Ramsay



Synopsis: This groundbreaking book provides the first detailed account of the materials and techniques of perhaps the most radical - and, until now, least studied - major American Abstract Expressionist.

The Renaissance Restored: Paintings Conservation and the Birth of Modern Art History in Nineteenth-Century Europe

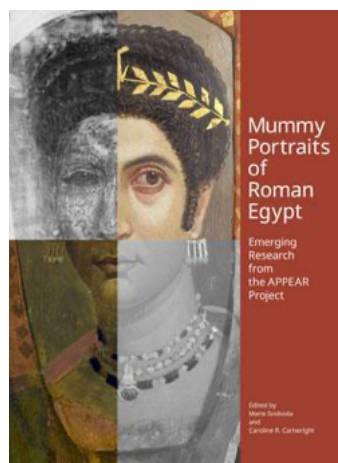
Matthew Hayes



Synopsis: This handsomely illustrated volume traces the intersections of art history and paintings restoration in nineteenth-century Europe.

Mummy Portraits of Roman Egypt: Emerging Research from the APPEAR Project

Edited by Marie Svoboda and Caroline R. Cartwright



An international collaboration known as APPEAR (Ancient Panel Paintings: Examination, Analysis, and Research) was launched in 2013 to promote the study of these objects and to gather scientific and historical findings into a

shared database. The first phase of the project was marked with a two-day conference at the Getty Villa. Conservators, scientists, and curators presented new research on topics such as provenance and collecting, comparisons of works across institutions, and scientific studies of pigments, binders, and supports. The papers and poster presentations from the conference are collected in this publication, which offers the most up-to-date information available about these fascinating remnants of the ancient world.

Available online:

https://www.getty.edu/publications/mummyportraits/downloads/SvobodaCartwright_MummyPortraits.pdf

**Retouching Playlists
Recommendations**

The Working Group Coordinator and Assistant Coordinators would like to share with you some of our favourite music and podcasts we listen to while retouching. We hope you enjoy our recommendations! Let us know what you like to listen to and we'll share it in the next newsletter.

Aimee (music)

Instrumental music by AlltA or the Brooklyn Duo (cello).

Other favourite songs: Carnival of the Animals, Cello Suite No 1 in G Major (Bach), Beau Soir (Debussy), Reverie (Debussy), 12 Etudes (Chopin).

Joanna (podcasts)

The Garden Log.

Laura (podcasts)

The New Yorker Shorts, The Daily, Stuff you Missed in History Class, Death of an Artist, Song Exploder, In Defense of Plants.

Mine

No music and noise cancellation headphones, occasional podcast or audiobook.

Nikita (music)

Classical instrumental music by Pandit Ravi Shankar (Sitar) and Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia (Flute).

Indian classical rock by Agam (Swans of Saraswati and Rangapura Vihara) and Indian Ocean (Charkha, Kandisa).

Electronic/Techno sets by Worakls, HVOB, and Khruangbin.

Sue-Ann

Mindful meditation.

Victor (music and podcasts)

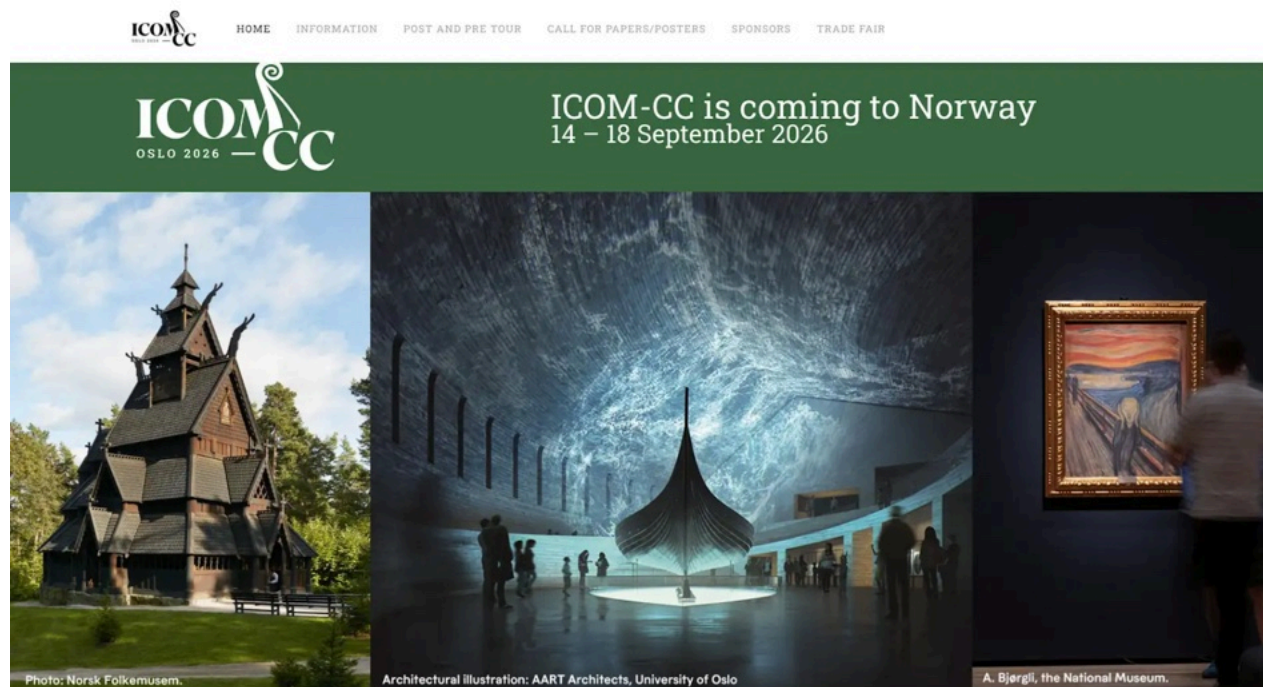
Samba music by Jorge Aragão, Zeca Pagodinho, Alcione, and Arlindo Cruz.

Sertanejo by Jorge e Matheus, Bruno e Marrone, and Marília Mendonça.

Podcasts of National and International Politics (Petit Journal, Medo e Delírio em Brasília, Xadrez Verbal).

21st ICOM-CC Triennial Conference in Oslo, Norway

Link to online site: [ICOM CC 2026](https://www.icom-cc.org/2026)



If you have any content you would like published by the ICOM-CC Paintings Working Group Newsletter please send it or inquiries to our coordinator Sue Ann Chui. Additionally, we welcome any announcements to be distributed to the community.