

# ICOM Young Professional Travel Grant Recipient



20th ICOM-CC Triennial Conference in Valencia,  
Spain, 18<sup>th</sup> -22<sup>nd</sup> September 2023.

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## **Introduction**

The Triennial Conferences of the Committee for Conservation, organized by the International Council of Museums, is a global landmark in the realm of cultural heritage. It serves as a convergence point for approximately a thousand professionals worldwide, both from ICOM and other institutions. Attendees flock to share experiences, insights, and to establish valuable networks with peers and key representatives from heritage institutions. This event is an essential platform for staying abreast of the latest trends and developments in cultural heritage conservation.

## **Location & Venue**

The conference was hosted in the historic city of Valencia, Spain. Valencia, with its rich blend of history and modernity, provided an idyllic backdrop for this significant event. One of the main venues was the Auditorium Les Arts at the Palau de Les Arts, an architectural marvel located at the western end of the City of Arts and Sciences.



Photo Credit: - Dr. Ali Nasir

## Opening Ceremony

The conference inauguration took place on Monday, 18th September. Valencia officials, along with ICOM-CC members, set the tone with their welcoming remarks. The day was marked by two keynote lectures. Sophia Labadi, a renowned professor from the University of Kent, delivered the first lecture, followed by an inspiring discourse by Luis Monreal on conserving the heritage of conflict-ridden zones. As the General Manager of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture in Geneva, Switzerland, Monreal's insights were particularly profound.



Photo Credit: - Dr. Ali Nasir

## Conference Overview

One of the significant highlights was the discussion on the conservation of the Aleppo Souk in Syria. The rehabilitation of this historic marketplace, which had suffered immense damage during the Syrian conflict, was not just a structural endeavor but had vast social, economic, and psychological implications for the community. The day culminated with a panel discussion featuring various keynote speakers, providing diverse perspectives on conservation.

## Poster Presentation

On the following day, I had the unique opportunity to stroll through the poster presentation area. This section showcased a diverse range of topics, each represented through meticulously crafted posters. Notable among them was Dharini Kumar's "Archaeometric study of pot sherds from a pre-Harappan site in Kunal, Haryana, India." Equally compelling were presentations like "The threads of the past weaving the future: Exploring 18th-century Portuguese and French wool dyeing recipes" by Paula NABAIS and team, "Between past and future: Using historically



accurate reconstructions to preserve madder colours” spearheaded by Vanessa Otero and her group, and “Applicability of Darning Stitches to Textile Conservation” by Mengying Zhang and collaborators. Each poster offered a deep dive into its respective subject, enriching the overall conference experience.

### Highlights & Key Insights

Over the course of five days, the conference showcased an array of insightful papers and presentations. Eminent contributors like Sreekumar Menon, Maninder Singh Gild, Rini Hazel Templeton, Nitin Kumar, and Sarah Scaturro stood out, receiving widespread acclaim for their valuable contributions. I was particularly drawn to projects like MOXY, which emphasized eco-friendly conservation methods, and the exploration of natural surfactants for cleaning historic textiles. The multifaceted approach to preserving Buddhist heritage and the emphasis on nurturing empathy among conservation students enriched the conference's narrative. Furthermore, captivating presentations by experts such as Karolina Soppa and Rachel Tabet delved into varied facets of conservation, broadening the scope of discussions.



Photos Credit: - Dr. Ali Nasir

### Planning Session of Textiles Working Group

Following the Textile Working Group presentation, we transitioned into the planning sessions. Sarah Benson, the Coordinator for the Textile Working Group, recounted the progress and evolution of the 2020-2023 Triennial. We also opened the floor to our members, seeking their suggestions for the upcoming 2023-2026 Triennial. Alongside this, Sarah Benson introduced

her Assistant Coordinator. Both Sarah Scaturro and I had the privilege to share our experiences and collaborative journey with Sarah Benson within the Textile Working Group.



Photos Credit: - Sarah Benson and Dr. Ali Nasir

### Networking & Interactions

A highlight of the conference was the chance to engage with distinguished conservators and experts in the field. It was truly a surreal moment to meet and converse with individuals such as Salvador Muniz, Kate Seymour, Noora Kennedy, John Scott, Prof. Emma Nerdy, Sarah Benson and Sarah Scaturro, all of whom I've deeply respected and admired for their contributions. Additionally, mingling with recipients of the Getty Award and the Indian Travel Grant added a layer of joy and excitement to the experience.



Photos Credit: - Dr. Ali Nasir

## Looking Ahead

Attending the ICOM-CC Triennial conference in Valencia, Spain, was a transformative experience on both a professional and personal level. Reflecting on the moments and learnings, I eagerly await the next ICOM-CC Triennial conference, optimistic that it will present even more opportunities for advancement in the realm of conservation.



Photo Credit: - Dr. Nitin Kumar

## Acknowledgments

I extend my deepest appreciation to both the International Council of Museum and its Conservation Committee for granting me this exceptional experience. The steadfast guidance and support from Kate Seymour and Joan Reifsnyder have been pivotal throughout this journey. My contemporaries, including fellow awardees and conservators from India and around the globe, have been a continuous source of inspiration and encouragement.