

# News in Conservation



The e-paper from the International Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works

## The Marciano Museum of Art, LA's newest site for modern and contemporary art



LOS ANGELES – As announced in the last issue of *NiC*, participants to the IIC Los Angeles Congress will be offered an exclusive visit to Los Angeles' newest site for modern and contemporary art – the Marciano Museum of Art.

Although the marble clad Scottish Rite Masonic Temple, designed by Millard Sheets, has been one of the landmark historic structures along the busy Wilshire Blvd of Los Angeles since its construction in 1961, it had been empty for a number of decades, and suffered from neglect for some years before that.

During the forthcoming IIC World Congress in Los Angeles (September 12th - 16th) delegates who sign up for a tour of the building will be treated to an exclusive look at one of Los Angeles' newest museums of contemporary art. This will take place well before the collection formally opens to the public.

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Issue 55, August 2016

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IIC meets the people behind the Marciano Museum of Art ahead of the IIC Congress in LA. Read the interview on pages 1-4

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XX NKF IIC Nordic Group Congress. Read the review on page 13

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IIC met up with **Jamie Goldblatt Manné** (JGM), Director of the Marciano Art Foundation, and **Tatyana Thompson** (TT), a Los Angeles based conservator of paintings who has worked with the Foundation for some years, to ask them what the major concerns and challenges were in planning this extraordinary addition to the cultural landscape of Los Angeles.



Work in progress at the Marciano Museum of Contemporary Art

**IIC: When you first saw the Temple building what were your concerns regarding bringing such a massive structure up to museum standards?**

**JGM:** *Bringing the building up to museum standards was a major concern when we first visited the space. Having sat vacant for many years, the building was in no shape to house artworks, or people for that matter. With such a large building (110,000 sq. ft.), one that was constructed in the late 1950's no less, we knew that it would be a challenge to control the environment throughout such a vast space. The original HVAC system had to be replaced and doing this allowed us to put into place temperature and humidity controls that could accommodate the new use of the building, as an exhibition space for contemporary art.*

*Despite of all these challenges we were able to envision the potential of what a space like this could offer and how it could radically change the contemporary art landscape in Los Angeles by giving artists and curators the opportunity to show work in a non-traditional setting with very few spatial limitations.*

**IIC: What were some of the specific challenges involved in adapting this building?**

**JGM:** *With any pre-existing structure, there are going to be difficult challenges in terms of bringing the building "up to date." From the beginning, we were adamant about making as few changes to the exterior of the building as possible. We wanted to keep Millard Sheets' beautiful and unique design intact and honor that part of our city's history. It was really the inside of the*

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# Editorial

Welcome to the August issue of *NiC*.

We have been in 'countdown mode' for the past few weeks and now that the date of the IIC Los Angeles Congress is finally approaching we hope many of you will join us in what promises to be an amazing event. In order to wet your appetite, IIC met and interviewed Jamie Goldblatt Manné, Director of the Marciano Art Foundation, and conservator Tatyana Thompson to talk about the Marciano Museum of Contemporary Art, one of the venues participants will be able to tour during the Congress. As the museum has yet to be opened to the public, this will be an exclusive opportunity offered to our delegates to discover the newest addition to LA's art landscape.

We have also recently announced the final list of papers and posters to be presented at the Congress and from the titles you would have picked up on the innovative and cutting-edge nature of the topics included in the programme. You can see the [full list here](#)

In this issue we travel to Qatar, where Amelie Couvrat Desvergnés talks about Islamic bindings, followed by an account of the recent event 'Monumental Treasure', the XX NKF IIC Nordic Group Congress, by Jaana Kataja and Maarit Jones.

A call from the IIC office! We need images to use for a variety of initiatives and need your help. Details of what is needed can be found in the IIC section on page 18 and images can be sent via email to [news@iiconservation.org](mailto:news@iiconservation.org)

That's all for now, enjoy *NiC* and see you in Los Angeles!

**Barbara Borghese**  
Editor

*building that required more attention and careful planning. The entire building had to be abated, the roof had to be replaced and, as previously mentioned, a brand new HVAC system was installed.*

**TT:** *Several concerns came to mind regarding the challenges of renovating a historic building into a new space for contemporary art. First, protection of the existing in situ works of art during the construction and the safe de-installation of the works should they be removed. This was no small challenge since there were several monumental and historic murals completed by Millard Sheets himself. Secondly, there were a number of standard concerns such as: climate control, appropriate light levels, eventual onsite storage, mitigation of any air pollution, protection of the works of art while on exhibition. The museum will be primarily exhibiting contemporary works of art which present a particular set of challenges including often complex and unconventional use of materials. These works can be quite vulnerable to damage from light, impact and environmental fluctuations, and the complexity of installations present unique challenges. Additionally, there was a clear need to plan for the interface of the collection with the public.*

*I must say that the project has been guided by a very diligent, responsive and informed staff and these issues have been addressed.*

**JGM:** *Despite all of the necessary improvements made to the building, the original layout actually lent itself quite nicely to the new purpose of the space, with many of our gallery spaces placed right over the previous floor plan.*

*For example, when we first sought to purchase the building from the Masons, the city allowed us to purchase it with one caveat: that we completely remove the 1,800-seat theatre on the ground floor due to inadequate parking (there are approximately 200 parking spots on sight). This naturally led us to convert the theatre into a large, and for LA, quite unique gallery space well suited for showing monumental works and installations.*

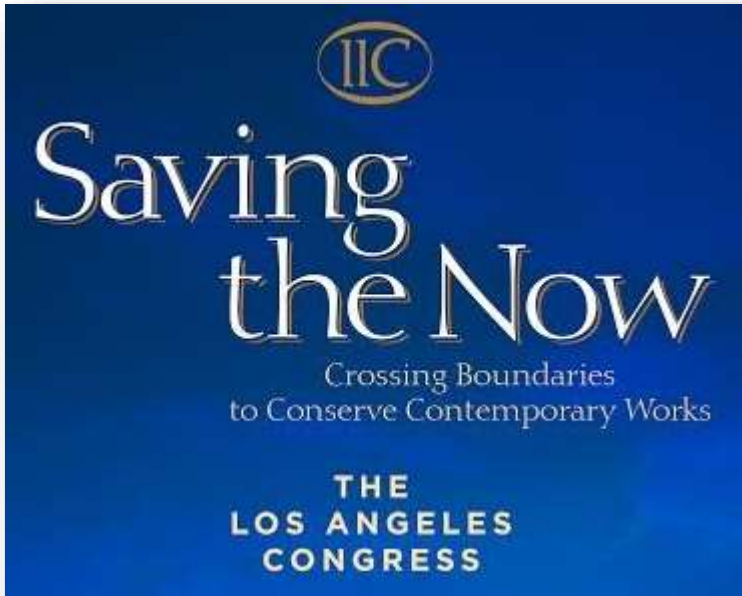
**IIC: And what were your general guidelines given the nature of the collection?**

**JGM:** *The artworks in the collection consist of a wide variety of media, including painting, sculpture, photography, film, installation and performance. Keeping in mind the variety of media and the various requirements each medium demands, we needed to make sure each space was as flexible as possible. Contemporary art is constantly moving in all different directions at an accelerated rate. Size is no longer a concern or restraint for many artists and we wanted the Foundation to be able to accommodate developments in how artists work today and well into the future. We made sure to address logistical concerns as much as possible before we went into the construction period so as to avoid any future limitations with regards to weight loads and height clearances.*

**IIC: How are you guided?**

**JGM:** *We visit as many galleries, museums and foundations as possible and see what others are doing successfully and where their approaches could be improved. Luckily, we have access to many of the best installers, conservators and exhibition coordinators at each of these types of*

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venues. Their guidance and expertise has been crucial in terms of helping us understand all the small yet crucial details that need to be considered when planning an exhibition space for contemporary art. Our architect, Kulapat Yantrasast of Why Architecture, is also quite familiar with the specific needs of contemporary art spaces due to his prior projects. His knowledge has helped us determine the most efficient and thorough way of making sure the artworks will be kept safe and stable for generations to come.

**TT:** Having consulted on the adaptive reuse of historic buildings into museums for both MOCA and The Broad in the mid-1980s, I was familiar with the challenges the Foundation would face. It was a privilege to provide guidance regarding conservation standards for the exhibition, storage and handling of

contemporary art in such an iconic and historic Los Angeles building.

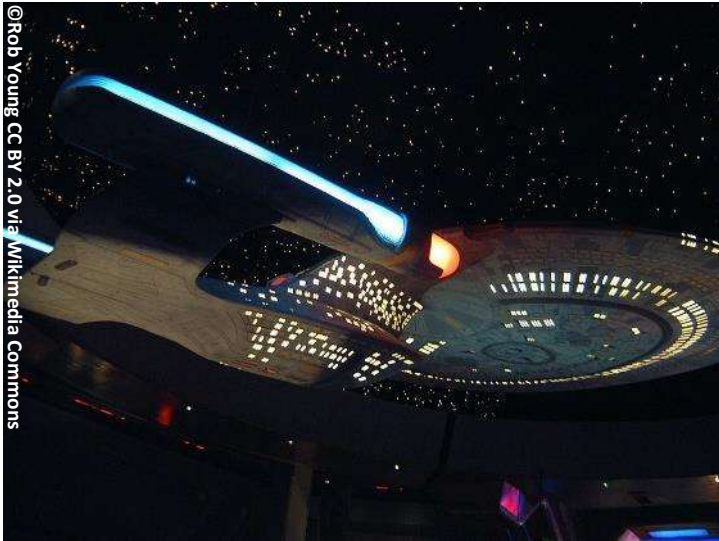
**IIC:** We understand that the museum will have a very aggressive and positive approach to supporting the cultural life of Los Angeles. Certainly a big part of that will be making the collection available to the public. The benefits are self-evident, but what are your concerns and how do you feel they balance out with the benefits?

**JGM:** Yes, we hope that the Marciano Art Foundation and sharing the Collection with the public will be a valued addition to the burgeoning and ever-expanding contemporary art community in Los Angeles. The Foundation will be free and open to anyone who wishes to visit by reserving a time online. In addition to staging rotating shows of the Collection with visiting curators, we also plan to host artist projects, visiting exhibitions and site-specific installations inspired by the Collection. In addition to this programming, we also plan to engage the community by providing a bookstore, workshops, lectures and school visits for local students. Our primary concerns are the safety of the artwork and the safety of our visitors – all other concerns come after that. We will build out our operations program (i.e. maximum number of visitors allowed in the Foundation at a given time, etc.) according to what we deem is safest for both the art and our guests.

Join us in Los Angeles and be a guest of the Maurice and Paul Marciano Art Foundation. Visit this and the many other world class collections of contemporary art in one of the most exciting cities in North America, Los Angeles. Go to <https://www.iiconservation.org/congress/2016losangeles> and join us in LOS ANGELES!



## News in Brief...



### Star Trek USS Enterprise back on display

WASHINGTON DC – After two years undergoing conservation work, the model of the starship USS Enterprise used in the popular television show, is back on display at the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum and is now on exhibition in the Boeing Milestones of Flight Hall.

The studio model was taken off display in 2014 to be examined by members of a special advisory committee using x-ray radiography and x-ray fluorescence (XRF), among other techniques. The Enterprise model, a genuine television star of the 1960s, now rests in a new, state-of-the-art, climate-controlled case.

The model's internal lighting was replaced with modern LEDs, which will come to life at different

times each day. An interactive touchscreen attached to the case will allow visitors to learn more about the model, Star Trek, and the Museum's long interest in imagined spaceflight.

Historic images and tests performed on the model informed the choice of paint colours to be used and many will be surprised to discover that the starship was not grey but originally green.

Malcolm Callum, Chief Conservator at the National Air and Space Museum said: "It's an iconic artifact, so we're really treating this as something that needs to be preserved and treated as authentically as possible".

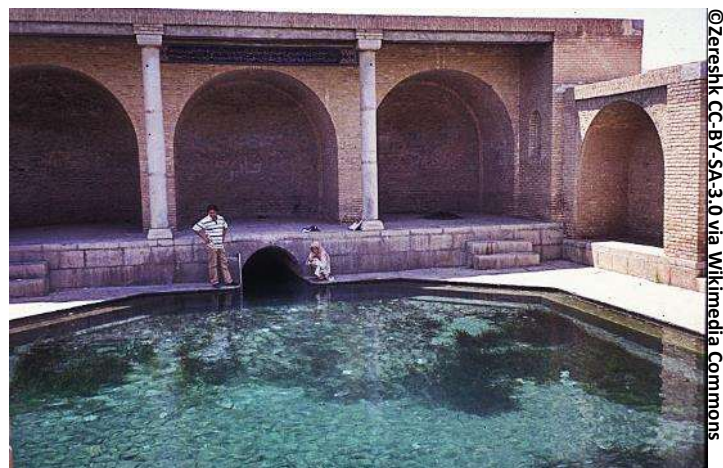
The Smithsonian recorded the various phases of the restoration via a blog that can be seen here: <https://airandspace.si.edu/stories/editorial/uss-enterprise-conservation-begins-phase-ii>

### Ancient Iranian 'Qanats' added to UNESCO World Cultural Heritage List

TEHRAN – Eleven *qanats* located in various areas in Iran have been recently added to UNESCO's World Heritage List, as announced in Turkey earlier this month.

Ancient qanats are underground tunnel systems with vertical access shafts allowing water to be transported from an aquifer located on hills to other areas using gravity to move the water downhill. These systems were found throughout the arid regions of Iran, and to these days agricultural and permanent settlements are supported by the ancient qanat system. The qanat technology is known to have been developed in Iran by the Persians sometime in the early 1st millennium BC, and spread from there slowly westward and eastward.

In the middle of the twentieth century, an estimated 50,000 qanats were in use in Iran, each commissioned and maintained by local users. Of these, 37,000 remain in use today. The historical importance and complex system of qanat as well as their benefits for ecosystem were the main reasons for their registration on the list. One of the oldest and largest known qanats is in the Iranian city of Gonabad; its age is estimated to be 2,700 years and it still provides drinking and agricultural water to nearly 40,000 people living in the area.



Qanat Kashan in Iran

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## Jesus' tomb, Christianity's holiest shrine to be restored

JERUSALEM — A restoration project to restore the monument believed to be tomb of Jesus Christ has begun.

A team of Greek conservators will be carrying out the work estimated to last for nine months and that will involve the consolidation of the collapsing chapel built above and around the burial cave.

The structure is buckling under its own weight and in order to carry out the work, the conservators will have to access the interior of the first-century tomb; this will be the first time the tomb is accessed in more than 200 years.

The tomb, known as the Holy Rock, is located inside the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem's Old City.

The team from the National Technical University of Athens had been previously involved in the restoration of the Acropolis in Athens. Antonia Moropoulou, leader of the team said: "This is the most alive place we have ever worked".

Ground-penetrating radar and laser scanners have already been deployed ahead of the actual work starting, detecting a fracture in the rock of the tomb, unknown until today. The cracks are very likely to have been caused as a result of the weight of the cupola above.

The religious orders that have rights at the Holy Sepulchre include Greek Orthodox, Latin Catholics and Armenian Orthodox, alongside Syrians, Copts and Ethiopians. Obtaining permission to work on the site has not been without challenges - the site is considered the most sacred in Christendom, a place of pilgrimage and faith and therefore the team will have to keep the church open to visitors and pilgrims throughout the project.



@IsraelTourism via Wikimedia Commons CC BY 2.0

The Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem's Old City

## Laser technology reveals hidden cities near Angkor Wat

ANGKOR WAT – Innovative airborne laser scanning technology (lidar) has revealed an extensive network of ancient cities in the Cambodian jungle around the ruins of Angkor Wat, the largest religious monument in the world.

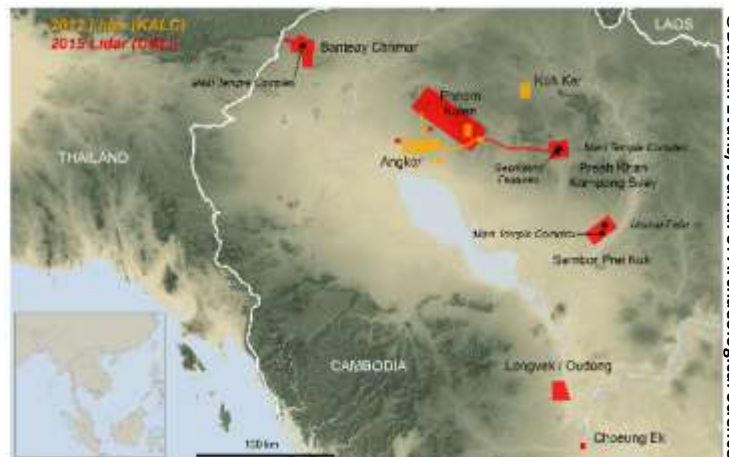
Covering an extensive area, the 12<sup>th</sup> century network of cities has been shown in high definition images obtained by scientists using, among other techniques, ground penetrating lasers. In all, the lasers scanned 735 square miles of the Angkor region and the results revealed an entire cityscape. Earth mounds were placed on a grid, showing an ancient street pattern. The discovery was made by archaeologists who have been working in the area for years.

Angkor Wat is a Unesco World heritage site dating back to the first half of the 12 century. The site is dedicated to the Hindu deity Vishnu and it is estimated that it took 30 years to build.

The discovery has been made as part of the Cambodian Archaeological Lidar Initiative (CALI), an initiative with the aim to uncover, map and compare archaeological landscapes around all the major temple complexes of Cambodia, with a view to better understanding the growth and decline of early civilizations in South East Asia.

Damian Evans, one of the archaeologists involved in the project said: "It turned out we'd been walking and flying right over the top of this stuff for ten years and not even noticing it because of the vegetation".

To learn more about this project visit: [www.angkorlidar.org](http://www.angkorlidar.org)



@Damian Evans / Journal of Archaeological Science



## Saint Michael the Archangel back on view at the MET after restoration

©The Metropolitan Museum of Art



Andrea della Robbia. *Saint Michael the Archangel*, ca. 1475. Glazed terracotta; wood frame. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1960

NEW YORK - The Metropolitan Museum of Art's late-15th-century glazed terracotta relief sculpture *Saint Michael the Archangel* by Andrea della Robbia (1435–1525) has returned to view in the Museum's European Sculpture and Decorative Arts Galleries.

The sculpture was damaged in a fall in 2008 and has since been restored by conservators in the Museum's Department of Objects Conservation.

The sculpture was commissioned ca. 1475 for the church of San Michele Arcangelo in Faenza, a town in the region of Emilia-Romagna renowned for its production of pottery in the Renaissance.

The church was dismantled in c. 1798 and the relief has been in The Met's collection since 1960.

Following the accident a review of existing wall-mounted sculpture at The Met was undertaken and safeguards were improved.

The conservation treatment of Saint Michael the Archangel involved meticulous reconstruction, as well as filling and in-painting of losses, with results that are only visible at close range. The study of the piece while undergoing treatment revealed finger and tool marks and working techniques that shed new light on how the sculpture was made.

A new mounting system was designed to secure each of the sculpture's original 12 interlocking sections independently while allowing the relief to be seen clearly as a whole.

## Conservators uncover 'hidden angel' in Bethlehem

BETHLEHEM - Following conservation work, a remarkable ancient mosaic of an angel has been uncovered after having been hidden for decades at the church on the site where Jesus Christ is believed to have been born.

Since 2013, a team of Italian conservators have been working with the Palestinian government in an effort to restore the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem in the occupied West Bank.

The team used thermal cameras similar to those used by the military at night to scan the walls of the church to check for anything that might have been hidden behind the modern plaster and were surprised to uncover an angel that had been hidden for decades.

Giammarco Piacenti, CEO of the company carrying out the work said: "In that part it was completely different, you could see the angel. We said 'what is this? It can't be an angel'.

The new discovery brings the total number of angels in the church to seven.

The church, which sees more than two million visitors per year, was originally built in 339 AD but rebuilt in the sixth century after being destroyed in a fire.

The completion of the project is threatened by limited funding, with the Palestinian authorities looking for a further 7.5 million euros (\$8.3 million) on top of the nearly 10 million euros (\$11 million) already received. If the necessary funding is found, the renovations are due to be completed in 2018.



Mosaics in the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem

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A section of *El Caminito del Rey*

participating in the EU's Creative Europe programme, and the winner of the Europa Nostra Award, from a European country not taking part in that programme, received the awards from the Juries' Chairpersons of the four categories.

The 7 Grand Prix, selected by independent expert juries will receive €10,000 each, together with the Public Choice Award, chosen in an online poll conducted by Europa Nostra.

The conservation of *El Caminito del Rey* (The King's Little Pathway) in Spain was the big winner this year: the expert jury granted it a Grand Prix while the general public selected it as their favourite heritage project in Europe.

To learn more about the awards visit: [www.europanostra.org](http://www.europanostra.org)

## Madrid hosts celebrations for the European Heritage Awards

MADRID - Around 1,000 people from all over Europe celebrated this year's most outstanding heritage achievements at the European Heritage Awards 2016 held at the historic Zarzuela Theatre in Madrid, Spain.,

Participants welcomed the messages on the power of heritage to revive the European project conveyed by EU Commissioner Tibor Navracsics and Europa Nostra's President Plácido Domingo, and demonstrated firm support for the proposed European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018.

The 28 winners of the EU Prize for Cultural Heritage Europa Nostra Awards 2016, coming from 16 countries

## Somalia's rock art in danger of disappearing

HARGEISA - The cave complex of Laas Geel on the rural outskirts of Hargeisa in Somalia contain some of the earliest known cave paintings in Africa. The paintings are estimated to date to somewhere between 9,000–3,000 BC. and are considered among the oldest and best preserved rock art sites of the continent.

However, due to lack of funding and a coherent preservation plan these marvels are protected only by a few guards who ask visitors not to touch the paintings.

In some area the painting layer is visibly peeling off and it is estimated that at the current rate of deterioration, the paintings will not last longer than a few decades.

"These paintings are unique. This style cannot be found anywhere in Africa. We don't have the knowledge, the experience or the financial resources. We need support" said Abdisalam Shabelleh, the site manager from Somaliland's Ministry of Tourism.

One of the main issue seems to be linked to the Somaliland region not being recognized as a state following the declaration of independence from the rest of Somalia when war erupted following the overthrow of President Mohamed Siad Barre in 1991. For this reason, a recent request to include Laas Geel in the UNESCO List of World Heritage sites could not be accepted.

To see more images of Laas Geel and other African rock art sites you can visit the British Museum website containing over 25,000 digital images of the area <http://africanrockart.britishmuseum.org/#/>



Long-horned cattle and other rock art in the Laas Geel complex

©Abdullah Geelah - CC BY-SA 3.0 via Wikimedia Commons





# Historical interleaves in Moroccan manuscripts from Qatar Collections: technical analysis and significance

by Amelie Couvrat Desvergnès



*This current research is part of a more comprehensive study, initiated in 2013, which aims to analyse and identify interleaving materials encountered in Islamic manuscripts. Interleaves are meant to counteract the chemical and physical deteriorations of pigments and inks contained in the illuminations and illustrations and to prevent offsetting onto the opposite pages of the book block.*



View of the Museum of Islamic Art, Doha

Three groups of original and historical interleaves were identified according to three distinct geographical areas: thin sheepskins in 19th century Iran, translucent and gilded papers in Ottoman Turkey and coloured pieces of paper in Morocco. While the results of interleaves in Iranian manuscripts have been recently published (Couvrat Desvergnès, 2015), the author has, since 2014, been focusing on the study of Moroccan manuscripts. The project is funded by the Islamic Manuscript Association (March 2015). The uniqueness of this research not only lies in the materials themselves but also highlights, in Qatar, the existence of collections of cultural and historical interest.

During the 16<sup>th</sup> and until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, in Morocco, some copies of *Dalā'il al-Khayrāt* were supplied with coloured interleaves. The *Dalā'il al-Khayrāt* or *Guidelines to the Blessings* is one of the most widespread prayer books among Muslims. It was written by *Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Sulayman al-Jazūlī*

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(d.1465 CE), a Moroccan mystic Sufi. The text, divided in seven parts, consists of long series of prayers and blessings over the Prophet Muhammad, to be recited during the seven days of the week. From Morocco, the book was disseminated as far as to Southeast Asia and took local appearance in the book covers, text layouts, and illustration designs. Some copies display double representations of the graves of the Prophet and his companions, the caliphs 'Umar and Abū Bakr, on one side and the interior of the Mosque of Medina, on the other side. Full-paged coloured interleaves were placed between the double illustrated folios and strips of cut off paper were laid on the illuminated titles introducing the chapters. These materials were made of paper, toned in a colour ranging from yellow to orange or fuchsia.

With the aim of advancing the knowledge of North African manuscripts and gaining more information on the materials implemented for their production, the dyestuffs used to tone the paper of the interleaves were analysed and identified. The physical features of these pieces, as well as the papers used, were also investigated to give a complete understanding of these particular objects.

The initial project includes seven copies of *Dalā'il al-Khayrāt* which mostly date from the 19th century from collections in Qatar. One copy belongs to the Museum of Islamic Art (MIA) (Fig.1) and the other six are kept at the National Library of Qatar (HC-QNL) (Fig.2).

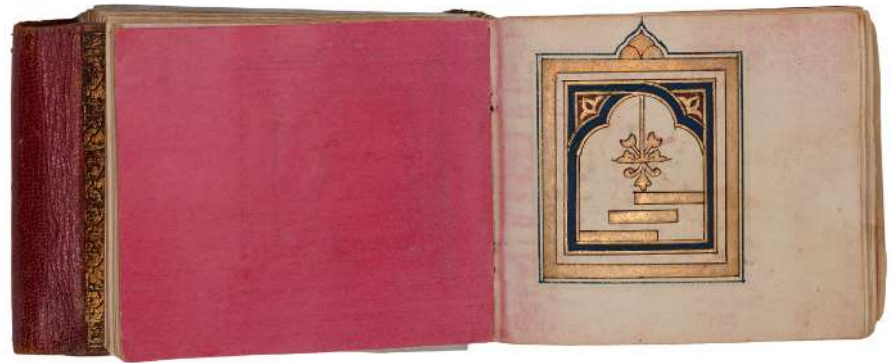
Micro-samples of interleaves, taken from five different manuscripts, were analysed with High Performance Liquid Chromatography (HPLC) at the Royal Institute of Heritage (KIK IRPA) in Brussels.

Safflower (*Carthamus Tinctorius L.*), a natural dye, widely cultivated throughout the whole Mediterranean, was identified in three manuscripts. Safranin and azo dyes, which belong to the early synthetic organic dyes developed from 1859 onwards, were found in two other copies. These results thus reflect the historical evolution of materials used by the end of the 19th century in the production of some Moroccan manuscripts and, the adoption of synthetic dyes coming from Europe.

Conservation issues are also raised since early industrial dyes were unstable in water and fugitive to light. In addition, there were very few technical manuals or standard procedures available on the market for their application and use (Barnett, 2007). Therefore accidents and poor results, such as dye bleeding and staining (Fig. 3), occurred due to a lack of information and knowledge from the local craftsmen in the implementation of these new imported dyes.

The second phase of the project sees the expansion of the study with the addition of seven other manuscripts from the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, dated from the 16th to the 19th centuries.

These were analysed *in-situ* with visible spectrometry in collaboration with IRAMAT-Centre E. Babelon, in France, a joint unit between the National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS) and the University of Orleans, specialising in the analysis of archaeological materials, inks and pigments.



©Museum of Islamic Art

In the copy of *Dalā'il al-Khayrāt*, the full page interleaf, dyed with Safranin, serves to protect the stylized representations of the graves of the Prophet Muhammad and the caliphs 'Umar et Abu Abū Bakr in the Medinan Mosque, MS.420.MIAQ, end of 19th century



The heading interleaf, dyed with safflower, consists of a band of paper terminated by a circular extension to protect the illuminated title and the marginal rosette, HC-QNL 1220, 19th century, Heritage Collection of Qatar National Library, Doha, Qatar



In addition to the scientific analysis of dyes, it is important to highlight the particular significance of these interleaves from codicological and historical perspectives. Until recently, interleaves were disregarded by scholars since they were considered to be modern alterations placed by restorers or bookbinders. But, thorough study, combined with careful examination, literature searches, and fruitful exchanges with other scholars, revealed that these materials are in fact original, part of the *Dalā'il al-Khayrāt* production and demonstrate an early interest for book preservation from Moroccan craftsmen.

In Morocco, the prayer book has been considered as a sort of alternative to the Qur'an, both text and illustrations being worshiped for centuries (Witkam, 2007). A comparison is made with silk curtains found in some Western manuscripts-religious and secular-during the medieval and modern periods. A scholarly study has revealed that these materials not only constituted physical protection against pigments degradations but also played the role of emotional and symbolic barrier for powerful figurative representations (Sciacca, 2007). Therefore, it is most likely that interleaves in *Dalā'il al-Khayrāt*, served the same meaningful goal of physical and ritual interaction between the readers and the book. The whole findings, soon to be published, will open further interesting prospects for researchers in codicology and art history.



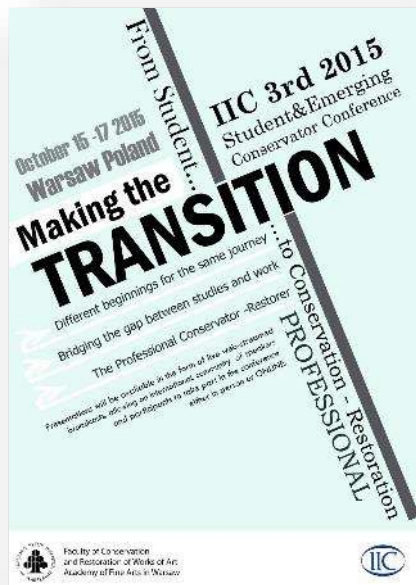
©Museum of Islamic Art

The folio on the left hand side shows bleeding of dye coming from the opposite interleaf toned with Safranin, MS.420.MIAQ, end of 19th century, Museum of Islamic Art, Doha, Qatar



**Amélie Couvrat Desvergnès** has been working as a senior book and paper conservator in the Museum of Islamic Art of Qatar since 2012. She holds a MA in Conservation from Paris Pantheon Sorbonne and a MA in Museology from École du Louvre in France. Alongside her involvement in the conservation activities of the conservation laboratory, she undertook a research on Islamic manuscript materials in collaboration with several European institutions and UCL Qatar.





# IIC Student & Emerging Conservator Conference: Making the Transition

by Beatriz Torres Insúa

*Organised by the International Institute for Conservation in co-operation with the Faculty of Conservation and Restoration of Works of Art of the Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts, the third IIC Student & Emerging Conservator Conference: Making the Transition took place the 15th and 16th of October 2015 in Warsaw, Poland. After one year of intensive work of preparation, this conference gathered people from twenty different countries that came to listen or to be listened.*

The topics of this third Student & Emerging Conservator meeting concerned students who are at the beginning or in the middle of their conservation studies and are now questioning themselves if their study programs are what they really want and if their content is really fulfilling its expectations.

To students who are about to finish their studies and would like to know what will happen after their university bubble is popped: will it will be easy to find a job or is it better to continue studying and look for scholarships or internships? The conference was also dedicated to young professionals who have just started their careers, and, last but not least, this meeting also welcomed professionals with many more years of experience in the conservation field who were willing to talk about their stories, and in some cases inspire the younger conservators.

***“...We are a connected, flexible and innovative generation of conservators, of course we all need to survive in this field but we should all think positive and support each other to create the bridges between cultures because, honestly, conservation is not just about the work on objects, in the end it is also about respecting other cultures in the sense of connecting people worldwide...”***

***Kevin Kohler, Conservator and assistant to the IIC Student & Emerging Conservators Conference***

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Let's go back to the first day, when we were received by our friendly hosts, who showed us the way to the registration table, where the room was quite full, and some people already knew each other; others started to get to know new colleagues while some preferred being alone and observe.

For this first day the organisers had prepared tours to the conservation departments of different cultural institutions: The National Library of Poland, The State Archaeological Museum, The National Film Archive and The Royal Castle among others. We were taken to our destinations by public transport, shepherded by the students of the Faculty of Conservation, who during our short trip kindly explained to us some facts about their city and way of life. After lunch it was time to start with one of the three sessions: Different beginnings for the same journey.

Four young conservators: Gaby Irving, Sofia Johansson, Eva Christiane von Reumont and Anna Gołębiowska told us how they started their conservation studies and showed us that studying or having internships abroad helped them to develop new skills and broaden their vision as conservators and as human beings, and that sometimes not being in your own country could be a tough experience if the language of the studies is not your mother tongue and that, occasionally, they found that the programme they chose was not as interdisciplinary as they thought.

The duration of the conservation studies was also brought to this panel: how long do conservators need to study in order to be "ready" for the outside world? It seems that there are different opinions about this: are five years not enough? Are six years too long? It depends on every person and the goals we want to achieve.

On Friday 16th October we had session 2 and 3: Bringing the gap between studies and work and The conservation-restoration professional.

The first one moderated by the conservator Julia Burdajewicz present four panellists: Ana Alba and Lisa Edgren via Skype plus Adam Klupś and the author of this review.

Some conclusions were that internships do help to smooth our transition into the working world and, if we receive support from our supervisors or professors, the opportunities for jobs are easier to find. Networking would be the watch word of this session, and being active, looking for opportunities, being curious about what other conservators do, taking on projects, even if we feel that we are not ready, visiting conservation labs, joining conservator associations and assisting at conferences were some of the advice we heard.

The session 3 offered us as guests conservators Sagita Mirjam Sunara, Sarah Staniforth via Skype and Jennifer Booth, Susan Corr and Tiarna Doherty. They presented their opinions and life lessons of more years of professional conservation experience, and the session was moderated by Anna Czajka. It was said here that in most cases the opportunities won't come to us but we need to look for them and that going abroad sometimes is not so easy - therefore it is not a must, and we can also develop our carriers in our countries.

The involvement of the audience in this conference was very strong, many questions were asked and answered in a satisfying manner.

There was not any formula given in order to select the ideal conservation program, or to get a job, or whether to decide to continue studying or looking for a job, but lots of ideas, new contacts and even new friends were brought to us with during this conference.



**Beatriz Torres Insúa** is a film and photography conservator graduated from the National School of Conservation, Restoration and Museography in Mexico City and from the Selznick School for Film Preservation in the George Eastman Museum in Rochester. She has lived and worked in Vienna since 2011. Beatriz has worked with different institutions in Mexico and Austria such as the Centro de Capacitación Cinematográfica, Film Archive Austria, the Austrian National Library, the Wien Museum and the Weltmuseum, where she is currently carrying out a project of identification, conservation and restoration of photographic glass plate negatives. Beatriz can be contacted at: [beatriztorresinsua@gmail.com](mailto:beatriztorresinsua@gmail.com)



## Reviews

# Monumental Treasures - XX NKF IIC Nordic Group Congress 21-23 October 2015 Helsinki, Finland

by Jaana Kataja + Maarit Jones



*The IIC Nordic Group (Nordiska konservatorförbundet rf NKF – Pohjoismainen konservattoriiliitto ry) organized the XX NKF Congress, Monumental Treasures Preservation and Conservation in Helsinki, Finland at the National Museum of Finland on 21-23 October 2015.*

The Monumental Treasures theme was a most suitable topic for the celebration of the 20th Nordic congress due to the several ongoing massive conservation projects in

Helsinki including the Parliament Building, the National Library of Finland and the Presidential Palace, the renovation of which was finished in late 2014. These huge projects challenged and offered great working and co-operative opportunities to the different cultural heritage authorities and conservators. In addition to learning about these Finnish projects, congress participants were able to visit some of the locations and hear from the authorities responsible for their work in situ.

The working language was English making the congress internationally accessible. The number of participants was altogether 222 from 14 different countries and every single seat of the National Museum's auditorium was taken!

Following the basic philosophy of other Nordic meetings, the Congress did not focus on a specific area of conservation but rather all conservation fields were represented. There were a total of 26 presentations and an additional 10 posters.

It was a great pleasure to witness how comprehensively the Monumental Treasure theme was handled in the papers; grave monuments, embroidered wall textiles, wall murals, epitaphs and even circus horses were among the topics discussed. A rich Congress publication was created which includes all the presentations as articles. It will be released electronically through NKF Finland's website later this year.

The Congress Committee was honoured to invite and have both the IIC President, Sarah Staniforth and Special Advisor to the Director General of International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM), Jukka Jokilehto to be the Congress's Keynote Speakers. Sarah Staniforth's presentation "Spirit of Place, Management of Historic Places" and Jukka Jokilehto's "Significance and Values of Cultural Heritage" reminded us profoundly of the value, significance

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and appreciation of conservation. These wise and warm-hearted professionals' presentations made the Congress experience feel ever so meaningful.

The co-operation with Metropolia University of Applied Sciences was also an added bonus. Paper conservation students assisted the working group at the Congress and the presentations were streamed to the university via the Internet. This was a great opportunity for engaging future conservators to join the association and to network with the conservation field around the Nordic countries.

The Congress evening event was held at Helsinki City Museum's Hakasalmi Villa, where participants let their hair



© Katja Luoma

Chairperson Charlotta Bylund-Melin (left) and Conny Hansen after her presentation: *Out of Darkness – Investigations of Three Large Scale Renaissance Epitaphs*.

down with retro dancing and refreshments. The NKF Finnish section awarded conservator Lena Wikström's lifelong work in the conservation field with an honorary membership.

Feedback on the Congress content, arrangements and spirit has been flattering and it has definitely made the working group happy and two-year of volunteer work have paid off generously. The next NKF Congress will be held in Iceland in 2018. Finland will host again in 2030. Before that, the Nordic conservation field will continue networking and we hope to increase the collaboration with the IIC to strengthen and share our knowledge.



**Maarit Jones** is Head of the Congress Committee and a Textile Conservator at Helsinki City Museum, Finland

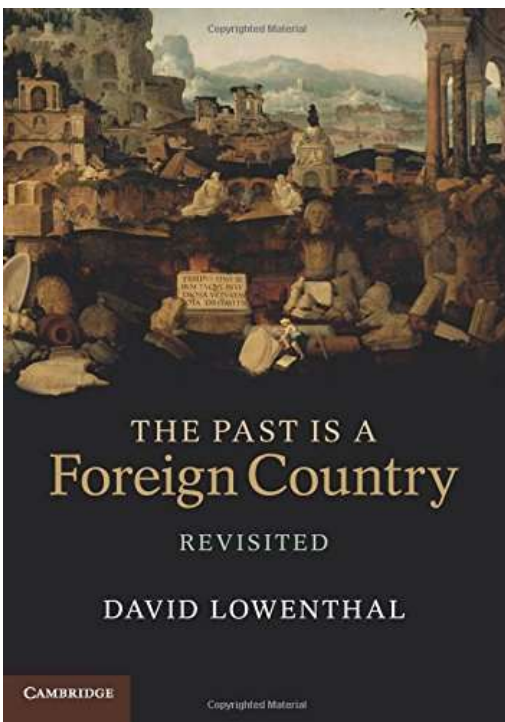
**Jaana Kataja** is the Chairman of NKF Finland and a Textile Conservator at the Museum of Kymenlaakso, Finland



## Book Review

# The Past is a Foreign Country – Revisited by David Lowenthal

Reviewed by Graham Voce



Cambridge University Press, 2015

ISBN 978 052 161 885 0 (paperback) / 978 052 185 142 8 (hardback)

This is not a straightforward conservation book. This book is focused on the past, concepts of the past and the variety of pasts that we perceive, as well as our relationships with these and how we wish to be aware of them, engage with them and value them. The author, David Lowenthal, writes incisively from outside the centre of the conservation profession and sheds essential raking light on attitudes, morals and mores, giving essential context and rationales to more familiar conservation treatments and techniques, analysis, science and preventive and interventive approaches.

This reviewer must relate, firstly, that David Lowenthal was awarded and delivered IIC's Forbes Prize Lecture in 2010 and, secondly, that, as a member of the audience for that lecture, I found that Lowenthal brought fresh angles, unexpected questioning and some radical new thinking that were entirely welcome; this fresh approach suffuses 'The Past is a Foreign Country – Revisited'.

The book is in itself a revisiting of the first iteration of this title, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge University Press, 1985), which famously first opened up our concepts of 'heritage', 'patrimony', the

past (or pasts) and the remembering, and conservation of, these pasts. This first book gave essential depth to thinking around much heritage conservation and cultural historical thinking in the 1980s and 1990s, and its almost deconstructive approach to history took heritage discussions in new, broad and sometimes unexpected directions. He also encapsulated that thinking of the past as 'foreign' or 'strange' – and that, as a writer from outside conservation per se, that first book opened up new angles into the heart of our concepts of 'heritage', 'patrimony', and the past.

So why re-visit and re-write? The title itself is a quote from L P Hartley's 1953 novel *The Go-between*, and Lowenthal includes in his introduction to this second version, "How my past became foreign". This is a revising, a revisiting, by the author of his initial points in the light of his own ageing and in the light of new technologies. He covers, as in the first iteration, Wanting the Past, then Disputing the Past, Knowing the Past, Remaking the Past and then, as an epilogue, the Past in the Present. Although illustrating how his move to the UK from the USA affected



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his own view of how the past and history / heritage are perceived, the book also shows how recent changes in technology change the way we see – and perceive and want - the past, and how that our once-familiar pasts, for us all, are now foreign. How foreign now seem black-and-white television and films, vinyl records, how foreign a world without computers and IT to frame life, how foreign those past, recent, times seem when perceived through these new technologies. Lowenthal: “Ageing shifts the balance between our own and other peoples’ memories”.

So is this approach of use to conservation professionals? Of interest? Of relevance? There are things that this book will *not* help with: processes of conservation or restoration or the science behind corrosion or the chemistry behind a particular pigment, for example. But in giving a context to conservation work of any type, in providing insights into the ways the past is seen, has been seen, and how the past is analysed (and why), this book is invaluable.

As Lowenthal notes, “This book has multiple points of departure and destination” – and if one is uncomfortable with the very wide range in the approach of a hugely energetic polymath, then this is not a book for you. Sometimes the book reads as the most magnificent discursion on a fascination with the past. But, if one sees the role of conservation as the retention and valuing of as much output of human endeavour as we can, so that we may treasure, wonder, learn and move on, then this is a superb survey. Covering almost the whole field of what we as a species have made, good and bad, and how we deal with this making and its outputs (or indeed how we do *not* deal with them), this is a book of great range and richness and offers an intensely personal view that always informs and challenges.

Lowenthal’s sheer energy, his depth of coverage and his insights are accessible, fascinating and essential reading.



**Graham Voce** is IIC’s Executive Secretary, responsible for the IIC’s Office’s day-to-day workings. Since taking on this role in 2004, Graham has been involved with most of IIC’s activities including working with the organisation of (to date) five IIC Congresses and three Student & Emerging Conservator Conferences, as well as other IIC events, activities and publications. Graham studied both Landscape Architecture and English Literature to BA (hons) degree level, is a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London and a member of a number of heritage organisations; he has also been involved in a televised conservation architecture and building project. Based in London, Graham previously worked as the Office Manager of a leading not-for profit sector recruitment agency and, before that, in publications and video editorial work in the world of corporate finance.



## IIC News

### Images wanted! A request for images of conservators at work from the IIC Office

Calling on all IIC members - The IIC Office needs photographs and images of conservators at work for use in awareness raising and in promotion of the work of the conservation profession and the international network of heritage professionals that is IIC. These will be used on the website, in promotional literature and on the stands that IIC takes during the Congress, Student and Emerging Conservator Conferences and other conferences.

**What are we looking for?** Images of practical conservation in action – photographs that show what we do in all its detail, whether this is a painting being worked on, a ceramic object, a mosaic floor, a tapestry, a sculpture and so on. Images showing finely detailed work – hands holding scalpels, needles, brushes or other tools as work is carried out – are particularly welcome.

Images need to be copyright-free, thus enabling the most widespread use. They cannot portray children, or easily identifiable people (unless they have given their permission; a roomful of people or a staged conference photo is probably OK). The item being conserved should not be visible enough to be seen as a whole and the photographer should have expressed their agreement that the image can be freely used without acknowledgement.

If you want to help send images to: [iic@iiconservation.org](mailto:iic@iiconservation.org) – or via a file transfer or file-sharing programme such as *WeTransfer* or *DropBox*.



### David Saunders is first recipient of Getty Rothschild Fellowship

LOS ANGELES – The Getty and the Rothschild Foundation announced the creation of the Getty Rothschild Fellowship, supporting innovative scholarship in the history of art, collecting, and conservation, using the collection and resources of both institutions.

The fellowship offers art historians, museum professionals, or conservators the opportunity to research and study at both the Getty in Los Angeles and at Waddesdon Manor in Buckinghamshire, England.

The inaugural fellow is IIC Vice-President Dr David Saunders, a foremost expert in the area of conservation science who will work on museum and gallery lighting during the fellowship.

Jim Cuno, president and CEO of the J. Paul Getty Trust said: “We are pleased to award the inaugural Getty Rothschild Fellowship to Dr Saunders, whose work in museum lighting has been of long-standing interest to the Getty Conservation Institute and the Getty Museum.”

Dr Saunders is a former principal scientist at The National Gallery in London and keeper of conservation, documentation, and research at the British Museum. He is also Vice President of the IIC and an independent researcher currently writing what will be a seminal book about museum and gallery lighting. Waddesdon will serve as a case study for his upcoming publication. Dr Saunders will be at the Getty from January to March 2017 and at Waddesdon Manor from April to June 2017.

The selection process for the Getty Rothschild fellowship includes a number of criteria, such as whether the applicant’s work would benefit from proximity to the Getty and Rothschild collections. Fellowships will be for up to eight months, with the time split equally between the Getty and Waddesdon Manor. Fellows will also receive a stipend during their time at both locations.

The fellowship is administered by the Getty Foundation.

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## **Lo Stato Dell'Arte - XIV IGIIC Annual Congress, 20-22 October 2016, L'Aquila, Italy**

ROME - The Italian IIC Group (IGIIC) is pleased to announce the 14<sup>th</sup> edition of the annual Congress *LO STATO DELL'ARTE* which will take place in the city of L'Aquila, 20-22 October 2016.

Now in its 14<sup>th</sup> year, the event aims to promote a productive exchange in the field of conservation/restoration maintaining its habitual multi-thematic formula, as well as allowing a broader view of the field to participants coming from different disciplines.

The IGIIC Congress aims to promote and encourage presentations focusing on comparison of techniques and practical problem-solving solutions to conservation issues from both method and material choice perspective.

The Congress will be divided into five thematic areas:

### **The Reconstruction Years**

Examples of restoration intervention carried out on heritage sites damaged by natural disasters or by other emergency situations.

### **Planning and intervention problems**

Restoration interventions showcasing critical choices made by experts concerning materials and practical methods.

In this session the planning stage of conservation/restoration projects will be highlighted with particular reference to the interactions between historians, scientists, restorers. The adoption of innovative methods as a result of scientific breakthrough will also be discussed.

### **Diagnostic, research and applied studies**

In this session examples of studies applied to specific intervention problems will be discussed. Examples will include case studies where laboratory research in diagnostics have been directly applied to conservation projects or have influenced the choice of materials and the technologies employed.

### **Preventive conservation**

This session will focus on reduction or mitigation of future decay of cultural heritage, with discussions on security, climate control; organisation and management of storage and emergency plan, staff development.

### **Sustainability of cultural heritage conservation**

We will discuss the environmental, social and economic sustainability of the Conservation and Restoration sector.

Discussion topics will include the use of new non-toxic materials as well as the development of new knowledge coming from research in the human science, information technology and material science fields.

Contributions will explore possible cost reductions achievable in storage, climate control and digitization strategies.

Every year the Congress is an opportunity for Fellows and non-Fellows to meet and exchange thoughts on *Lo Stato dell'Arte* – the current situation of the field of conservation/restoration in Italy. Over the years, participation has increased and now includes emerging conservators and students, making this event one of the most important in the sector.

To book a place visit the IGIIC website at: <http://www.igiic.org/?p=1964>



## **Congratulations to IIC Fellow Dr Ian D MacLeod!**

After 38 years working at the Western Australian Museum, Dr Ian MacLeod has retired and was conferred the title of Fellow of the Western Australian Museum. This is a conspicuous and rare honour conferred on only very few people. The only other living Museum fellow is John Bannister. Dr MacLeod's many awards have included being elected a Fellow of the Royal Australian Chemical Institute, a Fellow of the International Institute for the Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works, a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Technological and Engineering Sciences, a Fellow of the Royal Society of Chemistry, and a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland.

IIC wishes Dr MacLeod all the best in this new chapter of his life.

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## Call for Papers – News in Conservation

News in Conservation (*NiC*), the e-paper from the International Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works, is looking for contributions in the form of articles, long features, news, and reviews to be published in one of the future issues. Topics of interest can be discussed with the editor and can range from treatment papers to opinion pieces.

*NiC* enjoys a wider international audience from very diverse backgrounds. Published six times per year in digital format, it is delivered via an email alert to members and freely downloadable from the IIC website in open access.

*NiC* is an evolving project, one that exists thanks to the support of authors and writers that contribute articles and other informative material guaranteeing a steady flow of relevant content. IIC aims to mould our e- paper to fit our community's evolving interests and preferences; for this reason we invite comments and feedback and we maintain a continuous link with our social media activities.

Since being launched as an electronic publication, *NiC* has been growing steadily and in the past year has increased its readership and its overall reach. *NiC* has been praised on various social media networks by comments left by users and often cited as a good example of successful conservation outreach effort.

With continuous help and support, *NiC* will continue to deliver conservation news to the world of conservation, aiming to grow and reach further afield.

If you want to contribute please contact Barbara Borghese

[news@iiconservation.org](mailto:news@iiconservation.org)

To download a free issue visit: <https://www.iiconservation.org/publications/nic>



## What's on + NiC's List

### Call for papers

#### **New Zealand Conservators of Cultural Materials Conference 2016**

11 October, 2016

Wellington, New Zealand

Call for papers deadline: Friday 12th August 2016

For more information visit: <http://nzccm.org.nz/>

#### **43rd Annual CAC-ACCR Conference and Workshops**

6 -10 June, 2017

Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada

Deadline for abstracts: Monday, 31 October, 2016

For more information visit: <https://www.cac-accr.ca/conferences>

#### **The Shock of the New: Modern Materials, Media and Methods**

8-10 February, 2017

Deadline for submissions: Friday, 28 October, 2016

Melbourne, Australia

To submit abstracts write to:

[kpalmer@museum.vic.gov.au](mailto:kpalmer@museum.vic.gov.au)

#### **9th Nordic Conservation PhD Student Colloquium**

24-25 November, 2016

Deadline for submissions: Friday, 24 October, 2016

Oslo, Norway

To submit an abstract write to:

[d.l.v.d.meulen@iakh.ui.no](mailto:d.l.v.d.meulen@iakh.ui.no)

#### **11th Triennial Meeting for Conservators of the Baltic States - Changing contexts: from environment to ideas**

24-27 May 2017

Tartu, Estonia

Deadline for submissions: 1 October 2016

For more information see:

<https://www.iiconservation.org/node/6476>

**A comprehensive list of events taking place around the world, in and around the field of conservation. Write to [news@iiconservation.org](mailto:news@iiconservation.org) if you wish to add your event**

#### **Society for Imaging Science and Technology - Archiving 2017 Conference**

15-18 May 2017

Riga, Latvia

Deadline for submission: 1 November 2016

For more information click [here](#)

### Conferences/Seminars

#### **Saving the Now: Crossing Boundaries to Conserve Contemporary Works – IIC Congress**

12-16 September 2016

Los Angeles, USA

To book [click here](#)

#### **The 11<sup>th</sup> Islamic Manuscript Conference: Sufism and Islamic Manuscript Culture**

13-15 September 2016

Magdalene College, Cambridge, UK

For more information [click here](#)

#### **3rd international IPM Conference in Museums, Archives, Libraries and Historic Buildings**

13-15 September 2016

Paris, France

For more information go

to: <http://www.alphavisa.com/ipm/2016/en/>

#### **Light | Colour | Structure – The 9th AICCM Book, Paper and Photograph Materials Symposium**

10-12 October 2016

Canberra, Australia

For more information about this event

visit: <https://aiccm.org.au/>

#### **Engaging Conservation: Collaboration Across Disciplines**

6-8 October 2016

Philadelphia, United States

For more information [click here](#)

**Problems connected with Keeping and Conservation of Collections in Museums**

12- 14 October 2016

Komorniki, Poland

For more information

visit: <http://www.muzeum-szreniawa.pl/>**Making, sustaining, breaking – the politics of heritage and culture**

12-14 October 2016

Heidelberg, Germany

For more information visit: <http://www.asia-europe.uni-heidelberg.de/en/>**Revivify – 2016 AICCM Paintings Symposium**

26-28 October 2016

National Portrait Gallery, Canberra, Australia

To learn more about this event [click here](#)**Future for Religious Heritage Biennial Conference**

9-11 November 2016

Vicenza, Italy

For more information [click here](#)**Europeana Space 3rd International Conference :****Cultural Heritage: Reuse, Remake, Reimagine**

21- 22 November 2016

Berlin, Germany

For more information [click here](#)**Catastrophe and Challenge: Cultural Heritage in Post-Conflict Recovery**

5-7 December 2016

Berlin and Cottbus, Germany

For more information

visit: <http://asemus.museum/>**Paintings on Copper (and other metal plates): Production, Degradation and Conservation Issues**

27-28 January 2017

Valencia, Spain

For more information write

to: [conservacion&restauracion@upv.es](mailto:conservacion&restauracion@upv.es)**IADA International Symposium : From Generation to Generation – Sharing Knowledge, Connecting People**

3-5 May 2017

Oslo, Norway

For more information [click here](#)**Cultural Heritage: Disaster Preparedness, Response and Recovery**

3-4 November 2016

Lisboa, Portugal

For more information [click here](#)**Courses/Workshops****The Illumination of Museum Collections**

10 November, 2016

National Gallery of Art, Washington DC

For more information

visit: <http://www.conservation-us.org/illumination-of-collections>**Workshop on Indoor Climate Risks**

17-18 October, 2016

Cambridge, UK

For more information click [here](#)**Workshop on pigment identification**

30 August, 2 September, 2016

Amsterdam, The Netherlands

For more information click [here](#)

**For more information about these conferences and courses see the IIC website: [www.iiconservation.org](http://www.iiconservation.org)**