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IIC's Round Table on Climate Change and Museum Collections

No. 8, October 2008

# News in Conservation

The newspaper of the International Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works



## IIC Congress hailed a success

The 2008 IIC Congress scored a notable success on its return to London after 41 years. The theme "Conservation and Access" attracted over 460 delegates from 40 countries to the venue at Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre, opposite Westminster Abbey. IIC Secretary-General, David Leigh, said "This has undoubtedly been a pivotal event. Conservators addressed the topic from every angle: it is clear that they are the heritage professionals who are taking the lead in defining access: conservators are exploring the boundaries of collecting, what it means to present heritage to the public and how they can make heritage available and meaningful to current and future generations using the science and skills at their disposal."

Delegates enjoyed over 40 presentations and an extensive poster display, alongside a trade fair and evening receptions at the Museum of London, the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum. In conjunction with the congress the IIC also ran a new initiative "Dialogues for a New Century" to examine issues and concerns in our modern world that are affected by or affect conservation of heritage. The inaugural event took place during the congress at the National Gallery and was a roundtable discussion on the challenges presented by

global climate change. For a full review of this event see page 3.

The social highlight of the conference was a riverboat trip down the Thames, accompanied by good food and music. On the last day delegates set off for tours of National Trust properties, including Uppark, Petworth, Knole and Scotney, as well as London museum conservation facilities and Westminster Abbey. The whole event was an excellent opportunity for conservation professionals from varied backgrounds and fields of expertise to meet, discuss and share their ideas.

Summing up, Jerry Podany, President of IIC said "The conservation profession is facing increasingly complex challenges today, including the demands placed on us by climate change and the increasing demands for access to cultural property. This conference has provided a conduit for openly exploring those challenges and the potential solutions to them. Clearly, given the overwhelmingly positive response to IIC's efforts, the need for such a dialogue was significant and we intend to continue to support and encourage such communication through our programming."

*News in Conservation* is pleased to announce that the next IIC Congress will take place in Istanbul in 2010.



Jerry Podany opening the IIC Congress on Monday 15th September 2008

To mark the first day of the Congress, a drinks reception was held at the British Museum



## Ethiopia's Aksum Obelisk successfully reinstalled

Unloading part of the Aksum Obelisk



© N. Bierke, UNESCO

UNESCO teams have successfully reinstalled the Aksum Obelisk in its original location at the Aksum World Heritage site in Ethiopia. The 24m high, 152 ton stele is the second largest at the Aksum site and has become an important symbol of Ethiopian identity. The 1700 year old obelisk was taken to Rome in 1937. Agreements between both countries in 1956 and 1997 have now led to its return to Ethiopia.

Its reinstallation, started in 2005, was funded by the Italian government and has been the result of extensive technical planning from UNESCO and partners in both countries. In preparation for the return of the stele in three segments, the Ethiopian government modernised the airport and reinforced several bridges.

An inauguration ceremony took place close to the turn of Ethiopia's millennium on the 12th September this year. Attending the ceremony, UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Culture, Françoise Rivière stated "The reinstallation of the Aksum Obelisk is a source of pride for UNESCO. It is a technical achievement but it is also a source of pride because it shows that cultural heritage can be a true instrument for reconciliation."

Ongoing conservation work on the stele

will be complete by mid-October and the obelisk will be unveiled from its scaffolding by the end of December 2008. Following this, an ongoing program of involvement between UNESCO and Ethiopia will see assistance in the management of the site and the training of conservation professionals.

Mounting of the third block in June 2008



© Paolo Viesi, UNESCO

# Editorial

Hello from your new editor! I am Lucy Wrapson, a paintings conservator based in Cambridge, UK and I am thrilled to be taking over as editor for *News in Conservation*. I am keen to continue *News in Conservation's* tradition of representing conservators from all disciplines working all over the world.

In this issue we have a centrefold from Guo Zhan, vice president of ICOMOS and ICOMOS/China, which highlights the enormous challenges faced by cultural heritage professionals in the aftermath of the devastating Sichuan earthquake in June. The earthquake was terrible in terms of loss of life and has also caused extensive damage to hundreds of historical sites and museums.

**"I am keen to continue *News in Conservation's* tradition of representing conservators from all disciplines working all over the world."**

This past month has seen the IIC Congress on "Conservation and Access" and its associated event, the round table on *Climate Change and Museum Collections* held in London. This vibrant discussion was the first in a series of events put together by the IIC, entitled "Dialogues for the New Century." To bring a flavour of the round table, we have included a review of the event on page 3, a full transcript of which will be available on the IIC website.

Many thanks are due to Christina Rozeik for all her hard work as founding editor for *News in Conservation* over the past two years. I hope that *News in Conservation* will continue to progress and develop with input from IIC members. As this is your magazine, please help to define it with your letters, comments, articles and other contributions of your choice. Send your feedback and items of interest to [news@iiconservation.org](mailto:news@iiconservation.org)  
Lucy Wrapson  
Editor



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# News in brief...

## Mondrian's last work under the spotlight

"Victory Boogie Woogie", Mondrian's final, unfinished painting has been the subject of a two year technical study, the results of which have been presented in a recent symposium in The Hague.

New light was shed on the Victory Boogie Woogie's creation with the findings dispelling the idea that Mondrian worked according to predetermined plans and rigid geometrical patterns. It transpires that the painting is highly complex: although the viewer sees almost six hundred compositional elements, few of these were present in the planning stage of the work. Each element consists of two, three or more layers of paint, often in different shades. Mondrian also used pieces of tape to adjust and develop the composition. In some cases, as many as seven layers have been found.

The work was done by a joint team from the Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage (ICN), The Gemeentemuseum in The Hague and the Mobile Laboratory (MOLAB) sponsored by Eu-Artech. For more information see: <http://www.icn.nl/>

## Chairman of the Directory Board of ICOM-CC retires

Jan Wouters of the Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage (KIKIRPA), Brussels, and Chairman of the Directory Board of ICOM-CC, the conservation arm of ICOM, took early retirement on the 1st September, though he intends to stay fully active in the field of conservation. He will not only continue lecturing, writing and teaching, but will also act as an expert for the European Commission and work as a Consultant to The Getty Conservation Institute in Los Angeles as part of their Asian Organic Colorants project. This aims to identify organic pigments and to study the painting technique in Chinese wall paintings from the 5th to the 15th centuries. For more information on this project see: <http://www.getty.edu/conservation/science/asian/index.html>.

## European Commission proposes reduced rate VAT for conservation sector

On 7th July, the European Commission made a proposal to change the VAT Directive 2006/112/EC so as to provide EU Member States with the flexibility to apply reduced VAT rates for some specific services on a permanent basis. These comprise the so called "labour-intensive" services which have been broadened to include "Renovation and maintenance services provided to places of worship, cultural heritage and historical monuments, as recognised by Member States."

At present and until 2010, goods and services are subject to a rate of at least 15% with Member States able to apply reduced rates of not less than 5% to goods and services set

out in a restricted list. These rules have not, however, been applied consistently across all member states, nor has the restricted list been the same. The proposed amendment, due to be decided on in the European Parliament next year, will redress these inconsistencies and offer reduced rate VAT to many aspects of the conservation sector, though the application of reductions will still remain optional for Member States.

## Turkish dam threatens heritage site with flooding

A Roman bath archaeological site at Allianoi in Western Turkey will disappear under water forever as soon as the Turkish authorities decide to close the valves of the Yortanlı Irrigation Dam, completed in summer 2007. The large and well preserved site was an important healing centre from as early as 300BC right up until the 11th century but so far only 20% of the site has been uncovered and documented. Local campaigners and the international conservation community have managed to postpone the planned flooding of the site to allow further documentation and a Special Scientific Committee, established in 2006 by the Turkish Ministry of Culture, has recommended a series of alternative conservation measures such as the protection of the site by an earth wall or the relocation of some of the most important structures.

## Antiquities Database for Middle East

A new web-based geographic database of antiquities is being developed as part of a project to help protect and manage important archaeological sites in the Middle East. The project, run in partnership between the Getty Conservation Institute, the World Monuments Fund, the Jordanian Department of Antiquities and the Iraq State board of Antiquities and Heritage, was established to aid the inventorying, monitoring and managing of archaeological sites and monuments, to help protect them for future generations.

The Arabic-English database will incorporate geographic information systems as well as standardised information on sites such as their characteristics and condition. It will not only help with the monitoring of sites, but will also address the impact of nearby construction projects. It comes at a pertinent time for the archaeologically rich area, as looting and destruction of sites in the wake of the Iraq war has put tremendous pressure on their preservation. In Jordan the recent influx of hundreds of thousands of Iraqi refugees and regional investment has resulted in a development boom which could threaten sites.

A prototype of the system will be installed in the Jordanian Department of Antiquities offices in spring 2009, with development of the Iraqi version beginning after the Jordanian system is fully deployed in autumn next year.

# Sheep support Canterbury cause

A trustee of the Save Canterbury Cathedral Appeal and former High Sheriff of Kent, Amanda Cottrell, exercised her ancient right as a Freeman of the City of London last month to drive a herd of sheep across London Bridge in order to raise awareness of the Save Canterbury Cathedral Appeal. The well behaved sheep drew much media attention to the £50 million

appeal, which was launched in October 2006 to fund a major conservation and development project at the Cathedral. It includes re-leading the roof, shown here, and conservation and cleaning of internal decoration, external masonry, and the stained glass.



Images courtesy of Jason Doria Photography

# Climate change and museum collections

On 17 September, in parallel to the IIC London congress, Jerry Podany, President of the IIC opened the inaugural event in a new series of discussions entitled "Dialogues for the New Century: Round Table discussions on the conservation of cultural heritage in a changing world". These sessions aim to raise awareness and initiate discussion regarding current issues and concerns which influence and are influenced by heritage conservation. It was therefore apposite that the inaugural event, held at The National Gallery in London, tackled one of the biggest challenges of our times: climate change.

Jerry Podany stressed the need to begin a dialogue on the subject of climate change in relation to cultural heritage to dispel scepticism and increase the profile within the profession, not least among funders: "There are many very large concerns and issues that will affect conservation, that need to be addressed, that don't necessarily fit in the common check-boxes of traditional funding." He added that "It is at our peril and the peril of the heritage we claim to protect and preserve, if we greet these challenges with indifference."

There followed a series of presentations on the subject by the group of distinguished speakers, introduced by Sarah Staniforth, Historic Properties Director at The National Trust.

**"Conservators and scientists, together with curators, need to work together to develop 'damage functions' for a range of collection materials. Once we have these, we can model the links between damage and the environment." May Cassar, Director, Centre for Sustainable Heritage, University College London**

The capacity audience heard first from Professor Cristina Sabbioni, about the work of the European Commission funded Noah's Ark Project, a collaboration of researchers from across European member states coordinated by the Institute of Atmospheric Sciences and Climate in Italy. The project has been investigating the impact of various climate variables, such as temperature, precipitation and relative humidity, on aspects of cultural heritage, and has been predicting their impact in the future based on climate change models. Focusing on outdoor cultural heritage, the team's work showed that damage will be caused by changing humidity, increased precipitation and high temperatures, right across European heritage sites. This is mapped and published in a Vulnerability Atlas and Guidelines which show the threat of climate change on the built heritage and cultural landscape of Europe and proposes adaptation strategies for

Jerry Podany, IIC President, introducing the Climate Change and Museum Collections Roundtable on September 17



Jane Henderson from Cardiff University putting a question to the panel

cultural heritage management.

May Cassar, Director at the Centre for Sustainable Heritage, University College London, detailed the impacts of changing climate on the indoor environment, and stressed that it too would be vulnerable from fluctuations and extremes of relative humidity and temperature, mould and pollutants. She called for a better understanding of the link between damage and environmental change so that decisions on the care of collections, environmental specifications and energy use can have a strong scientific basis.

Professor Cassar observed that most of the work done on quantifying environmental damage focused on the outdoor environment and would not translate meaningfully indoors. She summarised the scientific study that has been done on changes in indoor variables on materials, but called for more work to be undertaken: "Conservators and scientists, together with curators, need to work together to develop 'damage functions' for a range of collection materials. Once we have these, we can model the links between damage and the environment." She stressed the importance of systematic monitoring of indoor environmental parameters to provide the necessary information to create computer models that can predict the effect of changing weather on the indoor environment. She also moved the debate closer to home, addressing some of the ways in which conservation professionals could reduce their carbon emissions.

**"You should argue with your Directors, and bring forth the evidence, because I think they're ready to listen."**

**Sir Nicholas Serota, Director of Tate**

James M. Reilly talked about the work at the Image Permanence Institute in New York where they have used computer models to develop a series of 'preservation metrics' based on accurate measurements of environmental variables. These can be used to address how much damage may be occurring to collection objects, in order to optimise their environment, but also to predict damage under more extreme scenarios. He argued that "it is both the interest and the responsibility of museums to monitor, understand, and manage their environments in as precise and efficient a manner as possible", and that by doing so they would reduce their own impact on climate change. He compared environmental data from twenty years ago, with recent data and showed that the related preservation metrics indicate a significant increase in rates of various forms of decay. This is due not just to increases in temperature and humidity, but also to increases in extreme fluctuations in these.

In his presentation, Michael C. Henry, Principal Engineer/Architect with Watson & Henry Associates in New Jersey, considered the dilemma of how to resolve being good stewards for collections, yet still reduce the impact of climate management within museums on energy use and carbon emissions. He highlighted the importance of well designed buildings which do not rely heavily on environmental control systems, but can provide light control, ventilation and moisture management naturally through use of good design and appropriate building materials. He called for a re-examination into the interior conditions necessary in order to provide cost-effective longevity to collections and stressed the need for site-specific data to inform the setting of interior environmental criteria and the targeting of low-tech strategies to improve environmental management.

In the final presentation, the Director of Tate, Sir Nicholas Serota, spoke about using the issue of climate change as an

opportunity to start running institutions differently. As public museums exist by virtue of having established a public trust, he felt it was only appropriate that these reflect, respond to, and in some instances, lead public opinion. In practical terms this involves evaluation of carbon footprints, efficient use and sustainable sourcing of resources, but critically, also the collection of data and additional research into managing collections efficiently, as was stressed in the other presentations. He described his involvement with a new working party on climate change led by national museum directors in conjunction with conservators from across the country.



Sir Nicholas Serota, Director of Tate, addressing the audience

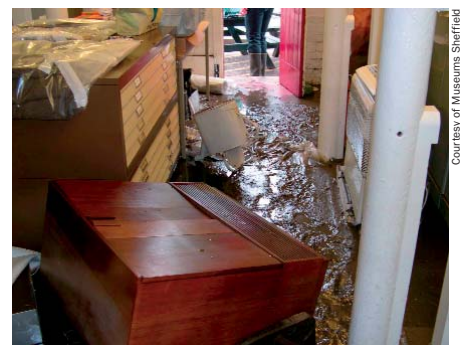
**"It is both the interest and the responsibility of museums to monitor, understand, and manage their environments in as precise and efficient manner as possible." James M. Reilly, Director, Image Permanence Institute, Rochester, New York**

The presentations were followed by a lively question and answer session chaired by Sarah Staniforth. After putting questions from the audience to the panel, she concluded by asking them what was the single most important piece of advice they could give. Sir Nicholas Serota responded, "You should argue with your Directors, and bring forth the evidence, because I think they're ready to listen". For a full transcript of the question and answer session, and the presentations see the IIC website on [www.iiconservation.org](http://www.iiconservation.org).

The IIC is pleased to have been able to facilitate dialogue on this important topic. "The round table has begun the discussion of a very pressing issue for all conservation professionals. We are facing a particularly difficult set of challenges, both professionally and personally, which can only be successfully met through collaborative efforts and open communication among all of us concerned with the preservation of heritage," commented Jerry Podany. "The topic has merged seamlessly with the IIC's successful congress on Conservation and Access and I would say that given the positive response to this congress, the IIC has provided a forum to address one of the most pertinent topics for our time."

*The event was made possible by the generous support of the Samuel Kress Foundation; Suzanne Deal Booth, Booth Heritage Foundation; Tom Pritzker and the Hyatt Regency Hotels; Julian Hills, The Ant Farm; the Foundation of the American Institute for Conservation; the National Gallery in London; and the many members of the IIC world wide.*

Flooded museum store, Sheffield, UK. Extreme weather events, such as the flash flooding which occurred in Sheffield in June 2007, may become more frequent as a result of climate change



Courtesy of Museums Sheffield

**News in Conservation spoke to Guo Zhan, vice president of ICOMOS and ICOMOS/China about the effects of the Sichuan earthquake and its impact on cultural heritage.**

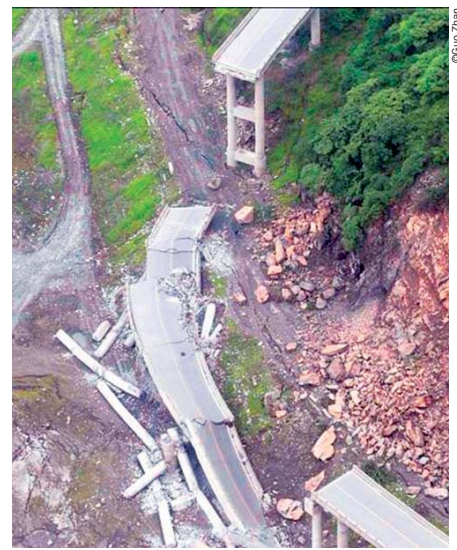


# Heritage in the aftermath of China's earthquake



©Guo Zhan

A scene of destruction in the province



©Guo Zhan

Collapsed viaduct

**The earthquake that struck Sichuan Province on May 12th 2008 was by far the most destructive seismic event in China since the Tangshan earthquake in 1976.**

The province of Sichuan is one of the most agriculturally rich areas in western China, and was historically known as the "Land of Abundance". The epicentre of the earthquake was in Wenchuan, a mountainous area. Around 603,000 people lived in the region most violently affected by the earthquake. Here the shaking was estimated as having a Modified Mercalli Intensity of X: Disastrous, meaning that most masonry and frame structures were destroyed with their foundations. The magnitude of the earthquake was measured between 7.9 and 8.3 and was felt as far away as Beijing some 1500 kilometres away; in Shanghai, 1700 kilometres away, as well as in nearby countries.

As of 6th July 2008, as many as 69,197 people are confirmed dead and 374,176 injured, with 18,340 listed as missing. The earthquake left about 4.8 million people homeless, though the number could be as high as 11 million.

The complex topography of the region added to the difficulties of rescue and still presents considerable challenges to the reconstruction effort. In the months after the earthquake numerous international cultural organisations have joined the heritage workers of the Chinese government in surveying the damage to cultural property and in developing plans for recovery and reconstruction.

*IIC's News in Conservation asked, Guo Zhan, about the efforts to recover from such a disaster and how the earthquake has affected the cultural heritage of the region and China as a whole.*

Guo Zhan: Since the earthquake, all the Chinese authorities in the administration of cultural heritage have been working against the clock enacting a full range of relief activities. The destructive power of the earthquake has gone far beyond

Sichuan Province. The State Administration of Cultural Heritage had received reports of damage to cultural relics from seven municipalities: Sichuan, Gansu, Shaanxi, Chongqing, Yunnan, Shanxi and Hubei. According to reports, 169 state priority protected sites (2 on the World Heritage List) and 250 province protected historic sites have suffered damage, with a total of 2,766 cultural relics damaged. In the cultural relic administration sector, one worker lost his life and many have relatives who were killed. It has been estimated that it will take up to five years for the objectives of post-quake cultural relic rescue and repair to be achieved and that this effort will cost nearly 6 billion yuan.

**169 state-priority-protected sites (two on the World Heritage List) and 250 province-protected historic sites have suffered damage, with a total of 2,766 cultural relics damaged.**

Cultural heritage professionals, mostly ICOMOS members, have been highly influential in the efforts all over the quake-stricken areas. Living in tents under extremely challenging conditions, all of them have committed themselves to the rigours of relief work. In a very short time, they have achieved much, including the completion of preliminary plans for major initiatives. For instance, the Dujiangyan Dam has been listed in the bill for provisional legislation and on

30th June, a key repair project was launched for the Erwang Temple (the building in memory of Li Bing and his son who supervised the construction of the Dujiangyan Dam). This project involves inspection, cleaning and clearing, surveying and mapping, as well as damage evaluation. Repair work will be carried out when the project plan has been approved by China's legal and professional inspectors and reported to the World Heritage Committee for coordination. The rescue and repair project for "Tibetan and Qiang Diaolou (fortified towers) and Villages", hopefully to be inscribed on the World Heritage List, had its opening ceremony on 15th July. The nature, content, and procedures to be followed for this project are basically the same as those for Dujiangyan Dam only with more concern for the intangible cultural heritage, since the rescue and preservation of the now vulnerable Qiang and Jiarong Tibetan cultures is a necessary focus.

While Chinese colleagues have tried their best, it will take at least 3-5 years after this earthquake to rescue, stabilise and

A school in Yingxiu town, Sichuan province after the earthquake.



©Guo Zhan



Guo Zhan, vice president of ICOMOS and ICOMOS/China at the Erwang Temple at Dujiangyan world heritage site after the earthquake.



The Bi Pagoda in Sichuan province after the earthquake.



Baoren Temple in Pingwu county, Sichuan province after the earthquake.

repair cultural heritage sites and objects that have been so dramatically affected. The large number of damaged sites, their remote locations, and the difficulty of transportation on difficult terrain all challenge the efforts of those struggling to address the effects of the earthquake. The international community's moral, financial and technical support are badly needed and welcomed. Even though many conservation organisations have been called in, the resources at hand are still not enough. One must remember that millions of people in the quake-stricken areas are yet to have some semblance of their normal everyday lives restored. Despite the great need for attention to cultural property it remains a priority to meet the daily needs of the people and protect them from secondary disasters. It is not hard to imagine the difficulties and hardships that will confront them in the coming years.

**Even though many conservation organizations have been called in, the resources at hand are still not enough.**

China's State Administration of Cultural Heritage (SACH) is planning to submit the emergency nomination for "Tibetan and Qiang Diaolou Villages" (proposed by ICOMOS/China) to the World Heritage List at the 33rd session of the World Heritage Committee. SACH is very impressed by the constant feedback from international colleagues and ICOMOS China will continue to promote and support this highly influential project.

On 25th July, the United Nations launched a 33.5-million-U.S.-dollar appeal for early recovery support to assist victims of the quake-stricken areas around Wenchuan. Following \$17 million of urgent relief assistance, this sum will mainly be spent on recovery tasks in the next 6 months and focus on livelihood, shelter, water, sanitation, health, education, protection of vulnerable groups, environment, and ethnic minorities. While such initiatives are important and clearly needed, the urgent need for rescue and conservation of

The quake-damaged store at Santai County Cultural Relic Administration Office, Mianyang, Sichuan province.



Tibetan and Qiang Diaolou Villages and other aspects of cultural heritage have not been included. This highlights the necessity and urgency for launching joint international actions in the framework of UNESCO and its World Heritage Convention.

Perhaps unique to this disaster and potentially challenging for the preservation community is the decision by the Chinese government to select and permanently conserve several ruined settlements as quake sites. On May 22nd at a meeting in Beichuan county, Mr. Wen Jiabao, Prime Minister of the State Council of China said:

"I suggest that the ruins of this county be conserved and transformed into a museum of the earthquake. Beichuan is the only autonomous county of Qiang nationality in China. The unique cultural heritages of the Qiang people should be properly conserved, even after the county proper is relocated."

Some colleagues have proposed that these sites be nominated for the status of world heritage sites. Challenges will include how to convey and retain authenticity and integrity, as well as how to conserve and manage those values into the future. I would welcome the opinions of the NiC readers on these topics.

NiC: How are collections that were housed in buildings made unsafe by the earthquake being protected? Have they been moved to temporary quarters or other museums or sites?

GZ: Yes. Some collections such as the Beichuan County museums are completely buried under the ruins. Some museums (e.g. that in Mianyang City) are in danger of secondary disasters, such as potential flooding from dams. Rescued movable cultural relics and those under the threat of secondary disasters have been urgently transferred to safe places.

NiC: How have the plans developed for the reconstruction and repair of heritage sites? What overarching guidelines will be followed?

GZ: Priority is given to accurate inspection, investigation, registration, evaluation and analysis of their present status, followed by a determination of the urgency and value of each collection and site. All repair or restoration plans must be based on adequate historical evidence, focus on their authenticity, integrity, disaster-proof functions and sustainability, and comply with relevant Chinese laws, procedures and international conventions.

NiC: Have volunteers been an important part of the recovery and protection of cultural property after the earthquake?

GZ: SACH has organized professional groups from many provinces to undertake key rescue projects in different regions. Miss Martine "Frederique" Darragon, a colleague from France, has been working on Tibetan and Qiang Diaolou for many years and now is working in the earthquake-stricken areas. However, policy and professional knowledge play a significant role in such work, and strict scientific rules and legal procedures are required, which make it impossible for volunteers to carry out any independent measures. Instead, volunteers are mainly found in coordinating activities such as services for everyday living and rescue.

NiC: As recovery goes on, have plans for the protection of cultural heritage sites and collections against future earthquakes been discussed?

GZ: Some rescue and restoration plans (e.g. for Erwang Temple in Dujiangyan) have been drafted, and are being developed and discussed. We are also discussing plans to transfer valuable cultural relics from the cultural relics administrative offices and from museums in poorer condition to the central museums with adequate resources to assure more centralised preservation.

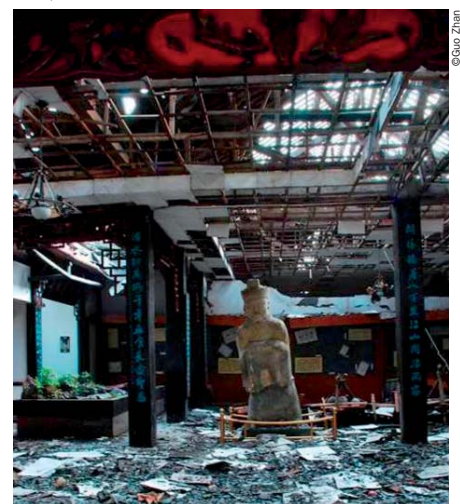
NiC: What has been the most valuable asset and resource during the rescue and recovery period?

GZ: What was and is urgently needed are dedicated professionals in good health, followed by local training and effective organisation. In terms of materials, besides funds, we need vehicles used in the field, everyday appliances, equipment and instruments for investigation, design, and scientific research.

NiC: During this period of recovery what would you say is the most vulnerable aspect of cultural heritage in the affected regions? What is at greatest risk of loss and why?

GZ: The most important thing in the earthquake-stricken area is disaster prevention at Dujiangyan, the World Heritage site, as well as restoration of its auxiliary buildings. Saving Qiang culture is very much an important issue. The former concerns the integrity of the world heritage site and recovery of social life in its populated areas, while the latter concerns rescue of tangible and intangible cultural heritages of the Qiang, one of the oldest nationalities in the world with a population of only 300,000. We have many Qiang villages and Diaolou as well as uniquely charming landscapes created by them waiting for reinforcement and restoration. The earthquake sadly took away 1/10 of the Qiang's population.

The Erwang Temple of Dujiangyan World Heritage Site after the earthquake.



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# Caring for Acrylics

Frances Fogel from insurers, AXA Art writes about their major collaborative project with Tate, Tate AXA Art Modern Paints Project.



Acrylic emulsion paints and primers have accounted for approximately fifty percent of artists' paint sales over the last thirty years. They are far more stable than traditional oils, and much less likely to turn yellow or develop cracks. However, although many well cared-for acrylic paintings still look 'new', they are still, like all works of art, vulnerable to deterioration, whether the causes are man-made, inherent or environmental. As with most new materials used in works of art, conservators are uncertain as to how best to restore acrylic paintings when they become dirty or damaged, partly due to a lack of knowledge of the possible long-term effects of conservation treatments. As the value of modern and contemporary art increases, it is vital that all those in possession of works of art with acrylic paint layers, be they private collectors, museums, galleries or conservators, have access to the right advice as to how to care for and clean them correctly.

**"We are very pleased to be able to evaluate the treatment of acrylic paintings as part of Tate AXA Art Modern Paints Project, as this helps to bridge what can be a large gap between scientific research and conservation practice."**  
**Dr. Bronwyn Ormsby**

In 2006, AXA Art, the world's only art-led insurer, partnered with Tate to generate what has become the most ground-breaking research into acrylic paintings to date. By looking into their fundamental properties,

A colourful selection of acrylic tube paints



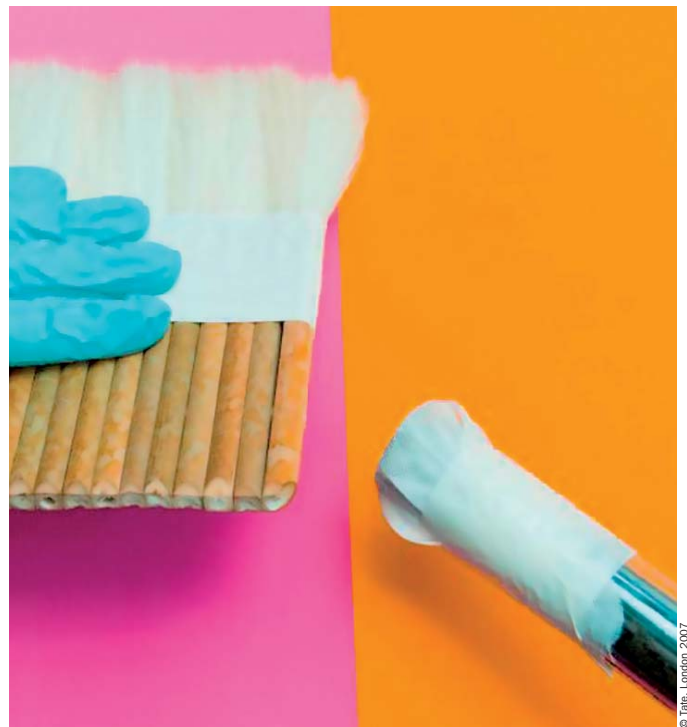
Joanna Fernandes © Tate, London 2007

their long-term behaviour and the effects of conservation treatments such as surface cleaning, the results of the project also indicate how these paints are affected by incorrect storage, packing, transit and display conditions.

The Tate AXA Art Modern Paints Project (TAAMPP) has led to the publication of *Caring for Acrylics: Modern and Contemporary Paintings* – a comprehensive guidebook intended to aid the work of conservators as well as provide an easy-to-read manual for those who collect works of art containing acrylic paints. This publication highlights the main precautions to take to reduce the chances of acrylic works of art needing remedial conservation. These include considering appropriate framing and/or temporary protection during high-risk situations, choosing the safest hanging site with the least damaging lighting, and ensuring that appropriate materials and methods are used for moving, handling, wrapping, and packing.

The results of the TAAMPP are feeding directly into conservation practice and will better equip conservators to handle and advise collectors on how best to avoid damage. By the project's conclusion in October 2009 five paintings in Tate's collection will have been successfully cleaned and the effects evaluated by Tate's expert team of in-house conservators and conservation scientists. Dr. Bronwyn Ormsby, Senior Conservation Scientist at Tate reiterates, "We are very pleased to be able to evaluate the treatment of acrylic paintings as part of *Tate AXA Art Modern Paints Project*, as this helps to bridge what can be a large gap between scientific research and conservation practice."

AXA Art is delighted to have sponsored the IIC Congress 2008 in support of advancing new discoveries and current debate in conservation. For many years AXA Art has been involved in international projects dealing with art conservation techniques. In addition to Tate, partners have included MoMA, the Guggenheim, Jacquemart Andre, Triennale di Milano, Museo Borgogna and the Vitra Design Museum. The knowledge generated by these projects helps AXA Art's clients – passionate art collectors, as well as conservators, care for the world's cultural heritage. AXA Art's involvement in conservation research, as well as the company's knowledge of, and international contacts in shipping, packing and conservation, help ensure that collections containing acrylic works of art are kept in the best condition possible. It is our hope that, as a result of the TAAMPP, synthetic paints will be further incorporated as an important area of study for students preparing for a career in conservation and that *Caring for Acrylics* becomes a standard reference for conservation training programs; contributing to the growing need for specific information on the conservation



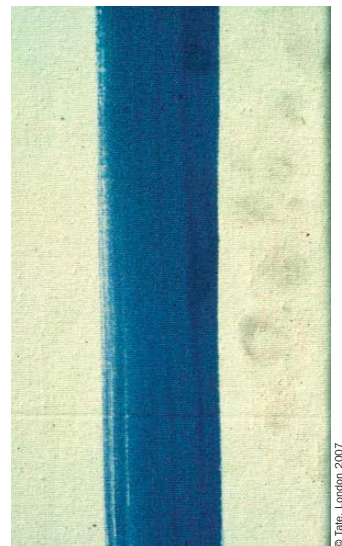
Regular dusting of acrylic paintings is important. This image shows the soft-haired brush and the covered vacuum cleaner hose typically used to clean loose dust from the surface of acrylic paint.

© Tate, London 2007

of modern paints, and particularly acrylics.

*Caring for Acrylics: Modern and Contemporary Paintings* is the second AXA Art publication dealing with the conservation of modern materials, the first being *Plastic Art – A Precarious Success Story*. Both publications were available free of charge at the IIC Congress and thereafter from AXA Art, [www.axa-art.co.uk](http://www.axa-art.co.uk)

**As with most new materials used in works of art, conservators are uncertain as to how best to restore acrylic paintings when they become dirty or damaged, partly due to a lack of knowledge of the possible long-term effects of conservation treatments.**



Fingerprints along the edges of acrylic paintings – especially on exposed priming – can easily result if gloves are not worn when handling. They can be extremely hard to remove without affecting the paint

© Tate, London 2007

### Author Biography



Frances Fogel has a Masters in Art History from University College London. She is one of AXA Art's in-house art experts and also manages marketing and partnerships for AXA Art UK.

# IIC News

## New IIC Fellows elected

Congratulations to Nigel Bamforth, Betty Engel, Alan Farancz, Helen Hughes Masako Koyano, William Lindsay, Mervin Richard and Marjorie Shelley, who have been recently elected as Fellows of IIC. Profiles of Alan Farancz, and Helen Hughes and will appear in the next edition of *News in Conservation*.

### Nigel Bamforth

Sixteen years ago Nigel sought a career change from the Textile industry. Embarking on a Brunel University BA in Furniture Conservation led to an Internship at Historic Royal Palaces, a deciding point in his career for applying himself to the museum sector. Now, eleven years on he is responsible for the management of the Furniture Conservation studio at the V & A Museum. A decade ago he addressed the subject of Indo-European furniture in his doctorate, seeking to establish the relationship between the object and India's cultural heritage. Securing awards from the Nehru Trust, INTAC (Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage) and a Churchill Fellowship enabled a thorough study of the craft's development to be conducted. His interest is to formulate Indian links and establish collection care for Institutions and Trusts engaged with historic collections.



### Betty Engel

Betty Engel is a painting conservator in private practice in San Diego, California. She has a BA in art history from the University of Rochester (1969) and an MA, also in art history, from the University of Chicago (1971). She was trained in the conservation program at the Intermuseum Conservation Association, Intermuseum Laboratory, Oberlin, Ohio (1972-1975) and received a Certificate in Conservation in 1975. Betty has worked as a painting conservator at the Portland Art Museum, Portland, Oregon (1975-79), at the Balboa Art Conservation Center, San Diego, CA (1979-88), and in a private practice partnership, Engel & Hulbert, Del Mar, CA (1988-2004). Since 2005 she has had a solo private practice. She is a Fellow of the American Institute for Conservation (since 1988) and a member of the Western Association for Art Conservation.



### Masako Koyano

Masako Koyano received a Certificate in Conservation in 1968 from the Conservation Center of the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, after graduation from Tokyo University of the Arts with a BA in Art History. She taught



as a lecturer at Tokyo University of the Arts, and then founded Art Conservation Lab., Tokyo in 1974 where she is the director. She has regularly been involved in teaching at conservation related programs/organizations including the Conservation Center of Institute of Fine Arts, New York University; National Museum of Modern Art, Seoul, Korea; Université de Paris I – Pantheon – Sorbonne; National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts, Taichung; and Tama Art University, Tokyo. Her book, "Japanese Scroll Mounting Technique", published by FAIC in 1979, has been internationally appreciated. Her work involves aspects of collections care, such as remote monitoring systems for relative humidity in art frames/cases as well as painting conservation.

### William Lindsay

William Lindsay is Head of the joint Royal College of Art/Victoria & Albert Museum Conservation programme. After studying geology at Glasgow University, he developed his conservation career at London's Natural History Museum. There he developed the Palaeontology Conservation Unit's focus on conservation and collections issues and its influence in wider natural science conservation, and was the inaugural Chair of the Natural Sciences Conservation section of UKIC and the resulting Natural Sciences Conservation Group. William was an Evaluator to the E.C.'s Fifth Framework Programme, and lecturer on the Imperial College London/NHM Taxonomy MSc, and has been external examiner for The City and Guilds of London Art School Conservation BA (Hons). He has been a member of the RCA's research and research ethics committees, is a Fellow of the RCA and of the Higher Education Academy, and is a member of the RCA's Senate. He was awarded a PgCert in Learning and Teaching earlier this year. William has published research in conservation techniques, collections environments, and aspects of museum displays, as well as issues in decision making.



### Mervin Richard

Mervin Richard is deputy chief of conservation at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, where he has worked since 1984. He received his MA in conservation from Oberlin College in 1978 and worked as a painting conservator at the Intermuseum Conservation Association in Oberlin, Ohio, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and the Winterthur Museum. He also was an adjunct professor of painting conservation in the graduate program at the University of Delaware/Winterthur Museum. Mervin Richard's scientific research has focused on the dimensional response of panel paintings to environmental variations and the behavior of works of art during transit. He served as co-chair of the ICOM Working Group for Preventive Conservation and co-chair of the Working Group for Works of Art in Transit. Mervin Richard was appointed to the Heritage Preservation board of directors in 1998 and now serves as its chairperson.



### Marjorie Shelley

Marjorie Shelley is Sherman Fairchild Conservator in Charge of Works on Paper at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Prior to earning her certificate degree from the Conservation Center, NYU she received an MA in art history from the Institute of Fine Arts. In addition to engaging in conservation treatment and technical analysis of 16-19th century drawings, she has lectured and written on the history of artists' materials, on such subjects as Van Gogh, Samuel Palmer, Gauguin, American 18th century drawings, and the pastel medium, and is editor and chief author of the Metropolitan Museum's preservation manual, *The Care and Handling of Art Objects*. She has served as a consultant for many museums and private collections, and was a recipient of a Rome Prize. She takes great pride in having instituted a series of annual presentations on the art historical context of the materials and techniques of works on paper, designing a state of the art conservation facility including the acquisition of the first Raman microscope in a North American museum, and building a collection of historic artists' materials.



## The Gabo Trust – IIC Travelling Scholarships for sculpture conservators

The bursary enables current paid-up members of IIC to take a study-focused tour around the world, with the aim of carrying out research on the conservation of sculpture as well as meeting other conservators and seeing their work. Applications are invited from conservators in the public or private sector who will preferably have had several years' experience after initial training.

The scholarships are directly concerned with the conservation of sculpture in all its aspects and are not restricted to any particular period or culture, but some benefit to modern and contemporary sculpture (post-1880) must be apparent in the application.

The maximum sum awarded will be up to £5000 (or equivalent US dollars or Euros). The closing date for applications is **30 November 2008**. A maximum of two awards will be made by the end of January 2009. For further details and application forms, please go to the IIC website.

## Innovative Lunder Conservation Center receives prestigious IIC Keck Award

On the final day of the London Congress, IIC named the Lunder Conservation Center as the winner of the prestigious Keck Award for 2008. The Keck Award is given every two years to the individual or group that has, in the opinion of the IIC Council, contributed most toward promoting public understanding and appreciation of the conservation profession.

The Center, jointly administered by the Smithsonian American Art Museum and the

Conservators at work in the Lunder Conservation Center's Painting Conservation Studio at the Donald W. Reynolds Center for American Art and Portraiture.



Carl Hansen, Smithsonian Institution

National Portrait Gallery in Washington is the first art conservation facility in the USA that allows visitors to the museums permanent, behind-the-scenes views of crucial preservation work. Five conservation labs are visible through floor-to-ceiling glass walls. The 10,200-square-foot centre includes laboratories and studios equipped to treat paintings, prints, drawings, photographs, sculptures, folk art objects, decorative arts and frames.

Presenting the award, IIC President, Jerry Podany, congratulated the Center on its ground-breaking achievement in making the work of conservation so accessible to the public and pointed out how well its mission fitted with the theme of the IIC congress, "Conservation and Access". Accepting the award in London on behalf of the two museums, Julie Heath, Center Coordinator, presented an illustrated account of the Center and recounted its success since opening in 2006, both in terms of visitor numbers and overwhelmingly positive public feedback.

## Subscriptions

These were due for renewal on 1 July. If you have already paid your 2008-2009 subscription – thank you.

If you have not yet paid your subscription as a Student, Individual Member or Fellow, you will receive a red renewal notice with this issue of *News in Conservation*. Please remember that you can pay your subscription online and take the opportunity of renewal, either online or by post, to contribute to the IIC Professional Development Fund. This fund assists people in countries where the earnings of conservation professionals and students are too low to allow for Individual IIC membership. By contributing to this fund, you help others to enjoy the benefits of IIC.

## AGM Advance Notice

The IIC Annual General Meeting will be held on Friday 30 January 2009 in London. The guest speaker will be Joris Dik of the Technical University of Delft who will talk about his recent discoveries – using x-ray imaging and a particle accelerator – of a painting by Van Gogh, painted over by the artist himself. More details in the next *News in Conservation*.

# IIC Regional Groups



Members of the IIC regional groups convened at the 2008 Congress to discuss their recent activities and to plan for the future. Gabriela Krist, IIC Vice-President, chaired the meeting and was able to reveal from a recent questionnaire that there are more than 2000 members in seven regional groups under the IIC umbrella. The possibility of developing new regional groups in Bulgaria, Romania and Poland was discussed, with representatives from these countries attending the meeting. Plans were also made for greater interaction between neighbouring regional groups and for regional groups to continue to share their activities through the IIC website and through *News in Conservation*.

**Calls for Papers**

**International Conference on Intangible Heritage: sharing cultures 2009**

30 May–1 June 2009  
Azores, Portugal  
Submit abstracts by:  
31 October 2008

**XIV international TICCIH congress – industrial heritage, ecology and economy**

30 August–5 September 2009  
Freiburg, Germany  
Submit proposals by:  
30 November 2008

**Studying Old Master Paintings – Technology and Practice**

The National Gallery Technical Bulletin 30th Anniversary Conference  
16–18 September 2009  
London, UK  
Submit abstracts by:  
12 December 2008

**Symposium: Facing the Challenges of Panel Paintings Conservation**

17–18 May 2009  
Los Angeles CA, USA  
Submit abstracts by:  
1 January 2009

**IUPAC 2009: heritage science symposium – analysis and detection**

2–7 August 2009  
Glasgow, Scotland, UK  
Submit abstracts by:  
16 January 2009

**Art d'aujourd'hui patrimoine et restauration des oeuvres contemporaines**

24–26 June 2009  
Paris, France  
Submit poster abstracts by:  
31 January 2009

**Meetings and Conferences**

**Looking both ways: connecting the future to the past**  
9–10 October 2008  
Melbourne, Australia

**Conservation: an act of discovery (10th Conference of the International Committee for the Conservation of Mosaics)**  
20–26 October  
Palermo, Italy

**Digital heritage: VSMM 2008**

20–26 October  
Limassol, Cyprus

**Working for Hitler: the restoration profession and the Nazi looting machine**  
21 October 2008  
London, UK

**EITEC 2008: 3rd International meeting of technologies applied to museology, conservation and restoration**  
23–24 October 2008  
Porto, Portugal

**L'Acqua le pietre i bronzi, le fontane monumentali. Gestione e conservazione.**  
23–25 October 2008  
Rome, Italy

**Stained glass conservation techniques**  
25 October 2008  
Manchester, UK

**In situ monitoring of monumental surfaces**  
27–29 October 2008  
Florence, Italy

**Ancient and medieval gold, silver and bronze**  
29–31 October 2008  
Bucharest, Romania

**Moulds and dust in libraries, archives and museums**  
3 November 2008  
London, UK

**Permanence in Contemporary Art: Checking Reality**  
3–4 November 2008  
Copenhagen, Denmark

**CHArt (Computers and the History of Art) 2008 Conference**  
6–7 November 2008  
London, UK

**Costume colloquium: a tribute to Janet Arnold**  
6–9 November 2008  
Florence, Italy

**II Encuentro de Conservación del Patrimonio Fotográfico. Desarrollo y perspectivas de la conservación de fotografías en México**  
7 November 2008  
Mexico City, Mexico

**Zeit und Ewigkeit Erhaltung-religiöser Kulturgüter 21. Tagung des Österreichischen Restauratorenverbandes (ÖRV)**  
7–8 November 2008  
Krems, Austria

**8th European conference on research for protection, conservation and enhancement of cultural heritage**  
10–12 November 2008  
Ljubljana, Slovenia

**The historic buildings, parks and gardens event**  
11 November 2008  
London, UK

**Museums and Disasters**  
12–16 November 2008  
New Orleans, USA

**Conservation and restoration of vernacular furniture**  
14–15 November 2008  
Amsterdam, Netherlands

**Mobile Analytics for Heritage Conservation**  
17–18 November 2008  
Somerset NJ, USA

**On The Waterfront: culture, heritage and the regeneration of port cities**  
19–21 November 2008  
Liverpool, UK

**Colore e Conservazione**  
21–22 November 2008  
Milan, Italy

**17th international meeting on heritage conservation**  
20–22 November 2008  
Castellón, Spain

**Cultural respect in preservation and conservation**  
20 November 2008  
Chapel Hill NC, USA

**Youths in the Conservation of Cultural Heritage**  
24–25 November 2008  
Rome, Italy

**Cultural heritage between conservation and contamination**  
29 November–1 December 2007  
Berlin, Germany

**Conservation of paintings at Apsley House, London**  
2 December 2008  
London, UK

**International Symposium on Virtual Reality, Archaeology and Cultural Heritage**  
2–6 December 2008  
Braga, Portugal

**Assessing the value of tangible cultural heritage**  
3–5 December 2008  
Rome, Italy

**Standards in the science of conservation and restoration of historic monuments**  
23–25 April 2009  
Berlin, Germany

**Going green: towards sustainability in conservation**  
24 April 2009  
London, UK

**Symposium: Facing the Challenges of Panel Paintings Conservation**  
17–18 May 2009  
Los Angeles CA, USA

**AIC Annual Meeting: Conservation 2.0 – new directions**  
19–22 May 2009  
Los Angeles CA, USA

**Incredible Industry: preserving the evidence of industrial society**  
24–27 May 2009  
Copenhagen, Denmark

**International Conference on Intangible Heritage: sharing cultures 2009**  
30 May–1 June 2009  
Azores, Portugal

**Forum for the Conservation and Restoration of Stained-Glass Windows**  
1–3 June 2009  
New York NY, USA

**Art d'aujourd'hui patrimoine de demain: conservation et restauration des oeuvres contemporaines**  
24–26 June 2009  
Paris, France

**IUPAC 2009: heritage science symposium – analysis and detection**  
2–7 August 2009  
Glasgow, Scotland, UK

**XIV international TICCIH congress – industrial heritage, ecology and economy**  
30 August–5 September 2009  
Freiburg, Germany

**Studying Old Master Paintings – Technology and Practice**  
The National Gallery Technical Bulletin 30th Anniversary Conference  
16–18 September 2009  
London, UK

**Courses, Seminars and Workshops**

**Care and Preservation of Furniture and Other Wooden Objects**  
14–17 October 2008  
Mount Carroll IL, USA

**Assessing and Managing Risks to Your Collections**  
15–17 October 2008  
Ottawa, Canada

**Imagen digital en conservación-restauración**  
15–17 October  
Seville, Spain

**Conservation of Tracing Paper**  
16–17 October 2008  
Berlin, Germany

**Digital Preservation Management: Short-Term Solutions for Long-Term Problems**  
19–24 October 2008  
Ann Arbor MI, USA

**Conservation issues in contemporary photography: 20th century color**  
20–24 October 2008  
New York NY, USA

**Synchrotron Radiation in Art and Archaeology**  
22–24 October 2008  
Barcelona, Spain

**You've monitored the environment, now what?**  
29 October 2008  
London, UK

**Responsibilities and Opportunities in Architectural Conservation**  
3–6 November 2008  
Amman, Jordan

**Digital Media and its Applications in Cultural Heritage**  
3–6 November 2008  
Amman, Jordan

**Sharing conservation decisions 2008**  
3–28 November 2008  
Rome, Italy

**Conservation Forum 2008: The Environment of Church Buildings**  
4 November 2008  
London, UK

**Access all Areas: one day seminar on new display materials/ techniques and providing access to collections**  
13 November 2008  
Liverpool, UK

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



**AXA Art – At hand for all your insurance needs.**

At AXA Art, the world's only art-led insurer, we take great care to handle art insurance claims as a conservator would a painting – sensitively and discretely. We are also committed to supporting research in conservation and proud to have been involved in the IIC Congress 2008.

For more information about AXA Art, please visit: [www.axa-art.co.uk](http://www.axa-art.co.uk)



Our current research grants support the Tate AXA Art Modern Prints Project. Tate advises that powder-free latex gloves are a good choice for handling paintings. Apply slight pressure to the sides of the painting with the palm of your hands and be aware of the placement of your fingertips at the back of the painting. Image: ©Tate 2007

**Abstracts of International Conservation Literature**

**[www.aata.getty.edu](http://www.aata.getty.edu)**

A free resource for professionals engaged in the conservation and management of material cultural heritage in all its forms: works of art, cultural objects, architectural heritage, and archaeological sites and monuments.

AATA Online includes more than 100,000 abstracts, with new abstracts of both current and historical conservation literature added quarterly.

AATA Online regularly abstracts 150 journals, conference proceedings and monograph series. Hundreds of other publications, both from the field of conservation and from allied fields, are abstracted on an irregular basis by volunteer contributors.

AATA Online includes all 36 volumes of *Art and Archaeology Technical Abstracts (AATA)*, its predecessor, *IIC Abstracts*, and over 1,600 abstracts published between 1932 and 1955 by the Fogg Art Museum and the Freer Gallery of Art. Also included are all of the original AATA special subject supplements and additional supplements added since going online.

For more information, please contact us at [aata@getty.edu](mailto:aata@getty.edu)

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