

AICCM

Painting Special Interest Group

9th Symposium

Perception: The preservation of paintings and their meanings

18th - 20th March 2004, Hobart, Tasmania

Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery



Australian Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Materials

The committee would like to acknowledge the kind sponsorship of the following institutions:



Moorilla Estate

Day 1: THURSDAY 18th MARCH 2004

9.30 – 10.15 Registration - Morning Tea

10.15 – 10.30 Welcome

10.30 – 12.30 Session 1 Convener: David Wise

John Payne - *Tiepolo: Why bother? Some thoughts on the restoration of paintings*

Andrea Nottage - *Image Reintegration of Two Paintings*

Anne Carter - *Fluorescent paint: a case study*

Deborah Lau - *XRD Analysis of Paintings using Micro-Diffraction*

12.30 – 2.00 Lunch

2.00 – 3.30 Session 2 Convener: Anne Carter

Gillian Osmond - *Metal soap formation in paintings from the Queensland Art Gallery collection*

Maria Kubik - *No need to dissect: Angry Penguins' paints and the application of Fibre-optic Spectroscopy*

Stewart Laidler - *Brief introduction to FTIR at the AGNSW*

David Wise - *Finding Stuff: Issues in the identification of modern pigments on works of art*

3.30 – 4.00 Afternoon tea

4.00 – 5.00 Session 3 Convener: Anne Carter

Vanessa Kowalski - *An Investigation of the Materials and Techniques of Ludwig Hirschfeld-Mack (1893 – 1965)*

Michael Varcoe-Cocks - *The romance in Smike's paint*

5.15 Reception – TMAG café and courtyard. Sponsored by TMAG

Day 2: FRIDAY 19th MARCH 2004

9.15 - 10.30 Session 4 Convener: Carrie Thomas

Andrew Thorn - *Degradation study of a painting on sandstone in southern Tasmania*

Jocelyn Evans - *An investigation into dibasic ester paint removal systems*

10.30 – 11.00 Morning tea

11.00 – 12.30 Session 5 Convener: Carrie Thomas

Sheridan Roberts - *Fantastic Plastic: The identification of synthetic polymer paint binders used by Dick Watkins on his paintings in the collection of the National Gallery of Australia*

Linda Waters - *God is in the details*

Sabine Cotte - *Arthur Boyd "Forest": rediscovery of a painting*

12.30 – 2.00 Lunch

2.00 – 3.30 Session 6 Convener: John Payne

Holly McGowan-Jackson - *The importance of edges*

Paula Dredge - *Preserving evidence of 20th century frames. A case study of Sydney Modern Painters and the SA Parker Framing works*

David Keany - *Cleve Parker at Australian War Memorial – framing a collection*

3.30 – 4.00 Afternoon tea

4.00 – 5.00 Session 7 Convener: John Payne

Malgorzata Sawicki - *From Lady in Black to Art Students: Story behind changing a frame*

Noel Turner - *Reconstructing the Wheel*

6.00 – 7.00 *Ferry trip to Symposium dinner. Board the Wrest Point Wanderer ferry at Brooke St Pier. Canapés and Pre-dinner Drinks will be served on board the ferry.*

7.30 - 10.15 Symposium dinner *Moorilla Museum of Antiquities (ph 03 6277 9900 - 655 Main Rd Berriedale Tas 7011). The symposium dinner is included in the registration costs, wine is provided by Moorilla Estate and a cash bar will be available for additional/ alternative drinks.*

10.15 Return transport to Hobart *A bus will be provided for guests wishing to return to Hobart at this time, alternative transport (taxis) can be organised by guests as required. Travelling time: approx 15 - 20 minute*

Day 3: SATURDAY 20th MARCH

9.30 – 11.00 Session 8 Convener: David Stein

Kathryn Ferguson - *It's Enough to Make You Blanche*

Nicole Tse - *Artistic Practices of Bohol Panel Paintings: an analytical and archival study of nineteenth century panel paintings in the Philippines*

Judy Dunlop – *Drastic Situation - Drastic Solution*

11.00 – 11.30 Morning tea

11.30 – 12.30 Session 9 Convener: David Stein

Alyssa Aleksanian - *Treatment of a large scale Victorian painting by FW Calderon*

Cushla Hill - *A suite of VCA student works at the Potter: Stretching and treatment regimes*

Chris Payne - *Mural Rescue*

12.30 – 1.30 Lunch

1.30 – 2.30 Session 10 Convener: Erica Burgess

Sabine Cotte - *Conservation of Tibetan paintings: Specific problems*

Maria Kubik - *Paintings Conservation in Australia: An Industry Analysis*

2.30 – 3.30 Session 11 Round table discussion and wrap up

Abstracts

Day 1: THURSDAY 18th MARCH 2004

John Payne - Tiepolo: Why bother? Some thoughts on the restoration of paintings

In July 2002 a program of examination, cleaning and restoration of Tiepolo's "Banquet of Cleopatra" began in the NGV painting conservation studio. The project occupied two people, full time, for an estimated 2500 hours. A project of this scale poses a number of questions – many related to the legibility of cultural heritage and the role of painting restoration. This paper will offer some thoughts on the issues and ask some questions about what is required for the future.

Biography

John Payne is Senior Conservator of Painting at the National Gallery of Victoria. He has worked with the Gallery since 1983 after training in conservation at the Canberra College of Advanced Education and the IRPA in Brussels. He has restored a number of pictures in the gallery and contributed to publications on the painting collections. He has a particular interest in the framing of paintings.

Andrea Nottage - Image Reintegration of Two Paintings

Losses in a painting's composition are a disturbance to the meaning and an interruption to the continuity of form. The minimisation of this disturbance in order to restore to the image the maximum presence possible, while respecting its authenticity as an art work and as an historic document, is the major problem of the reintegration of lost areas.

*Two paintings at the AGNSW recently underwent dramatic and somewhat interventive treatment when it came to the final stage of image reintegration. In *A Landscape with a Sybil's Temple: Composition*, 1816 (149.2cm x 240.1cm) by John Glover the inpainting of loss sites was based on stylistic features from other works by the artist. Taking this information to its limits, a substantial retouching on the site of an old inset was totally creative on the part of the restorer. By contrast in the case of *Vive L'Empereur*, 1891 (376cm x 445cm) by Edouard Detaille the reintegration of missing sections came primarily from within the painting itself. The final outcome of both retouching treatments was 'deceptive aesthetic reintegration', the intervention being recognizable at close range but not from a distance.*

Biography

MA Conservation of Fine Art, Easel Paintings, University of Northumbria. Hamilton Kerr Institute, Cambridge. Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. Free Lance, London

Anne Carter - Fluorescent paint: a case study

In 2001, The Queensland Art Gallery purchased a diptych by local artist Scott Redford titled Surf Painting/The Reflex and Surf Painting/Modernist House. The diptych is painted using the techniques of surfboard manufacture and depicts a Gold Coast type scene on one panel and a monochrome 'reflex' on the second panel. After eight months on display in the gallery, it was noticed that the monochrome fluorescent pink panel had developed blotches, which from a distance, resembled to the author the face of Jesus. This paper describes the examination of the painting and other paintings in the same series and refers to published literature on the colour change of fluorescent paints. The possible cause of the (very rapid) colour change in the QAG work and implications for the display of the work in relation to artist intent are outlined.

Biography

Anne Carter graduated from the University of Canberra, with a Bachelor of Applied Science, Conservation of Cultural Materials (Paintings Conservation) in 1995. She undertook an internship at the Museum of Modern Art, New York from 1997 - 1999, with focus on devarnishing modern paintings. She is currently Head of Conservation and Paintings Conservator at the Queensland Art Gallery.

Deborah Lau, Natasha Wright, David Hay - XRD Analysis of Paintings using Micro-Diffraction

This paper discusses one of the many unique applications possible using the Bruker GADDS (General Area Detection Diffraction System) for X-ray micro-diffraction analysis. The technique offers many opportunities for non-destructive, in-situ crystalline phase composition analysis of varied artworks. Painting surfaces and cross sections can be examined to characterise pigments and provide additional information complementary to existing investigative analyses. Studies described here demonstrate its usefulness for in-situ analysis and cross sections. Proprietary tube paints are examined showing differences in pigment composition based on paint quality. Cross section analysis of Tiepolo's Banquet of Cleopatra provides information on ground layer composition beyond what has been reported to date. Pigment identification was performed on "9 x 5" impressionist paintings from the collection of the National Gallery of Victoria. The significant advantages of this method are demonstrated by the quality of information and the non-destructive manner in which it can be obtained.

Biography

Deborah Lau has worked in the field of Conservation Science since 1990. After 3 years at the National Gallery of Victoria she completed a Masters in Analytical Chemistry and undertook consulting for institutions and private conservators. For the last four years she has been working at CSIRO in the dual role of materials and surface chemist, and Conservation Scientist.

Gillian Osmond - Metal soap formation in paintings from the Queensland Art Gallery collection

A serious form of deterioration of lead white pigmented paint layers has been recognised in 17th century Dutch paintings and is being researched in-depth in Europe in the context of De Mayerne Research Program (MOLART II) 2002-2006 - to study the dynamics of dissolution, soap formation and remineralisation (protrusion). A similar process of deterioration has more recently been found to occur in paintings internationally spanning the 16th to 20th centuries and has also been identified in zinc pigmented paint layers from the 19th century.

An unusual phenomenon observed in paint cross sections from several paintings dating from 1890-1904 by R. Godfrey Rivers from the Queensland Art Gallery collection have now been confirmed by MOLART researchers as containing (zinc) metal soaps. Initial indications from subsequent examination of paint cross sections from other 19th and early 20th century British/Australian paintings in the QAG collection are that significant numbers of these paintings also appear to contain metal soaps. Unlike 17th century examples in The Netherlands, the paintings of interest in Brisbane do not have obvious surface deterioration related to the presence of metal soaps. It is not clear whether the incidence of metal soaps observed in the QAG collection reflects an earlier state of the deterioration under investigation in The Netherlands. The stability and long term implications of the presence of metal soaps within the structure of the paintings are unknown.

This paper will include a brief overview of international research into the phenomenon of metal soap formation in paintings and then describe the incidence so far observed in paintings from the Queensland Art Gallery collection. Characteristic properties observed with optical microscopy and scanning electron microscopy with energy dispersive X-ray analysis will be discussed.

Biography

Gillian Osmond graduated from the University of Canberra (CCAEC), with a Bachelor of Applied Science, Conservation of Cultural Materials (Painting Conservation) in 1988. In 1991-92 she was a research intern at the Tate Gallery, London, using visible and ultraviolet fluorescence microscopy of paint cross sections to study the artificial ageing of artists's oil paints. She is currently Conservator, Paintings at the Queensland Art Gallery where she has worked since 1988.

Stewart Laidler - FT-IR at the AGNSW

A brief introduction to the FT-IR spectroscope at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, purchased recently by monies raised by 'Friends of Conservation'.

Biography

Stewart Laidler is the Senior Paintings Conservator at the Art Gallery of New South Wales

Maria Kubik - No need to dissect: Angry Penguins' paintings and the application of Fibre-optic Spectroscopy

The war years were an interesting period in Australian art, with European immigrants introducing new methods and techniques, and rationing causing artists to experiment with more unconventional artists' materials. Often grouped together from an art history perspective, the Angry Penguins were a collection of 1940's Melbourne artists, made up of Sidney Nolan, Arthur Boyd, Albert Tucker and John Perceval. These four artists shared more than their ideas on techniques and materials, they also shared a common patron and worked alongside each other in two Melbourne arts centres; Heide and Murrumbidgee.

This presentation aims to introduce various fibre-optic spectroscopic instruments (reflectance, fluorescence, and Raman) and their use in the identification of paintings of the 1940's. Research is currently being conducted using these different in-situ techniques, how they compare and where one may be preferable to the other. Ultimately, a database of known materials will be established against which other paintings may be compared.

Biography

Maria Kubik is a PhD student at the Research School of Chemistry, ANU. She has previously undertaken both undergraduate and postgraduate studies at the University of Canberra, and now works as a private paintings conservator between thesis chapters.

David Wise - Finding Stuff: Issues in the identification of modern pigments on works of art

Many pigments introduced from the 1850's onwards can present challenges, due to their size and chemical composition, when attempts are made to identify them on works of art. The common techniques employed by many conservators of PLM and SEM/EDX can be of limited use in such cases as the pigments are often too small, too dispersed or otherwise incompatible with these analytical methods. This paper will present a brief comparison of techniques used to investigate three specific cases in the collection of the NGA, when curatorial and conservation concerns meant that the identification of the pigment composition of a work of art was considered important for the treatment and/or long term survival of the work. Techniques discussed include PLM, SEM/EDX, Raman micro-spectroscopy and FTIR

Biography

David Wise gained a BA (Hons) in Fine Art at Manchester Polytechnic in 1984 and an MA in Art History at the University of Sussex in 1986. After working for some time with private conservation studios in Sydney he returned to the UK and completed the MA in Fine Art Conservation (Paintings) at the University of Northumbria in 1994. After working at Auckland Museum and the Auckland Art Gallery, New Zealand, he took up a position as Painting Lecturer in Conservation of Cultural Materials at University of Canberra

Vanessa Kowalski -An Investigation of the Materials and Techniques of Ludwig Hirschfeld-Mack (1893 – 1965)

This paper examines the materials and techniques used by Bauhaus artist Ludwig Hirschfeld-Mack throughout the 1950s in Australia. Focusing on the types of binders used, FTIR analysis, microscopic examination and microchemical testing, identified the materials present in a range of Hirschfeld-Mack paintings.

Hirschfeld-Mack was trained at the Bauhaus in the early 1920s. Deported to Australia in 1940, Hirschfeld-Mack continued to create art, as well as contribute to art education in Australia. He remained devoted to Bauhaus theories and art practices throughout his career, experimenting with a wide range of materials. His experimentation with varied materials inspired this research, as such experimentation by contemporary artists has important conservation implications.

The analytical investigation provided a greater understanding and information of the materials present, as well as the techniques used, which has relevance to the curator, art historian and to future conservation practice.

Biography

Vanessa completed her degree in the Conservation of Cultural Materials, at the University of Canberra, in 2002. Vanessa is currently undertaking a post-graduate internship at the University of Melbourne Conservation Service, The Ian Potter Art Conservation Centre.

Prior to her studies in Canberra, Vanessa studied at the Victorian College of the Arts in Melbourne, completing a degree in Visual and Performing Arts in 1998, where she specialised in painting and printmaking.

Michael Varcoe-Cocks - The romance in Smike's paint

This paper will discuss the completion of the restoration of Arthur Streeton's painting 'Spring' (1890) in the collection of the National Gallery of Victoria.

The painting exposed surprising insights into Arthur Streeton's working practice as well as documenting a variety of treatment approaches used by restorers working in Australia since 1890. Technical examination of the picture revealed hidden romantic annotations inscribed by Arthur Streeton, nicknamed Smike, and added to by Charles Conder; this led to the discovery of inscriptions in another painting by Arthur Streeton in the NGV Collection.

This painting has encouraged reconsideration of the treatment of pictures by artists, restorers and curators.

Biography

Michael Varcoe-Cocks has a Bachelor of Fine Arts-Painting from the Victoria College of the Arts and a Bachelor of Applied Science in Conservation of Cultural Materials specialising in paintings from the University of Canberra. Michael has worked at the National Gallery of Victoria since 1997 and is currently Conservator of Australian Painting with particular focus the painting collections from 1850 to 1950.

Day 2: FRIDAY 19th MARCH 2004

Andrew Thorn - Degradation study of a painting on sandstone in southern Tasmania

The Rogers 2 site on Tasman Peninsula is one of four surviving indigenous rock paintings in Tasmania. This presentation describes the examination of the painting and its surrounding rock shelter.

Paintings applied to rock surfaces present many problems, unique to their environmental context and hence methods of assessment have been developed specifically to address these issues. The presentation will be offered as light refreshment away from the intense gaze of oil on canvas.

Biography

Andrew Thorn is a conservator working for the Melbourne-based company Artcare, involved in the conservation of mural paintings and sculpture. He also coordinates research projects for SEPIK (Centre for the Preservation of Indigenous Cultural Heritage), undertaking projects to devise suitable methods for the preservation of paintings on natural stone surfaces.

Jocelyn Evans - An investigation into dibasic ester paint removal systems

The production of dibasic esters over the last decade has provided a new direction for the formulation of commercial paint removal systems (paint strippers). Products based on these esters have been found to work more slowly than other chemical paint strippers, allowing the operator greater control over the product's action.

Such products have the potential to enable the successful removal of a single paint layer from a multi-layer substrate, leaving the lower paint layers intact. This is of use to the fields of objects, paintings, and buildings conservation, where the removal of paint and other films to reveal the underlying paint layer is often desired, but can be problematic in its execution.

The applicability of dibasic esters to the field of conservation has been demonstrated with 3M's product 'Safest Stripper'. This paint removal-system, based on two dibasic esters (dimethyl adipate and dimethyl glutarate), has been used on conservation projects involving historic buildings. Its use has allowed the successful removal of paint films applied to already-painted surfaces, with minimal damage to the original paint layer. Unfortunately, this proprietary product is not available in Australia.

This project aimed to formulate a paint removal system based on dibasic esters that would give a similar result as 'Safest Stripper'. This was achieved using chemicals and materials readily available in Australia. The use of the system compared favourably with other methods of separating paint films (solvents, solvent gels, mechanical action). Health and safety issues with using the system were also considered.

Biography

This paper presents research undertaken by Jocelyn Evans during her internship in Paintings Conservation at the Ian Potter Art Conservation Centre, University of Melbourne, during 2003. Jocelyn graduated from The University Of Melbourne in 1999 on completion of the BA/B.Mus degree, majoring in Art History and Viola Studies. She then went on to study at the University of Canberra, graduating in 2002 on completing a B.App.Sci, Conservation of Cultural Materials, Paintings specialisation. She commenced work at the Ian Potter Art Conservation Centre in December 2002 as a Paintings conservator, continuing until the commencement of her internship in March 2003.

Sheridan Roberts - Fantastic Plastic: The identification of synthetic polymer paint binders used by Dick Watkins on his paintings in the collection of the National Gallery of Australia

The identification of synthetic polymer paint binders used by Dick Watkins on his paintings in the collection of the National Gallery of Australia

The adoption and use by artists of twentieth century paints, including household and industrial media not designed for use on traditional artists' supports, has created a number of unknowns for paintings conservators. Identification of the synthetic polymer binder can be the first step in determining suitable conservation treatments. The Australian Art collection at the National Gallery of Australia contains approximately 180 paintings catalogued under the general term synthetic polymer paint, including 14 works by Dick Watkins, (1937 -), dating from 1962 -1991.

Watkins is an intriguing, and often provocative, Australian artist who has been painting since 1958 and exhibiting consistently from 1962 to 2003. Watkins began painting in a period of transition from traditional oil paint to modern paints and his well-known stylistic eclecticism is mirrored in his attitude towards his material choices. He has stated that he used 'whatever paint was to hand' and that 'he never cared much about the technical properties of paint'. A close examination of his works, including analysis of the paint binders, reveals that his work generally reflects his statements, but that on occasion he sought out a specific medium to suit his artistic purpose. Deposition from his 1972 abstract expressionist series is one of these works. Binder analysis was carried out on 27 samples from the fourteen Watkins' paintings at the NGA, using Fourier Transform Infrared Microspectroscopy. This paper will focus on the process of identification for samples from Deposition and will briefly discuss the success of a multidisciplinary approach, which gave equal consideration to analysis results, scientific and artistic historical sources, artist recall and curatorial literature.

Biography

Sheridan graduated from the University of Canberra with a bachelor degree in Applied Science (Conservation of Cultural Materials/ Paintings) in 1997, and has worked as a Paintings Conservator at the National Gallery of Australia since 1998. Her paper draws on research undertaken as part of her current study towards a Master degree in App. Science, (Conservation of Cultural Materials).

Linda Waters - God is in the details

"God is in the details"

Ludwig Mies van der Rohe 1959

Ludwig Mies van der Rohe used this aphorism (attributed to Flaubert, Michelangelo and others) in relation to architecture. It can be applied broadly to the visual arts, and even more specifically to our professional concerns with paintings. It seems particularly pertinent to modern and contemporary art, where there often is so little material that the details and subtleties of that material carry much importance both visually and conceptually.

In the light of this statement, my paper discusses the meaning and preservation of several modern paintings from the collection of the National Gallery of Victoria – including works by Mark Rothko, Kenneth Noland and Pierre Soulages.

Biography

LINDA WATERS is Senior Project Conservator of Paintings at the National Gallery of Victoria, where she has been working for over ten years. She obtained her B.App.Sci. in Materials Conservation in 1989 from the University of Canberra, Australia, and is particularly interested in analysis and in the conservation of modern and contemporary art.

Sabine Cotte - Arthur Boyd "Forest": rediscovery of a painting

Arthur Boyd "Forest": An unknown painting from Arthur Boyd was rediscovered in Melbourne in very poor condition; after being purchased by the Heide Museum of Modern Art in Melbourne, different options for treatment were discussed; the phases of the treatment and the technique are exposed, as well as the elaborate system of framing for exhibition; the result of analysis of pigments is discussed here also.

Biography

Sabine Cotte arrived in Australia in December 2000. She graduated from the Institut Français de Restauration des Oeuvres d'Art (IFROA), easel painting speciality, in Paris, France, in 1990; and from International Institute for Conservation in Rome (ICCROM), mural painting course, in 1994. She worked in Paris from 1990 as a self employed conservator, and created with three other conservators an easel painting conservation studio. They have worked separately, and together as a team, for museums such as Musée du Louvre, Musée d'Orsay, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Musée du Petit Palais, and Institutions like National Trust, Churches of Paris, as well as art dealers and private clients.

She has travelled and worked in the Himalayas for Unesco and National museum of Bhutan, and is currently preparing a workshop for conservation of Himalayan painting for Unesco in 2005.

Since moving to Australia 2000 she has worked as a private conservator for private clients and art galleries, on western art and Himalayan art.

Holly McGowan-Jackson - The importance of edges

Over the past 4 years, as part of the redevelopment of the National Gallery of Victoria, a great deal of work has been carried out in the area of picture frame conservation as well as reframing. This investment of time & resources reflects a growing concern and interest in regards to the role of frames in the presentation of pictures. Through the discussion of specific examples, this talk will look at the philosophies and approaches that underpin the framing program at the NGV. In addition, the nature of various gilded surfaces and their preservation will be explored.

Biography

Holly McGowan-Jackson has worked as conservator of frames & furniture at the National Gallery of Victoria for the past 7 years. Holly trained in Objects Conservation at the University of Canberra & undertook an 18-month fellowship in the Furniture Conservation section at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

Paula Dredge - Preserving evidence of 20th century frames. A case study of Sydney Modern Painters and the SA Parker Framing works

A project commenced to document original frames on the collection of Australian paintings at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, has generated a large project devoted to the study of the frames of the Sydney framing company S.A. Parker. The S.A. Parker Framing Works employed three generations of family members from 1917 until 1971. Lindsay Parker generously gifted to the Art Gallery of New South Wales archives, the books of the company and Russell Parker has lent almost 1000 frame moulds, moulding samples, catalogues of moulding codes and original tools to the gallery for study and replication. The combination of paintings and original frames, account books and frame mouldings and codes offers a unique opportunity for the study of the relationships between a picture framer and a large number of artists in Sydney during the first half of the twentieth century.

Biography

Paula Dredge has been a Paintings Conservator at the Art Gallery of New South Wales since 1990. She has written articles on the materials and techniques of a number of 19th century Australian and European artists. Her previous research on 19th century Sydney picture framers has also been published.

David Keany - Cleve Parker at Australian War Memorial – framing a collection

After World War Two, the Australian War Memorial had several thousand paintings needing to be framed. A highly qualified framer, Cleve Parker, had volunteered as part of the armed forces and was redirected to frame the paintings. During this time and after discharge from the Army, he framed 1500 painting at his workshop in the Sydney suburb of Chatswood.

The quality of these frames is very high and they are still in good condition. We are attempting to match the standards set by Cleve Parker in the continual task of framing. Cleve Parker was part of the S.A. Parker family company and his story is an integral part of the S.A. Parker history.

Records at the Memorial give technical and aesthetic details of how the frames were made. They show that the interrelation of the artist, framer, and custodians can produce lasting results.

Biography

David Keany is the Conservator of Painted Surfaces at the Australian War Memorial. He has been working with the collection since 1976.

Malgorzata Sawicki - From Lady in Black to Art Students: Story behind changing a frame

The original frame for the Phillips Fox painting "Art Students" vanished in unknown circumstances many years ago. Since this incident, the painting has been encased in a contemporary frame, which was historically and aesthetically unsuitable for the image of the painting. In searching for an appropriate design for the frame for Art Students we came across another painting by Phillips Fox, Lady in Black, also in the collection of the Art Gallery of NSW. The image of this painting was destroyed beyond possibility of restoration, and due to its poor condition it would never again be exhibited. But, the beautiful original frame, which surrounded Lady in Black, was in a much better state of preservation.

The ethical dilemma involved in adapting a frame from one painting to another is an issue, which always has to be treated very seriously. The frame has enormous impact on the presentation of an work of art. In addition, the original frame is an integral part of the painting and separation of the two often leads to misinterpretation of the artist's intention or misleading historical information. For the last fifteen years the policy of the Art Gallery of NSW has focused on the preservation of original frames and the original presentation of the works of art. In this particular case however the idea of adapting the frame from Lady in Black to Art Students was in our opinion fully justified and appeared more an act of salvation rather than destruction.

The paper will tell the story hidden behind adaptation of the frame for the Art Students painting. Ethical issues associated with changing a frame for the painting will be discussed, and conservation treatment of the frame will be presented.

Biography

Malgorzata Sawicki is the Senior Conservator – Head of Frames Conservation Art Gallery of NSW

Noel Turner - Reconstructing the Wheel

A review of the re-constructive treatment completed on the 19th century Pre-Raphaelite frame for the painting "The Wheel of Fortune", by Edward Burne-Jones. The treatment involved removal of over-paint, as well as the production of missing members of the frame. The reproduction process included ornament decoration, carving, toning and distressing of a newly created surface. This review provides insight into the processes involved in frame reproduction, illustrating research methods, material selection and techniques.

Biography

After graduated from the University of Canberra, with a Bachelor of Applied Science, Conservation of Cultural Materials (Paintings Conservation) Noel Turner undertook a post-graduate internship at the University of Melbourne Art Conservation Service, The Ian Potter Art Conservation Centre. He briefly worked at The Conservation Centre in Melbourne before joining the National Gallery of Victoria Furniture and Frame conservation department. Noel also runs a private conservation practice specialising in Painting and Frame conservation.

Day 3: SATURDAY 20th MARCH

Kathryn Ferguson - It's Enough to Make You Blanche

Two paintings with unusual discolourations were treated to restore their appearance. "Near Leura" painted by Robert Johnson (early to mid 20th Century) had a discernable milky blanching across the surface. Attempts to remove the discolouration with conventional cleaning methods were unsuccessful and were replaced by using deoxycholic acid soap solution (Wolbers), cleared with petroleum spirits. Due to the dry nature of the paint media the painting was varnished. The second painting "Portrait of Benjamin Pickman" painted by Chester Harding (c1820) had developed white discolourations on the flesh areas (face and hands). Swabbing with petroleum spirits/ethanol (60:40) was carried out locally on the white areas to reduce the discolourations. Due to the presence of numerous drying cracks throughout the painting a consolidating varnish was applied to inhibit further drying of the surface and minimize the potential reappearance of the blotching of the skin.

Biography

Originally a biological laboratory technician, Kathryn Ferguson re-trained at the University of Canberra as a paintings/paper conservator completing her Bachelor of Applied Science Degree (Conservation of Cultural Materials) in 1988.

After two years with Art & Archival working with Kerry McInnis on a wide variety of paper objects she set up privately to pursue her interest in paintings conservation. Over the last fourteen years she has treated and condition reported many paintings in both private and National collections for a variety of individuals, as well as corporate and government organisations including the National Gallery, Parliament House, National Portrait Gallery, National Library, Canberra Museum and Gallery, Australian National University and ArtBank.

Nicole Tse - Artistic Practices of Bohol Panel Paintings: an analytical and archival study of nineteenth century panel paintings in the Philippines

In the center of the Philippines on the island of Bohol, a unique panel painting practice evolved linking western artistic methods introduced by the Spanish with Filipino knowledge of materials and techniques. The scientific analysis of five 19th century panel paintings belonging to the Baclayon Parish was undertaken and combined with an archival investigation of the Parish Archives to develop a better understanding of their provenance. Results illustrated the western construction of panel paintings with an oil medium and the utilisation of some local materials such as Kedondong wood for panel support, cotton and bast fibre paper for a gap filler between the wood panels and a beeswax for the ground layer. Some of the pigments identified correlated with the geological deposits from the region and others corresponded with the archival church records. Other identified pigments were not referenced in the archives or found locally. The latter indicated the importation of high quality pigment, not of Filipino origin. Further the good condition of the panels highlighted their sound preparation and a stable environment suited for these particular works.

Biography

Current PhD, The University of Melbourne; B.App.Sc.Materials Conservation, University of Canberra, 1996; BEd.Visual Arts, University of Melbourne, 1991.

Judy Dunlop – Drastic Situation - Drastic Solution

Problem: How to treat a large Ginger Riley painting of an AFL game which had been badly smoke and heat damaged in a house fire, while still remaining true to the integrity of the work and the cultural values of the artist.

Dealt with the cultural taboos about treating the work by telling myself it was a private commission of an AFL game rather than depicting something of sensitive cultural significance.

The artist was too ill to paint a replacement and he subsequently died during treatment. He was unable to even give advice. However I did have help from the artist's dealer concerning the type of paint he used and his technique. I also had a very good reproduction to work from; this work had been exhibited in the Ginger Riley exhibition at the National Gallery of Victoria. The heat and smoke of the fire had caused serious deterioration of the cotton duck support requiring the work to be lined bearing in mind the acrylic paint surface would restrict my options. The smoke had irrevocably stained the paints apart from the bottom fifth of the work. I had to overcome my qualms and repaint the work on top of an isolating layer of Regalres.

Result: One happy client

Biography

Originally trained at Gateshead Technical College, (UK). Judy has worked at the North West Area Museum Service (UK), Queensland Art Gallery, Bristol private firm IFACS (UK) as well as the Ian Potter Art Conservation Centre at Melbourne University. Judy now runs a private conservation business in Melbourne.

Alyssa Aleksanian - Treatment of a large scale Victorian painting by FW Calderon

The paper summarises the treatment of a large scale Victorian painting, Calderon's Crest of the Hill. The painting required some unusual treatment techniques due to its significant size and very poor condition. Structural treatments such as large scale tear repairs, flattening of extensive cupping and lining are discussed, through to retouching and recreation of a frame based on the original.

This paper discusses the problems posed by a large scale painting and charts the decision making process in finding solutions. Analytical results that informed the process of treatment will be presented.

Biography

Alyssa Aleksanian graduated from the Canberra Course in 2002. In 2003 she undertook a Painting internship at the Queensland Art Gallery.

Cushla Hill - A suite of VCA student works at the Potter: Stretching treatment regimes

An overview of a conservation project treating 32 paintings from the Historic Students Collection at the Victorian College of the Arts, Melbourne (formerly the NGV school). Artists represented include; Abbey Altson, Grace Joel, Spencer Macky, Marion Jones, Winifred Honey, Constance Parkin (nee Stokes), and Pascoe Redwood, all students between 1884-1929.

Biography

Cushla Hill is Senior Paintings Conservator at the Centre for Conservation of Cultural Materials at the University of Melbourne.

Chris Payne - Mural Rescue

The rebuilding of Windsor Square, Elizabeth, involved substantial remodelling of several performing arts spaces including the Shedley Theatre.

Running the full length of the back wall of this space was a mural 20 metres long and 1.8 metres high, designed and painted by the architect.

This talk describes the equipment and technique used to remove the mural for storage.

Biography:

Chris Payne is one of Bill Boustead's originals. Following this experience he spent some years at the Australian National Gallery before the building existed and then worked as a freelance conservator in Adelaide. For the last fifteen years he has been juggling private business with part time work at Artlab Australia.

Sabine Cotte - Conservation of Tibetan paintings: Specific problems

Treatment of Tibetan paintings: Tibetan paintings ("thangkas") are composite artefacts done using a traditional technique that has varied very little since the early middle-age, when Buddhism was introduced in the Himalayas. Their most common alterations are also specific of their religious use. The technique is described here, and the principal types of conservation treatment and their justification are discussed; some other type of himalayan objects are also shown, with according conservation treatment; the concept of artwork in use and its contradictions with the conservation ethics is discussed also.

Biography

Sabine Cotte arrived in Australia in December 2000. She graduated from the Institut Français de Restauration des Oeuvres d'Art (IFROA), easel painting speciality, in Paris, France, in 1990; and from International Institute for Conservation in Rome (ICCROM), mural painting course, in 1994. She worked in Paris from 1990 as a self employed conservator, and created with three other conservators an easel painting conservation studio. They have worked separately and together as a team for museums such as Musée du Louvre, Musée d'Orsay, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, Musée du Petit Palais, and Institutions like National Trust, Churches of Paris, as well as art dealers and private clients.

She has travelled and worked in the Himalayas for Unesco and National museum of Bhutan, and is currently preparing a workshop for conservation of Himalayan painting for Unesco in 2005.

Since moving to Australia 2000 she has worked as a private conservator for private clients and art galleries, on western art and Himalayan art.

Maria Kubik - Paintings Conservation in Australia: An Industry Analysis

Paintings conservation has changed considerably over the past 30 years following the introduction of the Australian Institute for Conservation of Cultural Materials (AICCM) and the 1978 opening of a training facility at the University of Canberra. There has been a steady increase in the number of qualified local conservators since then, spreading across both private and public sectors. Museums and galleries are now more likely to have their own conservation staff, or failing that, a private consultant nearby. This has in turn affected collection management, methods of storage and display, as well as improving awareness of the profession and of the need for conservation in the wider community.

To date, there had been no thorough research undertaken into the size and distribution of Paintings Conservation in Australia. This project therefore set out to provide a thorough insight into the industry. Following nationwide surveys of both public collections and practicing conservators, some interesting topics were addressed, such as the location of supply and demand, attitudes of conservators and collections, demographics, and needs for conservation in the future. The resulting data provides useful statistical information on the industry.

Biography

Maria Kubik is a PhD student at the Research School of Chemistry, ANU. She has previously undertaken both undergraduate and postgraduate studies at the University of Canberra, and now works as a private paintings conservator between thesis chapters.

JARMAN'S MAP OF HOBART TOWN.

