

Presentation Abstracts

(in order of program)

revivify

2 0 1 6



AI P A I N T I N G S
CCM S Y M P O S I U M

revivify 2016

14th AICCM Paintings Special Interest Group Symposium

National Portrait Gallery, Canberra

26 - 28 October 2016

Working with contemporary artists: an investigation into the degradation properties of popular artist epoxy and acrylic resin coatings for paintings

Full Presentation

Ruby Awburn¹, Caroline Fry², and Dr. Petronella Nel¹

¹ Grimwade Centre for Cultural Materials Conservation, University of Melbourne,

² Centre for Cultural Materials Conservation Commercial Conservation Services,
University of Melbourne Commercial
r.awburn@student.unimelb.edu.au

A relatively new practice is emerging in contemporary art where epoxy resins are applied coatings on paintings to obtain a glassy, high gloss surface. However, as the material ages it causes aesthetic and structural issues for the works of art, such as yellowing and delamination. As epoxies have limited reversibility, remediation treatment is problematic. In response to the popularity of epoxy coatings as a finish for paintings, various commercial brands have released epoxy-based products, advertised to be resistant to yellowing. In addition, other proprietary brands of artists' materials are releasing acrylic based products formulated to create a similar glossy appearance like epoxy coatings.

The primary aim of this research is to characterise and compare the ageing and deterioration characteristics of popular epoxy and acrylic resins utilised as coatings on contemporary paintings. Contemporary artists who use these materials will be consulted. This research project intends to provide lifespan data to conservators and artists, thus informing the selection of compatible proprietary acrylic or epoxy resin coatings for contemporary paintings. As a consequence, it is hoped this research will fill a gap in the growing information available regarding the conservation of new coatings used in contemporary art.

Ruby Awburn is a Masters student at the Grimwade Centre for Cultural Materials Conservation at the University of Melbourne, specialising in the conservation of paintings.

Caroline Fry is a paintings conservator the Centre for Cultural Materials Conservation. Caroline works primarily as a conservator, responsible for the conservation treatment of paintings from various collections, including public collections such as regional galleries, and commercial galleries and private individuals.

Dr Petronella Nel is a lecturer at the Grimwade Centre for Cultural Materials Conservation at the University of Melbourne. She is leading an ARC Linkage Project (2016-2019, \$280,000), titled 'A national framework for managing malignant plastics in museum collections' partnered with MV, QM, MAAS, AGNSW, SAM, UTS and Flinders University.