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Lightning talk: *Blurred Lines: Conservation of Costume/Restoration of Aesthetic*

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ABSTRACT

Costumes from the 'Golden Age of Hollywood', exhibition.

Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary (1975) defines **restoration** as, "a bringing back to a former position or condition." In *restoring* an art object, the most important requirement is the final appearance. The client and restorer determine the most desirable period of an object's life; and the restorer does whatever is necessary to return the object's appearance to that period.

In **conservation**, however, the absolute maximum amount of the original material, in as unaltered a condition as possible, is preserved. *Conserving* an object means the object dictates all choices on how it is treated. Conservation does not involve artistic choices or material experimentation on the object. As far as possible all repairs or additions must be reversible and removable without affecting the condition of the original material now, and in the future.

This presentation showcases the *conservation* of a private collection of Hollywood costumes for the 'Costumes from the Golden Age of Hollywood' exhibition, Museum of Brisbane 2014-2015, highlighting the collaboration between Conservator, Owner and Museum. A major goal of the project was to recreate the splendour of the costumes in their prime, so in order to satisfy the requirements of all stakeholders, it was necessary to blur the lines between conservation and restoration, and to ethically *conserve* the garments, whilst *restoring* their aesthetic.

BIOGRAPHY

Tess completed a Post Graduate Diploma in Textile Conservation at the Textile Conservation Centre, London (1984) and was Deputy Head of the Tapestry Department for three years before moving to Australia, establishing Heights Heritage Conservation in 2005.

In 2014 she attained an MSc. from Leicester University and spent over 600hrs on '*Costumes from the Golden Age of Hollywood*', which earned her the AICCM Conservator of the Year Award 2015.