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**Lightning talk: *Cellulose Nitrate & Cellulose Acetate Negatives: Preservation Management Strategies Used in Australian Institutions & the National Maritime Collection***

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**ABSTRACT**

This presentation will delve into the National Maritime Collection's cellulose nitrate and cellulose acetate story. Many are familiar with the particular smell of vinegar syndrome caused by deteriorating cellulose acetate, and incredible flammable qualities of cellulose nitrate. Institutions around Australia have cellulose nitrate and cellulose acetate negatives in their collections. At the Australian National Maritime Museum (ANMM) there are more than 6000 identified, and many more that remain unidentified. They are by nature unstable, will degrade and, as a result of this degradation, release hazardous by-products that are a risk to collections and humans.

It has been a decade since the ANMM took action to try and manage the risks these negatives pose. In consultation with key stakeholders and collaboratively both within the institution and externally, the ANMM has revisited the problem this material presents. The aim: to produce a robust long term preservation management strategy for this unstable material; incorporating industry best practice, ensuring the collections long term preservation, and long term sustainability in the current climate of shrinking budgets and fierce competition for resources.

Follow our journey: from the research stages and conducting a pilot condition survey on the negatives; to proposing preservation management strategies to key stakeholders within the museum; then turning to the community of conservators in Australia to ask of their experiences and institutional responses to the hazards, and difficulties, of preserving cellulose nitrate and cellulose acetate, particularly over the last decade. What is best practice for cellulose nitrate and cellulose acetate today? That is what we intend to discover.

## **BIOGRAPHIES**

Lucilla is currently the Australian National Maritime Museum's Paper Conservator. She has worked at the State Library of Queensland as Exhibitions/Paper Conservator and was the 2015/2016 Heritage Council Book and Paper Conservation Intern at Trinity college Dublin. Lucilla obtained her Masters in paper conservation in 2014.

Agata Rostek-Robak is Conservation Manager at the Australian National Maritime Museum. She has over 25 years work experience, mainly in various Senior Conservator roles at the State Library of NSW. Agata obtained conservation qualifications from the University of Canberra in 1992 and is currently studying towards a Master of Business Administration.