



KATOOMBA, NSW, 1 - 3 NOVEMBER 2017

Lightning talk: *Conservation Live - The John Herbert Public Conservation Project held at the National Gallery of Victoria from April - July, 2015*

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ABSTRACT

Throughout the months of April- July in 2015 the National Gallery of Victoria, with the support of the Copland Foundation, presented *Conservation Live - The John Herbert Public Conservation Project*. The project involved the conservation treatment of the painting and frame for the monumental artwork *Moses bringing down the Tables of the law* c. 1872-1878 by John Rogers Herbert and took place within the exhibition space on Level 2, NGV International.

The artwork is significant to the history and evolution of the NGV collection. When it was commissioned in 1872 John Herbert was a popular and respected Victorian Academician and the work was the largest and most expensive painting ever acquired by the gallery. Its original frame remains to this day the largest in the NGV collection. When the project was completed in July 2015 the painting and the frame were reunited and hung on the gallery wall for the first time in living memory.

Given the logistical implications of a project of this size and scale it was essential that there was collaboration both within the NGV conservation department as well as with a range of other important groups. These included other gallery departments such as Installation, Public Programs and Multimedia as well as the wider conservation community in the form of a dedicated group of conservation-trained volunteers.

An important objective of this project was to generate public interest and engagement with the profession of conservation through demonstrating the role conservation plays in providing access to the NGV collection. This was achieved through the conservation team encouraging questions and conversation with the public throughout the course of the project as well as through organised public programs, online content, multimedia platforms and print, social and digital media.

BIOGRAPHIES

Sandi Mitchell is a Paintings Conservator and David Stein & Co. in Sydney. Prior to commencing this role in 2015 she was H.D.T Williamson Foundation Fellow at the National Gallery of Victoria and served as Project Manager for *Conservation Live - The John Herbert Public Conservation Project*.

Suzanna Shaw is Conservator of Frames & Furniture at the National Gallery of Victoria. She has been working primarily with the furniture collection since 2002, however also supports the reframing program and frames conservation requirements. Her other interest is Asian lacquer.