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## **Who Painted Henry?**

Presenter: Simon Ives

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### **ABSTRACT**

An early Tudor portrait of Henry VIII on oak panel is now in the latter stages of an extensive collaborative conservation project which will result in a ground breaking presentation of the painting at the AGNSW in 2018. The panel underwent detailed imaging and extensive analysis in order to inform its restoration as well as to determine its origin. It was also hoped to clarify the uncertain authorship through comparative analysis with companion panels at the National Portrait Gallery in London and elsewhere.

High resolution digital scans were captured by IGLAM. Electron microscopy was carried out at the University of Western Sydney. Innovative comprehensive elemental mapping of the painting was undertaken at the Australian Synchrotron producing spectacular high-resolution data maps of the distribution of original and non-original materials. Dendrochronology, dating of the oak panel by growth-rings, has been carried out in collaboration with ANU. The adhesive used as mordant for the gilding was analysed employing a pioneering technique using antibodies at the Staatliche Akademie Der Bildenden Künste, Stuttgart. The analysis has given unparalleled insights into the making of the work. Elemental maps have revealed original details obscured, the shadow of the head, a slashed sleeve and alteration to fingers, sheets of gold leaf imaged for the first time in exquisite details.

This presentation also examines how images and data captured during the conservation process can be used, through digital mediums, to enhance visitor engagement with the original art object. In conjunction with the Laboratory for Innovation in Galleries, Libraries and Museums at the National Institute for Experimental Arts (UNSW), the Gallery is creating a high-resolution interactive app that allows users to explore the materiality and history of the painting in ways previously unavailable to people outside of conservation science. The installation of this app in the gallery space using a virtual reality format will break new ground in digital engagement for galleries.

## **BIOGRAPHIES**

Simon Ives is a Painting Conservator at the Art Gallery of New South Wales. He gained a Masters degree Fine Art Conservation with a specialism in easel paintings at the University of Northumbria (UK) in 1994. He has worked at the Tate Gallery, the National Gallery of Australia and in private practice.

Paula Dredge is Head of Painting Conservation at the Art Gallery of New South Wales. She has a Bachelor of Applied Science in Conservation of Cultural Materials from the University of Canberra. She was awarded a PhD with the Centre for Cultural Materials Conservation at the University of Melbourne in 2014.

Matthew Brookhouse is a Research Fellow in the ANU's Research School of Biology. Matthew holds a PhD in dendroclimatology and is principally engaged in examining the effects of elevated CO<sub>2</sub> on eucalypts and dendroclimatological research. Matthew also lectures in quantitative research methods at the Fenner School of Environment and Society.

Daryl Howard is a chemist at the X-ray fluorescence microscopy beamline of the Australian Synchrotron. He has a particular interest in cultural materials and has worked with many galleries and museums throughout Australia supporting their conservation studies.

Richard Wuhler is the Research Manager of the Advanced Materials Characterisation Facility (AMCF) at the University of Western Sydney (UWS). Richard has extensive experience on various characterisation techniques such as scanning electron microscopes, X-ray spectroscopy and X-ray diffraction. He has a PhD in Applied Science from UTS and is the President of the Australian Microbeam Analysis Society (AMAS).

Andrew Yip is a researcher in experimental new media and immersive visualisation for museology and cultural analysis. He is a post-doctoral research fellow at the Laboratory for Innovation in Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museums (UNSW) and previously held positions at the Art Gallery of NSW.