



Keynote lecture:

Bernardo Buontalenti: The evolution of ornament in Mannerist Florence and the emergence of the auricular frame style

George Bisacca

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Abstract

This lecture traces the evolution of ornament in Renaissance Florence through manuscript illumination, sculptural and architectural detail, furniture and fresco painting, culminating in the art of Bernardo Buontalenti, who is seen as a link between Mannerism and the Baroque and whose designs in the decorative arts may be responsible for the emergence of the auricular style in frames for the Galleria Palatina at Palazzo Pitti after the devastating fire of 1638.

Although various scholars and frame historians attribute the origin of the auricular style to the Netherlands, this is at odds with the otherwise austere and sparse ornament present on buildings and furniture both before and after its 20-year popularity in the Low Countries.

Given the seamless evolution and proliferation of ornamental forms across more than three centuries in Italy in general and in Florence in particular, the style would seem to be more logically explained as an outgrowth of existing trends.

The flatness and reduced scale of the Northern examples relative to the Florentine prototypes is probably due to the designs first being disseminated northward through drawings.



Biography of the Author

George Bisacca, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Before joining the Paintings Conservation Department at the Metropolitan in 1983, Mr. Bisacca received conservation training at the Palazzo Pitti, Florence, specializing in the structural treatment of paintings on solid support. He has since been invited to treat panel paintings at several institutions in the

United States and Europe.

After graduation from Middlebury College, he moved to Florence and began training in various artisan crafts, primarily traditional ornamental woodcarving and gilding with a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. Mr. Bisacca's interest in picture frames eventually led to a collaboration with Laurence Kanter (then director of the Lehman Collection) and Timothy Newbery on the exhibition, "Italian Renaissance Frames," held at the Metropolitan in 1990, including co-authorship of the catalogue.



Mr. Bisacca acted as Co-Chair of the international advisory committee of the Panel Paintings Initiative, a Getty Foundation project formed in 2008, which addressed training and research issues related to the structural conservation of panel paintings.

Mr. Bisacca has been awarded the medal of honor 'Alfonso X, El Sabio' from the Spanish Ministry of Culture in 2001 and The Gabarron Foundation award for conservation in 2012.



Figure 1. Paris Bordon, Portrait of a Man in a Fur Coat, c. 1535. Palatine frame: c. 1660s Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence. ©



Figure 2. The architectural detail from Palazzo Nonfinito, Florence by Bernardo Buontalenti, 1593. ©



Historical Frames at the National Museum in Kraków

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Abstract

From the beginning of time to the modern era, Poland, which is located in central Europe, has evolved as its neighbours have. Monasteries and officials, have own and accepted migration or imported craftsmen and artists.

The lack of native scientific monographs on historical frames for paintings and mirrors does not reflect the state of knowledge in Poland. There is extensive and detailed literature of specific objects and sacral and secular ensembles.

The severe losses of Polish public and private collections during World War II were mainly attributed to theft or intentionally destroyed works of art. An ideological imperative resulted in the destruction of monuments as well.

After the war, there was a crisis for many years. Political transformations in the Eastern Bloc focused on satisfying basic needs and caused the impoverishment of society. International policy isolated the state behind the "Iron Curtain" and the authorities restricted travel and contacts with foreign specialists. Many of private framing workshops simply closed. The continuity of tradition was interrupted, which ensured the transfer of skills from generation to generation. Trading in gold was illegal, which made it impossible to work with gold-leaf and powdered gold. State-owned studios became the mainstay of craftsmanship.

Political changes in the 1980s in Eastern Europe enabled the emergence of a free market which has strengthened in the new millennium. Globalization and cultural diffusion spread rapidly.

The high level of conservation of monuments in modern Poland is created by masses of professionals educated at universities and art and vocational schools.

Biography of the Author

Senior Paintings Conservator for 30 years at the National Museum of Kraków, Czartoryski Collection. Extensive experience and publications. Specialized in old Masters paintings conservation including Rembrandt, Lorenzo Lotto, Pieter Brueghel the Younger. High interest in frames, projects and technological replicas. Courier for "Lady with an Ermine" by Leonardo da Vinci.



The Bigger Picture - the unique relationship between 19th Century watercolour paintings and their frames.

Analiесе Treacy

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Abstract

The 19th Century is often described as the period during which watercolour painting truly flourished and ultimately reached its 'peak'. The enormous interest in the medium progressed hand in hand with the improvement and commercial development of the materials associated with it. As the availability and quality of watercolour papers and paints improved, and technical handbooks became more widely available, artists who had typically employed watercolour to create simple, honest sketches, were now afforded the opportunity to produce more ambitious and technically accomplished works. As artists aspirations grew, so too did the scale of their paintings, with many choosing to present their watercolours in large, ornate, gilded frames selected both to compliment the works and enable them to compete with the grandeur of oil painting. Using examples from the Art Gallery of New South Wales Collection, this paper will examine the significant rise in the popularity of watercolour painting in the 19th Century, and the instrumental role frames played not only in elevating the status of the medium but also in reflecting the intentions of artists of the period, both modest and ambitious!

Biography of the Author

Analiесе Treacy is a Paper Conservator at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, where she has worked since 2006 caring for works of art on paper and photographic material. Analiесе holds a joint Honours Degree in Art History & Italian from University College Dublin and a Masters Degree in Fine Art Conservation, specialising in works of art on paper, from the University of Northumbria in Newcastle.



A small frame survey for the National Library of Australia

Louise Bradley

Conservation Framers

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Abstract

In 2016 I was contracted by the National Library to survey a selection of frames and prepare a report. Conservation and curatorial staff selected thirteen frames and over five days in the library archives I examined the frames, took photos, made profile drawings and notes on condition and treatment needs. A report was prepared and sent to the library with multiple additional images. It is hoped that curators and the conservation department will use the report to prioritise treatment, and re-unite frames with their artwork.

Biography of the Author

Louise Bradley is a conservation framer in private practice specialising in the mounting and framing of work on paper and framing of modern and contemporary art. She is the convenor of the AICCM Conservation Framers Special Interest Group.



DEFINING THE APERTURE: How much of the sides of a painting should be covered?

Zoë Allen* and Yukiko Yoshii Barrow

Victorian and Albert Museum, England

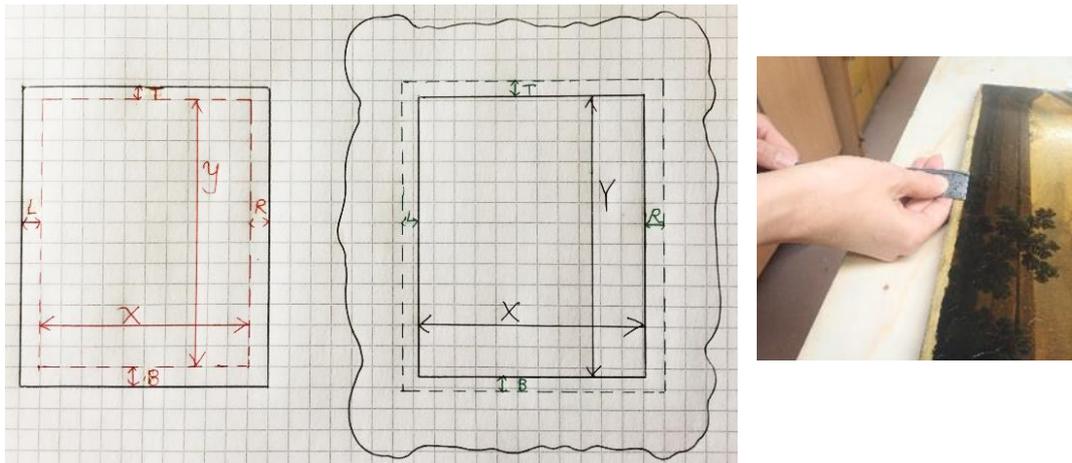
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Abstract

The point at which the edges of the painted image meets the frames sight edge is often an inexact art.

It is often dictated by the frame which cannot be altered. However, when we do have the opportunity to make new spacers we can dictate exactly how much of the edges of the painted image are visible.

This lightning talk presents an easy calculation to tailor make spacers to allow maximum flexibility to show as little or as much of the paintings edges desired even if each side is different.



Figures 1 & 2. The red dashes show the paintings edges covered by the slip frame. T, R, B & L are width of the covered area. See an image on right. The green dashes show the frame rebate. T, R, B & L are the depth of the rebate at each side.

Biography of the Authors

Zoë Allen has been head of the furniture conservation studio at the V&A Museum since 2016. She joined the V&A in 2000 to work on gilded objects for the British Galleries. She returned in 2003 as senior gilded furniture and frames conservator. Zoë has published articles on her work and in 2009 published *Italian Renaissance Frames* at the V&A, A Technical Study with Christine Powell. Before joining the V&A she worked in both the public and private sectors. She worked as project conservator installing the Wernher Collection at Rangers House (English Heritage). Other projects included cleaning Kent and Thornhill wall paintings (Royal Academy and St Pauls Cathedral) and condition checking for various exhibitions at Somerset House.



After a first degree in French Literature, Zoë studied conservation at the City & Guilds of London Art School. Internships included the National Institute for Restoration, Croatia, the Royal Collection and the Museum of London.

Yukiko Yoshii Barrow joined the furniture conservation studio at the Victoria and Albert Museum as a frames and furniture conservator in July 2017. She worked as a freelance frame conservator since 2009 working mainly in London in both private and public sectors at the V&A, the Tate, the National Maritime Museum and the Guildhall Art Gallery. Between 2003- 2009 she was working as a conservator in many historical houses at Olmsted Subdivision Historic District, Massachusetts U.S. Before this period, she was working in the private sector as a furniture conservator / restorer near Oxford U.K 1995-2000.

She has MA degree in conservation studies and a Post Graduate diploma both from the West Dean College and the Sussex University 2011. She first trained to be a furniture conservator- restorer at the West Dean College in 1995. She is originally from Japan.



The elephant in the room: display and concealment as function of miniature portrait frame at the State Library of New South Wales

Dana Kahabka

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Abstract

Pliny wrote about elephant ivory in the first century AD:

Their [the elephant's] teeth are very highly prized, and from them we obtain the most costly materials for forming the statues of our gods.

By the 19th century ivory had become a more common thing, made possible by the increased trade from east Africa to the world, and re-imagined through the process of industrialization into a plethora of luxury domestic goods such as cutlery handles, billiard balls, piano keys and fine smooth sheets of ivory for miniature paintings.

Despite the fashion for public display of commercial consumption in 19th century society there was a strong desire to define oneself as a person of discernment, elegance, moral character and profound sentiment. This desire for self-fashioning through consumption led to the popularity of miniature portrait paintings made durable and portable by setting in cases or locketts or small frames and cabinets for private display. The jewellery setting was designed to have a Janus like dual function; the front offers the portrait for the full gaze of the public while the back signals its more intimate and emotional value.

This lightening talk will present a classic portrait miniature in frame that denotes its sitter's social status, contrasted with a miniature used as a figurative trope within a large-scale portrait easel painting.

Biography of the Author

Dana Kahabka is a Paper Conservator, at the State Library of New South Wales where she has worked on a wide range of high priority objects most recently collaborated with University of Sydney: MicroCT visualisation 19th century Chinese paintings on pith paper; histochemical and morphological paper fibre identification on 17th century hand painted Dutch map; and pigment analysis using XRF and identification of a 19th century Tasmanian Proclamation Board.



Finding solutions in the face of complexity; the use of gel cleaning systems on a papier-mâché frame

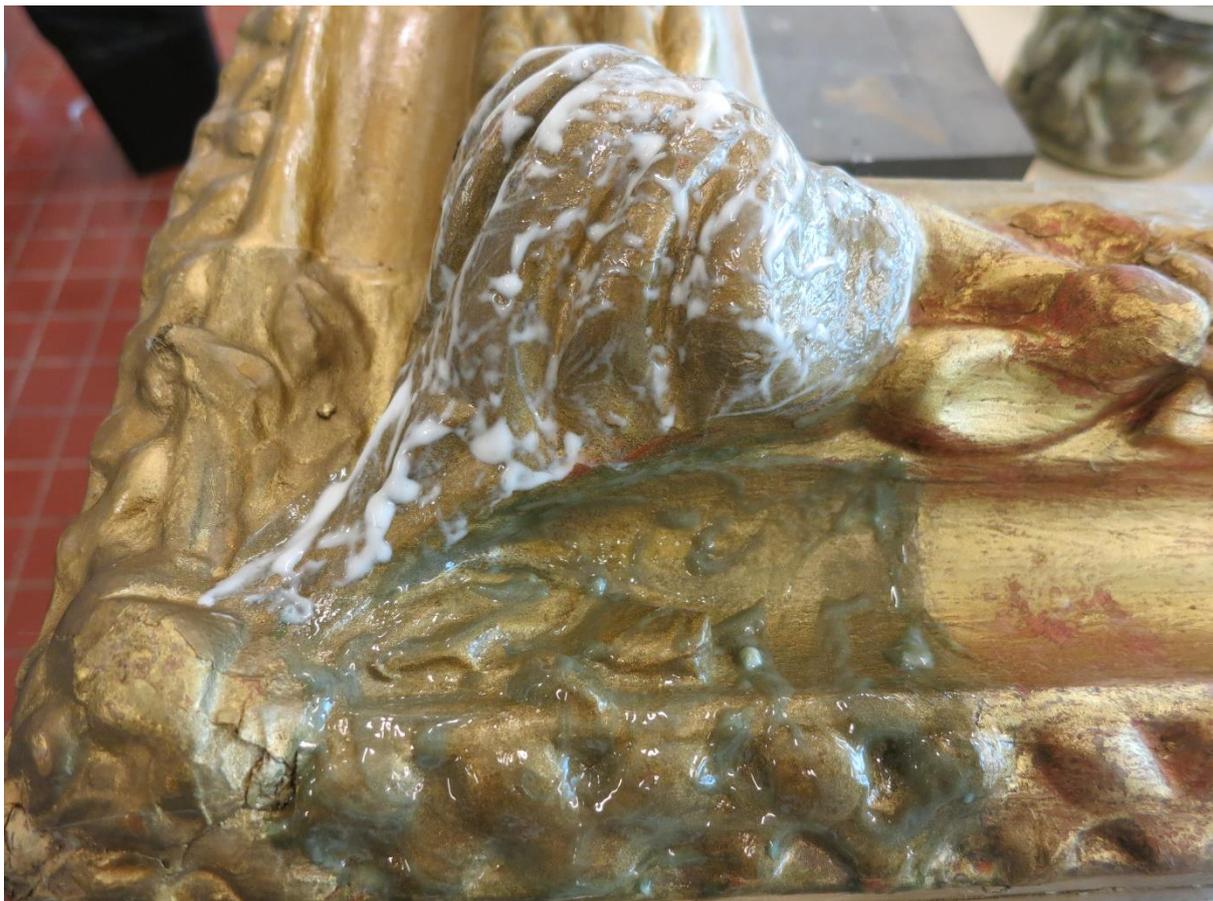
Grace Barrand

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Abstract

This presentation will discuss the complex cleaning system used to remove multiple layers of overpaint on a papier-mâché frame. The frame is the original for Australian painter Sydney Long's *Hawkesbury Landscape* (1925), and is a unique example of papier-mâché frame making in Australia. The use of gel cleaning systems and the challenges associated with the paper-based substrate will be explored in relation to removing non-original layers, which have reduced the definition of the ornament and obstructed the original brilliance of the bronze powder finish. An approach that balances the innovation of science with intuition, a knowledge of theory with a knowledge of practice proved integral in this treatment and will also be discussed.



Figures 1: Reaction of Pemulen TR2 emulsion after 50 minutes (green) vs freshly applied.

© Grace Barrand



Figures 2. Removal of Pemulen TR2 emulsion on working edge.
© Grace Barrand

Biography of the Author

Grace Barrand is the Assistant Frames Conservator at the Art Gallery of NSW. Grace has completed many frames conservation internships both around Australia and internationally including the National Gallery of Victoria, Museum of Fine Arts Boston, Artlab Australia and the University of Melbourne Conservation Commercial Services, and continues to admire the generosity of knowledge that frames conservators display towards students and young professionals. She is also managing the Heritage Skills Initiative project currently being undertaken by the International Specialised Skills Institute, which aims to sustain the use and knowledge of traditional trades and craft skills in Australia. Grace is currently completing her Masters in Cultural Materials Conservation at the University of Melbourne; the topic that she will be presenting on will form part of her final Master's thesis.



Make it modern: Frames used and made by the Heide Gallery circle

Louise Bradley

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Abstract

Heide, Museum of Modern Art, founded by benefactors and collectors John and Sunday Reed is today a thriving museum where the work of the Heide circle is exhibited with other modern and contemporary artists. When the Reeds bought the 15-acre property in 1934 there was only a small weatherboard cottage on farmland once occupied by the Wurundjeri People. In the early years the Reeds supported artists by hosting and housing them, and by purchasing, commissioning, and exhibiting their artwork. This paper will explore the frames made and used by the artists of the Heide circle. Artists will include Sam Atyeo, Yosl Bergner, Charles Blackman, Arthur Boyd, Mike Brown, Moya Dyring, Joy Hester, Adrian Lawlor, Mirka Mora, Sidney Nolan, Sweeney Reed, Albert Tucker and others.

Biography of the Author

Louise Bradley is a conservation framer in private practice specialising in the mounting and framing of work on paper and framing of modern and contemporary art. She is the convenor of the AICCM Conservation Framers Special Interest Group.



Exhibition announcement – *The Original Frames of the BRÜCKE artists*

Werner Murrer

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Abstract

“I myself have tried so much with frames of all kinds, because the usual plaster frames have something reprehensibly fake.” These words coming from a letter, written by Emil Nolde to the collector Carl Hagemann on the 6th of February 1912, describe an innovative movement which is representative for the way of framing at the beginning of the 20th century. Nolde was, besides Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, Karl Schmidt-Rottluff, Erich Heckel, Otto Mueller und Max Pechstein a member of the artist group BRÜCKE, who found their own way to end the tradition of gold framing.

For the first time the BRÜCKE artists and their frames will be the topic of an exhibition showing their special meaning and influence for picture framing in the early years of the 20th century. The artists themselves designed frames for their paintings, partly carved them with ornaments and tinted them in order to match the colours of the paintings. Frame and painting were seen as an overall composition which inevitably had an impact on both the frame profiles and the finishes. The design of the frames was individual with each of the artists and went beyond the BRÜCKE-period from 1905 to 1913.

The exhibition curated by WERNER MURRER RAHMEN in cooperation with the Brücke Museum Berlin and the Buchhheim Museum in Bernried is expected in autumn 2019.

Biography of the Author

Werner Murrer, WERNER MURRER RAHMEN, is in the frame business for over 30 years. The demand for both technically correct and aesthetically pleasing framing was his personal passion. The framing workshop consists now of a team of carpenters, gilders, glaziers, restorers, artists and art historians.



Keynote lecture:

30 Years of Frames Conservation at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia: Past, Present and...Future?

Dr Malgorzata Sawicki

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Abstract

Year 2017 marked the 30th anniversary of establishing the Frames Conservation section of the existing Conservation Department at the Art Gallery of New South Wales. In August 1987, the NSW Ministry for the Arts funded two new positions: Frames Conservator Grade 2, in charge of the frames conservation program, and Frames Conservator Grade 1. It was a milestone in the nearly 120 years of the Art Gallery of New South Wales history; frames for the paintings and works on paper from the AGNSW collections obtained the status of importance equal to other heritage items: since then the frames have been conserved by professional conservators.

In 1988 I was awarded the NSW Government grant to attend the memorable *Gilded Wood: Conservation and History* conference at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, US, and to visit a number of conservation laboratories in US and Canada. This eye-opening travel established in my mind the idea of the Frames Conservation Lab, which was finally created in then-a-new part of the AGNSW, devoted originally to the Artist in Residence studio. With the space devoted to the frames conservation projects, the AGNSW Frames Conservation lab became the centre for research and training on frames and gilded surfaces. In 1990s several short courses on conservation of frames and gilded objects were organised and the AICCM Gilded Objects Conservation Special Interest Group was established. In 1998 -2018 over 30 International and Australian conservators and conservation students received their internship training. Many research projects were conducted, with their outcomes disseminated by lectures presented at varied national and international conferences and by publications in professional journals. In addition to interesting case studies on frames from the AGNSW collections, the research topics focused on framemakers, such as S.A Parker Framing Company, on none-traditional gilding techniques for compensation of losses in gilded surfaces, on laser cleaning of gilded surfaces, on metallic paints, on formation of copper carboxylates as a result of the complex degradation processes of gilding with gold leaf-imitation materials, and more recently, research on using rigid gels and emulsions for surface cleaning of gilded surfaces. Several of these projects are long-term research and are continuing.

Many major restoration treatments of frames from the AGNSW collections were undertaken: layers of overpaints were removed revealing original finishes and preserving original integrity with the paintings. Many new exceptional-quality reproduction frames were made. The legacy of the AGNSW frames conservators, conservation interns and volunteers is apparent in the gallery showrooms, particularly in the Old Courts.

Where from now? The future presents many challenges. With the global trend of changing the attitude toward the collections by offering to the public viewing the artworks within the new context of new interpretations, is there a space for conservation of frames? With shifting the main focus in galleries and museums to increasing the number of visitors, rising revenue, and consequently offering to the public different experiences than viewing the collections, is there a place for Frames Conservation? The role of the conservator has changed. With constant change of display and exchange of artworks between institutions, conservators focus mainly on monitoring of the objects conditions providing sometimes



only minor treatments. Major conservation treatments are rarely conducted due to lack of resources, and with a generation of senior conservators reaching the retirement age, there is a fear that the high-level hands-on conservation skills will be lost. Does Frames Conservation have any future in this changing environment?

This keynote lecture will reflect on both the 30-years history of Frames Conservation at the AGNSW and on new challenges that are inevitable for Frames Conservation in the – not so distance - future.

Biography of the Author

Dr Malgorzata (Margaret) Sawicki is Head of Frames Conservation at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia. Trained in gilded/ polychrome objects conservation at the State Institution for the Cultural Heritage Preservation (PKZ), Warsaw, Poland, Malgorzata studied Preservation of Architectural Heritage (UNC, Torun, Poland), prior to migrating to Australia in 1980s. Malgorzata received her Master's Degree in Applied Science (Materials Conservation) with Distinction, and later PhD for research on non-traditional gilding techniques for compensation of losses in gilded surfaces (WSU, Sydney, Australia).

Malgorzata has mentored and trained many students in gilded objects/ frames conservation and shared her research and expertise on gilding conservation through publishing widely and contributing to conferences and workshops. In 1989-2005 she also managed and undertaken many frames conservation projects from the collections of varied public institutions in Australia and New Zealand, including State Library of New South Wales, Sydney, Contemporary Art Museum, Sydney, Historic Houses Trust of NSW, Sydney, Parliament House, Sydney, Parliament House, Canberra, Christchurch Museum and Art Gallery, Christchurch, New Zealand. Malgorzata was founder and first convenor of the AICCM *Gilded Objects Conservation Special Interest Group*, 1996 – 2001, and Coordinator of the ICOM-CC *Wood, Furniture, and Lacquer Working Group*, 2008 – 2014. She was honoured by the AICCM with the *Conservator of the Year* award (1999), with the *Certificate of Appreciation for Outstanding Research in the Field of Materials Conservation* (2009), and *The AICCM Medal* in recognition of her career long contribution to conservation profession (2018). Malgorzata is professional member of the AICCM, Fellow of the IIC, and a member of ICOM-CC.



The unique frames of Mary Edwell-Burke

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Abstract

Mary Edwards (Edwell-Burke) was an Australian artist active from the 1920s to the 1980s. Trained at Sydney Technical College Mary had studied sculpture with Beryl Young. However, Mary went on to focus on painting - she developed a distinctive style using bright, flamboyant colours becoming a successful portrait artist. Tainted by her role in opposing William Dobell's Archibald prize in 1943, Mary shed her past, changing her name and disowning past work. Retreating to her beloved Fiji she found a home there until her death in 1988.

Art historian Candice Bruce describes Mary as a 'painter and carver' – and it is perhaps in her unusual frames that the sculptor found its release. The SLNSW has three paintings by Mary Edwards all with curious frames. Two ostentatious frames, appear to be repurposed; and one hand carved frame, perhaps by Mary. There are many of her paintings in private collections which appear to have hand carved frames credited to Mary. The most magnificent frame is on a painting called *The Heritage* which Mary in later life denied was by her hand. Did Mary carve these frames and did she repurpose the grandiose frames in the SLNSW collection? The recent treatment of the cut-down 19th century gilded frame around the portrait of Millicent Preston Stanley has prompted this research to uncover the framer in Mary Edwards. By sharing information and insight into the frames in the SLNSW collection I hope to connect with others who may have knowledge of the unique frames of Mary Edwards.

Biography of the Author

Helen Casey currently works as Senior Conservator, Exhibitions and Loans for the State Library of NSW. Helen was previously at the National Gallery of Victoria. Helen graduated with a Masters of Cultural Material Conservation at the University of Melbourne in 2009 with a materials specialty in Paintings conservation.



A Poetics of Frames: the Work of Picture Frames

Matthew O'Reilly

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Abstract

The proposed paper is intended to examine one of picture frames' essential performative roles: its mediation of the relationship between viewer and artwork. Like much in art the point it will be making is rather more affective than purely logical, so I propose to use my text as a poetic response to the images on screen in order to make the connections more resonant. Logic in the talk is more implied than doggedly sought.

I see frames as I see other decorative arts, as active, representing strategies, subliminal and entirely conscious ones, articulated through the languages of style, and meant to bring the viewer into a particular relationship with the artwork contained within it. My talk will speak to a variety of framings each intended to explain or clarify the ways, specific or general, personal or conventionalised, that allow frames to perform their roles. What frames do is performative and my paper seeks to elucidate as many as I can of the ways it mediates relationships between the formal aspects of the object which is the painting, the iconographic details which together form the subject, and the viewer.

Biography of the Author

Matthew O'Reilly has been framer of paintings at Te Papa Tongarewa Museum of New Zealand for more than thirty years. His family history has a close relationship to New Zealand's mid-20th century modernism, when artists were learning to do without frames, thus giving rise to his interest in their attributes.



Frames in Focus: The NGV Centre for Frame Research

Holly McGowan-Jackson

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Abstract

The National Gallery of Victoria Centre for Frame Research is being developed over three years through the generous support of the Professor AGL Shaw AO Bequest. The aim is to establish a centre of excellence for picture frame research, production and preservation, building upon the NGV's work in the field over the last 25 years. Jason King has been appointed as NGV Frame maker, with a focus on the development of specialised skills and a program of reproduction frame making for the NGV collection.

The project aims to be inclusive and collaborative, with an emphasis on public engagement and outreach to Victorian regional galleries. This encompasses the development of a web presence and a frame research data base with contributions from community members. Issues being examined include ensuring accuracy of documentation, privacy for individual collectors and the use of digital scanning technologies. In regards to frame reproduction, protocols are being developed around intellectual property, copyright and the cultural heritage management of frames in the NGV collection.

Biography of the Author

Holly McGowan-Jackson is Senior Conservator of Frames and Furniture at the National Gallery of Victoria, where she has worked since 1996. She trained at the University of Canberra and completed an 18 month Andrew Mellon Fellowship in Furniture Conservation at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.



Matisse and framing

Helen Gramotnev

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Abstract

In 1916, Henri Matisse painted portraits of Michael and Sarah Stein. Sarah Stein's portrait was then placed into a simple gold frame (probably by the Steins themselves) that enhanced its spiritual appearance of an icon-like portrait. It has been suggested that this would have been consistent with Matisse's desires for very simple framing arrangements. While he was not opposed to using gold framed for his work, Matisse's writings suggest that he was looking for an "expansion" of the image into the space surrounding it. In *Interior with violin* (1918) Matisse painted corners of the frame black, extending his work beyond the confines of the canvas. The frame acts as another medium onto which the artist can extend his work: the painting ends at the wall, not at the canvas. The concept of a frame, then, is not merely that of a surround but a platform which is available to the artist to incorporate into their work.

This paper will explore the concept of framing in Matisse's work from inside the composition by looking at framing elements that commonly appear in his oeuvre: windows, mirrors and picture frames. It will also consider the artist's division of his compositions into panels that create a geometric framing within the work itself. Relying on Matisse's own writings about painting, as well as images of his framed and unframed works, this paper will explore Matisse's concept of a frame and the artist's relationship with it.

Biography of the Author

Helen Gramotnev is an independent curator and an art historian. Her research interests are in French art of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and the art of the Dutch Golden Age. She is currently the exhibition curator for the Queensland Military Historical Society.



Framing Munch

Werner Murrer

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Abstract

In June 2020, the Munch Museum in Oslo will move into its newly constructed building directly on Oslo Harbour. In preparation for the opening, Edvard Munch's artwork is getting new frames. This 4-year-project, there are 500 paintings and 400 graphic frames, is realised by WERNER MURRER RAHMEN. Munch's new frames, more precisely the decorative frames, are based on the historical framing of Munch's paintings, which was preceded by intense art historical research.

In addition to the question of aesthetics, a museum presentation of world-famous works of art such as those by Munch must guarantee security and a conservatorial correct framing. Equipped with a hidden interior frame in magnet technology designed by the Rhineland-Palatinate company HALBE based in Kirchen, the frames achieve new conservatorial standards. All the materials used were put through rigorous long-term testing to ensure that the chemical and physical properties of the frames will keep the works of Munch safe.

Munch has its very own idea of the perfect frame for his pictures, which has not only to do with the type of profile, but also with its condition. He was often careless with his works, in Munch's words this was as follows: "Good paintings can take quite a bit. Only poor paintings require neatness and gilded frames. As a rule, I frame mine with a narrow rim, preferably one that's round and white."

<https://www.murrer-rahmen.de/blog/2018/neue-rahmen-fuer-munch/#more-467>

Biography of the Author

Werner Murrer, WERNER MURRER RAHMEN, is in the frame business for over 30 years. The demand for both technically correct and aesthetically pleasing framing was his personal passion. The framing workshop consists now of a team of carpenters, gilders, glaziers, restorers, artists and art historians.



Reframing the modern

Denise Mimmocchi

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Abstract

In 2013, the Art Gallery of New South Wales hosted the exhibition *Sydney moderns: art for a new world*. This exhibition, co-curated by Deborah Edwards and Denise Mimmocchi surveyed the art of the inter-war decades, from around 1915 to 1941, which stands out as one of the most distinctive and innovative periods in Australian art history and the first era of modernist culture in this country.

The curators of *Sydney moderns* aimed to highlight the new realm of visual experience that works from Sydney's inter-war decades introduced to Australian culture. A significant conservation and re-framing program played an important role in realising this ambition.

This paper provides an overview of the reframing project for *Sydney moderns*, and how the collaborative work AGNSW frame conservators and exhibition curators in devising a set of new frames for numerous paintings in the exhibition, restored a greater sense of the dynamic modern character of these works.

Biography of the Author

Denise Mimmocchi is Senior Curator, Australian Art at the Art Gallery of New South Wales. Her most recent exhibitions and publications include *Tony Tuckson (2018) O'Keeffe, Cossington Smith, Preston: Making Modernism* (co-curator 2016) and *Sydney Moderns: art for a new world* (with Deborah Edwards, 2013)



The frame, a surface and a history to preserve

Stephanie Courtier

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Abstract

The frame is an artifact reflecting the history of artistic movements and expressions, the surface tells the story of techniques. From a Decorative Arts perspective, the painting fills the frame, the combination of these two artworks creating an aesthetic equilibrium.

Styles are imbued with elements from architecture and naturalism; they are created by the *ornemanistes*, intellectuals and philosophes who disseminate a decorative vocabulary drowned from engraving and drawing. Consequently, this vocabulary promotes the evolution of techniques, tools and materials.

Gilded wood is a craft carried out by the *peintres-doreurs* (painters-gilders guild). Some *ornemanistes* such as Oppenordt, Berain, Verbeekt or *menuisiers* (carpenters) such as Inffroit are today known to us. This paper will address techniques specific to gilding on wood, mouldings, recutting, water and oil gilding as well as metallic polychromy.

In the 20th century, we observe the development of an intellectual reflection of restauration: conservation for the frame in France. This field brings us to observe, study, analyse and preserve materials. In the gilding workshop of the C2RMF, the conservator follows a protocol including an observation with naked eye coupled with luminescent and microscopic analyses, allowing to establish a first diagnosis. This may guide us towards additional analysis such as SEM (scanning electron microscopy).

The treatment aims to consolidate, clean, reveal, retouch and reintegrate. Substitution materials need to be reversible and detectable.

This paper will cover the French gilding techniques and the story of the styles. It will present to you some examples of frame *restauration* accompanied with protocols of analyses and of restorations.

Biography of the Author

Stephanie Courtier is conservator of gilded wood at the Centre de Recherche et de Restauration des Musées de France (C2RMF) in Paris. She studied traditional gilding techniques as well as conservation ethics. For the past 21 years she has applied her expertise to the conservation of cultural heritage. She has been taking part in various projects such as Alienor at the C2RMF, cleaning of gilded surfaces with the Getty Conservation Institute and the creation of a gilding group at the French Section of the IIC (SFIIC).



Thomas Hart Benton's rare Synchronist picture Bubbles of 1914-1917: a surprising discovery of an artist's original painted frame

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Abstract

Thomas Hart Benton was an important American Regionalist painter of the 20th century who fervently rebuked Abstraction; however, in his early career he created several Synchronist abstractions which he called "Organizations". In 1947, the famous American writer/critic H.L. Mencken donated Bubbles to the BMA. At this time, no photographs were taken that document its framing.

The painting was displayed in numerous frames over the years, reflecting aesthetic preferences of various times. In the early 21st century, there was increased interest in Modernist frames and many paintings in the BMA's 20th century collection were reinstalled in their original frames. Bubbles' earliest known frame had been severely "altered" at some point, disguised as a linen liner, compromising its original appearance and intent. The frame was restored revealing its original green painted surface. An aesthetic improvement, the reversal also aligns with Synchronist colour theory. The painting itself, which had been treated previously as well, was repositioned properly on its stretcher to fit the original frame.

As part of the treatment, preliminary XRF (x-ray fluorescence) analysis of the frame's green pigment was conducted with a handheld Bruker Tracer III-V XRF instrument and compared with spectra of green passages in the painting. Spectral similarities suggest and help confirm that the frame was painted by the artist himself, a rare occurrence for Benton. As a result of this project, handheld XRF analysis has been undertaken more routinely on frames in the BMA's collection. We plan to undertake further pigment analysis on the frame for Bubbles.

Biography of the Author

Lauren Ross specializes in the conservation of frames and microclimate environments at The Baltimore Museum of Art. She has researched and treated many frames in the museum's encyclopedic collection over the past eighteen years. Lauren earned a Bachelor's Degree in Fine Art from The Maryland Institute College of Art.



Selected aspects of the methodology and conservation of frames of the National Museum in Warsaw

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Abstract

As a result of the intricate history of the collection of the National Museum in Warsaw in the XXth century, which can be contributed to World War II, a separate, unique set of historical frames was created. To prevent the destruction and plunder of the paintings from the Museum and other collections during WWII, they were hidden and stored separated from the frames. The frames were kept in poor conditions for several years. Hence, many of them have been affected by a number of damages and lost their exhibition value. After WWII only a part of the paintings got their original frames. Eventually over a thousand frames were left unused.

Inter-departmental team of the Museums' employees collaborates together to conduct an advanced query to rejoin the specific paintings with their original frames and exhibit such pairs. To make it possible, the selected frames must be subjected to a process of conservation and restoration. These procedures are conducted in the "Frame Conservation and Gilding Studio". The studio was restructured during the last few years and became a section of the "Studio of Conservation of Paintings on Canvas". This change was an impulse to review the methodology of conservation that was used so far. As the result, the range of materials and methods used during this process was extended.

The speech will present, with examples, the following stages of recovering the frames and in details the conservation methodology used during this process.

Biography of the Author

Monika Rdzanek-Solecka - 2010, Master's Degree in Fine Arts, Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, Institute of Conservation and Restoration of Works of Art. In 2011-2012, conservation of Chinese Rooms at the Museum of King Jan III's Palace at Wilanow. Since 2016 conservation assistant in National Museum in Warsaw, in Frame Conservation and Gilding Studio.



Cleaning of wooden gilded surfaces: research and dissemination project at the Getty Conservation Institute

Dr Stephanie Auffret

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Abstract

The Collections Department of the Getty Conservation Institute (GCI) has launched a new project, which aims to address the challenges presented by the cleaning of wooden gilded surfaces and implement practical methodologies accordingly. It was initially motivated by the lack of consensus on ethical and technical approaches related to the cleaning of these vulnerable surfaces, combined with a lack of specialized training in studying and treating them. This dearth results in numerous surfaces damaged or lost during cleaning campaigns, as well as difficulties for conservators to defend the need to preserve original surfaces with various stakeholders. The GCI project builds on former research carried out at the GCI, as well as by outside colleagues, on other delicate surfaces such as acrylic painted surfaces. Though different by nature, they are also sensitive to aqueous and polar solvent approaches. Cleaning systems developed for these other surfaces will be tested on gilded wood, allowing a range of options to be tailored for both water and oil gilded surfaces. Didactic materials will be developed in parallel, in collaboration with colleagues from several countries. A group of international experts have already been invited at the Getty in March 2018 to share their expertise and thoughts on the topic. This paper will provide an overview of the project, its aims, methodologies and planned outcomes.

Biography of the Author

Stephanie Auffret is a Project Specialist in the Collections Department of the GCI. She holds a Master Degree in Art Conservation from the University Paris I - Pantheon Sorbonne as well as a Master Degree and a PhD in Art History from the University of Paris IV-Sorbonne; her dissertation is entitled “The Authenticity of French Furniture: Interpretation, Evaluation and Preservation”. Prior to join the GCI, she worked as a Furniture Conservator in private practice in Paris as well as for institutions in the USA including Historic New England, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Fine Arts Boston and the Winterthur Museum. She also taught furniture conservation within the Winterthur University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation, where she still advises students as needed. She is currently the Coordinator of the Wood, Furniture and Lacquer Group of the ICOM-CC (2017-2020).



Gels and emulsions for surface cleaning and overpainting removal in gilded frames conservation

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Abstract

Wooden gilded surfaces are multilayered structures often including both the original gilding layers and later alterations, thus they are complex to clean. The term ‘cleaning of wooden gilded surfaces’ should be understood broadly to account for their complexity. The layers of overpainting, their state of preservation as well as the nature and condition of the original surface underneath should be considered equally when determining methodology for treatment. A layer-by-layer approach to cleaning allows greater control and selectivity in treatments.

Gels and emulsions offer controlled and selective cleaning options addressing specific surface characteristics. Customised gels can be prepared according to required pH, viscosity, combinations of solvents, and concentrations. They can reduce solvent evaporation and diffusion rates into the surface layers. These systems have been used effectively in other conservation fields for 30 years, however in regards to wooden gilded surfaces they have only recently been considered due to the fragile nature of gilding. Practice has shown cleaning gilded surfaces must be quick and able to be interrupted immediately if any risk of removing gold leaf is observed. Viscous gels systems often require time for clearing, which could be challenging if used to remove overpainting and soiling from the gilded surfaces. Rigid gels are potentially more suitable for this task.

The paper will present several case studies focused on selecting suitable gels and emulsions as well as application methods to remove brass-based overpainting and soiling from wooden gilded surfaces on frames. The rigid gels included in tests were: Xanthan gum gel, poly(vinyl alcohol)-borax gel (PVOH-borax gel), Agar gels, Gellan gels, as well as low-viscosity emulsions based on Pemulen TR-2. Gels were evaluated according to application and removal methods, viscosity, texture, and cleaning efficiency.

Biography of the Authors

Dr Malgorzata (Margaret) Sawicki is Head of Frames Conservation at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia. Trained in gilded/ polychrome objects conservation in Poland, Malgorzata received PhD in Applied Science (Materials Conservation) for research on non-traditional gilding techniques for compensation of losses in gilded surfaces (WSU). In addition to research on materials and methods related to conservation of gilded surfaces, her research and interest include also surface cleaning for gilded wood, metallic paints, and metal soaps formation in gold imitation-finishes on wood. Malgorzata has widely published on gilding conservation and presented her research at conferences and workshops. Malgorzata was Coordinator of the ICOM-CC Wood, Furniture, and Lacquer Working Group, 2008 – 2014. Malgorzata was honoured by the AICCM with the *Conservator of the Year* award (1999), with the *Certificate of Appreciation for Outstanding Research in the Field of Materials Conservation* (2009), and *The AICCM Medal* in recognition of her career long contribution to conservation profession (2018). She is professional member of the AICCM, Fellow of the IIC, and a member of ICOM-CC.



Emma Rouse is Campaign Assistant for the Sydney Modern Project at the Art Gallery of NSW, Sydney (Australia). She has a Master of Cultural Materials Conservation and a BSc from the University of Melbourne. Emma has co-authored papers relating to Frames Conservation research, specifically focussed on the impact of ageing nitrocellulose coatings that have been applied to gilded objects. Recently, Emma has been involved in researching the use of gels for cleaning cultural materials. She is also passionate about advocating for conservation research to her professional colleagues and the wider community through a range of public speaking engagements.

Sofia Lo Bianco is an objects conservator at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney with a specialisation in frames conservation. After completing her Masters of Cultural Material Conservation at the Melbourne University in 2011, she has worked in both private and public sectors and across a range of materials including contemporary art and frames and furniture.

Grace Barrand is the Assistant Frames Conservator at the Art Gallery of NSW. Grace has completed many frames conservation internships both around Australia and internationally, and continues to be blown away by the generosity of knowledge that frames conservators display towards students and young professionals. Grace is currently completing her Masters in Cultural Materials Conservation at the University of Melbourne.



Reconstructing a Tudor frame: an Art Gallery of New South Wales case study

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Abstract



Figure 1. ANGLO-NETHERLANDISH WORKSHOP, King Henry VIII c1535–40, oil on oak panel, 54.5 x 41.3 x 1.2 cm, Art Gallery of New South Wales, purchased 1961. The restored portrait in its new reproduction frame. © AGNSW

In 2018, the Art Gallery of New South Wales presented Henry VR, its first virtual reality (VR) exhibition, which focused on the restoration of a Tudor portrait of Henry VIII in the Gallery's collection. The display included two VR stations which transported viewers into a reconstruction of a 16th-century London artists' workshop, where they could experiment with the materials and pigments used to create the painting, and experience the sights and sounds of Tudor-era London. The fully restored painting was also shown for the first time in decades and presented in an appropriately Tudor-style reproduction frame, which had previously been surrounded by an unsympathetic 20th-century frame. The portrait of



the king was in the company of further 16th-century Flemish and Italian portraits form the Gallery's collection, together forming a picture of the art of portraiture in the late Renaissance.

This lecture will recount the fabrication steps of a replica Tudor-era frame by the Art Gallery of New South Wales's newly established in-house frame workshop in 2018. Furthermore, this lecture will examine the role curators play in the research involved in selecting accurate reproduction frames, and how together with conservators and historians, curators must work alongside skilled picture frame makers to achieve the goal of exhibiting works with the appropriate frames and subsequently allow the reinstatement of original presentation of paintings.

Biography of the Author

Dr Anne Gérard-Austin is assistant curator, International Art at the Art Gallery of New South Wales. Her recent doctoral thesis (University of Sydney, 2014) focuses on Australia artists' engagement with Parisian artistic practices from 1885 and 1939. She has written widely on Australian expatriates in France including Rupert Bunny (2009) and John Russell (2018), as well as on the Gallery's European paintings collection. Most recently she curated European Old Masters 16th-19th century at the Hazelhurst Regional Gallery & Arts Centre (2017) and the Art Gallery of New South Wales' first virtual reality exhibition Henry VR (2018).



Conservation issues of paintings on wooden supports "permanently" joined with engaged frames

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Abstract

The engaged frames of paintings on wooden supports consist sometimes of adorned moulding, mostly batten, attached to the painting board permanently with a support of glue and dowels. This type of structure blocks the lateral movement of the painting board exposed to the changes of the relative humidity in the unstable environment. With a large amplitude of these changes and a long time of impact on wood, the adhesive joints connecting the frame can be partially detached, the frame can be damaged or painting layers can crack and separate from the background, and in extreme cases the board itself can crack. This is a real risk to many panel paintings stored in interiors without environmental control systems and possibility of interventional climate adjustments limiting the risk of the above-mentioned damages. These include i.e. open-air museums, private collections in living spaces. This kind of



Figures 1 and 2. *Cyril and Methodius* painting on the wooden support, before and after conservation.

© Andrzej Cichy

destruction was diagnosed in a painting from the late nineteenth century on religious topic with the



presentation of saints of the Catholic and Orthodox Church - Cyril and Methodius. The oil painting on chalk ground was made on a linden board, supported at the verso by crossbeams. In order to eliminate threats that caused serious damage to the frame and numerous losses and separations of the painting layers, during the conservation treatment of the painting, the frame was attached in a way that allows the panel wood to work, while maintaining the required structural strength, aesthetics, and minimal intervention in the substance of the painting. Reversible materials were used, which at the same time fulfilled the requirement to make the conservation interventions recognisable to the viewer. The painting was monitored for a few years after treatment and no damage was observed.

Brief biography of the author

Andrzej Cichy is scientific and technical specialist of Heritage Wood Conservation at the Faculty of Wood Technology of the Warsaw University of Life Sciences, Warsaw, Poland. Andrzej awarded Master's Degree in Heritage Conservation at the Faculty of Fine Arts of the Nicolaus Copernicus University, Toruń, Poland. Working at the State Institution for Cultural Heritage Conservation in Warsaw, Andrzej gained experience in wood conservation at the Decorative Art Conservation Section, where from 1993 to 1998 he undertook conservation treatments of wooden furniture, paintings on wooden supports and wooden elements of interior design. Among other conservation topics Andrzej teaches the following subjects: Decorative Techniques for Furniture, Conservation Documentation and Costing Assessments for Conservation Treatments in Heritage Buildings, History of Heritage Wooden Structures and Architectural Joinery. Andrzej conducts research in the field of heritage wood conservation associated with antique furniture, wooden architecture and architectural details and publishes in the journal *Ochrona Zabytków*, *Annals of Warsaw University of Life Sciences* and *Aedifico et Conservo* (2011, 2014, 2018).



Agnolo Gaddi – The geometry of composition and its effect on a frame

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Abstract

The painting *Madonna and Child with Saint John Evangelist, Saint John the Baptist, Saint James of Compostela and Saint Nicholas of Bari* by Agnolo Gaddi (late 14th C) was acquired by the NGV without a frame. It hung in the gallery with the edges of its poplar panel exposed for some years. Work commenced on designing a suitable frame in 2006. The frame was completed in 2008.

Once the general style of the frame was established, determining the original outline of the painting, now indefinite due to repairs and re-painting, became the primary concern – in particular the compass points and radius of the Gothic arch.

To establish the original outline, a key measurement or shape needed to be found that, when superimposed on the painting, accurately located the principal features. The application of traditional techniques such as superimposing grids and geometric forms did not work in this instance.

Discovering the key to the composition of Gaddi's painting, and the steps involved in making its new frame, are the subjects of this presentation.

Biography of the Author

Rob has made historically accurate picture frames for approximately 25 years. Clients have included the National Gallery of Australia, the National Gallery of Victoria, the Art Gallery of South Australia, major regional art galleries, artists and private clients. He is currently employed under contract by the NGV to mentor its recently-appointed in-house framer.



Disseminating information about frame conservation & the craft of frame making: A Case Study

Zoë Allen and Yukiko Yoshii Barrow

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Abstract

A new display in the British Galleries at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, provided the opportunity to showcase simultaneously the steps involved in the conservation of frames and the materials and techniques involved in making a 19th century composition frame.

A framed painting by Andrew MacCallum 1821-1902, In Sherwood Forest, Nottinghamshire: Winter Evening after Rain, 1881 proved an ideal candidate to demonstrate the processes. The display is intended to reach out to a wide audience and introduce aspects of painting and frames conservation.

The first part of this paper will describe how the main stages involved in the conservation of frames are illustrated in the display. The second part of the talk will focus on the creation of a didactic prop. It will show how a section of frame was created demonstrating the steps involved in frame making.

The talk will highlight the collaboration essential for creating such a display and how such displays contribute to training, enjoyment and education of a wide audience.

Brief biography of the Authors

Zoë Allen has been head of the furniture conservation studio at the V&A Museum since 2016. She joined the V&A in 2000 to work on gilded objects for the British Galleries. She returned in 2003 as senior gilded furniture and frames conservator. Zoë has published articles on her work and in 2009 published Italian Renaissance Frames at the V&A, A Technical Study with Christine Powell.

Before joining the V&A she worked in both the public and private sectors. She worked as project conservator installing the Wernher Collection at Rangers House (English Heritage). Other projects included cleaning Kent and Thornhill wall paintings (Royal Academy and St Pauls Cathedral) and condition checking for various exhibitions at Somerset House. After a first degree in French Literature, Zoë studied conservation at the City & Guilds of London Art School. Internships included the National Institute for Restoration, Croatia, the Royal Collection and the Museum of London.

Yukiko Yoshii Barrow joined the furniture conservation studio at the Victoria and Albert Museum as a frames and furniture conservator in July 2017. She worked as a freelance frame conservator since 2009 working mainly in London in both private and public sectors at the V&A, the Tate, the National Maritime Museum and the Guildhall Art Gallery. Between 2003- 2009 she was working as a conservator in many historical houses at Olmsted Subdivision Historic District, Massachusetts U.S. Before this period, she was working in the private sector as a furniture conservator / restorer near Oxford U.K 1995-2000.

She has MA degree in conservation studies and a Post Graduate diploma both from the West Dean College and the Sussex University 2011. She first trained to be a furniture conservator- restorer at the West Dean College in 1995. She is originally from Japan.



The framing of John Constable's *Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows*

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Abstract

This paper explores issues around re-framing John Constable's *Salisbury Cathedral from the Meadows*, dated 1831. The painting was accessioned in 2013 fitted in a Rococo style frame, initially believed to be a 20th Century reproduction. It is in this frame that the painting was exhibited around the UK until spring of 2018. Subsequently at Tate it was exhibited in a new pressed composition ornament frame alongside Turner's also recently reframed *Caligula's Palace* celebrating their display side by side at the Royal Academy, London in 1831.

The paper explains why the painting needed a more historically appropriate and aesthetically pleasing frame and discusses what may have been lost by the change. It considers the role of the frame in relation to its painting in an Art Gallery context and the need to engage visitors with key artworks. It explores how the new design was sourced considering the lack of large contemporaneous Constable frames. The use of silicon rubbers and the making of polyester resin moulds from which to press composition is described. Composition recipes are discussed. In conclusion the validity of the new frame as a 'museum hybrid' or conservation creative act, especially appropriate to a Fine Art Gallery against a Historic House Collection is proposed. It concludes with a discussion of the role of subjectivity in museum framing where enhanced appreciation of the painting is considered the justification for a reframing that potentially replicates the display context of 1831.

Biography of the Author

Adrian Moore: Frames Conservator, Tate Gallery, London, England.

Frames Conservation Technician, Tate Gallery, 2001-2018 working on the replication and making of carved and pressed composition ornament frames for the Collection.

MA in *The Principles of Conservation*, UCL, London 2017-2018.

BA Fine Art (painting) 1980-1983 and subsequent qualifications in cabinet making.



Keynote lecture:

The money and the frame

John Payne

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Abstract

There are many ways we look at the development and history of picture frames, the forces that influence style and methods of manufacture. An area that has interested me is the influence of money on the story of picture frames and this paper is offered as an addition to our thinking with the hope it may prompt more work. Market forces shape the world around us and have done so since people established systems of trade. The paper will take a brief look at the way money and markets have influenced the development, technology and aesthetics of picture frames. From the renaissance to the world-wide depression, the link between money, its proliferation or retraction and who has it, has influenced the proliferation or retraction of frames and what they are used for.

It might be argued that the origin of the detachable frame as we think of it owes its existence to the growth of the merchant class in the fifteenth century. The move of money into the hands of an affluent, secular group and their subsequent expression of wealth in the purchase of art as a show of individuality necessitated the frame being an equally mobile vehicle for personal expression.

In the twentieth century we conventionally see the growth of modernism carries a shift in frame design, but we might equally think in terms of the purely economic necessity to pare back the cost of framing bringing about an austerity that materializes as a style. Making paintings to sell in the 1920's and 30's was not a sure way to become wealthy. Putting a frame around the paintings simply an additional expense. It is notable that a number of frames from the period are simply the basic timber moulding from frames that would otherwise have carried, with greater expense, runs of cast ornament. Between these two poles we find moments where the relationship between economic bubbles and simple but covertly expensive materials used in framing becomes evident. I'm thinking here of the Dutch frames of the seventeenth century, a moment of particular economic and social convergence. The confinement of ostentation through Protestantism attached to the extraordinary wealth generated by a trade based market economy. Conversely we can see express representations of wealth and privilege through overtly expensive materials and techniques through France in the eighteenth century. How much the frame costs needs to be demonstrably expressed in gold and detailed craftsmanship. The industrial revolution offers another shift in the marketing and production of art and picture frames. Linked to the growth of the salon and the academy, the hugely increased production of paintings brought a need to reduce the cost and increase the production of frames, while retaining a sense of their decorative and material value. Like all areas of the visual arts, industrial development and the technology of materials and processes tracks beside a tradition of craftsmanship and artisan production and the money is not far behind.

Biography of the Author

John Payne retired from the position of Senior Conservator of Painting at the National Gallery of Victoria in February 2018. Initially training in painting, printmaking and drawing, he worked with the NGV from 1982 after studying painting conservation at the Canberra College of Advanced Education and the Institut Royale du Patrimoine Artistique in Brussels. In addition to painting conservation his



interests include the framing of paintings and the radiography of artworks. His book “Framing the Nineteenth Century – Picture frames 1837-1935” was released in November 2007. In 2009 he was co-curator with Amanda Dunsmore of the exhibition Bugatti, Carlo Rembrandt Ettore Jean, featuring the work of the Bugatti family from collections within Australia.

John was made a Member of the Order of Australia in 2018.



The Picture Frame: An Australian Cultural Artefact

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Abstract

Since the late 1990s, the Australian picture framing industry has been fast losing the highly skilled craftsmen that have driven Australian picture frame manufacturing innovations. In addition, the changing tastes of both artists and the public have meant artworks and images are no longer framed, further reducing the picture framing skill base. It is imperative to gain an understanding of the history of hand finishes of the twenty first century to inform the long term conservation of this cultural artefact.

The growth in the framing industry and for picture frames was driven initially by the aspirational Australian colonial environment that produced a culture of competitive consumption that included the desire for artworks. Current historiography of picture frames in Australia primarily examines specific nineteenth century frame makers and/or frame designs. Secondary literature acknowledges the design debt to Euro-centric, and later American framing styles that many Australian frame makers owe. The demand for art and picture frames increased concurrently with the attendant growth in population and suburban expansion.

This presentation will provide an overview of the development of the Australian picture framing industry and its response to societal developments through an examination of legislative reports, letters, newspapers, bureau of statistics data, diaries and interviews, and ornament and moulding catalogues. By understanding the industry and its innovations we are better able to conserve this often overlooked cultural artefact.

Biography of the Author

Anita Gowers has in depth understanding of frame design and frame materials through her work as a picture frame designer. She has a particular interest in the Australian picture framing industry and is actively researching in this area. Anita is currently working at the University of Tasmania as an interdisciplinary strategic research manager.



Framed. At the State Library of NSW

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Abstract

The State Library of NSW has recently hung 301 paintings from its collection in a permanent salon hang. The aim was to hang as many paintings as possible – 301 in total – on all four walls of three consecutive gallery spaces.

Only a small number of the paintings had been hung in recent years so, with a very short lead time, innumerable decisions needed to be made about the conservation 'look and feel' and the framing. The frames in the Library's collection have received only spasmodic care and attention over the years so the fact that the Library's collection includes some notable frames has, with a few exceptions, largely gone unremarked.

This paper will look at a small number of frames from the collection of the State Library including frames chosen by artists, Herbert Badham and George Washington Lambert; paintings that have retained their original magnificent frames made by leading frame makers Lawrence Cetta, S.A. Parker and Edwin Baldwin; and at least one, chosen by the sitter to frame his portrait with the artist, Tom Roberts, painting to fit the frame.

Brief biography of the Author

Louise Anemaat, Executive Director, Library & Information Services and Dixon Librarian at the State Library of New South Wales.

Louise Anemaat is the author of *Natural Curiosity. Unseen art of the First Fleet* (2014) which focuses on detailed art historical analysis of the traditions of natural history art production in Australia and Britain in the decade following the arrival of the First Fleet. She has lectured widely on the collections of the State Library of New South Wales where she was formerly Head of the Library's extensive pictures collections.



Framing a collection

Felicity Corkill

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Abstract

What do you do when you are asked to prepare over 300 paintings for a permanent exhibition when many paintings have either inappropriate or no frames, you have no in-house framing studio or specialist staff, and you have less than 12 months until opening?

This paper will present the strategies undertaken by the State Library of NSW to assess, re-house and re-frame their collection of paintings currently on display.

At the end of 2017, the incoming State Librarian expressed his desire to fill the existing exhibition galleries at the Library with a permanent 'salon-style' paintings hang. With less than a year until the scheduled opening of the galleries, the curatorial and conservation teams undertook an initial survey and selection of about 380 works from the Library's more than 1100 framed paintings.

Once conservation had this short-list, we began our preparation. Due to the condensed time-frame and limited internal resources, a variety of approaches were taken. The first step was to gather appropriate specialists, both in-house and external, and then to assess the framing needs of the paintings.

Over 30 works were identified as needing new frames, another 30 were determined to need build-ups to increase the depth of the frame, and nearly a third of frames required housing improvements. Additionally, there were questions about glazing as the collection included highly reflective standard acrylic glazing, museum acrylic and original glass, as well as over half being unglazed.

Through the hard work of a large team of conservators, conservation framers and frame specialists these challenges were overcome and the frames are safely and beautifully housing the paintings on display.

Biography of the Author

Felicity Corkill is the Senior Conservator Books, Objects, Paintings at the State Library of New South Wales. She coordinates preservation planning and oversees the conservation treatment of the rare books, paintings and realia collections in the Library.

She has been a conservator and conservation manager for over 10 years. After completing her degrees in Paper and Photograph Conservation at the University of Melbourne, she has worked in private practice, as well as institutions such as the State Library of Western Australia, Museum Victoria, and the Center for Jewish History in New York.

Felicity is a professional member of both AICCM, and AIC.



Frames in focus. Preparation for the Exhibition *Paintings from the Collection*, State Library of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia

Barbara Dabrowa

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Abstract

Frames within the State Library of New South Wales' extensive collection of almost one thousand two hundred paintings were surveyed for the first time, and very briefly researched, during their relocation to a new Framed Collection Store in 2015 after the existing storage had reached capacity. The proposal to create new permanent paintings hang, *Paintings from the Collection*, provided the opportunity to display more than three hundred paintings in their original frames, to have reproduction frames made, and to change inappropriate frames by selection of suitable profiles from framing companies. As the State Library holds one of nation's richest collections of Australian art, the paintings, selected by the Curators represent two main categories: landscape studies and portraits from the early colonial era up to current time. They have been painted by important or unknown artists and they have been framed both modestly or in elaborate gilded frames. Consequently, the frames represent a vast diversity of styles and finishes. The condition of the frames had deteriorated throughout the years, so conserving and restoring them presented many challenges and conservation issues. Due to a very short lead time, the conservation treatment of the frames was limited to preservation conservation treatment including cleaning of the surface, consolidation and re-touching to make the appearance of the frames more presentable. A small number of full conservation treatments were undertaken. Because of the unique and challenging scenario presented by this exhibition requiring the preparation of a high number of art works at once, in my paper I would like to follow a whole project focusing on the frames conservation.



Fig 1. State Library of New South Wales - *Paintings from the Collection* exhibition.
© Barbara Dabrowa



Biography of the Author

Barbara Dabrowa completed her Master's Degree in the Preservation of Architectural Monuments at the University of Nicolaus Copernicus, Torun, Poland, majoring in the Conservation of Gilded Objects, 1985. Since 1995 she has been working as a Senior Frames Conservator, at the Art Gallery of NSW, Sydney, Australia. During her career, she carried out many projects in the field of gilding conservation at various galleries, museums, and private collections in Europe and Australia. Prior to her migration to Australia, she worked as a Head of Gilded Objects Conservation Laboratory at the Royal Castle and later at the Wilanow Palace, both in Warsaw. Other major projects comprise conservation treatments and research at the Bishops Palace, Bratislava, Slovakia, 1992; Victoria & Albert Museum, London, UK, 2003 and State Library of NSW, Sydney, Australia, 2015 and 2018.



Fitting the new in with the old: factors to consider when glazing art

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Abstract

Over recent years the importance of the frame as an integral part of an artwork has been gaining recognition. The frame may have been specifically chosen by the artist, communicate essential information on style, provide cultural context, or even contain details vital for provenance. However, what it may not possess is space for glazing material.

Whilst historically glazing might have been restricted to only exceedingly friable works, or those displayed in high traffic areas, glazing materials are increasingly becoming an essential component of conservation framing. The protection glazing affords from physical, chemical, and environmental deterioration factors, is hard to argue against. When coupled with increased emphasis on loans and budget shifts from physical security presence to electronic monitoring, including glazing can seem like an obvious decision.

The choice between the large variety of glazing options currently on the market, many with different conservation characteristics and impact on aesthetics, can be more complicated. Selecting the right glazing material can make a huge difference in the success of a frame package. This is particularly relevant if an original frame is to be modified to accommodate the glass or acrylic. Important aspects to consider when choosing between glazing options, and how those decisions impact frame construction, will be discussed here, with reference to several case studies.

Biography of the Author

Jennifer Booth leads the Fine Art and Museums team at Tru Vue, manufacturer of high-performance glass and acrylic glazing solutions. She has a BSc (Archaeology) and MA (Principles of Conservation) from UCL's Institute of Archaeology. Jennifer undertook an AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Award with the British Museum and the University of Oxford (DPhil 2013).



Continuing the Tradition

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Abstract

Jason will discuss observations and reflections on his work as frame maker at the National Gallery of Victoria over the past year. Melbourne has a rich frame making history but the 21st century has seen a major skills shortage in traditional frame making. Part of his role has been working with an established frame maker to further develop these specialised skills.

Recent reframing projects include a large portrait by E. Phillips Fox and two late 17th century/early 18th century small works on copper panels in the manner of Jan Brueghel I. The process of research to find an appropriate frame can be very lengthy, and rarely are there definitive answers. Other aspects of interest are how time-consuming production of bespoke historically accurate reproduction frames can be, and to what degree materials and methods of construction need to follow traditional techniques to produce a convincing replica. Examination of historical frames by John Thallon give an insight into methods used at the time for efficient production and leads to the question of what level these imperfections should be replicated in a reproduction frame.

Jason King is the frame maker at the National Gallery of Victoria and previously at the Gallery held positions as Senior Art Packing Technician and also worked as part of the Installation and Exhibitions team. He is a qualified cabinet maker.

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