



Emerging Conservator Symposium

Abstracts

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Morning Session

1. "Building Your Network: A Brief Introduction to the Built Heritage Community in Canada" *Mikaela Marchuk*
2. "On the Ethics of Preventive Conservation" *Jill Baron*
3. "How to Create Digital Infills: The Sleeping Congregation by William Hogarth" *Sandrine Blais*

"Building Your Network: A Brief Introduction to the Built Heritage Community in Canada"

Mikaela Marchuk

The Canadian built heritage community is a network of multidisciplinary professionals who collaborate to ensure the care and longevity of Canada's immovable cultural heritage, including their associated heritage objects and surrounding environments. Projects can be large in scope and may involve the documentation, assessment (analysis), treatment, care, safe transit, and storage of a multitude of interior and exterior objects.

At present, our Canadian community has entered an exciting era of technological developments and several, large-scale, concurrent, and multi decade-long projects. Trained art conservators are additionally becoming involved with built heritage projects in innovative ways. While it is self evident that a conservator's skills may be needed for the treatment and care of objects associated with buildings and landscapes, our backgrounds make us advantageous teammates when planning and overseeing building rehabilitations and interventions.

Engagement with the built heritage community and its projects remains intimidating for many emerging conservators. Built heritage specialists have a separately established network of professional organizations, publications, associations, and conferences. Furthermore, the multidisciplinary nature of the community and its projects has resulted in the use of unfamiliar specialized vocabulary and practises, such as tendering. Emerging art conservators are often unaware of opportunities for learning built heritage-specific terminology and practices that are essential to being involved in projects.

This presentation aims to briefly introduce emerging art conservation professionals to the Canadian Built Heritage community and its current state of affairs from the

perspective of an emerging professional. A variety of built heritage projects and resources will be profiled throughout.

On The Ethics of Preventive Conservation

Jill Baron

Most codes of ethics within the field of Heritage Conservation highlight the importance of preventive conservation methods. For many conservators more time is spent practicing preventive conservation over performing interventive treatments. Recently, there has been a movement within the field of Heritage Conservation to reduce the time spent on preventive conservation and bring conservators back to their workbenches. Proponents of this movement contend that established conservators are losing hand skills and decision-making abilities, which students are missing out on learning due to changing education requirements. However, many professionals make a career practicing preventive conservation, making it necessary for these skills to be taught. There must be a balance found amongst existing codes of ethics, allowing for preventive conservation and interventive treatments to be utilized in an ethical manner.

How to Create Digital Infills: *The Sleeping Congregation* by William Hogarth

Sandrine Blais

A Sleeping Congregation is a print by William Hogarth (1697-1764) dated 1762, based on his own oil painting from 1728. This engraving, belonging to the Agnes Etherington Centre located in Kingston, was treated in preparation for an upcoming exhibition. Because both the upper corners of the print were missing, new corners were digitally created and printed to replace them.

A high-resolution photograph was taken of the engraving and imported into Adobe Photoshop. The pattern around the missing corners was then copied to fill in the gaps. The corners were printed on various Western and Japanese papers to find the best colour match. The chosen corners were then adhered to the print with wheat starch paste and blended into the image area with watercolour pigments under a microscope, on a layer of methylcellulose.

Hogarth, an English pioneer in engravings and paintings, is well-known for his satirical and moral topics. The print depicts a preacher whose sermon has gone on for so long that the hourglass to his side is empty, and his entire audience is fast asleep. Upon closer inspection you can read the preacher's sermon: "Come unto me all ye that Labour and are Heavy Laden, and I will give you Rest" (Matthew 11:28). Note that the only other person who is awake is his clerk, eyeing a young woman's bust. The woman is holding a pamphlet on the topic of marriage.



Before treatment

After treatment

Pre-Lunch Session

1. "Starch Struck: a preliminary investigation of the use of wet cleaning to reduce starch finishes in historic textiles" *Anna F Robinson*
2. "The 'Application' of Colour: The Use of Physical and Digital Colour Mixing for Easy Colour Matching" *Kassidy Kingston*
3. "Canadian Isinglass: An Evaluation of Material Properties" *Kristy Corcoran*

Starch Struck: a preliminary investigation of the use of wet cleaning to reduce starch finishes in historic textiles

Anna F Robinson

Despite their consistent use throughout the past 500 years of European/ Western laundering and textile manufacturing practices, there has been very little discussion around starch finishes for textiles in conservation. While a few recent articles have touched on the subject of starch-finished textiles, there remains limited options for reducing starch finishes in textiles aside from the use of the enzyme α -amylase. This presentation reports on research conducted at the Kelvin Centre for Conservation and Cultural Heritage Research (formerly the Centre for Textile Conservation) at the University of Glasgow, into the potential for pre-soaking followed by conservation wet cleaning to reduce starch finishes in historic textiles. Overall, this research project found that wet cleaning, with or without the use of pre-soaking can be effective in

reducing by not fully removing starch finishes from textiles; and highlights the need for further research into starch finished textiles and their treatment within the conservation field.

The presentation includes a brief review of starch use in historic textiles and relevant conservation literature, before discussing the methods and findings of the wet cleaning experiments. The research presented was undertaken as a partial fulfillment of the MPhil Textile Conservation program at University of Glasgow during the spring and summer of 2021.

“The ‘Application’ of Colour: The Use of Physical and Digital Colour Mixing for Easy Colour Matching”

Kassidy Kingston

Understanding colour theory is a crucial first step into comprehending how and why we have historically chosen to use the RYB colour scale for physical colour mixing and how our eyes and brains perceive colour. This extends into understanding the biology of the human eye in order to know how light and colour are related and how this process contributes to the difference between the physical colour scale and digital colour scales. Next a physical matching resource can be developed using warm and cool tones to be used for paper fills. Sometimes paper tone matching can be difficult because the tones can be subtle and often the underlying colours can be difficult to determine. Using a comparative resource can make this process easier and is a good opportunity for colour mixing practice. Lastly, digital applications hold the capability to provide crucial colour mixing information at the click of a button, however, a conversion method is required first in order to convert the RYB colour scale into a digital colour scale. Before any conversion method can be developed the differences between physical colour scales and digital colour scales need to be understood, the key difference being the usage of subtractive versus additive mixing. Once a basic understanding of all of these background components has been established further research can occur on existing conversion equations and trials conducted to determine their effectiveness. These trials can also be used as an opportunity to test various applications for their benefits and downfalls to find one that is the most accurate and accessible for most. These are some of the further steps I intend to investigate as a result of this initial research project.

Canadian Isinglass: An Evaluation of Material Properties

Kristy Corcoran

Russian isinglass is a highly celebrated adhesive, known for its excellent material and ageing properties. Often used in conservation, isinglass is prepared from the inner membrane of the air bladder of the sturgeon fish, traditionally sourced from Russia or other European countries. This adhesive has, however, become increasingly difficult to find and more expensive as the European sturgeon species are critically endangered. As a result, Russian isinglass has begun to fall out of favour compared with the more easily accessible cellulose-based or synthetic adhesives. There is, therefore, a growing

interest in the possibility of using a different species of sturgeon for the continued use of isinglass in conservation. Through this research, sustainably sourced Canadian isinglass (fresh isinglass preparations from both Acadian and Shortnosed sturgeon species) was compared to six preparations of European isinglass (two Russian samples, one German and three listed only as European). Working and mechanical properties were evaluated by testing for flexibility and tack of the samples. Samples were artificially aged using Xenon arc bulb exposure to understand the degradation of aged samples. Analysis of samples before and after ageing was performed using Fourier transform infrared (FTIR) spectroscopy, colour spectrophotometry, gloss measurements, and pH testing. Results of this research indicated that Canadian isinglass had similar ageing characteristics to the European isinglass, with comparable results for all of the tests performed. It is therefore concluded that the more sustainable Canadian isinglass can be used as a viable replacement for European isinglass.

Post-Lunch Session

1. "Private clients, local museums, and national institutions – A student experience in a private conservation studio specialised in textiles" *Camille Lafrance*
2. "Photos to Deal With" *Mareike Friedrich*

Private clients, local museums, and national institutions – A student experience in a private conservation studio specialised in textiles

Camille Lafrance

As part of the MPhil in Textile Conservation at the University of Glasgow (UK), students had the opportunity to experience the professional sector of conservation over the summer in order to consolidate the theory and practice introduced during the school year. In this context, I had the opportunity to gain insight through a work placement of a well-established private conservation studio, Zenzie Tinker Conservation Ltd located in Brighton. It was a real shock to experience the dynamism of a private practice for the first time. For two months I worked with the studio team on different site works for private clients, local museums, national institutions, such as the Ironmonger's Hall in London; Farleys House and Gallery; to St-Paul's Cathedral. During this placement, I also completed the treatment of a naval dress coat dating from the early 20th century which needed the removal and replacement of its shattered lining, long hours of support stitching and visual infills, several dyeing tests, as well as the preparation a custom padded hanger for storage. This placement has certainly pushed me out of my comfort zone. However, I gained a better understanding of the realities of the private sector of conservation and the roles of conservators in a wider context, like the differences between public and private practices; how to interact with clients; the organisation of the work; etc. In other words, the dynamism and breadth of experiences in this placement provided the skills needed to start a career as an emerging conservator.

Clients privés, musées locaux et institutions nationales – Une expérience étudiante dans un studio privé de restauration

Dans le cadre de la maîtrise en restauration-conservation des textiles à l'Université de Glasgow (Écosse), des étudiants inscrits au programme ont eu l'occasion au cours de l'été de se familiariser avec le secteur professionnel et de consolider la matière apprise pendant l'année scolaire. Dans un tel contexte, j'ai eu l'occasion de réaliser un stage à temps plein et d'avoir un large aperçu d'un studio privé de restauration, soit *Zenzie Tinker Conservation Ltd* situé à Brighton (Angleterre). Ce fut un véritable choc de faire pour la première fois l'expérience du dynamisme du secteur privé. Pendant deux mois, j'ai ainsi travaillé avec l'équipe du studio sur différents chantiers pour des clients privés, musées locaux, institutions nationales, comme le Ironmonger's Hall; Farleys House and Gallery; et la Cathédrale Saint-Paul. J'ai également réalisé le traitement d'un uniforme militaire datant du début du 20^e siècle nécessitant, entre autres, le retrait et le remplacement de sa doublure, de longues heures de consolidation et de comblement de lacunes visuelles, plusieurs tests de teintures, ainsi que la confection d'un cintre matelassé pour sa mise en réserve. Ce stage m'a amené hors de ma zone de confort. Cependant, j'ai acquis une meilleure compréhension des réalités du secteur privé de la restauration et des rôles des restaurateurs dans un tel contexte, citons les différences de fonctionnement entre les secteurs publics et privés, les interactions avec les clients, etc.

Le dynamisme et l'étendue des expériences de ce stage ont été une chance unique d'acquérir de multiples compétences indispensables à un futur restaurateur émergent.

“Photos to Deal With”

Mareike Friedrich

Purpose: Present an example of making conservation decisions and preservation plans in complex and difficult situations.

In January of 2021 I began my conservation program internship at a small community archive. This archive had a backlog of over 60 boxes of unprocessed photographic material. My internship project was to develop a practical preservation plan that would improve the condition of the collection. Though this sounds straightforward, the project was fraught with challenges, setbacks, and difficult choices. My presentation will focus on how I was able to make decisions between two bad options. I will also highlight how I developed a comprehensive plan based on extremely limited resources. Additionally, I will discuss my experience as an intern during a pandemic and the overall benefits of a conservation internship that isn't focused on treatment.