

**CRITICAL ISSUES IN ART CONSERVATION: COURSE 389.340**  
**SPRING 2010, MONDAYS 1:30-3:50PM**

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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The course introduces students to some of the critical issues concerning art conservation theory and practice. Main topics to be considered include the following: How does conservation change the meaning and interpretation of objects and sites? Whose values are considered when conserving an artifact or site? Do objects live, die or have spiritual needs, and how does contemporary conservation practice cope with this? What role does conservation play in restoring memory, human relationships and national identity in the wake of political conflict?

In the first part of the course, we examine the conservator's approaches, methods and ethics and reflect on how these influence the appearance and interpretation of works of art. Next, we confront the voices of the artists, makers and users of art, cultural objects and sites, and consider how their intentions and choices of materials complicate or defy the role of the conservator. We then examine how individuals, communities and nations contest and claim bodies, objects and sites. Finally, we look at some of the powerful outside forces—political strife, armed conflict, tourism and the art market—that shape conservation practice.

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

**PART I: INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY AND THEORY OF CONSERVATION**

**JANUARY 25:**            *Introduction to Contemporary Art Conservation*

**FEBRUARY 1:**            *How do Conservators Make Decisions?*

Brandi, C. "The concept of restoration." In *Theory of Restoration*. ICR: Rome, 2005: 47-50.

Clavir, M. "First Nations perspectives on preservation and museums." In *Preserving What is Valued. Museums, Conservation, and First Nations*. UBC Press: Vancouver, 2002: 69-97.

Philippot, P. "Historic preservation: Philosophy, criteria, guidelines, I." In *Historical and Philosophical Issues in the Conservation of Cultural Heritage*. Edited by Nicholas Stanley Price, M. Kirby Talley Jr., and Alessandro Melucco Vaccaro. J. Paul Getty Trust: Los Angeles, 1996: 268-274.

Taylor, J. and M. Cassar. "Representation and intervention: the symbiotic relationship of conservation and value" In *Conservation and Access: Contributions to the 2008 IIC Congress*, London (2008): 7-11.

**FEBRUARY 8:**            *How has Conservation Changed Through History?*

Carrier, D. "Restoration as interpretation: A Philosopher's viewpoint." In *Altered States. Conservation, Analysis and the Interpretation of Works of Art*. Trustees of Mount Holyoke College: South Hadley, MA. 1994: 19-27.

Philippot, P. "Restoration from the perspective of the humanities." In *Historical and Philosophical Issues in the Conservation of Cultural Heritage*. Edited by Nicholas Stanley Price, M. Kirby Talley Jr., and Alessandro Melucco Vaccaro. J. Paul Getty Trust: Los Angeles, 1996: 216-229.

Podany, J. "Lessons from the past." In *History of the Restoration of Ancient Stone Sculptures*. Edited by Janet Burnett Grossman, Jerry Podany and Marion True. The J. Paul Getty Museum: Los Angeles, 2003: 13-23.

Watson, W. "Conservation and historical consciousness." In *Altered States. Conservation, Analysis and the Interpretation of Works of Art*. Trustees of Mount Holyoke College: South Hadley, MA. 1994: 9-17.

## **PART II: REVEALING THE "TRUTH" ABOUT ART**

### **FEBRUARY 15:**        *Conservation "Mistakes" and their Consequences*

Balachandran, S. "Object lessons: The politics of preservation and museum building in Western China in the early twentieth century." *The International Journal of Cultural Property*, Vol. 14, Issue 1, February 2007: pp1-32.

Brajer, I. "Taking the wrong path: learning from oversights, misconceptions, failures and mistakes in conservation." *CeROArt*, No. 3, 2009. <http://ceroart.revues.org/index1127.html>

Loma'omvaya, M. "NAGPRA artifact repatriation and pesticides contamination: the Hopi experience." *Collection Forum*, Fall 2001, Volume 17, Number 1 &2. [http://www.spnhc.org/files/CF17-1\\_2.htm](http://www.spnhc.org/files/CF17-1_2.htm)

### **FEBRUARY 22:**        *What Cleaning Art Can Reveal or Take Away*

Bassett, J. and W.T. Chase. "Considerations in the cleaning of ancient Chinese bronze vessels." In *Ancient and Historic Metals. Conservation and Scientific Research*. The Getty Conservation Institute, Los Angeles, 1994: 63-74.

Clark, K. "The aesthetics of restoration." In *Issues in the Conservation of Paintings*. Ed. David Bomford and Mark Leonard. Getty Conservation Institute: Los Angeles, 2004: p 30-1

Eastop, D. and M. Brooks. "To clean or not to clean: the value of soils and creases." *Preprints of the ICOM Committee for Conservation, 11<sup>th</sup> Triennial Meeting, Edinburgh, Scotland*. Volume II, ICOM: London, 1996: 687-691.

Golding, J. et al. "Crimes against cubists: an exchange." *The New York Review of Books*. 13 October 1983. <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/6093>

Richardson, J. "Crimes against cubists." *The New York Review of Books*. 16 June 1983. <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/6186>

### **MARCH 1:**                *What Technical Studies Can Reveal about Original Works*

Blänsdorf, C. and X. Yin. "A colourful world for the emperor's soul: the polychromy of the Terracotta sculptures at Qin Shihuang's burial complex." In *The Object in Context: Crossing Conservation Boundaries: Contributions to the Munich Congress 28 August – 1 September 2006*: 177-183.

Brinkmann, V. *From Gods in Color: painted sculpture of classical antiquity*. Stiftung Archaeologie Glyptothek, Munich, 2007.

    "Research in the polychromy of ancient sculpture." 21-27.

    "Armor on the naked skin." 100-105.

Podany, J. and D. Scott. "Looking through both sides of the lens: why scientists and conservators should know each other's business." In *The Interface Between Science and Conservation*. British Museum Occasional Paper 16. Edited by Bradley, Susan. British Museum: London, 1997: 211-220.

Sheldon, L. "Access to technical analysis: visualizing the invisible." In *Conservation and Access: Contributions to the 2008 IIC Congress*, London (2008):151-155.

The Hidden Leonardo:

<http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/learn-about-art/paintings-in-depth/the-hidden-leonardo>

**MARCH 8:**                    *Limits and Dangers of Technical Studies: Fakes, Copies and Authenticity*

Corporate Author, "Technical analysis of three paintings attributed to Jackson Pollock"

<http://www.artmuseums.harvard.edu/home/HUAMreport012907.pdf>

Galbally, A. et al. "Art conservation and art fraud: dissecting the thin blue line." In *Tradition and Innovation. Advances in Conservation*. Edited by Ashok Roy and Perry Smith. International Institute for Conservation: London, 2000: 73-76.

Kennedy, R. "Drip wars: a Pollock, in the eyes of art and science" *New York Times*. 4 February 2007, Week in Review Section

[http://www.nytimes.com/2007/02/04/weekinreview/04kennedy.html?\\_r=1&oref=slogin](http://www.nytimes.com/2007/02/04/weekinreview/04kennedy.html?_r=1&oref=slogin)

Lowenthal, D. "Forging the past." In *Fake? The Art of Deception*. Edited by Mark Jones with Paul Craddock and Nicolas Barker. British Museum Press: London, 1992: 16-22.

Woodward, R. "Too much of a good thing. Photography, forgery and the Lewis Hine scandal." *The Atlantic Monthly*. June 2003, Vol. 291, Issue 5: 67-76.

**MARCH 15:**                    *No Class. Spring Break.*

### **PART III: LIVING AND DEAD ART AND ARTISTS**

**MARCH 22:**                    *How Do We Know an Artist's Intent?*

Bracker, A. "Oh, the shark has pretty teeth, dear." *Conservation* 35, Summer 2000.

[www.vam.ac.uk/res\\_cons/conservation/journal/issue35/shark35/index.html](http://www.vam.ac.uk/res_cons/conservation/journal/issue35/shark35/index.html)

Davenport, K. "Impossible liberties: contemporary artists on the life of their work over time." *Art Journal* 54, 2, Conservation and Art History (Summer 1995): 40-52.

Hill Stoner, J. Whistler's view on the restoration and display of his paintings. *Studies in Conservation* 42, 2, 1997: 107-114.

Singer, M. C. and V. Fletcher. "The conservation of Arp's bronzes: preserving the sculpture's history or the artist's intent?" In *Tradition and Innovation. Advances in Conservation*. Edited by Ashok Roy and Perry Smith. International Institute for Conservation: London, 2000: 73-76, pl 35-37.

Vogel, Carol. "Swimming with Famous Dead Sharks." *The New York Times*. October 1, 2006.

**MARCH 29:** *Modern and Contemporary Art*

Davies, L. and J. Heuman. "Meaning matters: Collaborating with contemporary artists." In *Tradition and Innovation. Advances in Conservation*. Edited by Ashok Roy and Perry Smith. International Institute for Conservation: London, 2000: 30-33, pl.12-14.

Kennedy, R. "How to conserve art that lives in a lake?" *The New York Times*. November 18, 2009.  
See also: [http://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications/videos/focus/spiral\\_jetty.html](http://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications/videos/focus/spiral_jetty.html)

Mead, R. "The Art Doctor." *The New Yorker*, May 11, 2009. 58-65.

Viola, B. "Permanent impermanence." In *Mortality Immortality? The Legacy of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Art*. Edited by Miguel Angel Corzo. The Getty Conservation Institute: Los Angeles, 1999: 85-94.

Wharton, G. and H. Molotch. "The Challenge of installation art." In *Conservation: Principles, Dilemmas And Uncomfortable Truths*. Edited by Alison Bracker and Alison Richmond. Elsevier: London, 2009: 210-222.

**APRIL 5:** *Using Objects So That They Live or Die*

Hummeln, I. et al. "Reconstruction of a moving life." In *Modern Art. Who Cares?* Archetype: London, 2005: 23-41.

Jones-Amin, H. et al. "Gamelan: Can a conservation-conceived protocol protect it spiritually and physically in a museum?" In *The Object in Context: Crossing Conservation Boundaries: Contributions to the Munich Congress 28 August – 1 September 2006*: 138-143.

Kaminitz, M. et al. "First person voice: Native communities and conservation consultations at the National Museum of the American Indian." *Preprints of the ICOM-CC 14<sup>th</sup> Triennial Meeting in The Hague*, ICOM:London, 2005: 96-102.

Mellor, Stephen P. "The Exhibition and conservation of African objects: Considering the nontangible." *Journal of the American Institute for Conservation*, 31 (1992): 3-16.  
[http://aic.stanford.edu/jaic/articles/jaic31-01-002\\_idx.html](http://aic.stanford.edu/jaic/articles/jaic31-01-002_idx.html)

**PART IV. PROTECTING, DESTROYING, CLAIMING AND RE-CLAIMING ART**

**APRIL 12:** *Personal and Community Claims on Cultural Heritage*

Bredenkamp, J. "The Politics of human remains: The case of Sarah Bartmann". In *Human Remains and Museum Practice*. J. Lohman and K. Goodnow, eds. Unesco, Paris 2006: 25-32.

Dhar, S. "Challenges in the context of the living sacred tradition of Mahayana Buddhism". In *The Object in Context: Contributions to the 2006 IIC Congress, Munich (2006)*: 151-155.

Edmonds, P. and E. Wild. "New obligations: Conservation policy and treatment approaches for Aboriginal collections in Bunjilaka, The Aboriginal Centre, Melbourne Museum." In *Tradition and Innovation. Advances in Conservation*. Edited by Ashok Roy and Perry Smith. International Institute

for Conservation: London, 2000: 60-64.

Paiz, N. "The Value of Preserving the Past: A Personal Journey." In *Caring for American Indian Objects. A Practical and Cultural Guide*. Edited by Sherelyn Ogden. Minnesota Historical Society Press: St. Paul, 2004: 209-212.

Pala, C. "Paradise Almost Lost. Hawaii's Bishop Museum Grapples with NAGPRA." *Museum*, March/April, 2008. <http://www.aam-us.org/pubs/mn/nagpra.cfm>

**APRIL 19:** *Armed Conflict, Its Aftermath, and National Claims*

Bevan, R. "Remember and warn I: Rebuilding and commemoration." In *The Destruction of Memory. Architecture at War*. Reaktion Books: London, 2006: 175-201.

Dolff-Bonekaemper, G. "Sites of hurtful memory." Getty Conservation Institute Newsletter, 17, 2 (Summer 2002).

[http://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications/newsletters/17\\_2/feature.html](http://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications/newsletters/17_2/feature.html)

Spirydowicz, K. "Archives under attack: The Preservation of European documentary heritage in World War II." *Preprints of ICOM Committee for Conservation 14th Triennial Meeting*, September 2005, The Hague: 1034-1039.

Reza. "Images and Heritage in Afghanistan." *Museum International* 55, 3-4, December 2003: 51-53.

Peters, R. and D. Sully. "Finding the fallen: Conservation and the First World War". In *The Object in Context: Crossing Conservation Boundaries: Contributions to the Munich Congress 28 August – 1 September 2006*: 12-16.

**APRIL 26:** *How "Universal" is Cultural Heritage? How Do We Consume Art?*

Balachandran, S. "Edge of an ethical dilemma." *Archaeology*, 60(6): 18-20. November/December 2007.

Corruchaga, J. and P. Monforte. "The new museum of Altamira: Finding solutions to tourism pressure." In *Of the Past, for the Future: Integrating Archaeology and Conservation*. Getty Conservation Institute, Los Angeles, 2006: 177-183.

Lowenthal, D. "Heritage stewardship and the amateur tradition." *APT Bulletin*, Vol. 30, No. 2/3. (1999), pp. 7-9.

Pye, E. "The Benefits of access through handling outweigh the risks". In *Conservation and Access: Contributions to the 2008 IIC Congress, London*: 162-165.

Thorn, A. "Access denied: Restricted access to indigenous cultural sites." In *Conservation and Access: Contributions to the 2008 IIC Congress, London*: 209-213.