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NYU's Institute of Fine Arts Conservation Center has appointed Lawrence Becker and Thea B. van Oosten as Judith Praska Visiting Professors in Conservation and Technical Studies for the 2016-17 academic year

JULY 28, 2016 – The Institute of Fine Arts is pleased to welcome Lawrence Becker and Thea B. van Oosten in a dual appointment as the 2016-17 Judith Praska Visiting Professors in Conservation and Technical Studies. Lawrence will join the program in fall 2016 and will teach a course with the title “Conservation of Asian and Archaeological Objects.” Thea will join the Conservation Center in spring 2017 and the title of her course will be “The Physical Properties of Plastics.”

About the Judith Praska Visiting Professors in Conservation and Technical Studies at the Conservation Center: Thanks to a generous anonymous donation, a new visiting professorship in conservation and technical studies was inaugurated in Fall 2012. The Judith Praska Distinguished Visiting Professor in Conservation is named in honor of the donor's grandmother. Inspired by the Kirk Varnedoe Memorial Professorship, this visiting position will be awarded to a prominent conservator or scientist who can bring to our program new areas for research and teaching. The Praska Professor will be invited for a semester to the Institute of Fine Arts to teach in his or her area of specialty, particularly in courses designed for both conservation and art history students. The Professor will also give one public lecture on his or her research at the Institute. Praska lecture dates for the 2016-17 academic year are tentatively scheduled for: November 3, 2016; and March 8, 2017.

Dr. Hannelore Roemich, Chairman and Professor of Conservation Science at IFA's Conservation Center said, “We are very excited to welcome Lawrence and Thea to the Conservation Center as our Praska Professors. The topics they will cover over the course of the year will help our students specialize in their areas of interest. Both are distinguished professionals and wonderful colleagues, who will enrich academic life and inspire learning at the Center.”



Lawrence Becker received a master's degree in art history and an advanced certificate in conservation from the Institute of Fine Arts in 1982 and has been a practicing conservator for over thirty-five years. Initially concentrating primarily on the conservation of archaeological sculpture and objects from Egypt, West Asia, and the Greco-Roman world, his focus gradually shifted during his career toward the arts of South, Southeast, and East Asia. The majority of his career has been spent at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, where he was Sherman Fairchild Conservator in Charge of the Objects Conservation Department from 2003 - 2014 and Senior Conservator from 2014 - 2016. He has played a leading role in the Indian Conservation Fellowship Program, working with colleagues in the U.S., the Netherlands

and India to enhance the professional development of younger Indian conservators and help address collection needs at Indian museums, monuments, and archaeological sites.

Thea B. van Oosten received a master's in analytical chemistry from the University of Amsterdam and specialized in polymers at the National Dutch Graduate School of Polymer Science and Technology. For 36 years, Thea was a conservation scientist at the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands (RCE, former ICN) in Amsterdam before she retired in 2011. In addition to her professional experience, Thea comes to us with an extensive teaching record. As a recognized expert in the conservation of modern and contemporary art and design objects, she has contributed to several publications and books, such as *Modern Art, who Cares*, *Plastics*, *Collecting and Conserving*, *Plastics in Art and Preservation of Plastic Artefacts in Museum Collections*. One of her research topics was the consolidation of polyurethane foams, which resulted in a book published in May 2011, called *PUR Facts, Conservation of Polyurethane foam in Art and Design*. In spring 2016, Thea received a stipend as Independent Scholar at the Getty Conservation Institute to complete her most recent book titled *A Matter of Choice: Properties of Plastics for Conservation*.



About the Conservation Center of the Institute of Fine Arts at NYU: The Institute of Fine Arts (IFA) is an international leader in research and graduate teaching, and committed to global engagement and advancing the fields of art history, archaeology, and the theory and practice of conservation. New York City, with its incomparable resources and vitality, provides a backdrop and extended campus for the IFA's activities. Founded in 1960 as part of the IFA, the Conservation Center is the oldest degree-granting graduate program in art conservation in the United States. The Conservation Center prepares students for careers in technical study and conservation through a four-year, dual MA/MS graduate program combining practical training in art conservation with historical, archaeological, curatorial, and scientific studies.

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