

The Conservation Center Welcomes the Class of 2016

For a second year in a row, the Conservation Center received a record-breaking number of student applications. With so many highly-qualified applicants to choose from, the admission committee's task of selecting the interview group was made that much more difficult. In the end, we were privileged to select from a group of first-rate students whose backgrounds, talents and academic achievements rivaled only their enthusiasm for conservation. The final class decision was quite challenging as there were so many standout presentations. We thank the admissions committee members, staff and students for their tireless work during a grueling three weeks of interviews, and are proud to announce our incoming class of 2016.

Amy Brost graduated from the University of Wisconsin, Madison with a double major in art history and studio art. Amy spent 10 years in advertising and communications before deciding to change course and pursue conservation study. Her pre-program experiences have been in the areas of paleontological materials, objects, photography, and book and library conservation. "I have had the privilege to assist on treatments of a wide range of objects," Amy says, "including fossils from the Cretaceous period, a 17th-century book at The Library of The Jewish Theological Seminary, and modern works by Keith Haring, Alexander Calder, Barbara Hepworth and others." Amy was particularly excited to work on the façade restoration of the New York Public Library's landmark Stephen A. Schwarzman Building on 5th Avenue and 42nd Street because it was done in public view. "It was



Amy exposing a daguerreotype plate in her 4x5 camera (Linhof Technica II) on the roof of the Center for Alternative Photography, NYC

rewarding to hear first-hand how pleased people were with the progress," she says.

Her favorite objects, however, are photographs, and she plans on pursuing a specialty in photograph conservation. While an intern in the Department of Photograph Conservation at The Metropolitan Museum of Art (MMA), Amy had the opportunity to work with several Southworth & Hawes daguerreotypes and the Diane Arbus archive. "I have a particular passion for photography, so it's a thrill to walk into that lab each day and help care for some of the most important photographs in the world." The program at NYU, led by Sherman Fairchild Conservator, Nora Kennedy of the MMA, offers Amy a very strong curriculum in photograph conservation.

In addition to her interest in photographs, Amy recently began working with electronics. She enrolled in a physics course, which included the concepts and principles of electricity, magnetism, and optics. Using what she learned in class as a starting point, she constructed a small, voice-activated LED panel. The panel was a huge hit with the admissions committee members! "I think there will be a growing need for art conservators who are conversant in the preservation and treatment issues presented by artworks in electronic, digital, and time-based media," she declares. NYU is uniquely poised to address these issues, and offers supplemental coursework in these areas through the Moving Image Archiving & Preservation program at the Tisch School of the Arts. "I'm eager to take courses in time-based media conservation with the prominent conservators based here in NYC who are helping to pioneer that specialty."

Kathryn Brugioni comes to the program from Washington University in St. Louis where she earned a BA in art history and archaeology. As an undergrad, Kate designed her own formalized major in medieval studies, indulging her interests

in history, languages, literature, philosophy and religion, and marrying them to the material culture and artist techniques of the period. At the encouragement of her mentors at Washington University, she became a curatorial intern at the MMA in the Medieval Art and Architecture department, where she continued her interdisciplinary explorations of history, anthropology and art, and first became interested in pursuing art conservation as a career.



Kathryn stands against the Castello di Venere, built upon the ancient Roman Tempio di Venere Erycina in the medieval hill town of Erice, Sicily

Primarily interested in pursuing paintings conservation, Kate chose NYU because of its sound commitment to art history. “A strong interest in art history is what first prompted me to explore conservation,” she says. “Because the IFA’s curriculum joins the study of art history, material science and art conservation, it was my top choice. The faculty and students are fantastically talented, and when I came to visit they were very welcoming and receptive—I just had a good feeling about this place!”

Kathryn is also eager to participate in the IFA-sponsored digs located in Turkey, Greece and Sicily. What appeals to her is the idea of integrating the historical, social and theoretical knowledge learned in the classroom with practical field experience. She grew up skiing, hiking, camping and being outdoors in the mountains, so she should be well-pre-

pared for life on a dig! However, she realizes that, for the most part, she will be a New Yorker for the next three years. “Although I am a cowgirl at heart,” she says, “there’s no place I would rather be than New York—for the opera!”

Annika Finne graduated from Brown University where she created her own independent concentration in material art history, which incorporated physical and conceptual perspectives on material culture by combining courses in visual art, chemistry and art history. She first interned in the conservation department of the Seattle Art Museum and has since worked in the Rhode Island School of Design Museum of Art and the Museum of Modern Art. She has had the opportunity within these institutions to work with objects of diverse materials and contexts, from a Siense polychrome Angel Gabriel to a Ming dynasty lacquer box, or a Donald Judd brass cube. “My favorite experiences,” she says, “usually involve finding some moment within an object that reflects the process of its creation.” At the Seattle Art Museum, she remembers her initial thrill at how magnification revealed the complex layering structure of lacquer on a small, cinnabar box. But, favorites often make way for more quotidian activities; “Spending a sunny summer morning washing and waxing sculptures in the Museum of Modern Art Sculpture Garden is also very fun!”

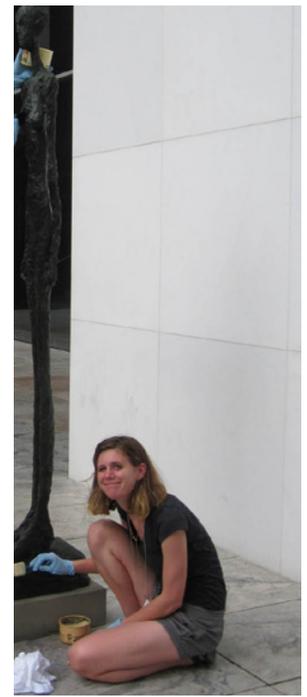
Annika is interested in studying contemporary paintings conservation. She chose NYU for the program’s emphasis on art history, its intimate relationships with nearby museums, and its location in a world center of art production and exhibition. “As a student interested in contemporary art conservation, I found these qualities both particularly exciting and particularly pertinent to my education.”

Originally from Pakistan, **Saira Haqqi**, a Magna cum Laude Russian studies major from Carleton College, admittedly says it was her “nerdy love of books” that first got her interested in conservation! “I was introduced to conservation in college,” she says, “where I worked in the library preservation department for two years.” After graduation, she moved to the DC area, where she got to know Yasmeeen Khan, Senior Rare Book Conservator at the Library of Congress. Through Yasmeeen, Saira met Jahanvi Desai and Lauren Zummo at Quarto Conservation of Books and Paper, where she’s worked since 2010. In 2011, she began volunteering at the Library of Congress. One of the objects she enjoyed working on the most was a scrapbook of newspaper cuttings about Teddy Roosevelt, put together by his secretary, Stuart Hill. The book belongs to the Smithsonian, and was treated at Quarto Conservation. While the work itself could occasionally get a little tedious, she says the cuttings themselves, particularly those of the political cartoons of the time, were really quite amusing.



Saira with a stack of Asian wrappers she made for several Chinese books at the Library of Congress

Saira is one of two students accepted into our library and archive program. The location of the Center appeals to her as a future book conservator. “NYC offers a rich collection of manuscripts, particularly Islamic manuscripts, in which I am most interested,” she says. “With resources like the MMA, the New York Public Libraries and the Morgan Library and Museum, there is much in



Annika waxes Giacometti’s Tall Figure, III in MoMA’s Sculpture Garden

the city from which a student can learn.” A degree from the Conservation Center is important to Saira because it will give her an enhanced understanding of art history, which will better inform her treatment of historical objects. “NYC also means that I’ll have ready access to wonderful museums and internship opportunities. I can imagine nothing better!”

Evelyn Mayberger, originally from Omaha, Nebraska, is an art history graduate of Wesleyan University. As a freshman at Wesleyan, she worked in the book preservation laboratory under the tutelage of Michaelle Biddle. She recalls that, “what had started out as just a job had turned into the most anticipated part of my day.”



Eve in painting the Hunt Mosaic at the Worcester Art Museum

The realization prompted her to major in art history, pursue chemistry, and further her investigation into conservation as a possible profession. She has held internship positions at the Lunder Conservation Center, the Historic Odessa Foundation, the Small Special Collections Library at the University of Virginia, and the National Museum of the American Indian. Most recently, Eve worked as the conservation technician at the Worcester Art Museum.

Eve is our second student in the library and archive program. Because this program encompass-

es special collections, which often contain a diversity of functional materials, she is eager to explore the conservation issues pertaining to objects of use, including books and ethnographic artifacts.

Eve recently published an article in the 2011 AIC Book and Paper Annual with co-authors Betty Fiske, Michaelle Biddle and Abigail Quandt. The article, “Treatment of an Oversize Rare Book: Research and Decision on Rebinding,” borne out of an eight-week internship at the Historic Odessa Foundation, concerns the conservation implications of the full treatment of a 1755 book on Alberti architecture.

Abigail Teller received her BFA in painting, history, and art history and archaeology from Washington University in St. Louis. At the moment, Abigail is undecided as to what specialization she’d like to pursue. Nevertheless, “art conservation allows me to come close to the art I study,” she says. She holds a strong interest in both paper and paintings conservation, and is especially fascinated by the challenges of conserving new and untested materials used in modern and contemporary art.

Her prior internship experiences include the MMA paper conservation department and at MoMA with Dr. Ana Martins, Associate Research Scientist. “My favorite experience”, she says, “was working on an early twentieth-century backdrop used for tintype portraits at Maria Scarpini Studio.” The immense linen painting had come to the studio crumpled in a trash bag, and the entire tempera paint surface was actively flaking off. “I enjoyed experimenting with and comparing different concentrations of consolidating agents to find one that would stabilize the surface without compromising its matte appearance.”

Abigail has a sharp interest in modern and contemporary art,



Abigail constructs four-flap folders for Brewster & Co. Carriages working drawings at the MMA

which is one reason that NYU appealed to her. Moreover, the opportunity to study in NYC will allow her to keep up to date with current trends in contemporary art. What’s more, it is the only program that would allow her to couple studies in conservation with a deep focus on art history. “Studying the history of art allows me to establish a different kind of closeness than the physical and material nearness of conservation,” she says. “To be able to not only use my eyes but science and technical skills to peel away each layer of the work is, for me, a deep pleasure.”

The Center congratulates each member of its incoming class, and we warmly welcome Amy, Kate, Annika, Saira, Eve and Abigail as the class of 2016. •

—Kevin Martin

Kevin is the Academic Advisor for the conservation program

photo credit: Amy Brost, Lisa Conte '10, Peter Gabrielli, Roger Griffith, Yasmeen Khan, Kari Kipper, NL Roberts