

NEWSGRAM

News in brief from the Conservation Center

Issue 20, December 2012

INSTITUTE of FINE ARTS
NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

Fourth-Year Conservation Internships 2012–2013

The fall semester is well underway and our fourth-year conservation students are settled comfortably into their final-year Internships. These important placements are not chosen arbitrarily by the student, but rather, develop from meetings with their primary advisor in order to find sites that provide instruction in areas where improvement or additional training is required, to capitalize on the personnel available in a student's chosen specialty, or to help the student in networking and possible career placement. This year, we have five students on their fourth-year Internship, and we're eager to catch up with them and see how they are doing.

Book conservation student Morgan Adams is completing her Internship in the Thaw Conservation Center at the Morgan Library & Museum. "I wanted experience in a lab working with both flat paper and bound items, works of art and library collections, and book and paper conservators," Morgan explains. "The Morgan Library & Museum is the most incredible combination of all of these elements." Primarily under the supervision of Maria Fredericks, Drue Heinz Book Conservator, Morgan is reaping the benefits of also working with book conservator Frank Trujillo and paper conservators Margaret Holben Ellis '79, Reba Fishman Snyder '86 and Lindsey Tynne '10. She is working on a number of projects, including an English 17th-century bound manuscript filled with paintings of coats of arms, re-attaching the boards on a late 18th-century English canvas-covered binding, removing the modern paper interleaving and associated adhesive residue from an early 16th-century French book of



Morgan works on the 17th-century armorial binding, preparing the sections for guarding and re-sewing

hours, and updating the binding descriptions for the Ramey Collection, a group of over 360 16th-century printed books that are in contemporary bindings and minimally repaired. In her spare time, she is also assisting in environmental monitoring and exhibition preparation and installation. As Morgan says, "it's great to be full time in a lab—the pace of learning accelerates from day one!"

Kristin Bradley chose to divide her fourth-year Internship between two important institutions: the Yale University Art Gallery (YUAG) and the Yale Center for British Art (YCBA). During her studies, Kristin, interested in paintings conservation, had a diverse learning experience, including treatment of Old Master panels in our Kress class, working on modern and contemporary paintings in a course with [Suzanne Siano '96](#), as well as auditing courses in the conservation of polychrome wood sculpture and of modern materials in objects. She wanted to intern at YUAG because of its comprehensive collection where she would continue working with paintings from a variety of

Alumni News



Mary Oey '07 and daughter Anya Oey Kumar (b. Aug 5) before Thanksgiving in Washington, DC.



Kristin treats a painting in Suzanne Siano's course, Examination & Conservation of Modern & Contemporary Paintings II

tion Conservator in Charge, as well as conservators Charlotte Hale, Dorothy Mahon '79 and Karen Thomas '04, her projects thus

time periods. Her first Internship project, under the supervision of Patricia Sherwin Garland, Senior Conservator of Paintings, involves the treatment of two early 20th-century paintings related to the Société Anonyme Collection, assembled by artist/patron Katherine Dreier, including one by Katherine Dreier herself and the other by Ragnhild Keyser. Kristin also started working with Irma Passeri to learn the visible retouching technique, *tratteggio*. While still early in her Internship year, she will transfer to YCBA after the New Year to continue her training under Mark Aronson, Chief Conservator of Paintings. Because both institutions are part of the larger academic body at Yale University, she hopes to have a chance to carry out in-depth research as part of her Internship experience.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art's Department of Paintings Conservation selected Sophie Scully this year as their graduate intern. Like Kristin, Sophie's graduate training included the treatment of pre-Modern as well as newer works. Her art historical studies at the Institute were more narrowly focused on medieval and renaissance Italy and 20th-century American art. In addition, she also studied art of the Islamic world and, with former Met Director Philippe de Montebello, the functions of museums as they relate to acquisitions, installations, exhibitions, and interpretation. Under the supervision of Michael Gallagher, Sherman Fairchild Center for Paintings Conserva-

tion Conservator in Charge, as well as conservators Charlotte Hale, Dorothy Mahon '79 and Karen Thomas '04, her projects thus far have spanned the 15th through 19th centuries, including a 15th-century portrait attributed to the Flemish Master of the View of Saint Gudule. Curator of European Paintings Maryan Ainsworth played an important role in discussions with the conservation department on the art historical context as well as the technical examination of the portrait. Sophie is also working on a French 18th-century Rococo society portrait by Jean-Marc Nattier and a collection of 18th- and 19th-century paintings, predominately French *plein air* landscapes, scheduled for an upcoming exhibition. "Such a variety of treatments and projects has introduced me to many of the facets of the department and the ways in which the conservation, curatorial and scientific research departments collaborate," says Sophie.



Sophie surface cleans a painting in Suzanne Siano's course, Examination & Conservation of Modern & Contemporary Paintings II

Our only fourth-year objects student, Cybele Tom, decided that Berlin was to her liking for her final-year Internship. She is at the Bode Museum, which had been closed for renovations since 1997 and only recently re-opened in 2006. Several factors, including summer travel using her Shelby White Travel Grant, prompted her decision to explore Germany as an Internship destination. During visits to sites in Turkey excavated by German archaeological teams, she grew to admire the seriousness with which the Germans regard the past and the objects that survive from it. She also wanted to expand her understanding of how to care for objects by experiencing firsthand how people outside the United States approach conservation.

She is under the supervision of Bodo Buczynski, Chief Conservator, and Dieter Köcher, who trained and worked in former East Germany. "The other day," Cybele muses, "I told Herr Köcher that I had not yet seen *sgraffito* or *Pressbrokate* under magnification. Without blinking, he said that we could call up a sculpture so that I could see what it looks like. This came after we had just looked at various kinds of metal leaf (*Zwischgold*, green gold, silver, uncut silver, etc.) under the microscope, which I had never done before. After that, I had a good visual reference for the variety of appearances tarnished silver can assume, and was able to identify with conviction a previously puzzling early layer on the sculpture." She is currently conducting an examination of an early 15th-century, Bavarian, linden wood sculpture of a saint, most likely Saint Peter, that no longer has hands or saintly attributes. A challenge, indeed! Perhaps the most surprising thing she's learned while in Berlin is that she is taking great pleasure from



Cybele uses a warm BEVA®-371 gel to consolidate lifting paint on an object in the spring 2012 course, The Conservation Treatment of Inorganic Archaeological & Ethnographic Objects, under the supervision of Samantha Alderson '94

Upcoming Event

February 6, 2013

Judith Praska Distinguished Visiting Professorship Lecture

Christine Frohnert

"Power On: The Conservation of Electronic Media Art"

6:00 pm lecture
IFA Lecture Hall

7:00 pm reception
IFA Loeb Room

photo credit: Viviana Dominguez, Maria Fredericks, Prem Kumar (Any's dad), NL Roberts

reading conservation and technical art history texts in German. “I find that reading in German is actually helping me remember the content better than when I had read it in English,” says Cybele. “I don’t know if it’s because I have to read slower or because the information is traveling to my brain via two different pathways (e.g., in a language-learning way and in an information-gathering way). That’s sloppy cognitive science, but it certainly feels like something like this is happening!”

Shauna Young, our third paintings student on her final-year Internship, has decided to stay local and accept placement at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA). With its unparalleled collection, dedication to research, and commitment to the creative and advanced preservation of the material history of art, Shauna knew MoMA would be an ideal place to serve as her host institution. Her treatment experience has long centered around the conservation of modern and contemporary paintings, under the supervision of Suzanne Siano, who was both an internship supervisor (pre-program and graduate-level) and a classroom instructor. At MoMA, she is supervised by paintings conservators Anny Aviram and Michael Duffy. “Suzanne also trained with Anny at MoMA,” says Shauna, “so it’s been wonderful to have my training come full-circle by having the chance to work with Anny myself.” The Internship at MoMA is important to her because she is working

with a world-renowned collection of modern and contemporary art, and will continue to explore the challenges, both ethical and material, presented specifically by 20th-century paintings. She is currently working on a large, circular Op-Art canvas by Croatian artist Miroslav Sutej. The paint film, a combination of oil and tempera, exhibits extensive cracking and areas of lifting paint for which research and ingenuity were crucial. Mary Gridley and Dana Cranmer’s article, “Unforgiving Surfaces: Treatment of Cracks in Contemporary Paintings,” published in 2006 in *Modern Paints Uncovered* helped guide Shauna in the most effective method of consolidation. Shauna and Anny are currently working together on two additional oversize canvases. Joan Mitchell’s *Wood, Wind, No Tuba*, recently de-installed from the lobby at MoMA, has several areas of lifting paint that need consolidation, and Mark Rothko’s *No.16 (Red, Brown and Black)* requires some retouching of abrasion along the canvas edges. “It’s been an interesting challenge working on such large pictures!” she says.

It has certainly been a busy first few weeks for our students. We are extremely proud of their achievements and wish them much success for the coming months. •

—Kevin Martin

Kevin is the Academic Advisor for the conservation program

Congratulations to our recent Graduates: Linsly Boyer, Justine Ellis, Jessica Pace, Katie Patton, Kristin Robinson, Julia Sybalsky and Kristen Watson Adsit

Linsly Boyer ’12 completed her fourth-year Internship and stayed on at the Preservation Society of Newport County for an additional 3 months in order to help establish an outdoor sculpture maintenance program. With the help of a pre-program intern, she completed the maintenance of 12 sculptures and used the experience to write a proposal for the continuation of the program on a yearly basis. After getting married and going on a honeymoon to St. Lucia at the end of September, she joined the permanent staff of Leslie Gat’s ’88 private conservation studio in the Brooklyn Navy Yard, Art Conservation Group, as an assistant conservator.

Justine Ellis ’12 was hired as a full-time conservator at Oka Bokkado in Kyoto, Japan where she spent her fourth-year Internship (2011–2012). Since becoming staff in the spring of 2012, she’s been busy working at the Kyoto National Museum on a team of about 5 people assisting with a range of treatments for handscrolls, hanging scrolls and folding screens. “It has been an incredible education so far and I’m looking forward to seeing many of these projects through to completion in the spring of 2013.” Justine says. “There is so much to see and do in Kyoto, Jeff and I have been visiting as many galleries, museums, shrines and temples as possible on the weekends. It is feeling more and more like home, but I think we will remain perpetual tourists as long as we’re here!”

Jessica Lian Pace ’12 is working as a Projects Conservator in Object Conservation at the Brooklyn Museum. Her main role is to coordinate the re-installation of a 19th-century period room and the installation of outdoor sculpture fragments in the new terrace, while also treating many different types of materials coming through the lab for exhibition and loan.

Katie Patton ’12 spent the past two years conducting a technical study and treatment of the large *Venus and Adonis* by Veronese, part of the Samuel H. Kress Collection at the Seattle Art Museum. The project, completed as a Mario Modestini and a Samuel H. Kress Fellow, has allowed for a re-evaluation of this damaged painting, which had been variously attributed to Paolo Veronese and to his workshop. Upon completion of the restoration many scholars have now accepted this as a work by Veronese himself. *Venus and Adonis* will be displayed in the exhibition, “Veronese: A Master and His Workshop in Renaissance Venice,” opening this month at the John and Mable Ringling Museum. Also this month Katie will head to Rome to join her fiancée, IFA PhD candidate Peter Bell, at the American Academy for the duration of the academic year. They are engaged to be married in April 2013.

Kristin Robson ’12 completed her fourth-year Internship at the Museum of Modern Art, and immediately accepted a permanent position at Cranmer Art Group, a private conservation studio in SoHo specializing in modern and contemporary paintings. She looks forward to welcoming the challenges and wide range of treatment experiences encountered in private practice.

Julia Sybalsky ’12 is an Assistant Conservator in Natural Science Collections at the American Museum of Natural History. She is working on projects related to risk assessment of library and archive collections, treatment of avian taxidermy, skeletal collections, and scientific equipment, as well as ongoing research into methods for taxidermy conservation. She has also been working with the coordinated Sandy recovery effort lead by AIC-CERT, Alliance for Response NY, NYRAC, and MoMA.

Kristen Watson Adsit ’12 is currently the Project Conservator in Design Arts at the Indianapolis Museum of Art (IMA). As part of an interdepartmental team, she is helping to design and implement a collection survey, treat objects and conduct materials testing in preparation for the museum’s first permanent installation of the 20th and 21st century Design Arts. While at the IMA, she has also enjoyed participating in Conservation Reel and arguing in The Great Debate at AIC’s Annual Meeting in Albuquerque.



At the Martha Graham Dance Company, Shauna (center) recently participated in a Hurricane Sandy relief volunteer project (with classmates Desi Peters, left, and Kari Rayner) salvaging historic costumes that had been stored in the basement and submerged under 12 feet of water