Creative Endeavors and Expressive Ideas:
Emerging Conservators Engaging through Outreach and Public Scholarship

Presented by the Emerging Conservation Professionals Network

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INTRODUCTION

The rising generation of conservators must not only master the science and craft of their field, but also become proficient at communicating and exhibiting their professional experiences in creative ways. This poster showcases success stories in outreach and new media that are being applied by emerging conservators, and highlights the variety of tools that are making these endeavors possible.

Outreach in the Galleries

Carrying out conservation activities in public spaces is a chance to showcase the profession and to educate the public. Emerging conservators – from pre-program interns to recent graduates – are playing important roles in communicating these conservation activities to a curious public. ***Melissa King***, a pre-program intern at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, sees conservation in the galleries as a way to strengthen visitor interest in the museum. The Etruscan sarcophagi conservation project she is working on – featured in a "Conservation in Action" exhibition – *"has been extremely popular, and because the treatments are ongoing, museum guests may be inclined to revisit the museum in the future to check in on their progress"*.

Public exposure has also been the goal for ***Allison Lewis***, who carries out conservation treatments three days a week in the gallery at the Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology (PAHMA) at UC Berkeley, where she works as Assistant Conservator. Lewis, who also authors a blog detailing behind-the-scenes conservation activity at the Museum, offers advice on how to engage with museum visitors: *"Visitors are far more likely to stop at the lab table and interact if the conservator assumes an approachable demeanor, by making eye contact, and sometimes verbally inviting visitors to ask questions."*

Allison Lewis speaking to visitors at PAHMA

Image courtesy of Allison Lewis

Engaging the public was only part of the experience for ***Rose Cull***, objects conservator in private practice and former graduate intern at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, during her public treatment of the museum's Phaeton Tapestries in 2010. This work also drew the attention of the media, and was featured in the Kansas City Star newspaper, on the online newspaper artdaily.com, and on the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art Facebook page. *"Working inter-departmentally was pivotal to the success of this project"*, says Cull, who worked with media relations and communications officers in the Museum's marketing department to coordinate with the media, as well as members of the Museum's education department to create an interactive table of tapestry-making materials for visitors. *"I feel the project was successful, but to raise awareness is not something that only needs to be done once or twice."*

Rose Cull speaking to museum visitors about the importance of cleaning the Phaeton Tapestries.

Image courtesy of the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art.

This feeling is shared by ***Caroline Roberts***, a fellow at the Kelsey Museum of Archaeology at the University of Michigan. The upcoming exhibition, "Conserving Antiquity", which will be on view in 2012, will demonstrate ideas and practices in archaeological conservation, *"but to create a more lasting awareness, we should encourage the display of conservation activities as an integrated part of permanent exhibitions in museums"*, says Roberts.

MFA website: "Conservation in Action: Etruscan Sarcophagi"
www.mfa.org/collections/conservation/conservationinaction_etruscansarcophagi

MFA Facebook album: "Conservation in Action":
www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.10150475274752321.367989.28314922320&type=1

Conservation blog at PAHMA:
conservationblog.hearstmuseum.dreamhosters.com

Phaeton Tapestries article, artdaily.org:
www.artdaily.org/index.asp?int_sec=11&int_new=48552

Private Practices Build Conservation Awareness and Opportunities

The benefits of outreach for any business is clear, but emerging conservators in private practice find that these efforts not only help them to draw clients, but also to educate the public, and to connect with other members of the conservation community. ***Emily G. Phillips***, paintings conservator in private practice in Essex, NY, employs a plethora of social media tools to reach her target audience: the general public and fellow conservators.

"I currently use **Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn** *and a* **Wordpress** *blog. They are mostly linked to each other for ease of management."*

Image courtesy of Emily Phillips

Emily G. Phillips on Twitter

Phillips says that her goal is to pique the interest of the general public, and educate them about our field. Her advice?

"Pace yourself and plan. The web is getting noisy with everyone starting up blogs and Facebook pages and Twitter accounts. Content has to be good, nice images help too."

Liz Chayes, a graduate of the UCLA/Getty Program whose private practice is based in Orange County California, is exploring ways of connecting with the conservation community outside of her practice by co-founding a non-profit organization, Indigo Arts Alliance (IAA). IAA was established with the goal of creating a free web-based resource that offers financial support to other conservators through grants, as well as news, job listings and a community network for its members. In fact, Chayes' outreach target has expanded to include allied professionals in museums, collection managers, students, and the interested public.

Image courtesy of Liz Chayes

Indigo Arts Alliance website

"First and foremost we wanted to have fun and to help others in the field. Since our launch in the Fall of 2011, we have had a very positive response. One of the elements of the site we're proud of is our Network page, where people can connect, create groups and invite others to post and chat… In addition, we established a grants program as a source of financial support for professionals in the field. This was an important part of our mission since we have known many conservators who have given up great opportunities for lack of funding. This year will be the first we are accepting applications for Indigo's financial awards so it is very exciting!"

Emily G. Phillips on Facebook www.facebook.com/pages/Essex-NY/Phillips-Art-Conservation-LLC/276647438370?ref=search

Emily G. Phillips on Twitter twitter.com/adkconservator

Indigo Arts Alliance website indigoartsalliance.org

Emerging Conservators in the Blogosphere

A number of emerging conservators are spreading the word about conservation through their blogs. Conservation students and recent graduates are connecting with online audiences by sharing news and links, as well as personal experiences, observations, and reflections through these social media platforms.

Steven O'Banion, a third-year graduate student at the Winterthur / University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation (WUDPAC), authors a personal blog titled "When Super Glue Won't Do" that is hosted by **Blogger™**. The blog chronicles O'Banion's experiences as a conservation student, and is linked to the Art Conservation Page at the University of Delaware's site.

"Much of the traffic comes from those interested in pursuing a career in art conservation", O'Banion says, however, the chief goal of the blog *"is simply to share my experiences with the public. I post about conferences, gallery openings, my projects, new products, etc. A blog is a perfect vehicle to share information with those who have an interest in one's content and wish to follow."*

Heather Brown, first-year WUDPAC graduate student and author of "Repair the Tear", her personal blog on **Wordpress**, has a similar goal in wanting to share her experiences with the general public: *"I hope that I'm teaching a non-specialist audience a few things about conservation, and making them interested in what we do"*. Brown recommends Wordpress for bloggers interested in learning about their audience, and has watched the number of her blog's followers grow over the past two years.

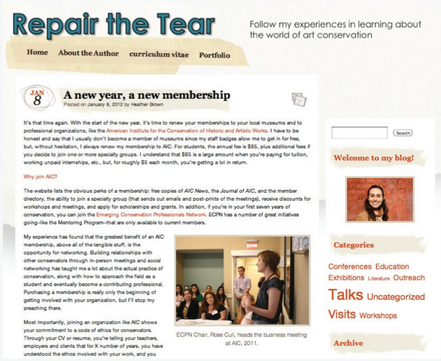

Image courtesy of Heather Brown

Heather Brown's Blog Repair the Tear

In addition to personal blogs like these, group blogs authored by classes in the conservation graduate training programs are emerging. ***Megan Salazar-Walsh***, first-year graduate student at Buffalo State College, and Outreach co-chair for ECPN, worked with her classmates to create a blog on **Wordpress,** which is updated periodically with activities students are doing in and out of class. According to Salazar-Walsh, the goal of the blog was initially to promote the graduate program and give a better understanding of how art conservators are trained, but it has produced unexpected benefits as well: *"…it has been an incentive to actively document our first year of school"*, she says. *"It sort of functions as a joint diary for the class of 2014; I think it will be fun to revisit the entries in a few years."*

Other conservation programs – including WUDPAC 2014 and the UCLA/Getty Conservation program – also host blogs.
Other blogs authored by emerging conservators include: ***Jennifer Martinez*** – "JenM. A Journey into Book Conservation"; ***Crista Pack*** – "Branches of the Same Tree"; ***Rose Cull*** – "Daly Conservation"; ***Liz Sorokin*** – "Pulp and Circumstance"; ***Sofie Laier Henriksen*** – "Conversations about Conservation".

Steven O'Banion's personal blog www.whensupergluewontdo.com

Heather Brown's personal blog repairthetear.wordpress.com

Buffalo State College 2014 class blog buffaloartconservation.wordpress.com

WUDPAC 2014 class blog wudpac2014.wordpress.com

UCLA/Getty program blog uclagettyprogram.wordpress.com

Outreach to Allied Professionals

Outreach to allies is part of many conservation projects and a great example is the work of the OSG Archaeological Discussion Group of AIC. ***LeeAnn Barnes Gordon***, a conservation fellow at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, has helped the Group in designing a brochure whose primary audience is archaeologists - including project directors, staff, specialists, and students. The goal of the brochure, to raise awareness among archaeologists about archaeological conservation, stems from a desire for better accessibility to conservation expertise and services, and to address statements that some archaeologists had a difficult time locating conservators for their projects.

"The brochure was created specifically as a handout for archaeological conferences, such as the Annual Meeting of the Archaeological Institute of America (AIA), where it would supplement a booth display about conservation". Gordon feels that the brochure is a great outreach tool, one that *"provides a flexible format that can be used in both a printed and digital form"*. Gordon stresses the importance of making conservation a presence at conferences like the annual AIA meeting, and of *"emphasizing the specialized training that conservators of archaeological materials receive"*.

Image courtesy of LeAnn Barnes Gordon

AIC's Archeological Discussion Group Brochure

Tara Hornung's format for outreach – hands-on workshops for artists – has helped in making the case to artists of the benefits of choosing archival materials. Hornung, a conservator in private practice, says she *"[tries] to teach the basic vocabulary of archival materials so that artists can choose products based on a knowledge of what 'archival' means vs. a product label. I demonstrate the basic techniques of archival hinging/mounting of works on paper and photographs, and work with individuals to problem-solve a best practice solution for their artistic vision … I believe that the workshop format is successful because it is a forum for dialogue and discussing specific solutions"*.

Tara Hornung giving a workshop for artists

Image courtesy of Tara Hornung

The Archaeological Discussion Group: www.conservation-us.org/archaeology

Archaeological Conservation Brochure Acknowledgements:
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Tara Hornung's Facebook business page:
www.facebook.com/ArtifactConservationServices

Emerging Conservators Connect via Social Media

Finally, one of the most effective ways emerging conservators have used outreach is to connect with one another, and network with established conservators in their communities. ***Jennifer Martinez***, pre-program intern in Sacramento and San Francisco, CA, maintains a blog and routinely checks the ECPN Facebook page. She has also used the AIC website to search and set up visits with local conservators. One such visit led Martinez to organize and co-host a Bay Area Meet and Mingle for emerging conservators with ***Melissa Stone*** of Zukor Conservation in Oakland, CA. Participants in the event kept in touch, and another event was planned to include professionals in the local conservation guild. In Martinez's case, networking online led to in-person networking opportunities – and new professional relationships.

"Always follow up with people and if visiting labs send thank you cards for their time. If you do get a Meet and Mingle together make sure to keep in touch with those who came and perhaps get an email group going to keep each other updated if there is no guild in your area. I still have coffee once in a while with a couple girls I met from the very first lab visit I went on to a private conservator's lab."

August 2011 Meet & Mingle in Oakland, CA.

Image courtesy of Melissa Stone

Melissa Stone went on to help advertise a meeting for the Bay Area Art Conservation Guild (BAACG), with the help of email groups, **Facebook**, the **ECPN blog** and **BAACG website**.

"My recommendation to other conservators is to use professional organizations", says Stone. *"They are already established in the community and members generally know of emerging conservators in the area."*

These experiences show that the best outreach tools are those that have helped start real conversations, that connect emerging conservators with mentors, and that give us a platform to share our field with the world.

Jennifer Martinez's personal blog www.jenmartinez.net

Bay Area Conservation Guild Facebook page
www.facebook.com/groups/152907821387505
...and website www.baacg.org

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TO FIND OUT MORE

Just scan this QR Code ➔

to visit our accompanying blog post, or go to:
www.conservators-converse.org/2012/05/ecpn-outreach

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