

Humanities Seminars Program, Fall 2018

Exposed: Art History and Technology

Wednesdays, October 17-November 14 9:00-12:00

Dorothy Rubel Room, Poetry Center

Olivia Miller, Curator of Exhibitions
The University of Arizona Museum of Art
millero@email.arizona.edu
520-626-9899

Exposed: An Exploration of Technical Art History features scholars from across the University of Arizona campus whose research has broadened our knowledge of the cultural and artistic artifacts of humankind. Through studies of art production, materials science, and cutting-edge dating methods, this course will explore ways in which science and technology enhance our understanding of our cultural history and demonstrate how scholars unite across disciplines in order to expand art historical perspectives. We will begin the course with an overview of the campus collections and basic tenets of museum collections care. The course will end with the latest in conservation technology and the issues surrounding the collecting and preservation of contemporary art. Throughout the class we will explore the following questions:

- How do we know what we do about art?
- How do we understand the process of artistic creation?
- How can technology enhance our understanding of art?
- How can museums safely care for and interpret objects?
- How can museums adapt to preserve contemporary art?

Readings: Due to the diversity in subject matter, there are no single textbooks required for this course. Readings will be uploaded to Box@UA and the link for this site will be shared with registered students in early September. In some cases, the required reading should be accessed directly through a website. The links are provided below in the course calendar and a document with the links will also be provided in the Box account.

Course Calendar*:

October 17: Introduction to Art Conservation and Preservation

Guest Speaker: Dr. Nancy Odegaard, Head of Preservation at the Arizona State Museum; Professor, School of Anthropology; Professor, Department of Materials Science and Engineering; Drachman Institute Affiliate

Required Reading:

- Maryann Ainsworth, *From Connoisseurship to Technical Art History*
http://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications_resources/newsletters/20_1/feature.html
- Selections from: Philip Ward, *The Nature of Conservation: A Race Against Time*.
- Selections from: Emiko Usui and Julia Gaviria, eds. *MFA Highlights: Conservation and Care of Museum Collections*.

Optional Reading:

- Helen Glanville, Introductory essay: “*Relativity and restoration*.”

October 24: The Materiality of Art

Guest Speaker: Dana Hemmenway, Senior Photographs Conservator, Center for Creative Photography

Required Reading:

- Browse: <https://www.nedcc.org/preservation101/session-5>
- Browse: <https://www.moma.org/interactives/objectphoto/materials.html>
- Claire Barry, “The Making of the Ciudad Rodrigo Altarpiece.”

Optional Reading:

- Mark Golden. “Manufacturing Artist Paints: Keeping Pace with Change.”
http://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications_resources/newsletters/31_2/artist_paints.html
- Browse: Cennino D' Andrea Cennini, *Il Libro dell'Arte*, (*The Craftsman's Handbook*),
<http://www.noteaccess.com/Texts/Cennini/>
- Luca Uzielli, “Historical Overview of Panel-Making Techniques in Central Italy.”

October 31: Dating Methods in Art

Guest Speakers: Dr. Charlotte Pearson, Assistant Professor, Laboratory of Tree-Ring Research and Dr. Gregory Hodgins, Director, Accelerator Mass Spectrometry Lab, Assistant Professor, Anthropology, Assistant Research Professor, Dendrochronology

Required Reading:

- Emily Litvack, *Radiocarbon Dating Gets a Postmodern Makeover*, March 30, 2017
<https://research.arizona.edu/stories/radiocarbon-dating-gets-postmodern-makeover>
- Peter Ian Kuniholm, “Dendrochronology (Tree-Ring Dating) of Panel Paintings.”
- A. J. Timothy Jull and G.S. Burr, “Some Interesting Applications of Radiocarbon Dating to Art and Archaeology.”

Optional Reading:

- A. Läänelaid and A. Nurkse, "Dating of a 17th Century Painting by Tree Rings of Baltic Oak."
- Mark J. Y. Van Strydonck, Liliane Masschelein-Kleiner, Cees Alderliesten, and Arie F. M. De Jong. "Radiocarbon Dating of Canvas Paintings: Two Case Studies."

November 7: Imaging and Authenticity

Guest Speakers: Kristen Watts, Ph.D. Candidate, Chemistry and Gina Watkinson, Conservation Laboratory Coordinator, Preservation Division, Arizona State Museum

Special Viewing: Forgeries from the collection of the University of Arizona Museum of Art

Required Reading:

- Bomford, David, Rachel Billinge, Lorne Campbell, Jill Dunkerton, Susan Foister, Jo Kirby, Carol Plazzotta, Ashok Roy, and Marika Spring. Introduction to *Art in the Making: Underdrawings in Renaissance Paintings*.
- Andrea Kirsh and Rustin S. Levenson, "A couple Reunited: Rembrandt's Portrait of a Man Trimming His Quill and Portrait of a Young Woman Linked Through X-Ray Studies of the Canvases."
- Jehane Ragai, "The Scientific Detection of Forgery in Paintings."

Optional Reading:

- W. Stanley Taft, Jr. and James W. Mayer, "Detection of Fakes."

November 14: The Future of Conservation

Guest Speakers: Jillian McCleary, Archivist, The University of Arizona Museum of Art and Nathan Saxton, Exhibitions Specialist, The University of Arizona Museum of Art

Required Reading:

- Bronwyn Ormsby and Tom Learner, "Recent Developments in the Cleaning of Modern Paints."
http://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications_resources/newsletters/31_2/feature.html
- Noémie Jennifer, "The Race to Save Computer-Based Art."
https://creators.vice.com/en_us/article/saving-computer-based-art-conservation-lab
- C. Richard Johnson Jr. and W.A. Sethares, "Canvas Weave Match Supports Designation of Vermeer's Geographer and Astronomer as a Pendant Pair."
<https://jhna.org/articles/canvas-weave-match-supports-designation-vermeer-geographer-astronomer-pendant-pair/>

Optional Videos (30 minutes each):

- *Collecting Live Performance at the Guggenheim Museum*, Joanna Phillips
Conservator, Time-based Media, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum and Lauren Hinkson
Assistant Curator, Collections, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum
<https://www.restauratoren.de/collecting-and-conserving-performance-art-videos/>
- *Assembling the Body, Reactivating Presence: Collecting, Processing, and Conserving Performance at The Museum of Modern Art*, Athena Christa Holbrook
Collection Specialist, Department of Media and Performance Art, The Museum of Modern Art
<https://www.restauratoren.de/collecting-and-conserving-performance-art-videos/>

Useful Websites: If you are interested in learning more about conservation and technical art history, these are all useful and approachable sites for you to browse.

- University of Delaware Technical Art History Website:
<https://www.artcons.udel.edu/outreach/kress>
- Yale University Technical Art History <https://guides.library.yale.edu/conservation>
- Pigments Through the Ages: <http://www.webexhibits.org/pigments/>
- American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (AIC)
<http://www.conservation-us.org/home>
- Canadian Conservation Institute <https://www.canada.ca/en/conservation-institute.html>
- The Institute of Conservation (ICON) <https://icon.org.uk/>
- International Network for the Conservation of Contemporary Art
<https://www.incca.org/>
- Lunder Conservation Center <https://americanart.si.edu/art/conservation>
- The Getty Conservation Institute (GCI) <http://www.getty.edu/conservation/>

*This syllabus is subject to changes since it is dependent on the availability of guest speakers.