

Virginia



The Virginia Conservation Association promotes the care and preservation of cultural materials. The VCA offers education and training for those involved in conservation and provides a forum for discussion of pertinent issues and new developments in the field.

CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION

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September Meeting!

Textile conservator Gretchen Guidess featuring her work on *Printed Fashions: Textiles for Clothing and Home*, a Colonial Williamsburg Foundation exhibition currently on view. Thursday, September 21st at 5:30pm at the DeWitt Wallace Decorative Arts Museum of Colonial Williamsburg, 325 Francis St, Williamsburg, VA 23185

Letter from the President



KATE RIDGWAY, VCA PRESIDENT

There is a supposed curse that says “may you live in interesting times”. It seems like we are living in interesting times here in Virginia lately and we as museum and preservation professionals are feeling a bit of that curse. How does one decide what to do when their personal ethics and their professional ethics are not necessarily aligned? I know as a person who has worked in preservation for about 20 years now that I have mixed feeling about the Civil War Monuments that are the focus of so much pride and prejudice lately, and really have been for decades.

How can I be disturbed by monuments being destroyed as a professional and be happy with the destruction of what society has deemed is a racist symbol? I know that not everyone will agree with what I have to say, and that is okay! But we need to talk about this, because not having a discussion about how we feel as professionals is not acceptable. This is too complicated and feelings run too deep to ignore the topic of the “preservation of racism”. How do we document and preserve all the varied reactions? How do we preserve the volatility that is so much a defining part of this topic and this time? Should we preserve it or just let it find its own way through history? How do we talk to the next generation about why this generation is so emotionally charged about this? How do we provide help with this topic to the public that we serve as people who preserve history? All of history. Not just this part or that part because it is easy. All of history is important, not just the easy parts. How do we do this?

I have no idea. I’m not going to pretend like I do. I have my own thoughts and feelings, some of which I’ve written down here, but some of which I haven’t even figured out yet. My point is that we should have open, judgement free dialogues about these kinds of topics. It’s our duty as professionals, to ourselves, to the public, and to the history that we serve.



September Program

*Thursday, September 21st at 5:30pm at the DeWitt Wallace
Decorative Arts Museum of Colonial Williamsburg, 325 Francis St,
Williamsburg, VA 23185*

One of VCA's newest members, Gretchen Guidess, will give a gallery talk on the current exhibition, Printed Fashions: Textiles for Clothing and Home. Gretchen, a textile conservator, joined the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation (CWF) Conservation Department last winter and became immersed in exhibition preparations. Her talk will address the approach to display of the textiles and customizing of mounts for the costumes. She is looking forward to an interactive discussion with colleagues. Check out the website for a sneak peak at the exhibition.

Gretchen came to Virginia from Massachusetts and has previously worked at the Williamstown Art Conservation Center and Historic New England. She holds an M.S. from the University of Delaware/ Winterthur Museum Program in Art Conservation. Her passion for textiles extends to her own fun wardrobe, and she is looking forward to being involved in the VCA.

For the September program there is also the possibility of touring the CWF textile conservation lab after the talk only if there is enough interest because it is about a 20-minute walk from the Museum. Please indicate if you would like to see the lab in your RSVP.

The evening will end as usual with a light reception featuring food and beverage provided by the VCA. Members are welcome to contribute additional snacks or desserts.

Parking is available at the Museums off of S. Nassau St. Members should enter through the main entrance to the Museums via the Public Hospital (facing Francis St.) Identify yourself as a VAM or VCA member at the front desk. **Please RSVP to ewroczyzn@gmail.com by September 18th and indicate your preference for a lab tour.** If we offer a tour of the lab, there is also parking at the Collections and Conservation Building (309 1st Street), and driving and walking directions will be provided.

The program will begin in the Gilliland Gallery on the second floor of the DeWitt Wallace Decorative Arts Museum. If members would like to extend their visit to CW beyond the VCA program, a complimentary single day "museum professional" pass for use in the historic area can be obtained at the Museums, the Visitor Center, or any ticket location with the presentation of a valid institutional ID badge.



VCA Takes AIC

The Virginia Conservation Association was well represented at AIC's Annual Meeting that took place May 28th - June 2nd in Chicago, Illinois. VCA members attended meetings, participated in workshops, tours as well as networking events. Members including Casey Mallinckrodt, Will Hoffman, Elsa Sangouard and Kathleen M. Sullivan as well as the following presented posters and papers.



Samantha Sheesley

The VMFA Paper Conservator captivated the Book and Paper Specialty Group audience celebrating the unsung Abstract Expressionist Sari Dienes and her prints. She received many questions and insights towards her ongoing research and treatment.



Julie Ribits

The NEH Conservation Fellow at the Chrysler Museum rapidly presented her poster in under two minutes during the Emerging Conservation Professionals Network Poster Session Lightning Round, that generated interest and questions about her varnish-removal techniques during the AIC Poster Session later in the week.



Taylor Healy

First year NYU conservation student co-presented a paper at the Met's Costume Institute involving 3D scanning and CNC routing for the Textile Specialty Group to compare methods and answer questions about adapting this technology for other collections-care practices.



Workshop

Partner with Historic St. Luke's as it works hard to clean each gravestone in the historic section of our cemetery. There are over 600 graves in need of your attention. Join us for this hands-on workshop where volunteers will learn techniques for cleaning historic gravestones based on industry best practices. Lunch and the necessary tools for the workshop will be provided. This workshop will take place on Saturday, September 30th and again on October 21st at Historic St. Luke's Church, 14477 Benns Church Blvd, Smithfield, Virginia 23430

Please RSVP by emailing Education Coordinator Rachel Popp at rpopp@historicstlukes.org to reserve your spot for the workshop by Wednesday, September 27th.



Conference

Preservation Virginia is excited to be co-hosting the Virginia Preservation Conference alongside the Virginia Department of Historic Resources in Petersburg, Virginia on Friday, October 6 at Union Train Station! Each year, the conference brings together architects, preservationists, government leaders and everyday citizens to explore preservation ideas and initiatives. This year, we invite you to "Explore the Value of Partnerships" happening between organizations in the private and public sector that are strengthening Virginia's communities. You'll get to hear from incredible guest speakers about the collaborations and preservation programs that help revitalize and sustain historic places of memory across the Commonwealth.

Visit preservationvirginia.org/programs/annual-conference to register before September 25.



Lecture

Explore the hidden world of materials beneath the surface of the fine and decorative arts we admire in museum collections and discover what these uncovered elements tell us about an object and the people who made and collected it. Lecture by noted conservator and historic paint analyst, Dr. Susan Buck. Wilton House Museum will host "Art Under the Microscope" on September 14th from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm. Be sure to check out Dr. Buck's exhibition "Vivid View: The Art and Science of Paint Analysis" on view until October 31, 2017. These analyses have also revealed the original decorations in each room, and how the rooms were repainted over time. Remarkably, the original paints survive in every room, as do the paints and decorative finishes applied by each successive owner.

To find out more, purchase at wiltonhousemuseum.org/event/artunderthemicroscope.



May Meeting

The last meeting of the 2016-2017 season featured Conservator Carey Howlett and his work on the Sounding Board at Historic St. John's Church.

VCA BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Williamsburg Regional Library

August 17, 2017

ATTENDEES: Kate Ridgway, Dotty Robinson, Bob Self, Terri Blanchette, Tom Snyder, Kate McEnroe, Emily Wroczyński, Christy Barranger, Maeve Bristow, Jane Hohensee, Deborah Pellmann

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: Kate Ridgway asked us to consider how the VCA can make an impact on and become more relevant to our professional associates. She also informed us of the upcoming Judgment Free Discussion of Monuments. Members are encouraged to email Kate if they are interested in participating in this event.

OFFICER REPORTS:

Treasurer's Report: Christy Barranger reported that we have \$5,213.00 in the Bank and \$250.00 in PayPal.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Education: Bob Self and Terri Blanchette are collecting suggestions for possible workshops and will solicit suggestions from members. If the VCA were to begin an "Angels Project" type program, a workshop could be done on the skills needed to do the project. Bob Self compiled a list of past VCA Education workshops from archived newsletters, which was e-mailed to board members for consideration prior to the meeting. The following workshop events were suggested:

- Lorraine Brevig has indicated she is willing to conduct a one-day session on in-painting.
- Suzanne Collins has indicated she is willing to conduct a one-day session on decorative painting
- A session on family heritage preservation with Education co-chair Terri Blanchette
- Casey Mallinckrodt suggested a joint workshop with The Fralin Museum at UVA on mannequins with Shelley Ulhir
- Another session on metal patination with Andrew Baxter (suggested by past VCA president Nancy Beck) and possible sessions focusing on gilding, and faux food.

Outreach: There was discussion on VAM's Top 10 Most Endangered Artifacts Award and our possible contribution to or involvement in the program.

Membership: Dues and applications need to be in by the September 21 meeting. Dotty Robinson said that because PayPal on our website is currently not working, dues need to be paid via check or cash.

Programs: Discussion was held on how to thank our presenters. Non-member presenters could be offered a one-year free membership in the VCA. They would be sent a thank you letter and an application to return if they wish to be included in either the on-line or membership directory. Speakers who present later in the year would be given an extended membership into the next VCA fiscal year. This would be handled by the Membership Chair. Discussion was also made on a possible honorarium to non-members. The Secretary will send a thank you note to all presenters who are currently VCA members. Final plans and contacts are still being made for program for the September 21, 2017 meeting. Discussion was held on the difference between Programs and Education. The distinction was made that Programs are part of the regular bi-monthly meetings verses Education being more hands on, longer in duration, and usually involving an additional charge to participants.

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There was discussion of beginning an “Angels Project” (under a different name) of pro-bono services from interested members to an identified organization. Kate McEnroe, volunteer to oversee the development of the “Angels Project”. An appeal could be put out in the newsletter and would be good publicity for the VCA.

Publications: All items for the Newsletter need to be submitted to Taylor Healy by Monday August 21, 2017.

Refreshments: There is a budget of \$650.00 per year for the five regular meetings. Jane Hohensee and Tom Snyder informed us of the current supplies on hand. The VCA will provide sandwich trays and have members bring in beverages. **NEW BUSINESS:** The VCA will not formulate an official statement concerning the Confederate monuments situation. Board Meetings will alternate between Richmond and Williamsburg on the third Thursday of the month.

OLD BUSINESS: None

ANNOUNCEMENTS: The October Board meeting will be held at the Libby Mill Library in Richmond.

ADJOURNMENT: Kate Ridgeway adjourned the meeting at 7:20

Membership

Attached to this newsletter is a copy of the latest membership application.

You will notice that there is no information about signing up online and using PayPal. This is a temporary restriction as we transition to a new web site and make PayPal fully functional. For the time being, please open the email attachment, fill out the application form, print it, and send it with a check to the VCA PO Box—or you can pay by check or cash at the first members’ meeting. By mailing the application and check together you will help us ensure that we have everyone’s information for the Directory. If you hit the send button and are not using Internet Explorer, it will not get to us.

Because of the delay, we are extending the renewal deadline until October 15th. As soon as the new web site is set up to process online membership applications and payments, I will let you know. Until then we appreciate your patience and understanding. If you have questions, please contact me.

Dotty Robinson

Membership Chair

Dotrob327@verizon.net

804-347-9813

Helping Hands

VCA is in the early stages of developing an AIC-inspired Angel’s Project to occur at some point next year. The goal of the project would be to assist a small or under-funded institution with a conservation or preservation-minded project. The project would ideally be more preventive than interventive, so that a wide-range of colleagues and conservators of any specialty could participate. For more information about Angel’s projects, visit this website for a list of past AIC hosted projects: www.conservation-us.org/annual-meeting/angels-project#.WZbiVz594dU.

Anyone interested in participating or with ideas of deserving institutions or projects can email Kate McEnroe, katelmccenroe@gmail.com, or speak to her at the next meeting.