

VIRGINIA CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION



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The Virginia Conservation Association (VCA) 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.

The VCA is open to anyone with an interest in the care and preservation of art and historic artifacts.

virginiaconservationassociation.org

Submission Deadline for
the November Newsletter

October 17, 2021

Letter from the President

Greetings, VCA!

As some of you already know, I accepted a position as the Wooden Objects Conservator for New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation. Yes, New York state is very clearly not Virginia. While I will be physically remote this upcoming year, I certainly plan to be as engaged and present as ever during this transitional year for the VCA. I am happy to welcome Marla Curtis and Amy Byrne back to the board (but in new positions!) and Sara Ludueña to the board for the first time. Along with Jackie Peterson-Grace and Elizabeth Robson, I believe we will successfully navigate these somewhat new waters (smaller board, fewer programs) to great effect.



Paige Schmidt, VCA President

On the immediate horizon, the VCA board will be in discussion with the also-evolving VAM board and interim director to determine the best way forward in managing the SHARP grant. As a timeline for the project is resolved, we will be sure to update VCA membership with emails and through upcoming newsletters. Board members from either organization may be reaching out to individuals and the VCA membership over the next few months, so please be on the lookout for emails. While the specifics of the video production and grant fulfillment are still TBD, we certainly welcome any feedback or input in the meantime.

I'm looking forward to a great year for the VCA, and appreciate everyone's continued involvement. As always, please send any programming ideas to myself, Marla (our program chair), or anyone on the board.

Paige

Virginia Conservation Association 2021 Board of Directors Election Results

At the end of the last VCA season, the 2021-2022 fiscal year budget was approved and the new board was elected. New Board terms began August 1, 2021. Meet our new board members below!

Many thanks to everyone who voted and to the members who volunteered to serve on our board!

Board

President: Paige Schmidt

Treasurer: Amy Byrne

Secretary: Sara Ludueña

Paige Schmidt

Paige Schmidt is the Wooden Objects Conservator for the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, based at the Peebles Island Resource Center in Cohoes, NY. Paige received her Master's degree from SUNY Buffalo State



College in 2017. She was an intern and fellow at Biltmore in NC prior to working at The Mariners' Museum and Park from 2017-2022 as an object conservator. She is an active member of AIC's WAG, serving as program chair in 2018 and on the Advisory Committee from 2015-18. Paige has been a guest lecturer for Christopher Newport University's course on Collections Management and Practice and Theory and an instructor for FAIC's Preventive Conservation and Housekeeping workshop. Her interests outside of work include woodworking, rock climbing, backpacking, boats, and basically anything outdoors, especially if she can bring her dog. She's recently taken up embroidery but isn't very good at it.

Committee Chairs

Membership: Elizabeth Robson

Programs: Marla Curtis

Publications: Jackie Peterson-Grace

Amy Byrne

Amy Byrne began her lifelong passion in art conservation in 1985 when she began the Pre-Conservation Program at Virginia Commonwealth University and graduated with a BA in Art History. Amy held pre-program positions at Richmond Conservation Studio and the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts



which eventually lead to getting a Master of Arts Degree and Certificate of Conservation from Buffalo State College. Post graduate positions included the National Park Service, Metropolitan Museum of Art, and Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. In 2002 Amy started Amy Fernandez, Inc., a private practice specializing in Fine Decorative Arts and Sculpture, Easel Paintings, Polychromed Objects, and Historic Collections. Amy is a Professional Associate in the AIC and has been a member of the VCA since 1989. Amy lives on a small farm in Shepherdstown, WV with her husband Greg, where they enjoy gardening and entertaining along with their two dogs, two cats and five chickens.

Sara Ludueña is currently the Marshall Steel Fellow in Textile Conservation at the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. In 2020, she completed a Master of Arts in Fashion and Textile Studies at the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York and subsequently worked as The William E. and Mary F. Conway Family Fellow in Textile Conservation at the Cleveland Museum of Art in Ohio. Sara has held internships in textile conservation at the Cleveland Museum Art and at the Museum at FIT. Previously, she earned a Master of Architecture degree and worked in the field of historic preservation in Texas for several years. Sara holds a Bachelor's degree from Barnard College in New York. She is originally from Texas.



Marla Curtis has worked in the field of Art Conservation for nearly 30 years. She started her private practice, Curtis Fine Art Conservation, LLC, in Williamsburg, Virginia in 2010. Marla earned her Master of Arts degree and Certificate of Advanced Study in Art Conservation from Buffalo State College with a specialization in Paintings Conservation. Marla also holds a Master of Arts in Art History from Virginia Commonwealth University. After completing her graduate coursework, Marla worked for ten years in the Painting Conservation studios of several art museums, including the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, The Phillips Collection, and the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC. Each of these museums offered experience with superb painting collections as well as exceptional mentors and colleagues. Marla holds the paintings she examines and treats in the highest regard and takes a minimal, yet effective, approach in her practice.



Elizabeth Robson is currently an Andrew W. Mellon Conservation Fellow with the Chrysler Museum of Art and Hampton University Museum. Previously, she was a Post-Graduate Fellow in Paintings Conservation at the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. She received her Master's degree from SUNY Buffalo State College in 2019, after completing her third year internship at the John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art in Sarasota, FL. She also volunteered and worked in Colonial Williamsburg's conservation labs pre-program, and she is enjoying being back in southeastern Virginia again!



Jackie Peterson-Grace is the Associate Textile Conservator at The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. She completed a Master of Science from the Winterthur/University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation in 2018 with concentrations in textile and preventive conservation and holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Conservation Studies from Marist College. As a graduate student, she completed internships in the textile conservation labs at the Victoria & Albert Museum, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and Peebles Island Resource Center. She worked closely with collections care staff at the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum in Cambodia from 2018 to 2020 to address textile preservation needs.



VCA Meeting Summary May 7, 2022

Sara Ludueña

Members and friends of the VCA met for our Spring Field Trip at Fort Monroe and the Casemate Museum on Saturday, May 7. We toured some of the museum's storage areas and heard from their collections management staff about the challenges they face caring for objects in spaces that were not intended for this use. It was very interesting to see how Casemate staff are inventorying, processing and triaging the museum's collection based on the needs of the objects and the rather unusual environmental concerns of housing historic objects in a space directly adjacent to a moat! We also toured the site's archaeology lab and learned some about their archaeology collection and the history of the fort. The tour was very informative and it was a beautiful, sunny spring day to spend visiting a unique historic site and museum. After the tour, several attendees went to a nearby local brewery for lunch.



Casemate Museum staff welcoming VCA tour group to the museum



Fans are used to assist with air circulation in storage areas



Metal storage units are placed along the walls of this repurposed portion of the former fort

The VCA at AIC

AIC's 50th annual meeting was held in Los Angeles, California between May 13th and 17th, 2022. Programming focused on how the field has changed over the past 50 years, and what it may look like in the coming decades. The first in-person meeting since 2019 was complemented by a virtual component that included approximately one third of the in-person meeting. The virtual offerings were live-streamed and [recordings are available](#) for registered members until October 31, 2022.



Congratulations to the VCA members who participated in this year's American Institute for Conservation Annual Meeting!

Iron Stain Reduction on Painted Surfaces: Treatment of a Korean War Era Missile

Kathryn Brugioni Gabrielli, Lauren Horelick
National Air and Space Museum

Creating Simulated, Graphitized Archaeological Cast Iron Samples for Testing Conservation Treatments

Eric Farrell
The Mariner's Museum and Park

Mist Consolidation: Future Treatment Potential for Deteriorated Iron-Dyed Yarns

Heather Hodge
The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation / Winterthur Museum, Garden and Library

A Technical Study and Treatment of a Tibetan Ritual Crown

Leila Sabouni, Ainslie Harrison
Virginia Museum of Fine Arts

ECPN Regional Liaison Update

Hannah Sanner

The Williamsburg Regional Emerging Conservation Professionals Network (ECPN) welcomes a new liaison: Hannah Sanner. ECPN is a subgroup of the American Institute for Conservation (AIC) that helps people find a network to support the beginning of their career in conservation. Whether you are just discovering the field, a pre-program intern, a graduate student, or a post-graduate we welcome you as an emerging professional.

Hannah is a pre-program intern at Colonial Williamsburg who works across the textile, paper, objects, and archeology labs. She graduated from William & Mary in 2021 with a Bachelor of Arts in Chinese language & culture and a certificate in museum studies and material culture from the National Institute of American History & Democracy. While in school she interned at Colonial Williamsburg's weaver trade shop where she worked on historic cloth reproductions. Post graduation she had the opportunity to work at the state level in the Virginia Department of Historic Resources conservation lab.

As the new liaison she is hoping to expand the community and help new emerging professionals connect with experienced professionals. If you would like updates and have not received emails from Williamsburg ECPN in the past, please email Williamsburg.ecpn.liason@gmail.com to be added to the mailing list. Hannah is eager to answer questions and provide resources to emerging conservators across Virginia. She has already forwarded a survey to collect information on what programming the community would like to see in the coming quarter. Our first event this fall will be a social meet and greet to introduce old and new members. Stay tuned to the ECPN emails for more information.

Useful Links:

Read more about the ECPN AIC group and find excellent resources on our website:

<https://www.culturalheritage.org/membership/groups-and-networks/emerging-conservation-professionals-network>

See what is new, check us out on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/419707523031/>



Hannah Sanner, Williamsburg ECPN Liaison

Emerging Conservation Professional Spotlight

Megan Zins

My name is Megan Zins, and I really didn't know what I wanted to do with my life until relatively recently. During my sophomore year of undergrad at The College of Wooster, I met my future thesis advisor, Dr. Sarah Schmidtke Sobeck. Dr. Sobeck is a conservation scientist and introduced me to the world of conservation through her research, which we collaborated on during the preparation of my thesis. My work focused on the physical and chemical properties of the photodegradation of carminic acid dye and carmine pigment. Though this work was very fulfilling, I was still (and currently am) interested in more direct interaction with cultural heritage objects. Ideally, in the future, I will be a conservator with extensive knowledge of conservation science who regularly employs scientific instrumentation in order to gain a more wholistic understanding of cultural heritage objects.

Working towards that vision, I recently completed my first Pre-Program summer internship as an NEH Paintings Conservation Intern at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (VMFA).



*Megan Zins next to *The Music Master* after treatment was completed. Photo by Amalia Donastorg.*



*Explaining my treatment of *The Music Master* and its frame (in foreground) to a tour group visiting the VMFA conservation lab. Paintings conservators Josh Summer and Meredith Watson are helping display the painting. Photo by Debbie Linn.*

Over the course of the summer, I worked on numerous projects ranging from small to large in scale. Engaging in these projects taught me valuable skills such as properly handling art objects, operating a power drill, finishing wood, securely fitting paintings into frames, infilling losses in paintings, color matching when inpainting, and so much more.

The project that taught me the most about conservation work, however, was treating a painting known as *The Music Master* (also known as *The Music Master of Philadelphia*). Recently acquired into the VMFA's collection, the work is intended to be a part of the museum's upcoming exhibition *Storied Strings: The Guitar in American Art*, which will eventually travel to Nashville. Under the supervision of Paintings Conservators Josh Summer and Meredith

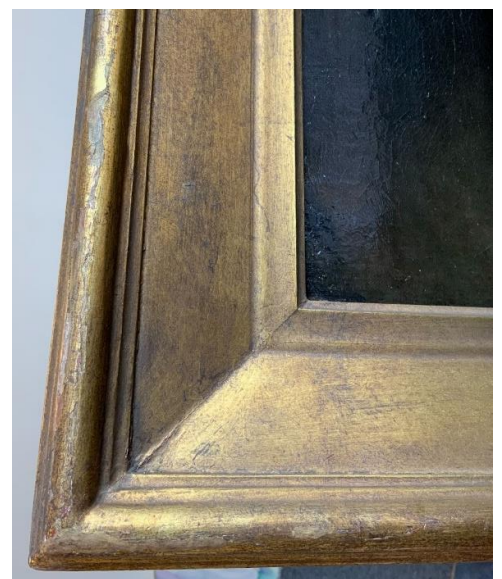


Consolidating the losses in the frame using fish glue in deionized water. Photo by Debbie Linn.

Watson, I prepared *The Music Master* to be aesthetically ready for exhibition and structurally ready for travel.

The treatment addressed both the painting itself and its associated frame. Work on the painting consisted of dry cleaning; resaturating abraded varnish; consolidating, filling, and inpainting small losses; fastening corner brackets to the painting's stretcher to address issues in its planarity; and constructing a new insert backing to reduce vibrations in the painting while in transit. The frame's treatment followed a similar protocol and consisted of consolidating losses around the entire frame; filling losses with gesso and carving them down; inpainting the filled losses with metallic watercolor; lining the rabbet with felt; constructing a buildout; and adding matboard and felt inserts to fit the painting more securely in its frame.

This treatment, which I later learned was considered an "every-day" type of treatment, was completely new to me. Each and every step in the treatment process listed above required me to learn a new skill, a new way of thinking, and a new way of looking. And now, after applying these skills throughout the course of my internship, I carry them forward into my career in conservation.



Progression of treating losses in the frame. From left to right: Losses before treatment, losses after being consolidated and filled with gesso, losses after being inpainted.

Connecting Peninsula Institutions Through Lab Tours

Gretchen Guidess

On Friday, June 24th Colonial Williamsburg Foundation conservators and interns embarked on an excursion to Richmond to partake of some of our favorite things: visiting conservation colleagues, food, and baseball. Our day began with lunch so that we could tour the galleries of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts fortified. Among the many wonderful and wonderous things on display in the galleries we saw the atmospheric woodblocks of Kawase Hasui. The exhibit, “Landscapes and Architecture: Japanese Woodblock Prints by Kawase Hasui” featured a selection of his early work that spanned his working life, 1918 until 1957. The last print was made days before his death in November 1957. It is a quiet scene called “Hiraizmi, Konjiki-do” or Hall of the Golden Hue at Hiraizumi.” In it a single figure walks through gentle snowfall before a snowy temple. In the Lewis Focus Gallery was projected a transfixing video installation of Ebony Patterson entitled “...three kings weep...” (2018) a three-channel digital color video. The sorrow of the three individuals juxtaposed with the vibrant and lush dress and accessories they wore was riveting.

Following our visit to the galleries it was time to rendezvous with our hosts and ascend to the conservation studios. We caught our VMFA conservation colleagues during an especially dynamic time. Along with meeting the newest members of their internship program we were treated to a survey of their projects and other current work in each of the labs’ specialties. We also learned that they will be joined by a photographic conservator who will expand the skills and knowledge of the department. As with any new addition, some of the lab spaces were being reconfigured in preparation of welcoming this new colleague. We enjoyed seeing in-person the fabulous labs and analytical resources we first glimpsed virtually in previous visits to the department. Many thanks to our colleagues at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts who accommodated our event filled schedule and were generous with their time. We look forward to future profession exchanges with them.

The dinner hour was fast approaching so we traveled across town to go through the ‘Squirrely Gates’ into The Diamond to watch the Richmond Flying Squirrels take on the Portland Sea Dogs. This was a first ball game ever for both summer intern Shannon Cherry and conservation friend Walden Grace. We hope that the allure of ballpark food and the promise of free Flying Squirrel Hawaiian shirts will bring them back.



Left to right Summer Intern Shannon Cherry seated with Conservation Friend Walden Grace, and in the background, pre-program intern Hannah Sanner at the Flying Squirrels Funnville.

Connecting Peninsula Institutions Through Lab Tours

Perrine LeSaux

Summer is always an exciting time in conservation labs as we host summer interns. In June Colonial Williamsburg welcomed 2 summer interns, a new post graduate fellow, and a new pre-program intern. Since they were new to area, we thought it would be great for them to be introduced to neighboring institutions. It has been a few years since it was safe for “behind the scenes” tours, so we were excited to visit a few labs and have fellow conservators visit our labs as well.



Director of Conservation Will Hoffman speaking to a group of Colonial Williamsburg employees and interns in the USS Monitor Center wet lab which is filled with large desalination tanks.

On a beautiful day in early July, we caravanned down to the Mariners’ Museum. In tow were most of the interns, as well as a few assistant conservators, and part of the preventive team. Will Hoffman (Director of Conservation) captivated us with a fascinating tour of the Monitor project and conservation lab. We were led into the warehouse-sized tank room and peered into tanks big and small. Everyone was blown away by the sheer scale of the Monitor project and were treated to a detailed description of what it takes to treat and organize such big project. Then we were toured around the new conservation labs where we met Dr. Molly McGath (research scientist), Emilie Duncan (paper conservator) and Lindsey Zachman (paper conservator). Will ended the tour in the public viewing area where he discussed the implementation of the Conservation on Display program.



Looking into the conservation labs at the Mariners’ Museum from the public viewing area. Paper conservators Emilie Duncan (left) and Lindsey Zachman (right) are working on projects at their benches.

News and Updates

VCA membership renewal

Membership renewal is upon us for the 2022-2023 year! Please renew your Membership by **October 15** to be eligible for member benefits and to ensure your inclusion in the Directory. You can renew online by visiting the link below. Complete the application form and submit it before adding the membership to your card and making your payment.

<https://virginiaconservationassociation.org/members>

As requested last year, PLEASE FILL OUT THE FORM IN ITS ENTIRETY. The VCA Services Directory will be updated to reflect any conservators and/or preservation specialists who want to be searchable through the VCA website for private work (as opposed to the general membership online directory). Please check the box in the last question on the form only if you want to be searchable for Private Practice.

You can also print the application at the end of the newsletter and submit payment via mail to:

The Virginia Conservation Association
PO Box 7023
Richmond, VA 23221

Note from the Publications Chair

Welcome to the 2022-2023 VCA year! Things will look a bit different for us following years of virtual programming and the membership's vote last year to reduce to number of events, but the board is committed to fostering the VCA as a place for regional conservators to meet, discuss ideas, and build a sense of community. Though we won't be meeting as frequently, the newsletter will continue to go out every other month and we want this to be a platform for sharing current projects, interesting discoveries, and new resources! Please consider sharing updates from your lab, private practice, or intuition. I look forward to keeping us all connected this year! You can reach me at publications.vaconservation@gmail.com.

Conservation equipment for sale

Pam Young is closing her private practice studio in Williamsburg, VA. A wide range of equipment, tools and supplies is for sale including a Museum Services Corp. 36" x 48" suction table with Tiger vacuum, Gore-Tex 36" x 5 yard rolls, a Preservation Pencil, and Caselli spatulas.

Please contact Pam at pamelajyoung1@gmail.com for further information and an inventory.

Job Opportunity

The Muscarelle Museum of Art at William & Mary is seeking to engage a temporary, contract Museum Collections Specialist. Primary duties will include but not be limited to the following.

- Assist with a systematic inventory and tracking of location changes of objects.

- Assist with condition reports and database updates.
- Take images of various objects and assist with maintaining photographic documentation of all processes.
- Other related duties as assigned.

Qualifications: The candidate should be detail-oriented with the ability to accurately record and document data. Experience with and knowledge of museum collections care and best practices, organizational coordination, as well as art handling experience with excellent oral and written communications skills are highly desired. The candidate will maintain effective working relationships, working closely with the Museum's registrar, collections staff, as well as student interns. Prior experience with museum collections and databases is a must. Candidate should have the ability to lift 30 lbs. and stand or sit for extended periods of time. A Bachelor's degree in art history, museum studies, or library and information science is preferred. This part-time, temporary position will run from late September through mid- December. Expected schedule is 30 hours a week at \$24/hour. Please submit your application here: <https://jobs.wm.edu/postings/50088>

VCA AUGUST BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Virtual Board Meeting - August 18, 2022

ATTENDEES

Paige Schmidt, Marla Curtis, Elizabeth Robson, Amy Byrne, Sara Ludueña, Jackie Peterson-Grace

Call to Order: President Paige Schmidt called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm

PRESIDENT'S REPORT (PAIGE SCHMIDT)

Paige asked all board members present to introduce themselves. Some board members are still working on gaining access to their Google accounts. The documentation associated with the eliminated board positions has been archived and the Google accounts remain active, access for those accounts will be kept by the Membership Chair so they may be accessed in the future if need be. The updated bylaws were reviewed.

TREASURER'S REPORT (AMY BYRNE)

Amy will work with Keri, previous treasurer, to transition all necessary permissions and documentation.

SECRETARY'S REPORT (SARA LUDUEÑA)

Sara coordinated with the previous secretary to transition into the position.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Programs Committee (Marla Curtis)

Two potential programs were discussed. The board agreed that all future programming should include a virtual option for those who cannot physically attend.

Membership Committee (Elizabeth Robson)

No updates to report.

Publications Committee (Jackie Peterson-Grace)

Jackie requested ideas for future newsletter content and discussed VCA's social media presence.

Meeting adjourned by President Paige Schmidt at 7:30pm



2022 – 2023 Board Members

Paige Schmidt president.vaconservation@gmail.com	President
Sara Ludueña secretary.vaconservation@gmail.com	Secretary
Amy Byrne treasurer.vaconservation@gmail.com	Treasurer
Elizabeth Robson membership@virginiaconservationassociation.org	Membership Chair
Marla Curtis programs.vaconservation@gmail.com	Programs Chair
Jackie Peterson-Grace publications.vaconservation@gmail.com	Publications Chair

VCA Student Scholarship

VCA offers two annual scholarships of \$250 each to be used for furthering education in the field. Use of funds may include conference or class fees or other professional-development expenses. Applicants must be VCA student members to apply. Applications are accepted throughout the year and will be evaluated during the April and December Board meetings.

To apply, submit a one-page proposal for use of funds that specifies how the scholarship will assist in the pursuit of a career in conservation or a directly related field. To apply, email our Education Committee Co-Chairs or mail paper applications to the VCA, P.O. Box 7023, Richmond, VA 23221

Contribute to the Newsletter!

Are you working on an interesting or challenging treatment? Have you made exciting research discoveries, come across valuable resources, or attended an inspiring professional development event? We want to hear from you!

Our all-volunteer publishing team regularly calls for content and any VCA member is welcome to contribute. If you are interested in writing for the newsletter but would like some advice and guidance, please get in touch with our Publications Chair to discuss your ideas.

The deadline for the November Newsletter is **October 17**

Contact Us

Virginia Conservation Association

P.O. Box 7032
Richmond, VA 23221

www.virginiaconservationassociation.org
www.facebook.com/VaConservation/