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BOOK AND PAPER

CONFERENCE

CONSERVATION UNCOVERED

INVESTIGATION AND DISCOVERY IN TREATMENT AND ANALYSIS

21-24 OCTOBER 2025

THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES, LONDON

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about us


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Icon Book & Paper Group unites the book and paper conservation community.

We support the conservation of books, archives, manuscripts, works of art on paper, and related materials through professional development, knowledge sharing, and community-building. The Icon Book & Paper Group is committed to providing high-quality, accessible training and events that support Continuing Professional Development (CPD), address skills gaps in both institutional and private practice, and reflect the evolving needs of our members through open consultation and feedback.


William Bennett
Chair

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PAST CONFERENCES

Icon BPG Conferences promote knowledge exchange, networking and celebrating achievements.

2021 - Contemporary Issues in Book and Paper Conservation.

2018 - Unexpected fame: Conservation approaches to the preparatory object.

2015 - *Adapt & Evolve: Eastern Asian Materials and Techniques in Western Conservation.*

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2025 CONFERENCE

Conservation Uncovered, Investigation and discovery in treatment and analysis.

From experienced professors to emerging conservators, finally together to examine how material analysis, historical research, and careful observation influence treatment choices and reveal new insights. Participants will explore novel approaches to conservation challenges and share discoveries that have transformed our understanding of cultural heritage materials.

Tuesday
21 October 2025

WORKSHOPS

9:00	10:00	11:00	12:00	13:00	14:00	15:00	16:00	17:00
Understanding the structure and binding of manuscript from the Islamic world The British Library								
	Navigating the early career landscape in conservation and heritage science The National Archives							
					Book and Paper Group Wiki-Thon The National Archives			
					Re-moistenable tissue for conservation at scale The National Archives			

Wednesday
22 October 2025

STUDIO TOURS

11:00	12:00	12:30	13:30	14:00	14:30	15:00	15:30	16:00
Lambeth Palace Library								
The British Museum								
National Portrait Gallery								
		The London Archives						
				Royal Botanic Garden				
				The British Library				
				The National Archives				
					The London Archives			

Thursday
23 October 2025

9:00-9:30	Registration	
9:30-10:00	Opening Remarks Emma Jhita - Icon CEO William Bennett - BPG Chair	
10:00 - 10:30	*The "Graz Mummy Book" (UBG Ms I 1946), the oldest direct precursor to the codex form: holistic material investigation and the scientific method.*	Theresa Zammit Lupi, Lena Krämer
10:30 - 11:00	*Unfolding decision-making and treatment techniques in the Conservation of three maps from Dunham Massey (National Trust).*	Mhairi Boyle, Richard Hawkes
11:00 - 11:30	Break - poster session	
11:30 - 12:00	*Red rotting leather binding: understanding deterioration*	Marysia Tarnowska, Wren Montgomery, Konstantina Konstantinidou, Innes Clatworthy, Long Jiang
12:00 - 12:30	*Sense and Wisdom of the King brought to light: Conservation and Scientific analysis at the British Library.*	Heather Marshall, Lucia Noor Melita
12:30 - 12:40	*Artificial intelligence in book and paper conservation? Evaluating ChatGPT as a research tool in professional practice.*	Anika Freitag

12:40 - 12:50	*Collective insight: research, collaboration and conservation in the Korean Scroll project.*	Gemma Mathieson
12:50 - 13:00	*The Influence of Dyeing Assistants on Paper Deterioration: a case study using Glauber's salt.*	Jaiyu Hu
13:00 - 14:00	Lunch	
14:00 - 14:30	*Application of Jin-Shofu Starch Nanoparticles for the Consolidation of the paint layer of a 19th century tempera artwork on paper.*	Selene Chersicla
14:30 - 15:00	*Light, Legacy and Colour. Technical investigation of J.M.W. Turner watercolours at the National Galleries of Scotland.*	Clara de la Peña McTigue, Joyce H. Townsend, Kirsten Dunne
15:00 - 15:30	*Stuck in the middle with glue: mounting contemporary chinese paper cuts.*	Emily Williams, Simon Philpott, Vivian Yip
15:30 - 15:50	Break	
15:50 - 16:30	Keynote *A world made of paper: how damage functions can help management, policy and climate action.*	Josep Grau-Bové
16:30 - 17:30	Panel Discussion *Opening Access to Research Infrastructure in Conservation*	Nicola Grahamslaw, Marc Vermeulen, Louise Gibson, Josep Grau-Bové, Abigail Bainbridge
17:30 - 19:00	Evening Reception at The National Archives	

Friday
24 October 2025

9:00-9:20	Arrival	
9:20 - 9:30	Introduction	
9:30 - 10:10	Keynote *A journey from textiles to libraries via plastics- confessions from 30 years of exploring and uncovering heritage collections.*	*Cordelia Rogerson*
10:10 - 10:20	*From Plate to Page to Stage: the analysis and conservation behind the exhibition "Audubon's Birds of America".*	Lisa Cumming
10:20 - 10:30	*Bright lines: the identification of huangbo applied beneath lines of text in Tibetan Buddhist manuscripts.*	Lora V. Angelova, Lucia Melita, Melodie Doumy
10:30 - 11:00	*Botanical Studies: discovering curation through conservation.*	Nora S. Lockshin
11:00 - 11:30	Break - Poster session	
11:30 - 11:40	*Canvas bindings in UK collections: identifying structures and patterns of degradation.*	Beckett Thornber
11:40 - 12:10	*Reconstructing Codex Lippomano: a technical study of the earliest Plaquette binding.*	Yungjin Shin
12:10 - 12:40	*A joint effort: the conservation of oversized architectural drawings in the case study of MAIRE Historical Archive.*	Paola Fagnola Sofia Pregagnoli Elena Mazzoni

12:40 - 13:10	*Negotiating Fragility: Investigating the Conservation of Butter Paper Drawings through Research and Practice*	Rattan K. Rainu, Ritwika Basak
13:10 - 14:00	Lunch	
14:00 - 14:30	*The role of textiles in uncovering hidden histories in Armenian Manuscripts.*	Aldona Jedrusik
14:30 - 15:00	*Unfolding Histories: material characterisation of chinese export wallpapers at the Royal Pavillion, Brighton.*	Amy J. Heslip, Marc Vermeulen
15:00 - 15:30	Closing remarks/discussion	
15:30 - 16:00	End	
16:00	Drinks Local Pub Kew	

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DAYS



LOCATIONS



PRESENTATIONS



LIGHTNING TALKS



POSTERS



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KEYNOTES & PANEL DISCUSSION



A world made of paper: how damage functions can help management, policy and climate action

Dr. Josep Grau-Bové

Damage functions for paper and archival materials are the most well-developed in heritage science, offering a blueprint for how risks can be formalised, quantified, and linked to management decisions. But how far can the logic developed for archival materials be applied universally to other heritage typologies? And if we are able to extend it, what scientific and practical problems could we solve? This talk addresses these questions by drawing on two recent studies. The first, General collections demography model with multiple risks (Grau-Bové & Andrews), presents a new modelling approach that integrates continuous and probabilistic degradation, combining damage functions with the risk parameters of the ABC framework. This attempt at a universal implementation of Collections Demography demonstrates how multiple risks can be synthesised to project the condition of collections over time. We have tested the model with museum buildings and collections and unexpected sites such as the Covid Memorial Wall, to learn about its limits. The second, Using damage functions to map heritage climatology at a global scale (Grau-Bové, Orr, Thomas & Andrews), applies paper-based and other damage functions to global climate datasets, testing their ability to represent geographically diverse risks. While this analysis reveals the potential of damage functions to underpin heritage climatology and international collaboration, it also exposes the limitations of applying models developed for European and North American materials to tropical and non-archival contexts.

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Recently, the Cultural and Heritage Capital framework launched by DCMS has increased the interest in expanding the real-world use of damage functions to help guide government investment. The talk will use this recent research to show how the well-defined case of paper can act as a testbed for the simulation of other heritage collections, opening pathways for more robust management, policy frameworks, and even climate action.

Dr. Josep Grau-Bové

Professor Josep Grau-Bové, FIIC, is Director of the Institute for Sustainable Heritage (ISH) at University College London (UCL), where he serves as Professor of Heritage Science. He studied Chemical Engineering in Tarragona and History of Science in Barcelona. He specializes in preventive conservation, with a particular interest in computational approaches. His research focuses on transport phenomena in historic objects and spaces, with an emphasis on the impact of environmental factors such as airborne particles on the conservation of cultural artefacts. He has led multiple training programmes in the sector, including the Master's in Data Science for Cultural Heritage and the Master's in Sustainable Heritage. He participates in several research projects, among them ITHACA (Integrating Lifetimes in Heritage Capital), funded by the AHRC, as well as projects with DCMS to assess environmental conditions in museums.

He also collaborates regularly on projects funded by the European Union and has served as National Coordinator of ERIHS UK (European Research Infrastructure for Heritage Science), the European research infrastructure for heritage science.



A journey from textiles to libraries via plastics- confessions from 30 years of exploring and uncovering heritage collections

Dr. Cordelia Rogerson

With the latent curiosity of a conservator who is driven by an inherent desire to preserve the past, this presentation will reflect on the discoveries and lessons learned of a conservation professional who has analyzed, explored and preserved very varied collection materials. The purpose is, therefore, to reinforce the rationale, logic and justification behind discovering information about heritage material through conservation processes. Whether the material content is identified to understand deterioration pathways or elucidating the significance of the cultural property, information gleaned shapes the next steps and outcome of the treatment process.

Conservation research and analysis is applied and practical, bridging theory and practice. Arguably the aim is to understand cultural heritage more clearly to elucidate society and the world around us. Case studies to explore the topic will include cross-sectional analysis of painted textile trade union banners, multi spectral imaging of 2 copies of Magna Carta and observing expert tacit knowledge being applied to the examination of a prayer book handwritten by Elizabeth I. Each case study presented represents a steep learning curve of collaboration, applied skills, information sharing, interpretation and answering the 'so what' question. Conservation is not an end in itself. We are agents of communication and explanation via the material we preserve and explore. Clearly articulating the outcomes of our collective endeavors is paramount to creating an enduring impact.

Critiquing the outcome of the analysis and discovery process is therefore imperative, and hindsight is a luxurious advantage I have now obtained. Moreover, in a world of resource constraints, clarity of the initial research questions and ultimate goals is important. Reflections will consider if the processes and analyses have indeed enabled us to improve practice and advance our interpretation of society.

Dr. Cordelia Rogerson

Dr Cordelia Rogerson is Director of Collection Management at *the British Library* and is responsible for the managing both physical and digital collection material throughout the collection life cycle – acquisitions and content strategy, metadata creation, preventive and treatment conservation and loans registry - to enable collection use and preservation. Cordelia reached this point via a degree in Art History followed by training at the *Textile Conservation Centre* (TCC), then at the *Courtauld Institute of Art*. On graduation Cordelia worked in both the teaching and Conservation Services teams of the TCC before completing a PhD in plastics conservation for artist jewellery at the Royal College of Art/ V&A. She joined the BL at the first modern materials conservator before stepping into the role of *Head of Conservation* and thereafter with an ever-expanding remit to ultimately become a director.

Cordelia also holds non-executive Directorships at *Clothworkers' Company* and *Book Industry Communications,* is a Trustee of *British Library Collections Trust* and a past board member of *Leeds University*. She sits on advisory committees for buildings and collections at both Salisbury and Winchester Cathedrals and is an Honorary Associate Professor at UCL.



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Opening Access to Research Infrastructure in Conservation

Access to research tools, facilities, and specialist expertise can transform conservation practice, but such resources are not always equitably available across our field. This panel will explore how conservators, scientists, and heritage professionals can work together to build more connected and accessible research networks.

Panellists will share perspectives from large-scale research infrastructures, cultural organisations, and independent practice. They will discuss practical experiences of collaborative models and working across disciplines, highlighting both barriers and opportunities to access both users and providers. Initiatives such as the European Infrastructure for Heritage Science (E-RIHS) and the upcoming UK Research Infrastructure for Conservation and Heritage Science (RICHeS) will be considered alongside more informal, grassroots approaches to resource-sharing. By foregrounding both frameworks and hands-on experiences, the discussion will explore how the conservation community can better share expertise and resources for the benefit of all.

With speakers representing diverse collections and practice, this session aims to surface common challenges and practical strategies. We hope attendees will gain:

- Awareness of current and upcoming research infrastructures in the UK and Europe
- Examples of collaborative models that support smaller organisations and private practitioners
- Practical ideas for fostering partnerships and accessing specialist knowledge

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Chair

Nicola Grahamslaw

Nicola Grahamslaw has worked as an Engineering Analyst and Systems Engineer in a variety of industries including aerospace and nuclear energy, and as a digital technology educator. In 2018 she was appointed as the first SS Great Britain Ship's Conservation Engineer, developing a sustainable conservation strategy for the 175-year-old ship, designed by Isambard Kingdom Brunel and operating as a museum in Bristol. Nicola is passionate about inspiring and encouraging the engineers of the future, working with schools, as a speaker and mentor on careers and professional development.



Speakers

Louise Gibson

Louise Gibson is the Biobank Manager at the Zoological Society of London (ZSL), a leading conservation charity. She manages one of the UK's largest wildlife biobanks, containing over 800,000 specimens that underpin research in biodiversity, wildlife health, and conservation. With a strong commitment to enhancing the visibility and accessibility of zoological collections, Louise works to ensure these invaluable scientific resources are used to their full potential. She actively collaborates across the research and conservation community to champion the critical role of biobanks and collections in addressing global biodiversity and environmental challenges.



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Marc Vermeulen



Marc is Head of Heritage Science and Conservation Research at The National Archives. His work focuses on the scientific study of historical collections, with interests in pigment degradation, hazardous materials in archives, and advanced imaging techniques. He leads cross-disciplinary research to improve collection care and safe access. Through this work, he aims to foster inclusive access to collections, enable informed decision-making across the sector, and ensure that science plays a central role in shaping the future of archives and libraries.

Abigail Bainbridge

Abigail Bainbridge is director of Bainbridge Conservation in London, specialising in the conservation of books and paper. She has taught extensively in higher and further education, including conservation science at Camberwell College of Arts. She is editor of Conservation of Books (Routledge 2023).



Josep Grau-Bové



Josep Grau-Bové is the director of the UCL Institute for Sustainable Heritage, and professor of Heritage Science. He has been an active participant in the creation of E-RIHS, where he has co-led the development of the education strategy, and has fulfilled the role of UK National Coordinator (2024-2025) during the implementation phase of the infrastructure. Josep is an expert in preventive conservation, especially the creative use of computational models to help decision-making. He currently offers preventive conservation labs as a service within the ERIHS catalogue.

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TALKS

We're gathering speakers from all over the world: bookbinders, art historians, conservators, conservation scientists and more.

Join us for this fine selection of relevant talks about 2025 ICON BPG Conference, *Conservation Uncovered.*

Following abstracts and bios have been summarized.

Click here for the full-length version.

The 'Graz Mummy Book' (UBG Ms I 1946), the oldest direct precursor to the codex form: holistic material investigation and the scientific method



Discovered at Graz University Library and unveiled in 2023, the Graz Mummy Book is a papyrus fragment dated to 260 BCE. Featuring a central fold, ink transfer, and text layout, it has been identified as a bifolio, and the oldest known fragment of a codex-life structure. The interpretation of the fragment as a bifolio is sensational because this identifies the fragment as the earliest direct precursor to the book, predating existing codices by at least 400 years.

Scientific analysis (carried out at the Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures, *University of Hamburg*) confirmed its unique features, but to fully understand the object, researchers turned to craft-based methods and model-making, emphasizing the importance of human experience in interpreting ancient materials. In the two years since the discovery was made public, conservator's interpretation has often been dismissed by scholars outside of conservation who rarely provided alternative suggestions to explain all the fragment's relevant material features. This raised questions about the perceived legitimacy of conservation and codicological research in relation to other academic disciplines and we wondered whether it was the conservation profession as a whole that was ultimately being dismissed. Their work calls for greater interdisciplinary collaboration, showing that combining scientific tools with practical knowledge is essential to truly grasp our cultural heritage.

Theresa Zammit Lupi ACR studied art history and book & paper conservation. She received her PhD in London focusing on Renaissance manuscripts and was a research fellow at *Harvard University*. Since 2021 she is Head of Conservation at *Graz University Library*, Austria. In May 2023 she discovered UBG I 1946, a fragment that has been interpreted as the oldest precursor to the codex – 'The Graz Mummy Book'.

Lena Krämer is a conservator of books and library materials. After obtaining a BA in History and Philosophy, she completed an MA degree in conservation at *West Dean College* (UK) in 2021. She briefly worked in private practice and is currently conservator for *Graz University Library* in Austria.

Unfolding decision-making and treatment techniques in the conservation of three maps from Dunham Massey

Many paper conservators encounter challenges when treating oversized, mounted maps, which often lie at the intersection of art and archival material. These maps must remain functional and legible, while addressing issues like physical damage, yellowed varnish, fragile cloth backings, and historical mounting methods. This paper explores the conservation of a set of large-format 18th-century maps from Dunham Massey (NT), Cheshire, and the ethical decisions involved in their treatment, storage, and display. The maps were made from multiple printed sheets pasted together with cloth backings that had deteriorated, while the paper itself showed significant fractures, as well as the original wooden batons were at risk of detaching due to corrosion and tearing.

Given the extent of the damage, a high level of intervention was required. Conservators used an adapted Asian technique involving temporary facing with starch adhesive to stabilize the fragments before removing the backings, washing, and lining the sheets. Stakeholders were consulted throughout the process, especially concerning safe methods for storing and displaying such large objects. Framing or storing them flat is difficult due to their size, while rolling poses other risks - a solution was developed that preserved the original batons but added protective layers using acrylic strips and aluminum barrier foil.



Mhairi Boyle is a Paper Conservator with an MA in Cultural Materials Conservation from the *University of Melbourne* and is interested in adapting traditional Asian conservation techniques for the treatment of works on paper. She joined *Artworks Conservation Ltd* in 2023.



Richard Hawkes ACR has been Director of *Artworks Conservation Ltd* since 2004. He received an MA Conservation of Fine Art (Works on Paper) from the *University of Northumbria* at Newcastle and previously worked at the *Ashmolean Museum, Oxford* and *Museum Conservation Services Ltd*, Cambridge.

Red rotting leather bindings: understanding deterioration



Deaccessioned samples from the *Natural History Museum* in London have shed new light on how leather-bound books deteriorate over time. Using non-destructive attenuated FTIR spectroscopy, researchers found that degraded leathers show much greater variation in their spectral features than those still in good condition. A novel peak height ratio was developed to quantify deterioration- this method doesn't just help identify damage; it also opens up new ways to explore the history of leather, such as pinpointing the types of tannins used and potentially tracing their geographic origins.

The study also broke new ground using scanning electron microscopy (SEM), revealing the infamous red rot is made of short, thin collagen fibres. Interestingly, SEM couldn't identify the animal source of the leather, but it showed that red rot shares many structural similarities with other forms of leather decay, such as hydrolysis, oxidation, and gelatinisation. Both FTIR and SEM analyses revealed that a thick surface layer of dye can conceal even advanced deterioration, yet beneath that, the leather's internal fibres tell a different story—one of decay already well underway.



Maryisia Tarnowska is a heritage scientist. Most recently, they worked at the British Library as a conservation scientist. Prior to that, they worked as a postdoctoral researcher at the Biodiscovery Institute, University of Nottingham on AI assisted drug discovery. A chemist by training, Marysia discovered heritage science during their PhD (University of Nottingham) and won an EPSRC IAA grant to expand their thesis on the synthesis of handcuff rotaxanes and other interlocked supramolecules to include red rot in leather in collaboration with the Natural History Museum, London.

Wren Montgomery, Konstantina Konstantinidou, Innes Clatworthy, Long Jiang

Sense and Wisdom of the King brought to light: Conservation and Scientific analysis of at The British Library



The *British Library*'s stunning 16th-century Shahnameh manuscript from Shiraz, attributed to the scribe Hidāyat Allāh Shirāzī, recently underwent a major conservation project. This richly illustrated copy of Ferdowsi's epic had suffered from structural damage, poor restoration, and pigment deterioration—making handling, digitisation, and display risky. Conservation also revealed serious damage in the lavish painted areas—flaking pigments, oxidation, and paper splitting—all addressed with targeted treatments. Pages were repaired, resewn, and rebound in an Islamic-style structure. In collaboration with conservation scientists, ten paintings were analysed using XRF, FORS, MSI, and digital microscopy.

These tools unveiled a complex palette of pigments and dyes—including tarnished gold and silver, and even Indian Yellow—along with evidence of underdrawings, unfinished designs, and later overpainting. The findings not only deepened our understanding of Safavid artistic practices but also directly informed conservation decisions. This project showcases the power of interdisciplinary collaboration, where science and conservation come together to preserve and illuminate a cultural treasure.

Heather Marshall ACR is a book conservator at *The British Library*. She graduated in 2003 with a Masters in Book Conservation from *Camberwell College of Arts*. She takes particular interest in historical binding methods, and has gained valuable experience working at various Institutions and private practice. She currently works at *The College of Arms*.

Lucia Noor Melita is the Lead Conservation Scientist at *The British Library*, where she manages the analytical and imaging labs, guiding the technical examination of the Collection and supporting the scientific and conservation research programme. She competed her PhD in Materials Science at UCL. Lucia has expertise in the analysis of a wide range of materials, both traditional and modern, and of museum objects. Prior to joining the BL, Lucia worked as a scientist on modern materials at the V&A and held post-doctoral positions at t*he British Museum* and in the Material Studies Laboratory at UCL.

Application of Jin-Shofu Starch nanoparticles for the consolidation of the paint layer of a 19th-Century tempera artwork on paper

A full-scale tempera painting by Edoardo Marchionni was rediscovered in 2017 in a severely deteriorated state. Structural damage to the paper support and widespread detachment of the paint layer rendered the artwork unmovable and unsuitable for immediate conservation intervention. To address the critical flaking issues typical of delicate tempera magra techniques, a dedicated research project was undertaken within a graduate thesis at the *Opificio delle Pietre Dure* Higher Education School (Florence), completed in 2024. The study aimed to develop an innovative consolidation methodology tailored for fragile matte surfaces, with particular attention to identifying the most effective consolidant and the optimal application method.

The experimental phase involved a comparative evaluation between Funori, a traditional consolidant, and Jin-Shofu starch nanoparticles (SNPs), a novel material synthesized by the *Center for Colloid and Surface Science* (CSGI) at the *University of Florence.* Extensive mock-up testing identified a 1% aqueous dispersion of SNPs, applied with a specialized airbrush, as the most effective treatment. This method successfully restored inter-pigment cohesion while preserving the original matte appearance and colors, leading to the artwork's successful conservation treatment. This pioneering use of SNPs offers a scientifically validated, innovative alternative for stabilizing extremely fragile matte surfaces.

Selene Chersicla is a freelance conservator specialized in the preservation of paper, parchment and photographic materials. In 2024, she graduated from the Higher Education School *Opificio delle Pietre Dure* in Florence, completing her studies in the conservation of paper, books, parchment and photographic materials (2018–2024). Since then, Selene has contributed to the conservation of contemporary artworks at Atelier Simona Calza in Paris, collaborated on the PNRR Digital Libraries Project and worked in paper conservation at the *Charta Laboratory*. She also collaborated on the preparation of the exhibition "*From Paper to Stone. The Vase of Flowers Model by Edoardo Marchionni*".



Light, Legacy and Colour: Technical Investigation of J.M.W. Turner watercolours at the National Galleries of Scotland



To mark Turner's 250th anniversary in 2025, and as part of a bequest exchange with the *National Gallery of Ireland*, 38 watercolours by J.M.W. Turner bequethed to the *National Gallery of Scotland* were unframed for the first time since the 1980s. Despite Turner's prominence in UK collections, many of his works on paper have never undergone comprehensive technical study.

Using a combination of advanced diagnostic techniques, researchers gained new insight into his working methods, material choices, and even hidden underdrawings and compositional changes. These non-invasive techniques revealed Turner's use pigments in watercolour and oil, and helped identify organic pigments particularly vulnerable to light. The findings not only confirm the protective value of Henry Vaughan's display restrictions but also shed light on the artworks' exposure history prior to entering the gallery's care. The project is now informing future conservation and display approaches, with plans to incorporate the research into interpretive content for upcoming exhibitions.



Clara de la Peña Mc Tigue has been Lead Paper Conservator at the *National Galleries of Scotland* (NGS) since September 2022, previously holding key roles at the *Royal Collection Trust* and *Royal Museums Greenwich*. She worked as a postgraduate fellow at *The Metropolitan Museum of Art* and *The Morgan Library and Museum*. Recent research projects include the technical study of watercolours by JMW Turner at NGS.

Dr. Joyce Townsend FIIC ACR has been Senior Conservation Scientist at Tate for over three decades. She is author of *How Turner Painted: Materials and Techniques* (Thames and Hudson 2019). She led or participated in numerous technical studies at Tate on 17th-20th century British artists and international artists of the earlier 20th century.

Kirsten Dunne ACR is Senior Projects Conservator at the NGS, where she has worked since 2005. She currently focuses on Time Based Media, Microfading and the application of Technology to Conservation practice. Kirsten holds an MA in Conservation of Fine Art, Works of Art on Paper from *Northumbria University* and an MA in History of Art from *Edinburgh University*.

Stuck in the middle with glue: mounting contemporary chinese paper cuts

Photo © Tate (Kathleen Arundell)



In 2021, *Tate* acquired eight large paper cuts by contemporary queer Chinese artist Xiyadie, who colors xuan paper using bao bun food dyes before cutting intricate compositions inspired by traditional folk art. Three of these works had been folded into sixteenths for international shipping, causing heavy creasing and tearing.

The main challenge in this project was developing an unobtrusive double-sided mounting and framing system that could safely exhibit the works, withstand frequent transportation, and serve as long-term storage. The team innovatively mounted the artworks between UV-filtering acrylic panels. This solution required overcoming issues like the acrylic's flexibility and static build-up, and involved designing bespoke frames that allow the works to be suspended from the ceiling. For smaller cutouts on a different pre-dyed paper, a more traditional single-sided mounting and framing approach was used, hinged to mountboard supports. These contrasting methods demonstrate versatile ways to display paper cuts ranging from intimate to monumental scale.

Emily Williams



Emily Williams obtained her BA in Conservation from *Camberwell College of Arts* before receiving a postgraduate diploma in Art History from the *Courtauld Institute of Art* and a dual MA/MSc in Conservation from UCL. She has been working as a Paper Conservator at *Tate* for the past six years.

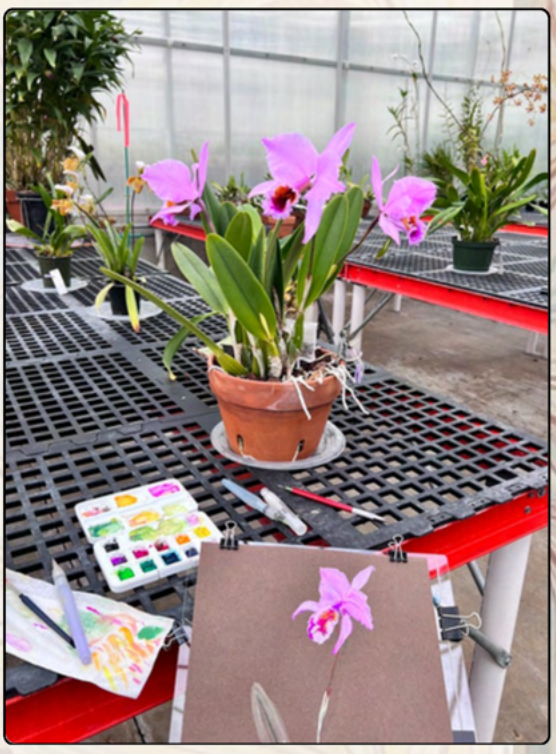
Simon Philpott



Simon Philpott is Senior Conservation Technician at *Tate*. He currently manages a small team of technicians who prepare works on paper and photographs for *Tate Britain*, *Tate Liverpool*, *Tate St Ives*. Simon has a MA in Contemporary Fine Art and before joining *Tate* nine years ago, he had worked primarily in artists' studios fabricating artworks.

Vivian Yip is Paper Conservator for *Tate* Loans-out programme and Exhibitions and Displays for Tate St Ives. Graduated with MA Conservation (UAL, UK) and MArtAdm (UNSW, Australia). She has been working at *Tate* for the past seven years.

Botanical studies – discovering curation through conservation



This project started when the author was asked to save a fragile gouache painting on brittle paper that had suffered from a previous poor treatment. This difficult task sparked a deep curiosity about why this particular paper had aged so differently from others, and about the artist behind it—Adelia Sarah Gates. What followed became a journey of discovery; collaborations with researchers brought new insights into Gates's materials, techniques, and the wider cultural context she inhabited. The project even led the author into unexpected side paths, including exploring traditional botanical knowledge and historic foodways! Meanwhile, the institution's larger efforts to digitize archives and highlight women in science added momentum and scope to the work.

After more than twenty years since first encountering the painting, and nearly a century since the collection was last exhibited, the entire archive is now being prepared for digitization. New content is being created to bring Gates's legacy to life for future generations, blending conservation science with storytelling and scholarship. This project shows how caring for a single difficult artwork can open doors to broader conversations, international partnerships, and deeper appreciation —not only preserving the past but inspiring what comes next.

Nora S. Lockshin is Senior Conservator for the Smithsonian Institution Archives, Smithsonian Libraries and Archives provides treatment, guidance, research, training and advocacy, and consultation for caregivers of collections throughout the Smithsonian's museums, education and research centers. She quite enjoys botanizing and painting again, thanks to Adelia Sarah Gates.



Reconstructing Codex Lippomano: a technical study of the earliest plaquette binding



In 2023, the *Morgan Library & Museum* acquired the Codex Lippomano, the earliest known plaquette binding from the Italian Renaissance. This extraordinary manuscript binding, created around 1480 and attributed to Felice Feliciano, uniquely blends Classical and Islamic decorative motifs within a typical Italian Renaissance binding structure. While the binding shows significant wear—especially on the spine and decorative elements—these losses provide a rare glimpse into its complex inner construction. Through detailed historical research, scientific analysis, and hands-on model-making, the project explored the materials and techniques behind this masterpiece.

Creating a physical model by hand-cutting filigree and replicating the plaquette offered fresh insight into the craftsmanship and historical methods used, revealing the technical possibilities and lost skills of the time. Despite its fragile condition, the binding remains structurally sound. To preserve its integrity, conservators opted for a custom protective enclosure instead of invasive treatments. The Codex Lippomano project not only uncovers the artistry and innovation of early Renaissance bookbinding but also exemplifies how combining research, science, and craft can illuminate and safeguard cultural heritage.

Yungjin Shin is an independent book and paper conservator based in Athens, Ohio, USA. She was recently a Pine Tree Foundation Fellow at the *Morgan Library & Museum*. She worked at the *University of Illinois* at Urbana-Champaign Library for a conservation project on the Gwendolyn Brooks Papers Collection. She holds a MA degree from the Winterthur/University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation, majoring in Library and Archives Conservation Education. Yungjin previously interned and worked at various conservation labs in library institutions, including the *University of Chicago Library*, the *Harvard University*, the *New York Academy of Medicine*, and the *Frick Collection*.



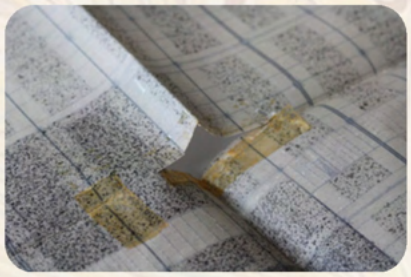
BOOK AND PAPER

CONSERVATION UNCOVERED

A joint effort: the conservation of oversized architectural drawings in the case study of MAIRE Historical Archive

This presentation outlines the coordinated conservation, restoration and digitization project of the *MAIRE Historical Archive*, managed by MAIRE Foundation - ETS. This 10-km collection was declared of historical interest as it contains contains documentation from the former FIAT Building Division, later Fiat Engineering (1939-2004). Methodological challenges in treating 111 large-format architectural drawings will be addressed, as well as the conservation treatment of 21 drawings.





Operational phases included controlled unfolding, adhesive tape removal, and humidification, using both traditional and adapted oriental mending techniques. This project (2023-2025), which included new housing systems and digitization, demonstrates how an interdisciplinary approach effectively addresses challenges of industrial archival heritage conservation. The methodology developed offers a scalable model for large-scale conservation projects, addressing both technical challenges in paper conservation treatments and the organizational complexities inherent in managing extensive collections of oversized archival materials.



Paola Fagnola graduated with a MA degree in Book, Paper and Photography Conservation at ICPAL, Rome, in 2016. Having a bookbinding background, she's now a bookbinding teacher and in charge of Conservation, Education and Communication in the family-owned studio *Bottega Fagnola* in Turin. She's currently working on her PhD at *Brera Academy of Fine Arts*, Milan, with a research in the history of Italian bookbinding in the industrial era.

Sofia Pregagnoli is graduated in Book and Paper Conservation at the *University of Tor Vergata*, Rome, in 2021. She completed internship at the *Central National Library of Florence* and worked at *Bottega Fagnola* in Turin. In 2024, she has carried out an annual project of research and conservation at the CRPR of Palermo. She is currently involved in restoration projects in Rome.

Elena Mazzoni is specialized in the conservation of cultural heritage with a focus on complex projects. She's currently involved with *Insaid,* a cooperative dedicated to preserving archival documents, photographs, and film reels. Previously, she worked as conservator and Head of the Historical Archive and Library at the *Officina della Scrittura* in Turin. Since 2021, she holds a MA degree in Book and Paper Conservation from ICPAL, Rome.

Negotiating Fragility: Investigating the Conservation of Butter Paper Drawings through Research and Practice



Conserving preparatory drawings on unconventional materials poses unique challenges, as shown by the case of three large-scale contemporary Indian artworks on fragile butter paper. This translucent, cellulose-based material is not designed for longevity and is prone to brittleness, curling, and damage, further complicated here by diverse paints, stains, and tapes.

The project required a careful, research-driven approach: conservators collaborated closely with scientists to analyze the paper and media, testing adhesives, lining papers, and humidification methods to ensure structural support without compromising the artworks' delicate appearance. Special techniques—including modified Japanese tissue and a custom low-moisture lining station—were developed to stabilize tears and fragile areas across the oversized sheets. Balancing minimal intervention with long-term preservation, the treatment respected the drawings' conceptual and material integrity, recognizing their value as standalone artworks rather than mere preparatory studies. This case highlights the need for interdisciplinary innovation in contemporary art conservation and the vital role of conservators as adaptable problem-solvers facing evolving artistic materials and techniques.

Rattan Kaur Rainu



Rattan Kaur Rainu is an Assistant Conservator at the INTACH *Conservation Institute*, New Delhi. She holds a MA degree in Art and Heritage Conservation from the *National Museum Institute*. Her work encompasses the preventive and remedial conservation of wall paintings, manuscripts, arms and armour, and composite objects. Her research interests include risk management, material deterioration, and sustainable conservation.

Ritwika Basak



Ritwika Basak holds a MA degree in Conservation, Preservation and Heritage Management from *Ambedkar University* Delhi. Her practice focuses on the hands-on conservation of material heritage, with experience in paper, paintings, and textiles. Alongside practical conservation, she has a strong academic background in intangible cultural heritage, oral histories, and textile research.

Unfolding Histories: Material Characterisation of Chinese Export Wallpapers at the Royal Pavilion, Brighton



This ongoing PhD research explores the material makeup and historical significance of the Chinese export wallpapers at the *Royal Pavilion* in Brighton (1770-1820 ca). Largely undocumented until recently, this remarkable collection offers a unique window into global trade, art, and material culture of the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

Using a suite of non-invasive scientific techniques, the study investigates pigments, colorants, sizing agents, and fibers. These analyses provide crucial insights into the wallpapers' chemical composition, lightfastness, and degradation, guiding more effective conservation strategies. This research also aims to situate these wallpapers within their precise production context. By linking pigment and material data with historical trade networks, the project not only enriches scholarship but also enhances understanding of how economic and cultural forces shaped these decorative arts. The findings have important implications for similar Chinese export wallpapers and decorative objects worldwide as well - collaborations between B&H Museums and *The National Archives* underscore the value of combining scientific analysis with conservation expertise.

Amy Junker Heslip ARC is a book and paper conservator. She began a CHASE-funded collaborative PhD with B&H Museums and the University of Sussex, focusing on Chinese export wallpapers from the *Royal Pavilion*, Brighton. Prior, she worked at major institutions in London including the *British Library*, *British Museum*, *Courtauld*, *Tate*, and *Wellcome Collection*. She regularly teaches at *West Dean College* and the *Universities of Brighton* and *Lincoln*.

Marc Vermeulen is Head of Heritage Science and Conservation Research at TNA (UK). He holds a PhD in Chemistry from the *University of Antwerp* (2017). Prior to joining TNA, he was a Mellon Senior Fellow at *The Met.* As a Research Associate at NU-ACCESS (2019–2022), Marc led projects on colonial-era painting materials, Caribbean art, and arsenic-based pigments in bookbinding. At TNA, his current research explores how materiality can inform historical context using scientific evidence.



The Role of Textiles in Uncovering Hidden Histories in Armenian Manuscripts

In the course of an initial digital survey investigating textile use in Armenian manuscripts and printed books, a pattern began to emerge: textiles used as binding elements offered a wealth of information previously overlooked in both cataloguing and conservation. These materials, often dismissed as incidental or purely functional, revealed their significance through methodical cross-referencing and classification.
As part of a broader project exploring the role of textiles in Armenian codicology, the research began by evaluating the usefulness of online images for identifying and interpreting textile features. Over 700 of digitized manuscripts were examined - while many items were photographed primarily for their textual content, a notable number included glimpses of structural textiles. These fragments were further analyzed by classifying textile materials and mapping their functional uses. Through this framework, weave types, fiber characteristics, and patterns were re-evaluated and began to correlate with known regional trends and historical conservation strategies. These observations shifted the perceived value of such textiles; once considered negligible, they now serve as material evidence. This shift in interpretation has immediate implications for conservation decision-making. Rather than overlooking textiles in manuscripts, conservators are now encouraged to document and preserve them as integral components of a books historical narrative. These materials are no longer merely structural supports but are increasingly recognized for their codicological and cultural significance.

Aldona Jedrusik is a conservator and researcher specializing in the preservation of textile heritage. She has led interdisciplinary research projects integrating biotechnology, mechanical engineering, artificial intelligence, and 3D design into textile conservation. Her work includes exploring the use of microorganisms for cleaning historic textiles, investigating the mechanical properties of low-density Japanese tissue papers, and assessing the potential of digital technologies in conservation. She initiated development and implementation of new textile conservation strategies at the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum. Currently, she is affiliated with the University for Continuing Education Krems (Austria), where she researches the role of textiles in Armenian manuscripts and printed books

Icon
BOOK AND PAPER

CONSERVATION UNCOVERED

LIGHTNING TALKS

We want to give space to as many presenters as possible, even when there's not enough time for a proper lecture! These 10-minutes presentations will give you a short overview on recent projects and researches.

Following abstracts and bios have been summarized.

Click here for the full-length version.

Bright lines: the identification of huangbo applied beneath lines of text in Tibetan Buddhist manuscripts

Huangbo is a yellow dye derived from the bark of the Amur cork tree, used in Chinese papermaking since at least the 7th century for its visual appeal, religious symbolism, and insect-repelling properties. It has been identified in Tibetan manuscripts dating back to the 9th and 10th centuries. Traditionally, entire sheets were uniformly dyed with huangbo. However, our research has uncovered unusual examples in which the dye is applied only beneath the lines of text. This talk presents visual and analytical evidence from manuscripts held in a private collection and at *The British Library*.





Lora Angelova is an independent heritage science researcher based in Berlin, Germany. She was previously Head of Conservation Research at *The National Archives,* UK, and worked at *Tate*, and at the Material Studies Laboratory in *University College London*. She holds a PhD in chemistry from *Georgetown University* and the *National Gallery of Art*, Washington, DC.



Lucia Melita, Melodie Doumy.

From Plate to Page to Stage: the analysis and conservation behind the exhibition "Audubon's Birds of America"

The 2022 Birds of America exhibition at National Museums Scotland featured 47 unbound, hand-coloured plates by John James Audubon. Preparing the show offered conservators a rare chance to study the materials and techniques behind these iconic prints. Working with Northumbria University and NMS scientists, the team used non-invasive techniques to identify pigments and guide conservation treatments. Despite pandemic constraints, the project culminated in successful mounting, framing, and a subsequent tour to three venues in the UK and USA—demonstrating the vital role of conservation in both exhibition and long-term care.





Lisa Cumming ACR MA (Conservation of Fine Art- Northumbria University 1996) has worked at *National Museums Scotland* as Paper Conservator, and worked at *The National Galleries of Scotland* both as Paper Conservator and latterly as a freelancer. Her work at NMS includes complex conservation treatments on the widely diverse paper collection, and on material such as historical and contemporary fine art, global arts, historic photographic processes, documents, papyrus, wallpaper and mixed media.

Collective insight: research, collaboration and conservation in the Korean Scroll project

This case study highlights the successful conservation of six early 20th-century Korean scroll paintings at the *National Museums Scotland*. Funded by the *National Museum of Korea*, the project aimed to enhance the visibility of Korean cultural heritage in UK collections, with the restored scrolls set to go on display at the NMS. Faced with unfamiliar materials and formats, the team overcame challenges through close collaboration with a Korean heritage specialist and textile conservators. The team chose not to replace the fragile scroll mounts, instead they developed innovative techniques to stabilise and preserve the originals for exhibition. This presentation offers a behind-the-scenes look at the thoughtful decision-making and teamwork that led to the project's success—proving that even under tight deadlines, cross-cultural collaboration can bring historic artworks back to life.





Gemma Mathieson completed a postgraduate MA in the Conservation of Works of Art on Paper at Northumbria University (2014-16) followed by a 3-year traineeship in conservation binding (2017-20). Gemma has since worked in private practice, serving national organisations, as well as a number of institutions across Scotland. Gemma currently splits her time between National Museums Scotland and the National Library of Scotland.

BOOK AND PAPER

CONSERVATION UNCOVERED

Artificial intelligence in book and paper conservation? Evaluating ChatGPT as a research tool in professional practice



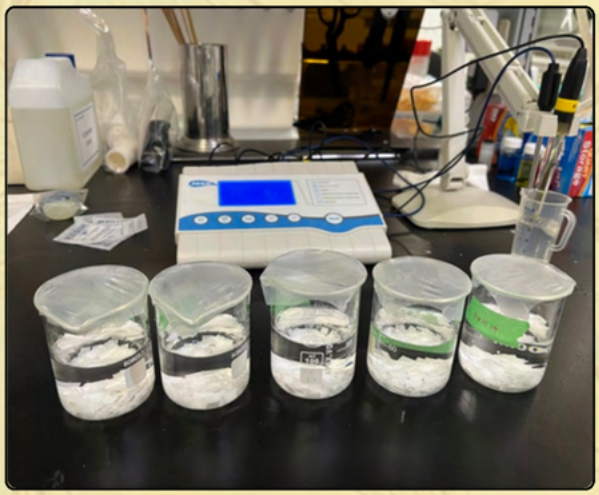
While AI tools like ChatGPT are already transforming research and writing, their potential in book and paper conservation remains largely untapped. This lightning talk investigates whether AI can assist with the investigative aspects of conservation, particularly for students and emerging professionals navigating complex treatment decisions.

Through hands-on examples—ranging from adhesive removal techniques to photographic documentation and solvent gel formulation—the talk explores how the clarity and precision of user queries shape the usefulness of AI-generated advice. A key challenge is the scarcity of high-quality, professional conservation content online—raising ethical concerns about misinformation. This talk invites critical reflection on how AI might be responsibly integrated into conservation workflows.

Anika Freitag works as a book and paper conservator at the *Municipal Archives of Hanover.* She trained as a bookbinder at the *University and State Library* in Münster and hold a BA degree in Conservation and Restoration from the H*AWK University of Applied Sciences and Arts* in Hildesheim, specializing in books, paper, and graphic. Previously, she worked at the R*oemer- and Pelizaeus-Museum* in Hildesheim, focusing on collection relocation and preventive conservation.



The influence of dyeing assistants on paper deterioration: a case study using Glauber's salt



Synthetic dyes are sometimes used to tone paper in both artistic and conservation contexts—but what about the long-term effects? This study explores the impact of Glauber's salt (sodium sulfate), a common dyeing additive, on the aging of paper. Four sets of handmade paper samples—dyed with and without Glauber's salt, treated with salt alone, and untreated controls—underwent accelerated aging

Researchers tracked changes in colour, folding strength, and surface pH. The findings? Paper exposed to Glauber's salt showed noticeable yellowing over time, while other properties remained largely unchanged. These results suggest that certain dyeing additives may compromise the visual integrity of paper without immediately affecting its physical structure. This research highlights the importance of critically evaluating the materials used in dyeing processes—especially when the goal is long-term preservation.



Jiayu Hu holds a MA in Paper Conservation and East Asian paintings. She is currently interning at *Graham Bignell Paper Conservation Studio* in London. Previously, she worked at the *National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts*, focusing on paper-based artworks while also collaborating on mixed-media objects. Jiayu gained experience with traditional Chinese formats during her internship at the *National Palace Museum* in Taipei and presented her research on Chinese brocade boxes at the 2023 *American Institute for Conservation* (AIC) annual meeting.

BOOK AND PAPER

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Canvas Bindings in UK Collections: Identifying structures and patterns of degradation

Canvas bindings, found from the mid- to late 18th and early 19th centuries, are an interesting but currently under-researched subsection of textile bindings. They represent an early use of cloth as a non-luxury binding material prior to the introduction of coated bookcloth in the 1820s. As part of a wider MA research project aimed at creating a standard conservation protocol, an evaluative survey of canvas bindings across a number of UK collections has been carried out, tracking trends in damage related to materiality, structure, and use. The talk would briefly present the findings from this survey, outlining what a canvas binding is and what conservation problems they present within collection contexts.



Beckett Thornber is a book and paper conservator currently studying at *West Dean College* for an MA in Conservation Studies. He has a previous MA in History of Art from the *University of York*, and originally trained as an illustrator at *Falmouth University*, where he received his BA. Beckett most recently completed a six-week work placement at *Cambridge University Library* with the Conservation Department, where, among other things, he was able to assist with the install of the Curious Cures exhibition and make a model medieval folding manuscript. He is particularly interested in textiles in library and archive settings.



BOOK AND PAPER

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POSTERS

We invite you to explore the Poster Section — a curated showcase of innovative ideas, emerging research, and visual storytelling. Each poster represents the dedication, creativity, and critical thinking of its authors, offering fresh perspectives and inspiring dialogues across disciplines!

Following abstracts and bios have been summarized.

Click here for the full-length version.

A technical study of some watercolours by Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Elizabeth Eleanor Siddal in context



In preparation for Tate Britain's 2024 exhibition *The Rossettis*, technical research was carried out on works by Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Elizabeth Eleanor Siddal. This included the examination of ten watercolours, microfading tests on 1850s–60s works, and imaging and materials analysis of eight Rossetti oil paintings. Handheld XRF helped identify pigments and painting techniques, enabling comparisons between Rossetti, Siddal—who shared his studio and materials—and other artists like Edward Burne-Jones.

Both Rossetti and Siddal used heavily-applied watercolours on complex supports, with Rossetti's works showing recurring efflorescence, possibly due to the use of tube watercolours. This efflorescence is being analysed using advanced mass spectrometry (ASAP-HRMS) at RCE Amsterdam. The study also compares Rossetti's pigment choices in watercolour and oil, examining colour changes and his use of fugitive materials despite warnings from John Ruskin. Early findings suggest Rossetti used a consistent pigment palette across both media.

Dr. Joyce Townsend FIIC ACR is Senior Conservation Scientist at Tate. Her principal research interests are the identification and deterioration of artists' materials. Working with Tate conservators, she has carried out technical studies in the oil paintings and watercolours for the recent Tate exhibition *The Rossettis*.

Sophie Sarkodie ACR is the lead paper conservator for Tate Britain. She's been working on exhibitions and displays at Tate since 2012. She studied paper conservation at *Camberwell College of Art* and has worked at many prestigious institutions all over the world, while gaining an MA in *Arts Management* and ICON accreditation.

Wim Genuit is a guest researcher at the *Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands* (RCE). His main interest is in the development and application of analytical methods involving mass spectrometry. Before his retirement, Wim has worked for almost 35 years as a mass spectrometrist in the analytical department of the *Shell Laboratory* in Amsterdam, collaborating with (predecessors of) the RCE and with museums in the Netherlands and abroad.

Art Ness Proãno Gaibor is a full-time researcher at the *Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands* (RCE), specialising in organics analysis and the development of improved analytical methods for investigating works of art.

Exploring Sustainable Viscosity Agents for Traditional Japanese Papermaking in Conservation

This study explores sustainable alternatives to traditional neri (viscosity agents) used in Japanese washi papermaking, particularly focusing on safer options for cultural heritage conservation. *Tororo-aoi* (Abelmoschus manihot), the traditional plant-based neri used in the nagashizuki technique, is effective but prone to rapid decay in summer, often requiring chemical preservatives like formalin or cresol, which raise health and environmental concerns. Four neri types were tested: preservative-free *tororo-aoi*, cactus mucilage, *konjac* paste, and a synthetic acrylic-based agent. Evaluations included long-term paper stability (via artificial ageing tests measuring strength, pH, discoloration, and acidity) and effectiveness in fiber dispersion during sheet formation. Konjac yielded the strongest paper but showed significant discoloration, indicating acidic degradation. Acrylic-based samples were weakest but most stable in color. Tororo-aoi offered the best balance between mechanical performance and fiber dispersion, while cactus showed good durability but uneven fiber distribution, likely due to residual organic matter. Future work will focus on standardizing viscosity agent concentrations to improve reproducibility and support the development of safe, sustainable alternatives to traditional neri in washi production.



Dr. Kang Lee is a junior associate professor in conservation science at *Tokyo Gakugei University*. He received his MA and PhD from *Tokyo University of the Arts*, where he specialized in paper conservation science, and a postdoctoral research at the *University of Tsukuba*. Dr. Lee's research includes scientific analyses to evaluate and improve the durability of conservation papers made from various types of washi currently used in Japan and abroad. He is also exploring the development of visual diagnostic methods to assess the physical deterioration of paper-based cultural assets.

Hiroko Tanino is a traditional washi papermaker and the founder of *Tanino Handmade Washi Studio.* She began her career in papermaking in her 30s and is now a certified artisan of Hosokawa-shi, a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage since 2014. Recognized as a *Saitama Traditional Craftsman* and an *Excellent Skilled Worker of Saitama*, she produces high-quality handmade washi for calligraphy, interiors, and art. In addition to managing her studio, she conducts workshops and lectures at schools, museums, and international venues, sharing her expertise in traditional papermaking techniques.

Text Between the Threads: balancing access to information and preservation



This case study focuses on Manuscript 77-78 from the *Royal Library of Belgium*, which contains 23 parchment fragments of a Middle Dutch text by Jacob van Maerlant, reused as binder's waste in the centrefolds of the gatherings. The manuscript, rebound in the 20th century, was too tightly bound to allow full access to the fragments - only five had been partially deciphered in 2003. The binding was identified as modern, but underlying structural elements, discovered during treatment, were likely original 15th-century features—prompting a strategy to retain the sewing structure while removing the cover and reducing spine adhesive to expose more of the fragments.

This intervention confirmed the fragments' origin and identified them as part of a rare van Maerlant text, previously known from seventeen copies; the fragments now form the eighteenth witness. Further treatment involved unbinding the manuscript to access obscured fragments while reconstructing and preserving the original sewing structure. The structure was re-created, and Sofie Moors is currently reconstructing the original bifolio, which will be housed alongside the manuscript and spine structure in a custom-made box. This project demonstrates how conservation, guided by material evidence and scholarly collaboration, can recover lost literary content while navigating ethical questions about intervention, preservation, and access.

July Van Malderen is a book and paper conservator at the *Royal Library of Belgium* (KBR). She holds a master's degree in Eastern Languages and Cultures from the *University of Ghent* and a degree in Conservation and Restoration from *SyntraWest*. She is currently furthering her expertise in Conservation and Restoration at the *University of Antwerp*. She has worked on the *Mmmonk* (Medieval Monastic Manuscripts Open Network Knowledge) project for the *Public Library of Bruges* and for #Tomorrow's Research and Google Books at the *University of Louvain*.

Sofie Moors

Reductive and oxidative bleaching of aged lignocellulosic papers: a comparative study



Aged wood pulp papers pose significant conservation challenges due to their acidity, yellowing, and fragility. Bleaching is often used to enhance their visual legibility, yet most research and protocols have focused on cellulosic papers, not lignin-rich wood pulp varieties. This study evaluates the effects of several commonly used bleaching agents on degraded lignocellulosic papers. Both reductive and oxidative treatments were tested on a lab-made paper and two naturally aged early 20th-century newsprint samples.

Papers were first characterized using histology and µFTIR. The treatments were assessed for bleaching efficacy, deacidification and impact on mechanical strength. Results showed that reductive agents generally outperformed oxidative ones, effectively reducing yellowing and improving brightness, and all protocols achieved some deacidification, but oxidative treatments caused mechanical degradation in one of the newsprints, despite improving folding endurance in others. Notably, sodium borohydride enhanced folding endurance across all samples, suggesting its promise as a bleaching agent that balances aesthetic improvement with mechanical stabilization for lignin-rich papers. This comparative study provides updated insights into bleaching protocols and offers practical guidance for conservators treating degraded wood pulp papers.



Camille Jallu is a junior conservator-restorer specializing in graphic arts. She graduated from the *École nationale supérieure des Arts Visuels de La Cambre* (Brussels). In 2025, as part of her master's degree, she conducted research on the deacidification and mechanical strengthening of aged lignocellulosic papers using aminoalkylalkoxysilanes (AAAS), in collaboration with the *Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage* (KIK-IRPA – Brussels) and the *Conservation Research Center* (CRC – Paris).

Nathan Ferrandin-Schoffel, Anne-Laurence Dupont, Estelle Van Geyts, Francisco Mederos-Henry

Mounting large-scale works on paper: Integrating Eastern painting mounting with modern aluminum honeycomb boards for frameless display





This presentation outlines two large-scale mounting projects on paper completed by the SJAC team for artist Tong Yang-Tze's exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Great Hall in New York in 2025. By combining traditional East Asian mounting techniques with modern materials, the artworks were applied to aluminum honeycomb panels. Custom-designed prefabricated connectors were developed to seamlessly join the panels, resulting in a frameless, lightweight, and structurally stable configuration.

This innovative approach greatly simplifies the on-site installation and suspension of large-scale works, while also reducing the risks associated with international transport—offering a practical, reversible alternative to traditional wooden mounting systems. Through the experience and principles established in this project, the use of traditional adhesives to bond paper with contemporary materials demonstrates strong potential for broader applications. This method supports the evolving exhibition and conservation needs of contemporary Eastern works on paper on an increasingly scale.



Ting-Fu Fan [范定甫] worked as a Chinese painting conservator at the *National Palace Museum* in Taipei and the *Hirayama Studio* at the *British Museum* in London. He later established *San-Jian Art & Conservation*. Based in Taipei, his work focuses on integrating traditional Chinese painting conservation with modern materials and mounting methods, supported by rigorous cross-cultural and material research.

Yi-Chiung Lin [林怡瓊] is a manager at *San-Jian Art & Conservation*. She is mainly responsible for studio operations and the coordination of international projects to ensure that the projects proceed smoothly.

Analysis and treatment of three Saint-Mémin chalk portraits





This case study focuses on three 1808 profile portraits by Charles Balthazar Julien Fevret de Saint-Mémin, depicting members of the Greenhow family and now held by the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts. Known for their distinctive pink-toned grounds and precise graphite profiles, the works were created using a physiognotrace during the artist's time in Richmond, Virginia. Although produced simultaneously with identical materials, each portrait showed unique damage and treatment histories. emarkably, previous treatment records accompanied the works, providing valuable insights into past interventions. These informed a recent conservation project, which employed multimodal imaging and scanning XRF to map damages, distinguish earlier restoration campaigns, and guide tailored treatment approaches. The study highlights the complexities of conserving fragile historical drawings and the importance of documentation in informing ethical and effective treatment.

Jenni Krchak holds an M.A./M.S. in Conservation of Art and Cultural Heritage and Conservation Science and Imaging from *SUNY Buffalo State University* with a specialization in works on paper. Previous conservation experience includes hurricane recovery work at *Vizcaya Museum and Gardens* in Miami, wall painting conservation at a medieval church in England, and book and paper conservation at the *Georgia Archives* and the *American Philosophical Society* in Philadelphia. She is the current Assistant Paper Conservator and NEH Fellow at the *Virginia Museum of Fine Arts* in Richmond and is also serving as the Programs Chair for the *Virginia Conservation Association.*

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LAMBETH PALACE LIBRARY

Visit Lambeth Palace Library to see how the Library team engage with readers, embrace sustainability through the new building and improve collection preservation to support the organisation's mission and values. The tour of the library building opened to the public late 2021, will include public areas with views over the Thames, the Reading Room and the Collection Care studio with auxiliary spaces for preservation, quarantine, etc.



BRITISH MUSEUM

WESTERN ART ON PAPER STUDIO



Visit the British Museum's Western Art on Paper studio in the World Conservation and Exhibition Centre and find out about current work that the paper conservators and conservation mounters are undertaking. You will have the opportunity to see a range of conservation and mounting for forthcoming display, as well as a glimpse into the breadth of work they deal with - from Ancient Egyptian papyrus to 21st century prints and drawings.

BOOK AND PAPER

CONSERVATION UNCOVERED

NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

WORKS ON PAPER, PHOTOGRAPHS, AND MINIATURES CONSERVATION STUDIO.

Visit the new National Portrait Gallery works on paper, photographs, and miniatures conservation studio. This new space has been created in parallel with the re-opening of the gallery in Summer 2023 and has been fully operational since September 2023. It supports the ambitious display program of the Gallery. The studio is also equipped with analytical equipment to explore the materiality of the collection. We'll discuss current projects and the storage of photographic collection in cold environment.



THE LONDON ARCHIVES



Join us at The London Archives for a behind the scenes tour of our conservation and box making studios. This will be an opportunity to view TLA's unique collections and see some of the current projects being worked on across the team.

BOOK AND PAPER

CONSERVATION UNCOVERED

THE BRITISH LIBRARY
CONSERVATION STUDIO

Discover the hidden world of conservation and explore the expert techniques used to preserve our national collections on an exclusive 'behind-the-scenes' tour of the Conservation Studios at The British Library. Gain a rare insight into the meticulous work of our conservators as they protect and extend the life of treasured manuscripts, books, maps, and more — safeguarding them for future generations.



THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES
CONSERVATION DEPARTMENT



The National Archives collection is one of the largest in the world, containing over 11 million historical government and public records. From Domesday Book to modern government papers and digital files, including paper and parchment, digital records and websites, photographs, posters, maps, drawings and paintings. Join us in a guided tour to the busy Conservation Department and find out about recent projects.

LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES, KEW ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS

CONSERVATION DEPARTMENT

Join us for an introduction to the Conservation Department at the Library and Archives, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. Set within the historic Herbarium building, the conservation laboratory recently underwent a much needed renovation and is continuing to evolve into a modern and professional workspace.

The Library and Archives team is responsible for the botanical garden's vast paper-based collections. The collection includes approximately 7.5 million items, ranging from the 14th century to the present day, including printed books, manuscripts, botanical illustrations, archives, exsiccate, and artefacts. This behind-the-scenes tour offers a rare opportunity to explore highlights from the collection, and to learn about past and ongoing conservation projects that help preserve these invaluable materials for future generations.



BOOK AND PAPER

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WORKSHOPS

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BOOK AND PAPER

CONSERVATION UNCOVERED

UNDERSTANDING THE STRUCTURE AND BINDING OF MANUSCRIPTS FROM THE ISLAMIC WORLD

THE BRITISH LIBRARY

Dr. Karin Scheper

In this one-day workshop, hosted at the British Library, Dr. **Karin Scheper** of the *University of Leiden* will lead attendees on a survey of manuscript making in the Islamic world, with a focus on the binding structure of codex volumes, discussing the predominant structure as well as region-specific characteristics and varieties. Dr. Scheper will detail the strengths and functionality of this bookbinding method, in order to understand the composite structure of Islamic bindings and the use of materials in these structures, helping participants to recognise the special needs of these objects when they are damaged and need conservation care.

Click here for the event page on our website



BOOK AND PAPER

CONSERVATION UNCOVERED

RE-MOISTENABLE TISSUE FOR CONSERVATION AT SCALE

THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

The National Archives' (TNA) Conservation for Imaging team works across multiple large-scale imaging projects that require conservation methods that are scalable, efficient, and appropriate. In this workshop, participants will learn about our approaches to repair using re-moistenable tissue, our methodologies, and take part in a practical workshop where they will have the chance to prepare and test their own re-moistenable tissue. By the end of the workshop participants will come away with an understanding of the benefits remoistenable tissue can provide in varied contexts, and confidence in how to make their own. This introductory workshop is for anyone who wants to familiarise themselves with or refresh their knowledge on this topic. We welcome emerging conservators, or private practitioners interested in streamlining their own processes.

Click here for the event page on our website



BOOK AND PAPER

CONSERVATION UNCOVERED

NAVIGATING THE EARLY CAREER LANDSCAPE IN CONSERVATION AND HERITAGE SCIENCE

THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

This workshop is designed to support early career professionals working in conservation and heritage science as they navigate the next steps in their professional development. Through a series of themed round robin discussions, participants will gain practical insight into building and refining portfolios, understanding the grant-writing process, and exploring strategies for advancing within the field. A diverse team of experienced professionals from across institutions will share their expertise, offering guidance and reflections drawn from a range of career paths. The workshop will conclude with a panel discussion centred on workplace culture, providing space to reflect on how to sustain and shape a meaningful and supportive professional life in conservation, and the heritage sector. This is a hybrid event, so if you are unable to attend in person please choose the online ticket option, and a Zoom link will be sent to you.

Click here for the event page on our website



Icon
BOOK AND PAPER

CONSERVATION UNCOVERED

BOOK AND PAPER GROUP WIKI-THON

THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Abigail Bainbridge

Join Abigail Bainbridge, editor of Conservation of Books, in editing the world's most-used reference source: Wikipedia. A Wikipedia edit-a-thon or Wiki-thon is a collaborative event where people come together to improve and expand the online encyclopedia. For conservation professionals, it's a chance to share your knowledge, improve public understanding of our field, and gain new digital skills in this afternoon workshop, which will be Icon's first Wikipedia edit-a-thon. Take advantage of The National Archives' conservation library and collaboration with peers to update, correct, add to, and reference information about conservation on Wikipedia. We will be supported by volunteers from Wikimedia to make a difference in the public perception of conservation and cultural heritage.

Click here for the event page on our website

