

# SO YOU WANT TO BE A CONSERVATOR?

## 10 Must-have traits for the modern conservator

1

### GENUINE INTEREST

"The best conservators I have worked with share a keen interest in how things are made and what they are made from. Such an interest can take you on amazing journeys around the world and into history."

2

### CRAFTSMANSHIP

"The practical is no less important than the academic...Achieving competence with hand skills is only the beginning; Craftsmanship is not a dirty word."

3

### AWARENESS

"Practise not just looking closely at an object but also being totally aware of everything surrounding the object... Conservation is about knowing the relationships between things, people and their contexts."

4

### COMMUNICATION

"A good deal of my time is spent working with other people, helping them understand why conservators work in the way they do...There are times I feel I should be working as a UN diplomat rather than a conservator!"

6

### TENACITY

"You need to have the determination to make the most of your course and the contacts provided in the conservation community. Take the initiative and immerse yourself into your chosen specialism."

5

### ADAPTABILITY

"You must have the ability to develop and balance both creative and critical thinking and doing to make informed decisions which overcome a range of conservation and preservation issues."

7

### PATIENCE

"Patience is one of the most important skills required... some tasks will require such dexterity and perseverance that they can seem impossible to complete."

8

### BUSINESS NOUS

"You must have the ability to be pragmatic: budgets are never big enough and we can never do all that is needed, so we have to negotiate and find a way to achieve what we can."

9

### ANALYTICAL MIND

Conservators must be practical as well as creative to work out solutions in an ever changing museum environment where priorities and resources change frequently."

10

### WILLINGNESS TO DOCUMENT

"You must develop a deep understanding of the critical importance of documenting what we do. So much work in the past was not recorded and it is an endless complication."

