

Program Chair's Foreword

This conference proceedings volume contains the 18 papers presented in the Objects Specialty Group sessions at the 2014 annual meeting of the American Institute for Conservation. This diverse group of papers represents some of the best and most innovative work in our discipline today. As a practicing conservator, I find conference volumes like this one particularly useful because they report on the daily, real-life work of my colleagues.

The theme of the 2014 meeting was preventive conservation, and many of the papers explicitly address this theme. Other authors discuss preventive conservation as one component of a larger project. Still others focus not on the end goal—the ideal desired solution to the problem—but on understanding the problem itself. What truly unites all the papers is this focus on understanding the underlying challenge. The authors look deeply and thoroughly at the problems they face, consider them carefully, and from this understanding create unique and successful solutions. The challenge of developing understanding is not only an issue in treatment decisions; true understanding is also necessary for conservators to understand and empathize with the public they serve.

The diversity and complexity of this collection of papers reflects the increasingly collaborative nature of our discipline. Twelve of the papers were presented in joint sessions. One session was held jointly with the Research and Technical Studies (RATS) group and the other with the Architecture Specialty Group (ASG). At the 2015 meeting, the Objects Specialty Group (OSG) will hold joint sessions and events with the Electronic Media Group. The multidisciplinary nature of conservation demands shared venues for considering problems and opportunities, and shared vehicles for reporting the results of collaborative efforts. The specialty group silos are beginning to break down as a natural evolution of the discipline, and I hope this trend continues. To continue to work productively, we must work together.

Creation of the joint sessions at the 2014 meeting was a team effort. Ainslie Harrison (RATS) and Jennifer Correia (ASG) were my co-chairs for the joint sessions with their specialty groups, and they participated as managing and content editors for the resulting print papers. It was a pleasure to work with them, and I am grateful to have had the opportunity.

The editing of this volume was also a team effort. 2014 marked the first year that papers in the OSG postprints underwent formal peer review. The session chairs (Jennifer Correia, Ainslie Harrison, and I) identified two reviewers for each paper. The reviewers were conservators, scientists, and scholars who had specialist knowledge appropriate to each paper. This dedicated group of volunteers reviewed content: they identified gaps, suggested additions, and generally made recommendations to improve both the content and the clarity and usefulness of its delivery. Peer review is enormously important in any discipline, but it is especially needed in conservation. There are few peer-reviewed journals in our small field, and conference proceedings like this one often present the most topically relevant current work. Peer review makes these publications immeasurably stronger and more useful. I hope that future OSG postprint editors will take advantage of the expertise in our field and continue to provide peer-reviewed papers.

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Last but not least, OSG postprint coordinators Kari Dodson and Emily Hamilton checked citations, references, and image captions, and provided initial editing for style and copy. In many cases, this important work was also significant in terms of time and effort. They also, along with Bonnie Naugle, AIC Communications Director, guided me through the production process.

I speak on behalf of the OSG in thanking all the authors, reviewers, and editorial and publication teams for their hard work on this volume. I hope you will enjoy reading it as much as I enjoyed being managing editor for it. It was truly a pleasure.

Suzanne Davis, Chair of the Objects Specialty Group