



Newsletter

Winter 2023 Volume 6, Number 2



SOUTHEAST REGIONAL
CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION

paper | *books* | *paintings* | *objects* | *textiles*

From the Desk of the President

By Michelle Savant

Dear Friends,

I am replacing SERCA with beekeeping! Yes, my final few months as SERCA President is upon us. I will be sad to say goodbye to the fantastic group of women I work with on the board. I thought about reflecting on my last 6 years, but I'm not much for introspection. I will say that a president is only as good as the people they have surrounded themselves with and my board is filled with

overachievers. Katie B. has done an amazing job updating all things communication, Brittany answers my odd and random accounting questions at any time I text her, and Eliza and Katie E. have outdone themselves on the upcoming annual meeting. They have worked hard during these last few years so if an agenda item hasn't been completed I shan't be sad. Besides, someone new will take over and SERCA will continue to do great things. That much I am sure of. If you're that someone who wants to help steer the boat please let us know! Eliza is staying on, if y'all reelect her, as vice president. I know she's looking forward to helping ease a new president into the position.



With that - let us look forward to ***All that Glitters is Gold*** in March 2024! I believe all of us deal with gold in some form or fashion so this should be interesting for all of us. I'm very excited for our speakers, Micki and Mitch Cavanah. Gilding is in the family! It also turns out that the Society of Gilders is fascinated by SERCA and conservators, so I'm hoping this leads to a new friendship amongst our respective memberships. As SERCA has never been to Mississippi I urge everyone to join us. You have a great excuse to go to a new city and see wonderful sites, one of which will be Katie's new(ish) work space! After the 2024 annual meeting, who knows what great things SERCA will do - I know I'll be eating honey.

Happy Holidays and the best for the new year 2024,
Michelle

A Letter From The Communications Coordinator




by Kathryn Boodle

The SERCA 2024 Annual Meeting will be held in Jackson, MS at the Mississippi Department of Archives and History on March 8th to 10th, 2024. This year's topic will be on Gilding and Metalwork! The title of this year's Annual Meeting is *All that Glitters*. Full annual meeting details and registration forms will be posted on the [SERCA Website](#) later this month.

Our guest presenters will be Micki and Mitchell Cavanah, antique frame, signage, and sculpture gilders, of [Reed's Gold Leaf](#) located in Nashville, TN. They are members of the Society of Gilders and have been gilding for more than 30 years. Among their proudest achievements are gilding the Athena statue in Nashville's Parthenon, as well as restoring frames for Monet, Renoir, Van Gogh, and several other master works exhibited in the Frist Center's "Splendid Palette" in 2006. Other clients include Kentucky's Ashland and Whitehall Estates and Filson Club, the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, architectural gilding services at The Schermerhorn Symphony Center and other historic sites all over the southeast. In recent years, Reed's Gold Leaf Studios has expanded their services to include gilded glass signage.

However, they aren't the ONLY people we want to hear from! Do you have a gilding project you've worked on that you'd like to share and discuss the treatment of? Perhaps an illuminated manuscript, decorative volume or work of fine art? Or do you have a topic adjacent piece you've treated like a painting on glass or metal? A textile with gold thread appliques? Tin or daguerreotype



photographs? If so, please consider submitting a presentation for the meeting so that you can share your work with fellow Southeastern conservators! We are also accepting talks on general conservation treatment if you've treated something interesting in the past year or just have a tip or trick to share!

The Call for Presentations is now open and brief abstracts can be submitted using the following link:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfpj_AT01b42eBUrUViMG2m3RiS20OgWomP_Lq9BI_iNvYpg/viewform

If you have a tip or trick you'd like to share, please submit it using this form as well. The submission form will remain open until December 31st, 2023. Successful applicants will be notified by January 15th, 2024 to discuss further details.

Questions about submission can be directed to communications@sercaconservation.org.




Welcome to Jackson - the 'City with Soul'

by Kathryn Etre

Although small, Jackson offers a wealth of hidden treasures. From its profound role in the civil rights movement to its thriving arts scene, educational institutions, and vibrant culinary offerings, Mississippi – Jackson in particular – is a must see gem.

Once called the most segregated state, Mississippi became a center place for civil rights movement. Mississippi's numerous cultural sites reflects on the dark past of the state while celebrating the struggles towards equality. Mississippi is home to civil rights icons James Meredith, Medgar Evers, Fannie Lou-Hammer, and Ida B Wells as well as Tougaloo College, which was known as "The Cradle of the Civil Rights Movement in Mississippi". The Mississippi Civil Rights Museum, which will be one of the hosts for our annual meeting, is the first state civil rights museum in the country. The museum "serves as a poignant reminder of the struggles and triumphs that shaped the nation, offering a comprehensive exploration of the fight for equality (Jackie, JAMS Travel Tips)".

Mississippi is also considered the Birthplace of America's Music. Blues began in Mississippi. Robert Johnson who sold his soul to the devil, and of course, Elvis were from Mississippi. "Music pulses through the veins of Jackson, with a rich history deeply intertwined with blues, gospel, and other genres (Jackie, JAM Travel Tips)." Come and hear live music at local haunts Hal and Mal's, Iron Horse Grill, Martin's, and Fenian's Pub. Travel the Blues Trail and return for the internationally known Juke Joint Festival in March.





This creative spirit pulses through the rest of the art genres as well. Mississippi is home to John Grisham, William Faulkner, Tennessee Williams, Jackson's own Eudora Welty, Richard Wright, and Shelby Foote. Jackson, itself, is the setting of Kathryn Stockett's "The Help". As a side note, visit the Library Lounge at the Fairview Inn for cocktails named in honor of these authors. Mississippi also claims Kermit the Frog ...and Jim Henson, George Ohr the Mad Potter of Biloxi, Morgan Freeman, and Oprah.

These artists are celebrated in institutions such as the Museum of Mississippi History, the Mississippi Museum of Art, the Mississippi Music Experience at Iron Horse Grill, and the Eudora Welty House and Gardens in Jackson, William Faulkner's Rowan Oaks in Oxford, the George Ohr Museum in Biloxi, the Jim Henson Museum in Leeland, the Grammy Museum in Cleveland, the Elvis Presley Birthplace in Tupelo, and the BB King Museum in Indianola. Either in Jackson or traveling through state, Mississippi has a wealth of inspiring sites.

If you prefer nature and like scenic drives, the Natchez Trace is one of the most [famous scenic drives in the US](#). The trace starts in Natchez, a city full of Antebellum mansions and its dark past in the slave trade, and follows the former bison migratory trails, which in turn became trade routes, to Nashville, TN. Or wander down the Mound Trail, visiting the homes and ritual sites of the Natchitoches people. Drive along the Mississippi River and through the farm lands of the Delta, viewing the sources of Mississippi's former wealth, the river and the crops – namely cotton which is still grown today.

Mississippi's dark past has given the state a poor reputation that it no longer deserves. Please come and experience the true Mississippi. I hope to see you all in Jackson for SERCA 2024 and will be excited to welcome you to Mississippi!

For more information, watch Visit Jackson's [docuseries](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZxgfO29ZRDw&list=PLFsK721dwpEK8E8r-IV3oMI2180-bput5>

Celebrating David Goist: A Conservation Advocate

At the 51st annual meeting of the American Institute for Conservation (AIC), held on May 17, 2023, David Goist, a proud alumnus of the class of 1975, was honored with The David Magoon-University Products Conservation Advocacy Award. This accolade is bestowed upon conservation professionals who have made remarkable contributions to the field of art conservation and have championed conservation through significant efforts in outreach and advocacy.

Throughout his career, David Goist has left an indelible mark on the world of art conservation. His unwavering dedication and tireless commitment to advancing the preservation of cultural heritage have been nothing short of exemplary. His journey began at the Intermuseum Laboratory at Oberlin College, where he worked and shared his knowledge as an educator.

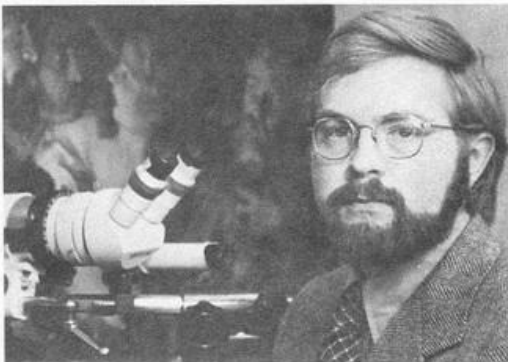


The Columbus Gallery of Fine Arts

invites you to a special Members' Preview Opening
of the exhibition

"CONSERVING OUR CULTURAL HERITAGE"

Thursday, April 8 New Wing



Mr. David Goist, Conservator, The Intermuseum Conservation Laboratory Association, Oberlin, Ohio, will speak at 8 o'clock in the New Wing. Wine and cheese tasting, hosted by the Gallery Docents, will follow in Derby Court.

Beverage donation \$2 per member

Don't forget: showing your current membership card is required for admission to all special members' events.

Card mailed out by Intermuseum Laboratory & Columbus Museum of Art before a 1976 talk by David Goist

David's impact extended further when he established the first conservation facility at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, setting the stage for the institution to safeguard its artistic treasures. In 1981, he went on to create the conservation facility at the North Carolina Museum of Art, where his expertise and leadership became instrumental in ensuring the protection and restoration of priceless artworks.

After a dozen years of service in the public sector, David ventured into the realm of private practice, focusing on the conservation of paintings and painted surfaces in Raleigh. His decision to

transition to the private sphere allowed him to apply his extensive expertise to an even wider array of art conservation projects.

David Goist's connection with the American Institute for Conservation is longstanding, reflecting his deep commitment to the profession. He firmly believes in the importance of conservators advocating for their field, a perspective he has championed with enthusiasm throughout his career.



David at Wofford College showing his disregard for hazard warnings

David's reputation within the conservation community is characterized by his five decades of unwavering commitment to the field. He possesses a remarkable ability to engage in meaningful discussions on a wide range of cultural heritage issues, with an inclusive approach that welcomes participants regardless of their position, knowledge, or experience level.

One of David's central missions throughout his career has been to emphasize the significance of conservation training and skill development, with a strong focus on emergency preparedness, disaster response, material salvage protocols, and collection rescue operations. He has consistently advocated for mental health care and the critical importance of supporting emergency responders during the tumultuous aftermath of disasters, an advocacy that arises from his firsthand experiences.



David shaking hands with a President Obama mannequin

As the second chairperson of the Emergency Committee, which later evolved into the AIC Emergency Committee, David played a pivotal role in establishing AIC-Collections Emergency Response Team training and an emergency hotline connecting disaster-affected organizations with deployable responders. This initiative expanded to train numerous emergency responders and ultimately gave rise to the AIC-National Heritage Response team.

Furthermore, David collaborated with colleagues in the southeastern United States to establish and develop SERCA—the Southeast Regional Conservation Association. SERCA's leaders have been actively involved in responding to emergencies, presenting at conferences, sharing valuable conservation information, and conducting 96 Collection Assessment for Preservation (CAP) assessments. David has been a strong advocate for CAP grants, recognizing their importance for organizations seeking to enhance their facilities.



David doing a collections care demonstration for members at the Asheville Art Museum

David Goist's professional journey was shaped by his training under the guidance of Caroline and Sheldon Keck at the Cooperstown Conservation Training Program. This lineage connects him to the early generations of AIC conservators, while his own contributions have propelled the profession forward, nurturing new generations of practitioners.

David's steadfast commitment to community engagement and his tireless efforts in advocating for the preservation of cultural heritage have earned him the utmost respect and admiration. His contributions stand as an invaluable asset to the conservation field, and his dedication serves as a beacon of inspiration for all who share his passion for preserving our artistic and cultural legacy.




SERCA Angels: Collections Assessment and Recommendations

Once again, during 2023 meeting, SERCA Angels took on an exceptional project. Their mission: to assess a collection of cherished artworks from the Museum of Arts and Sciences in Macon, GA. Under the leadership of Eliza Gilligan, a team of SERCA members reviewed a diverse range of artworks on paper, each with its own unique tale to tell, and initiated an assessment journey to determine their current conditions and needs.

Among the treasures they examined were masterpieces by renowned artists such as Matisse, Whistler, Calder, Sibley Couper, and more. Some of these artworks had endured considerable damage over the years, while others were in relatively better condition. Yet, they all shared a common thread: the need for professional care and attention to ensure their stories could continue to be shared.

SERCA Angels' dedication to these artworks resulted in a success story that brought smiles to many faces. Their meticulous care and attention to detail not only assessed the conditions of these treasured pieces but also provided tailored recommendations to safeguard their legacy for



generations to come. From here, we want to thank each one of the SERCA members that made this project a big success: Katie Boodle, Ginny Newell, Ella Andrews, Renée Stein, Brittany Dolph Dinneen, Ann Frellsen, Ephranette Brown, Kathryn Etre, Michelle Savant, Kelly O'Neill, David Ma, Yasmeen Ismail, Shannon Kimbro, Sarah Bess Brown, Veronica Davis, Eliza Marie Lenz. Thanks a lot!

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Polar Bears and Pesticides

By Kathryn Etre, SERCA Health and Safety Officer

While dusting the polar bear at the Museum of Arts and Sciences in Macon, GA at our last annual meeting, we suddenly remembered pesticides. Was this bear toxic to us?

The application of pesticides was commonly part of a regular museum maintenance schedule in the past. This repeated application of pesticides increased the toxicity of the museum object to museum professionals. Luckily, the wide scale use of pesticides within the museum environment ceased around 1980.

Although many pesticides break down over time, some pesticides, such as arsenic and mercuric chloride retaining their toxicity. In addition, some pesticides release slowly in fats over time, which can be an issue with leather and furs. These pesticides, in particular, can create increasing levels of toxicity within closed cabinets.


In addition to pesticides, toxins such as arsenic, lead, cadmium, and asbestos can be used in the production of dyes, pigments, and materials used to create museum objects. These toxins, although not added post-production and not to be removed like pesticides, need to be handled with the same care.

Any object suspected of being contaminated with pesticides or toxins should be stored separately, or other objects could be cross-contaminated.

Virtually all pesticides are irritants and can cause an allergic reaction. However, pesticides have been known to cause cancer, neurological damage, kidney damage, and damage to fetuses.

Due to these health risks and in an abundance of caution, any object collected before 1980 should be treated with caution.

Pesticides can be detected through testing. Test kits for heavy metals are available on Amazon. Elemental analysis, such as XRF (X-Ray Florescence), can be useful as well. GC-MS (Gas Chromatography Mass Spectrometry) is the best method to detect organic pesticides. Tests, however, may not reveal full extent of residual toxins. Even negative tests do not necessarily mean the object is free of contaminates so precaution must be used.





Pesticide Precautions

- Wear the proper PPE (Personal Protective Equipment). This includes gloves, lab coats, booties, and respirators with HEPA filters.
- Properly remove and dispose gloves to avoid cross-contamination. See previous SERCA Health and Safety Updates for methods to remove and dispose of gloves as well hazardous waste.
- Avoid touching your face and hair.
- Wash your hands frequently.
- Avoid touching other surfaces when such as door knobs and cabinetry while wearing contaminated gloves.
- Wipe down all surfaces and dispose wipes as hazardous materials. This includes wiping down tools, especially the hose and nozzle of vacuums.
- Wash lab coats and clothing separately. Add extra rinse cycle.
- Consult with *occupational medicine physicians* or toxicologist if you feel any unusual symptoms.

Removal of all pesticides may not be possible but we can reduce the amount of pesticides on the objects we treat. The use of a HEPA vacuum will greatly reduce any loose granules of pesticides. Washing and/or solvent extraction of pesticides from objects increases the amount of pesticides removed. However, such bathing activities can be damaging to the objects and do not completely remove all toxins.

Pesticides can be particularly an issue when an item is returned, especially if said object will be used. First, inform the owners of the issue and any possible mitigation options. If possible, know how the object will be used. With consultation with the owners, you can create barriers such as gloves or added liners to masks. Provide safe handling instructions. If safe use is not possible, consider offering a reproduction of the object.

Although a once contaminated object may never be 100% free from pesticides and toxins, with proper precautions we can ensure we do not meet the same fate as the insects the pesticides were targeting. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

OH! And thanks to Timothy Ward, Dean of Science at Millsaps College, and free use of all of his analytical equipment, my favorite dust brush was pesticide free!

Further Reading

Chiwara D, O'Connell S, and Loubster M, 2022. Potential Insecticide Contamination in Repatriated Artifacts in African Museums: The Need for the Adoption of safety Protocols for Access and Use of Hazardous Artifacts. *Journal of the American Institute for Conservation*. Online.

Department of the Interior, 2006. Frequently Asked Questions about Contaminated Museum Collections. Online.

Dotan L 2022. Arsenic and Old Feathers: A Survey of Detection, Mitigation, and Treatment Approaches for Pesticide-affected Objects and Creating a Treatment Protocol Proposal for SUNY Buffalo State. *Art Conservation Master's Projects*: State University of New York College at Buffalo, Buffalo State College.

National Parks Service 2001. Physical Properties and Health Effects of Pesticides Used On National Park Service Collections. *Conserve O Gram* 2.17.

National Parks Service 2002. Guidelines for the Handling of Pesticide Contaminated Collections. *Conserve O Gram* 2.19.



Announcements

This inspiring feature article on our very own Ginny Newell was highlighted in the AIC NEWSLETTER!!!, we do not want to be less!!

CONGRATULATIONS GINNY!!

Beneath the Grit and Grime: Painting Conservation Pioneer Ginny Newell '78



Ginny Newell '78 at work in the main room of her studio.

Membership

Membership Payment Online via PayPal

It's that time of year again to renew your SERCA membership! SERCA membership is open to conservators, allied professionals, and students interested in the preservation of cultural and heritage properties. The annual membership is valid from **January 1, 2024** through **December 31, 2024**.

You can visit the SERCA website page for [Membership](#) to become a new member or renew an existing membership. You can also fill out the form directly by clicking the following link:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdbYWVos-MRv5-9GVP9LLaZMYLVPL1R9gnHI_hyLcLeps8T2Q/viewform

Please be sure to both fill out the membership form AND send payment via the links on the submission page. You will receive an email receipt from Paypal if you choose to pay online. If you do not receive one, you have not paid your dues!

If you have the means, please consider also making a donation to the [Leonora Weaver Scholarship Fund](#) to support new and emerging conservators.

If you have any questions about membership please contact us at communications@sercaconservation.org.

Newsletter Submissions

Newsletter Submissions

Working on an interesting project? Have an internship, job opening, or workshop opportunity to share? Let us know what's going on in your studio! Content for the newsletter should be directed to the Newsletter Editor (newsletter@sercaconservation.org)'

SERCA's Newsletter is published three times a year in April, August, and December. Please note that content should be sent at least two weeks prior to publication. Articles should not exceed 750 words. Also, there should be no more than 4 accompanying images in jpeg format. The editors reserve the right to copy-edit in order to fit available space.

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