Centre for Cultural Materials Conservation
Research Presentations
Master of Cultural Material Conservation Minor Thesis
Presentations
Masters by Research and PhD

Thursday 27 to Friday 28 October 2011
The University of Melbourne

Program, Abstracts and Speakers
### Program Overview: Day 1: Thursday 27 October, 230 Theatre

**Venue 1:** Building 263, 234 Queensberry Street, Campus Map Ref U17, [http://maps.unimelb.edu.au/parkville/building/263](http://maps.unimelb.edu.au/parkville/building/263)

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<th>Session</th>
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<th>Student</th>
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<tr>
<td>Welcome</td>
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<td>PAINTINGS</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>9.20</td>
<td>Rosie Heysen</td>
<td>Hans Heysen’s Art Materials: An Investigation into supply, knowledge and choice with a focus on works in oil on canvas 1898-1918</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>Laura Reid</td>
<td>Mold Growth in Acrylic Paint Films in Tropical Environments</td>
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<td>Blake Fox</td>
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<tr>
<td>Morning Tea</td>
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<td>OBJECTS</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>11.10</td>
<td>Gisella Campanelli</td>
<td>Cleaning With Pemulen: An Investigation Into a New Conservation Approach for Cleaning Textiles from the Wayang Golek Collection of the National Gallery Of Victoria</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>11.30</td>
<td>Michelle Hodder</td>
<td>Developing a conservation protocol for the Grainger Museum’s Arimba (xylophone) with the view to outline the issues pertinent to risk assessments, acceptable levels of damage and documentation procedures</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>11.50</td>
<td>Raoul Mischlewski</td>
<td>An Investigation of a wood and ochre Mimi Spirit</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>12.10</td>
<td>Lauren Keating</td>
<td>An investigation of current conservation treatment methodologies for iron-based staining and concretions on earthenware ceramics from terrestrial archaeological sites</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>12.30</td>
<td>Nicholas Flood</td>
<td>Material characterisation of modern bronze sculpture: composition and microstructure of The thinker</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<td>PAPER</td>
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<td>10</td>
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<td>Peter Mitchelson</td>
<td>The Investigation of a work on paper by Abraham Bloemaert in the collection of the Baillieu Library</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>Cait Burgoyn</td>
<td>An exploration of methods of process and material choices to the understand the deterioration of aluminium foil in the works of George Baldessin</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>Michelle Stoddart</td>
<td>Is the code binding? A look at conservation codes of ethics in relation to book conservation</td>
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## Programme Overview: Day 2: Friday 28 October, Old Arts Theatre C

**Venue 2:** Old Arts, Building 149, Faculty of Arts, University of Melbourne, Parkville, VIC 3010, Campus Map Ref G14, [http://maps.unimelb.edu.au/parkville/building/149](http://maps.unimelb.edu.au/parkville/building/149)

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<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong></td>
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<td><strong>DIGITAL RECORD</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>9.20</td>
<td>Erina McCann</td>
<td>Digital reconstruction as a practical strategy for Indigenous art centre archive preservation</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>9.40</td>
<td>Elizabeth Long</td>
<td>The role of the conservator as orchestrator in the preservation of Moving Image Art in Australia; the need for cross-disciplinary collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>Sarah Brown</td>
<td>An Investigation into the incorporation of digital and traditional infill technology in a case study treatment of a French Tissue stereo view card</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>10.20</td>
<td>Asti Sherring</td>
<td>Virtual Theory of Conservation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Morning Tea</strong></td>
<td>10.40 – 11.00</td>
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<td><strong>RHD Students</strong></td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>11.00</td>
<td>Sophie Lewincamp</td>
<td>The future will be brighter – Exploring the future possibilities for the University of Melbourne’s Middle Eastern manuscript</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>11.20</td>
<td>Paula Dredge</td>
<td>The history and analysis of Australian made nitrocellulose and alkyd paints with case studies of their use by artists</td>
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**Speaker Abstracts and Biographies**

**SARAH BROWN**  
Master of Cultural Material Conservation Minor Thesis Presentation  
**An Investigation into the incorporation of digital and traditional infill technology in a case study treatment of a French Tissue stereo view card**

A case study treatment examining the use of digital fill techniques used in photographic conservation. Under the supervision of Pip Morrison (Conservator of Photographs – NGV) a repair treatment was conducted on a damaged French tissue stereo view card, which incorporated traditional and experimental techniques. The aim of the treatment was to gain further understanding of how to utilize modern technological aspects of treatment methods in harmony with existing techniques.

Sarah is part of the Paper conservation student group in the Masters program, and has a focus on photographic conservation. She completed her undergrad in Fine Arts (Photography) in 2005 at Curtin University in Perth as well as a semester at Ryerson University in Toronto. She has recently undertaken her internship at the NGA with Andrea Wise and is currently volunteering with Pip Morrison at the NGV.

**CAIT BURGOYNE**  
Master of Cultural Material Conservation Minor Thesis Presentation  
**An exploration of methods of process and material choices to the understand the deterioration of aluminium foil in the works of George Baldessin**

Aluminium foil prints are relatively modern print techniques, a method that involves the reworking of traditional print making techniques. This project will build upon research of aluminium foil paper and subsequent deterioration in the works of George Baldessin, from a technical examination and art historical perspective. This thesis aims to, through a brief introduction of the history of printmaking, focusing on contemporary prints will stress the significance of the printmaking medium and answer the question as to why a comprehensive understanding of contemporary prints is crucial for the future conservation of these works. The research conducted will include an art historical of printmaking; interviews of those who knew Baldessin and surveys and technical examinations of supporting work by the artist to make a comparative assessment. This thesis will provide a reference tool which will enable future investigations and open avenues for further inquiries into such a specialised and contemporary technique. Information gained from research into the deterioration of aluminium foil will provide a useful tool, for conservators faced with the same or similar materials in the future. The exploration into the work of celebrated Melbourne artist George Baldessin will broaden and deepen knowledge of Baldessin's work held in collections worldwide.

Cait Burgoyne completed a Bachelor of Fine Art, majoring in Printmaking in 2009 at the Victorian College of the Arts. Her involvement in the practice of printmaking sparked an interest in not only the working properties, but the conservation issues of the materials she was using. Her area of specialisation is paper, with particular interest in etchings. Her research topic is 'an examination of the methodology within the work of George Baldessin, with the aim of understanding the deterioration of aluminium foil'.
cleaning options. An experiment was developed for testing the gel on fabric samples, which closely resembled the textiles found on the wayang golek. The gel’s performance was assessed according to its cleaning ability, and its potential to impact on dyes and the textile substrate. While it was found to have certain benefits over current spot cleaning methods, some disadvantages may limit its usefulness in textile conservation.

Gisella Campanelli is a student of the Masters of Cultural Materials Conservation program (University of Melbourne). She is specialising in objects and has a particular interest in ceramics. She holds a Bachelor of Pharmacy (Monash University) and has been a practising pharmacist for over thirteen years.

PAULA DREDGE
PhD Student, CCMC
The history and analysis of Australian made nitrocellulose and alkyd paints with case studies of their use by artists

Historical studies on the development of synthetic paint mediums in the U.S.A. and U.K. in the first half of the 20th century have been published, but the corresponding situation in Australia has not been fully documented. This paper describes the history of the local production of these materials, particularly the DUCO (nitrocellulose) and DULUX (alkyd) range of paints which were manufactured in Australia from the late 1920s to the 1950s. Analysis of examples of these materials from old paint cans and historical samples using Fourier transform infrared spectroscopy (FTIR) and derivatised pyrolysis gas chromatography-mass spectroscopy (THM Py-GC-MS) has characterised the changes in formulations over the period. These analytical techniques also demonstrate the capabilities and limitations for the positive identification of these materials on paintings. Analysis of the paint on a number of paintings by the Australian artists Sidney Nolan and Eric Wilson provide examples of the use of these products.

Paula Dredge is Senior Paintings Conservator at the Art Gallery of New South Wales. Research on the analysis of paint materials and paintings by Sidney Nolan up to 1952 is the subject of her PhD thesis in progress with the Centre for Cultural Materials Conservation at the University of Melbourne. This research is being undertaken as part of the Australian Research Council Linkage project. The twentieth century in paint, with the support of the Art Gallery of New South Wales as an industry partner.

NICHOLAS FLOOD
Master of Cultural Material Conservation Minor Thesis Presentation
Material characterisation of modern bronze sculpture: composition and microstructure of The thinker

The NGV holds the first bronze cast of Rodin’s The thinker. Casting of this sculpture has not been attributed to a particular foundry; however, historical records suggest that one of two possible foundries was responsible. To aid the attribution this study provides material characterisation of this sculpture. A generic analytical pathway was designed and applied to investigate its composition and microstructure. Methods used include p-XRF, optical-microscopy, SEM-EDS, metallographic etching and EMPA. Results indicate a copper-zinc-tin-lead alloy composition and a microstructure typical of casting. This study contributes to the sculpture’s attribution and provides a resource for conservation professionals.

Nicholas specialises in objects conservation with an interest in metals and the use of analytical techniques. His previous education includes a Bachelor of Arts (European Studies and Philosophy) and a Bachelor of Science (Chemistry and Psychology) studying at the Universities of Adelaide and Leeds, UK. A recently successful Dreamlarge Grant application will see him travelling to East Timor for three weeks in 2012 to conduct workshops in the identification, assessment and management of cultural materials. Nicholas was the President of SC@M (Student Conservators at Melbourne student group) for the year 2010-2011 and is the current AICCM National Council Student Representative.
ROSIE HEYSEN
Master of Cultural Material Conservation Minor Thesis Presentation

Hans Heysen’s Art Materials: An Investigation into supply, knowledge and choice with a focus on works in oil on canvas 1898-1918

The enduring existence of the estate of Australian landscape painter Hans Heysen presented the opportunity for this study to determine what an artist’s house, studio and personal collection can uncover about the artist’s supply, knowledge and choice of his artists materials. This study was conducted primarily using sources derived directly from the Hans Heysen’s estate ‘The Cedars’ which exists as a house museum in the Adelaide Foothills including documentary sources, works of art in oil on canvas between 1898 and 1918 and realia remaining in the artist’s studio.

Rosie Heysen: Masters in Museum and Curatorial Studies – University of Adelaide and The Art Gallery of South Australia; Masters in Art History – University of Adelaide; Graduate Diploma in Management (Art and Culture) – University of South Australia; Bachelor in Landscape Architecture – University of Adelaide; Bachelor in Architectural Studies – University of Adelaide; Graduate Diploma in Design Studies – University of Adelaide

Project Manager for The Nora Heysen Foundation Incorporated. Rosie has been working on a voluntary basis at Artlab Australia in the Paintings Conservation Lab since July 2010 and had the opportunity also to spend some time volunteering in the Painting Conservation Lab at the Art Gallery of New South Wales in January of 2011

MICHELLE HODDER
Master of Cultural Material Conservation Minor Thesis Presentation

On the question of whether or not musical instruments should be played there are two opposed views. One view is that they should be played as that is their aesthetic function. The other view is that playing, and preparing instruments to be played destroys historic information and therefore they should not be played. This thesis investigates whether the acoustic properties of an instrument can be used to assist in making the decision of whether or not to play musical instruments in museum collections.

The objective of this thesis is to develop an evidence based methodology, which is aligned with cultural material conservation ethics and practices, for determining whether or not a musical instrument in a museum collection may be played without causing an unacceptable level of damage to the instrument.

Michelle Hodder: Bachelor of Engineering (Industrial and Computing), Monash University; Master of Business Administration, University of Melbourne.
20 years work experience in ship building, property services and automotive industry and 30 years experience playing music particularly the flute. Michelle came to conservation through a desire to combine working with hands with technical problem solving. Michelle has undertaken an internship at Museum Victoria.

LAUREN KEATING
Master of Cultural Material Conservation Minor Thesis Presentation

An investigation of current conservation treatment methodologies for iron-based staining and concretions on earthenware ceramics from terrestrial archaeological sites.

The aim of this thesis is to investigate common conservation treatment methodologies and their effectiveness on iron-based staining and concretions, with a focus on the break-edges of sherds. The formation processes of iron-based staining and concretions on earthenware ceramics will be outlined, and the ethical considerations of such treatments will be discussed. In order to investigate the effectiveness and the best application methodology for iron-based stain and concretion removal treatments, earthenware samples from Heritage Victoria (originating from Cohen Place, an archaeological site in Melbourne) were utilised and a number of treatments were tested, including acetic acid, oxalic acid, citric acid, sodium hexametaphosphate and disodium salt EDTA.
Lauren Keating: Prior to undertaking her Masters, Lauren completed a Bachelor of Arts at La Trobe University and majored in Archaeology and Art History. These subjects sparked an interest in treating objects of an archaeological provenance, as reflected in her thesis topic. As an objects stream student, Lauren has completed treatments on a Balinese textile, a mixed-media scale model of a plant, plaster relief casts and a miniature dollhouse wood sideboard. Lauren volunteers at Heritage Victoria, completed her internship at Museum Victoria earlier this year, and looks forward to completing her Masters degree shortly.

SOPHIE LEWINCAMP
Masters by Research
The future will be brighter – Exploring the future possibilities for the University of Melbourne’s Middle Eastern manuscript

This paper examines the issues that face many collections of Middle Eastern manuscripts that have been collected for teaching and research purposes, but which now lack both the academic and cultural context. I will assess the options for delivering benefits to the collections, and gaining benefits from the collections. In short to address the question: what does the future hold for the collection? At the Centre for Cultural Materials Conservation, Melbourne (CCMC) staff and students recognise the skill and technology contained within these manuscripts. A number of research projects have delved into the materials in particular the pigments but there needs to be a collaborative effort to bring together all the current knowledge, identify the unknowns and manage the future research. University Library staff have supported the need for digitisation and a recent digitisation program means the collection will be available online possibly creating a greater need for access to the original materials. Once in the online realm the accuracy of the catalogue records will become a significant issue requiring addressing in this project. Can online access encourage international scholars to assist with accurate dating, provenance and significance? Will it allow for some cultural context to be re-gained?

At the time of collection these manuscripts were studied for the language and textual information now using conservation examination methods they can divulge a wealth of information as to the materials and construction methods. This additional knowledge will not only inform the care and treatment of these manuscripts but will assist with provenance and enable vital historical trade route data to be discovered.

In Australia there are few professionals specialising in the areas needed for a project such as Middle Eastern bookbinding, In this respect, programs such as those developed and provided by TIMA are critical in enabling the best use of these collections.

Sophie Lewincamp is a Masters Candidate and Paper Conservation Lecturer at The Centre for the Cultural Materials Conservation, University of Melbourne, Australia

STEPHANIE LIMOGES
Master of Cultural Material Conservation Minor Thesis Presentation
A case of incompatible materials: Examining possible catalysts for deterioration reactions at a metal-polymer interface.

This project presents research and analytic data that explore the possible causes for the localised and corrosive degradation of the schlag metal finish on a 1950s frame in the collection of the Art Gallery of NSW. It will examine the possible impact of incompatible materials catalysing a reaction process, based on the range of manufacturing techniques available to the period. This will be presented as a step-by-step research programme for how to identify and characterise issues of deterioration in composite objects of unknown origin, with the aim that this may help inform similar issues faced by both frames and objects conservators.

Stephanie Limoges has an undergraduate degree in Fine Arts, majoring in painting and ceramics. She has been a picture framer for 10 years, specialising in hand-crafted manufacturing techniques such as gilding, composition ornamentation and French polishing, as well as frame restoration. She has
specialised in paintings conservation whilst at Melbourne Uni, and is hoping to combine her two loves of frames and paintings in her future career.

ELIZABETH LONG

Master of Cultural Material Conservation Minor Thesis Presentations

The role of the conservator as orchestrator in the preservation of Moving Image Art in Australia; the need for cross-disciplinary collaboration

Managing the preservation needs of moving image art stretches the role of the conservator. The important elements to be preserved are often the information about the showing and installation needs of the work as much as the material itself. The materials used in the creation of the moving image are often complex and their maintenance requires skills not taught in the usual conservation training. Interviews with a range of experts on the moving image show that the conservator needs to play a new role in conserving the moving image: that of communicator between disciplines and advocate of the ethics of conservation while sourcing outside expertise to manage the various components of moving image art.

Elizabeth Long is currently undertaking her Masters in Cultural Material Conservation specialising in paper and photo-media. This will be complete in July 2012. Previously she has completed a degree in fine art photography at the Victorian College of the Arts in 2007 and was involved in many exhibitions during her final year including participating in the Do it project by Hans Ulrich at the Margaret Laurence Gallery and the exhibition Do you like me? at Kings Artist Run Initiative in King Street Melbourne. Her artwork includes sculpture, photography and the moving image that led to an interest in the conservation of photography and moving image art. In 2010 she worked in a volunteer position at the Museum of Victoria doing digital photography and data enhancement for the new website on the Hecla Collection.

ERINA MCCANN

Master of Cultural Material Conservation Minor Thesis Presentations

Digital reconstruction as a practical strategy for Indigenous art centre archive preservation

Recent archive preservation trends within collecting institutions have been directed primarily at digitising archival material, ultimately for the preservation of archived material for future use. The ever-growing amount of material being available digitally not only drives the need for feasible access and delivery, but also serves as a tool for preserving digital objects in the medium and long run (Strodl et al. 2007, p. 1). For Indigenous Communities in Australia, digital repatriation of archival material assists with community development and provides information for land rights claims, restores traditional knowledge systems and the (re)building family genealogies. However, what happens when a ‘community archive’ is lost/damaged?

In light of the recent floods in Warmun, the physical threat posed to local collections, highlights the vulnerable state and nature of locally archived material. Nakata et al suggest that ‘local documentation (often digital) of recovered traditional and cultural knowledge collected from Indigenous groups since the nineteenth century and stored in library, archive and museum collections’ may be utilized to ‘restore traditional knowledge continuity (2005, p. 11) but is it really that simple? In theory, it may be suggested that by drawing together threads of knowledge from various sources, e.g. Indigenous memory and ongoing oral tradition, the collaboration of these aspects of knowledge may help facilitate a foundation for the reconstruction of a cultural archive. However, the collected physical material alone cannot reconstruct the archive. By examining Bastian’s (2003) notion of a “community of records”, whereby the community is referred to as a record-creating entity and a memory frame that contextualises the records it creates, this thesis examines possible collaborations relating to digitisation of recollected/repatriated physical archival material within a community context, which in turn provides the memory frame for (re)created memories. This thesis poses this strategy as a practical and constructive step towards the reconstruction and subsequent maintenance of a community archive.

Erina McCann – originally from New Zealand, is of Maori descent with affiliations to Ngati Ruapani and Rongowhakaata tribes from the Gisborne region of the East Coast of the North Island of New Zealand. Having studied Anthropology and Maori Studies at Auckland University, she furthered her
interest in Maori Material Culture, completing an honours degree in Maori Studies, which involved researching the introduction and use of modern weaving materials in the manufacture of traditionally woven baskets (kete). In 2007/08, she was the recipient of a Te Maori Manaaki Taonga Fellowship, awarded to an Indigenous student intending to undertake the Masters degree in Conservation at Melbourne University. She began study in February 2008 and been studying part-time since, while raising a young family.

She is very passionate about her culture, and has a strong interest in Maori Performing Arts, having been an avid performer for many years, Tikanga Maori (Maori customs/traditions/protocols) as well as Raranga Whakairo (Maori weaving). She has specialised in objects, and is interested in ethnographic objects manufactured using organic materials (wood, shell etc); specifically traditional woven objects manufactured using plant fibres.

RAOUL MISCHLEWSKI
Master of Cultural Material Conservation Minor Thesis Presentations

An investigation of a wood and ochre Mimi Spirit

This project investigated a wood and ochre Mimi spirit and assessed the materials and techniques of original manufacture and a subsequent conservation intervention conducted in 2005.

PETER MITCHELSON
Master of Cultural Material Conservation Minor Thesis Presentations

The Investigation of a work on paper by Abraham Bloemaert in the collection of the Baillieu Library

The technical analysis of Old Master drawings is less developed than it is for painted works and the treatment of works on paper has generally been regarded as less complicated than the conservation of paintings. Despite this, the awareness of their material complexity is beginning to grow. To help redress this imbalance a work by the Dutch artist Abraham Bloemaert (c.1565-1651) will be examined from the Baillieu Print Room. This investigation will be multi-disciplinary, combining research from the fields of paper history, art history and paper conservation and will demonstrate the contribution that conservators can make to our collective knowledge of art history.

Peter Mitchelson- Before undertaking a Masters in Paper Conservation, Peter completed an Honours Degree in Art History at the University of Melbourne. He has worked for auction houses and art galleries in Melbourne and London and has a strong interest in Renaissance and Baroque art. In the coming years he hopes to gain a broad range of skills as a paper conservator.

LAURA REID
Master of Cultural Material Conservation Minor Thesis Presentations

Mold Growth in Acrylic Paint Films in Tropical Environments

This project investigated correlations between the physical and chemical behaviors of acrylic paint films exposed to mold in tropical environments. Samples of Golden Artists’ Acrylics, Silpakorn Artists Acrylics and Silpakorn’s component biocide and preservative were aged in ambient conditions and at 55% and 80% RH in a 27º Celsius oven. Samples inoculated with mold were examined visually, microscopically, and with FTIR and SEM analysis. Observations of non-inoculated samples and those in different conditions were compared. The Silpakorn acrylics showed little response to aging conditions, while Golden acrylics showed swelling, delaminating and increased plasticity in high relative humidity. Unrelated laboratory interference caused contamination of some samples. However, despite this interference, obtained results support the importance of biocides and preservatives in preventing mold cultivation on acrylic paints in tropical conditions.

Laura Reid is an American artist and emerging painting conservator. She received her B.A. in Studio Art from the University of North Carolina at Wilmington. She carried out her pre-program internship at The Mariners’ Museum in Virginia where she performed conservation treatment on waterlogged, U.S. Civil Ware period artifacts. While a student at the CCMC, many of her individual studies focused on acrylic...
paints and paintings. Laura is interested in painting conservation, object conservation and conservation science.

**ASTI SHERRING**  
Master of Cultural Material Conservation Minor Thesis Presentations  
Virtual Theory of Conservation

This thesis addresses the development of computer based art and the opportunities and challenges it presents to conservation. The thesis explores the issues surrounding the conservation of computer based artworks, such as the need to properly identify the medium and establish standardised terminology. As well as the need to understand the true nature of a computer system, in regards to the mathematical model and current preservation issues. The current standards of digitisation are discussed in relation to a new proposed system of “emulation” – that of complete reconstruction of computer based artworks. The formulation of the virtual theory of conservation seeks to address the current theories of conservation and offer a new approach to the way in which computer based art is viewed as a medium, understood by those in the profession and ultimately how the conservation of computer based artworks and objects is approached by the larger conservation community.

Asti Sherring completed a Bachelor of Media Arts with Honours from Sydney University in 2005. She is currently enrolled in a Masters of Materials Conservation majoring in paper and photographic materials. She completed a post-graduate certificate in Photographic Conservation (Melbourne University) in September 2011. Asti completed an internship at Birmingham University Special collections library in the United Kingdom in 2011, as well as previously volunteering at Melbourne Museum and the Sydney Jewish Holocaust Museum. In 2010 Asti was involved in a joint project between Melbourne University and Racing Victoria, in which a conservation assessment was performed on a collection of 16mm film in preparation for digitisation. She is currently employed at Arts Project Australia, assisting with the digitisation and preservation policy for the organisation. Asti is interested in the conservation challenges of new media art and the preservation of digital media.

**MICHELLE STODDART**  
Master of Cultural Material Conservation Minor Thesis Presentations  

This paper will look briefly at the history of conservation, focusing on the sub-discipline of book conservation. This thesis will provide an overview of the history of conservation societies and the evolution of various conservation codes of ethics. This thesis will tabulate and critique the current codes of ethics of the Australian Institute of Cultural Materials Conservation (AICCM), New Zealand Conservators of Cultural Materials (NZCCM), American Institute of Conservation (AIC), Canadian Association for Conservation of Cultural Property (CAC)/Association of Professional Conservators (CAPC), and the Institute of Conservation (ICON) /European Confederation of Conservator-Restorers’ Organisations (ECCO). This thesis will aim to explore various codes’ applicability in book conservation and gauge their useability by questioning current book conservators within Australia. The paper will also discuss the codes and policies of various institutions in Australia and show how the policies of an institution may conflict with the conservation codes.

Michelle Stoddart is currently completing her Masters of Cultural Materials Conservation at the University of Melbourne, where she has focused on paper conservation. During this time Michelle has also completed two short courses on bookbinding at RMIT. Michelle has a previous Masters in Museum Studies from the University of Sydney and over the past five years has undertaken various internships, volunteer work and positions in the conservation departments of the State Library of Victoria, the State Library of New South Wales, the State Records of New South Wales, the Art Gallery of New South Wales and the Old Library at Trinity College in Dublin.