

THE WINTERTHUR/UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE PROGRAM IN ART CONSERVATION

Class of 2023

The Winterthur/University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation is pleased to highlight the accomplishments of our first-year students, the Class of 2023. We value the skill and expertise they will bring to the Program and our profession. We recognize that their career paths described herein have relied heavily on volunteer-based internships, minimally paid jobs, and relocations without financial support. We remain committed to working within the cultural heritage sector to remove such barriers and requirements that discourage diversity, the kind of diversity that our communities and cultural collections deserve and that we are committed to.



MEGHAN ABERCROMBIE (*she/her/hers*)

Meghan was introduced to conservation while pursuing her undergraduate studies in Fine Arts at Dickinson College. During her junior year she traveled abroad to Florence, Italy, to study at Studio Art Centers International, gaining her first conservation treatment experience. Reassured that conservation would be her life pursuit, she returned to the States and interned with a private conservator during her senior year. After graduating with honors in 2015, she participated

in numerous invaluable conservation internships and jobs, including positions at the Penn Museum and Winterthur Museum. She acquired experience with paintings, paper, books, historical buildings, and archaeological materials while supporting herself with several jobs, including serving two years with Americorps. Her Americorps position as a tutor and mentor in Philadelphia public middle school classrooms amplified her passion for education and social equity, which she hopes to incorporate into her work as a conservator. She was therefore thrilled to pursue her passion for equity further by participating in the 2019 Building Diversity in Art Conservation Program as a teaching assistant for the Two-Week Introduction to Practical Conservation. It is her goal as a graduate fellow and beyond to continue assisting the movement to make conservation more accessible to others.



OLAV BJORNERUD (*he/him/his*)

Olav graduated from Lawrence University with BA degrees in History and Studio Art in 2014. He then studied art at the LungA School in eastern Iceland. Back in the US, he worked as a studio assistant for sculptor Rob Neilson and in the woodshop of a small company specializing in furniture made from repurposed materials. Working with worm-eaten oak from Kentucky boxcars and cedar riddled with the phantom stains of long-lost nails, he became increasingly

interested in the stories materials can tell. Around this time Olav consciously made entering the field of conservation a goal and started taking chemistry classes. Most of his pre-program career was spent as an intern at the Yale University Art Gallery, beginning in 2018. Here, under the guidance of the Gallery's conservators—particularly Anne Gunnison and Irma Passeri—Olav had the chance to be involved in a wide variety of projects. These included stabilizing large-scale architectural fragments, working with a team of conservators and conservation scientists on an in-depth technical analysis of a 19th-century Kongo Power Figure, and analyzing and cataloguing a collection of historical pigments. Olav is keenly interested in the qualities and connotations of materials, and how materials are transformed both deliberately and inadvertently.



RILEY CRUTTENDEN (*they/them*)

Riley has been interested in history, art making, and community building for as long as they can remember. They studied Sculpture at Ohio State University (OSU) and graduated Summa Cum Laude from the honors BFA program. Riley worked in art supply retail and taught community art classes before returning to OSU for graduate training in architecture and to serve as a teaching associate in the history of architecture. During that time, Riley interned

with the OSU Libraries' Conservation Unit and contributed to a mass spectrometry research group. Riley also holds an MLitt in Technical Art History from the University of Glasgow, where they received a UK Fulbright Award. Their master's thesis research, a technical analysis of two historic ship models, was conducted at the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam. Riley has interned at the Glasgow School of Art (Scotland), the National Museum of the American Indian (Washington, DC), and with Dr. Joyce Hill Stoner at WUDPAC. Most recently, they worked as a Conservation Technician and Assistant Project Manager on contract for the US Holocaust Memorial Museum. Riley happily fills their personal life with art making, exploring plants that heal and comfort, volunteering as a hospice companion, cooking vegetarian food, and—best of all—spending time with loved ones.



KAELEY FERGUSON (*she/her/hers*)

While earning her B.A. in Chemistry from Boston University, Kaeley sought a career path that combined her passion for art and her enjoyment of chemistry. Once she discovered art conservation, Kaeley began volunteering at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. There, she performed analysis and treatment on Japanese woodblock prints, gaining appreciation every day for the medium. The excitement of being close to a work of art and learning its details

never wore off. Eventually, Kaeley gained more experience at several Boston-area institutions including managing pests at a Historic New England property and expanding her paper conservation knowledge at the Northeast Document Conservation Center. Most recently, Kaeley was the Conservation Technician at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, where some of her favorite treatments included treating a japanned bookcase and repairing broken caning on a chair. Eager to expand her knowledge of the conservation community and get more involved in discussions advocating for pre-program individuals, Kaeley joined ECPN as the Boston-area regional liaison. In this position, Kaeley fostered in-depth conversations with emerging professionals to inform others about the field. Kaeley hopes to continue these conversations at WUDPAC while becoming a half-decent baker and exploring Wilmington on walks with her dog, Rex.



SARAH FRESHNOCK (*she/her/hers*)

Sarah graduated from Bowdoin College in 2017 majoring in visual arts and art history and minoring in chemistry. She began her pre-program career at the Museum of Fine Arts Boston. She then spent two years working with the National Park Service and Studio TKM Associates. Working with works on paper at both positions, Sarah gained invaluable experiences treating differing types and sizes of paper, from small newspaper clippings, to Audubon Birds of

America prints, to a 15-foot collaged mural. She then traveled west to the Buffalo Bill Center of the West in Cody, WY and led a group of interns in a paper conservation treatment while completing other objects treatments. Sarah found a special place in Cody working with Beverly Perkins, and

returned the following year for a position assisting in the treatment and then installation of the Cody Firearms Museum collection. Most recently, Sarah was the sculpture technician at The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in the objects conservation lab. While working on the outdoor sculpture collection, she fully realized her love of objects conservation and got to return to her hometown of Kansas City. When Sarah's not waxing sculptures, she loves baking, fly fishing, cats, and trying to find the perfect French fry.



ELLE FRIEDBERG (*she/her/hers*)

Elle graduated from Wellesley College in 2017 with a BA in Chemistry and Studio Art. She began her pre-program journey at the Smithsonian Museum Conservation Institute under the supervision of Jia-sun Tsang and Dr. Thomas Lam. Together they researched and treated paintings for the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture and developed a paint cross section preparation technique

for modern and contemporary art materials. Elle served as the Paintings Conservation Volunteer at the National Gallery of Art and later interned at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History under the supervision of Richard Barden. Treating a nineteenth-century wax anatomical medical model and rehousing a collection of 1960s presidential campaign ribbons allowed Elle to see firsthand the preparation of art objects for exhibitions and the importance of preventive conservation in collections care. Most recently, Elle worked at the Worcester Art Museum under the supervision of Rita Albertson. In addition to treatments such as a Nipmuc ash splint basket and sixteenth-century North German jousting armor, Elle was responsible for conservation tasks including gallery maintenance and pest management. Being integrated into departmental activities allowed Elle to see how a museum functions as a whole with people from different specialties working together.



VERÓNICA IVETTE MERCADO OLIVERAS (*she/her/hers*)

In 2018, Verónica graduated Magna Cum Laude from UPR-Mayagüez with a BA in History and minor in Art. Her thesis pertained to the foundation of Puerto Rico's first multi specialized conservation laboratory, Anton Konrad Conservation Center, where she interned twice carrying out treatments on Latin-American artworks on paper and preventive conservation to paintings. As an undergrad, Verónica discovered that the island's library and archival

heritage was at risk due to the absence of book conservators and resource shortages. Consequently, she crossed the Atlantic to pursue training at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History, the Rare Book School, the Library of Congress, and San Gemini Preservation Studies (Italy). Amid the aftermath of Hurricane María, as a senior, Verónica assisted UPR-Mayagüez Library on recovery efforts, a decision that inspired her to seek training in disaster response and collections recovery to support mitigation efforts back home. Twice a funded intern, and, most recently, a Conservation Technician, at the NMAH, Verónica collaborated with conservators Janice Ellis, Dawn Wallace, and Sunae Parks by treating, researching, photographing, photo-processing, and surveying 19th to 21st-century collection objects highlighting a Cuban baseball album, a narcotic prescription book, an accordion-style fold-out map, computing devices, and a wooden panel. Verónica is described as a warm person who enjoys learning from others. She holds an innate drive to advocate for Puerto Rico's cultural heritage and will be joining WUDPAC as a LACE Fellow.



MARGARET O'NEIL (*she/her/hers*)

Margaret O'Neil graduated Summa Cum Laude from the University of Minnesota with a BA in History and minors in Fashion Studies and Art History. Margaret was introduced to the field of conservation her freshman year of college through educational programming on PBS and further internet research. She started her pre-program experience with Ann Frisina at the Minnesota Historical Society's textile lab where

she solidified her love of historic costume. At this lab, Margaret worked on Civil War flags, a 19th-century corset, Ojibwe bandolier bags, and a wide range of 19th- and 20th-century garments. She has also worked at the Minnesota Historical Society's book and paper lab and a private objects lab working on Paul Manship bronzes and various paper consolidation treatments. Margaret gained further experience in the collections care department at the National Museum of the American Indian rehousing small Arctic textiles and facilitating the visits of various Native delegations to their collections. In her free time, Margaret explores her love of historical textiles further, hand sewing historically accurate reproduction garments and adding to her collection of antique and vintage clothing.



ALYSSA RINA (*she/her/hers*)

In 2013, Alyssa graduated Magna Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Fine Arts from The School of Visual Arts in NYC. As an undergraduate, she explored different artistic mediums and worked at a fast-paced Chelsea art gallery. Shortly after graduation, Alyssa discovered Art Conservation and began her chemistry prerequisite coursework. She placed in an Organic Chemistry II Honors Section, which introduced her to X-ray fluorescence

spectroscopy through an independent research project. Alyssa started interning with local photography conservators in private practice. From there, she went on to intern and work at The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; The Historical Society of Pennsylvania; The Historic Odessa Foundation; The University of Delaware Art Conservation Department; The University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology; and The Buffalo Bill Center of the West. Most recently, Alyssa was a conservation technician at The American Museum of Natural History for 20 months. She learned a variety of treatment techniques for organic, composite cultural materials and attended many consultation sessions with native advisors. Alyssa is passionate about respectful community engagement and learning how conservators and cultural heritage institutions can become more sustainable in response to the impacts of climate change on tangible and intangible cultural heritage materials.



KATHARINE SHULMAN (*she/her/hers*)

Katie is from San Francisco and first learned about conservation in a high school art history class. From that moment there was no looking back! She graduated from Scripps College, Claremont, CA with a BA in Art Conservation, having interned with conservators Donna Williams and Gawain Weaver, as well as at the deYoung Museum and Asian Art Museum of San Francisco. Her curriculum included a memorable semester at SACE (Florence, Italy).

After graduation Katie moved to the east coast to work as a technician with Sally Malenka at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. She fell in love with objects conservation and the variety of materials and challenges, from an Olivetti typewriter to a porcelain fashion doll. Simultaneously, Katie gained invaluable experience at the Barnes Foundation in the treatment of gilded frames and in preventive conservation. In connection to her work with PMA scientist Beth Price, Katie travelled to Australia to present Japanese Sugito in the Philadelphia Museum of Art: Investigation of Painted Decorations and Soluble Nylon Coatings (poster, 13th Biennial IRUG Conference). She counts among her favorite PMA projects the FTIR analysis of early Disney animation cels. Katie is passionate about conservation outreach and engaging and inspiring students through museum and community programs.

