

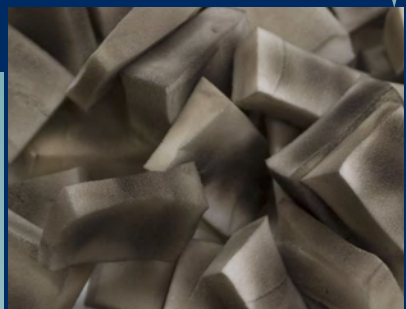


## Art Conservation *and library collections*

*When the Wilmington Public Library recently re-evaluated how to best serve its diverse constituencies, one result was a decision to give a number of items to the Winterthur Library, including a portfolio of unique decorative art by Viennese artist Kolomon Moser. Titled Flächenschmuck (“patterns for flat surfaces”), the portfolio was published in 1901 as Vol.3 of Die Quelle (“The Source”) and contains 30 double-sided prints of art nouveau designs intended as decorative patterns for textiles and wallpaper.*

Moser was part of the Viennese Secessionist movement and the vivid, almost psychedelic patterns in Flächenschmuck reflect the artist’s desire to break away from the more restrictive academic traditions that were then in vogue. The portfolio is destined to become part of the rare book collection in the Winterthur Library, where it will be available for research. First, however, it is being treated by Winterthur/University of Delaware Program in Arts Conservation (WUDPAC) Second-Year Fellow Tessa Gadomski. Tessa, who is majoring in library and archives conservation, determined that the portfolio primarily needed to be cleaned and stabilized. She also saw that the binding, which is not attached to the prints but instead wraps around them, would need more attention than the prints themselves. The binding, which is made of two mill boards connected by a cloth cover, was extremely grimy with a large stain in front. The spine had deteriorated and separated from the rest of the binding, while a cloth flap, attached to the back cover and designed to wrap around the prints’ edges before tucking back under the front cover, was losing parts of its paper lining. The prints, though showing some brittleness and surface grime, were intact.

Tessa first cleaned loose dirt from both the binding and the most heavily soiled prints by carefully using small cosmetic sponges. She anticipates doing additional cleaning once she can identify an effective solvent that would evaporate quickly and not damage the binding’s paper supports. To stabilize the decorative paper lining of the protective cloth flap, Tessa applied a 50/50 mixture of methyl cellulose and wheat starch paste that was both flexible and contained minimal moisture. She further stabilized the paper lining by covering small cracks and loose pieces of the paper support with strips of Japanese tissue paper and the wheat starch mixture. After this step is complete, Tessa will remove the old spine and attach a new, more stable spine material. The original decorative paper spine lining will be saved and reattached to the inside of the new spine.



### ARTC Spotlight—January 2013

*The University of Delaware’s Art Conservation Department educates and trains professional conservators in the treatment, analysis, documentation, and preventive conservation of individual artifacts and entire collections. Our students are powerful public spokespersons for cultural heritage and its preservation. Visit our web site at <http://www.artcons.udel.edu> for more news about our students and other department activities.*



*Top: WUDPAC Fellow Tessa Gadomski surface cleaning the prints using a cosmetic sponge. Above: Detail of sponges after use. Right: The Flächenschmuck portfolio before treatment, including a detail of the title page print and the lifting paper lining. Photos by Jen Schnittker/Tessa Gadomski.*

