



Art Conservation *and historical processes*

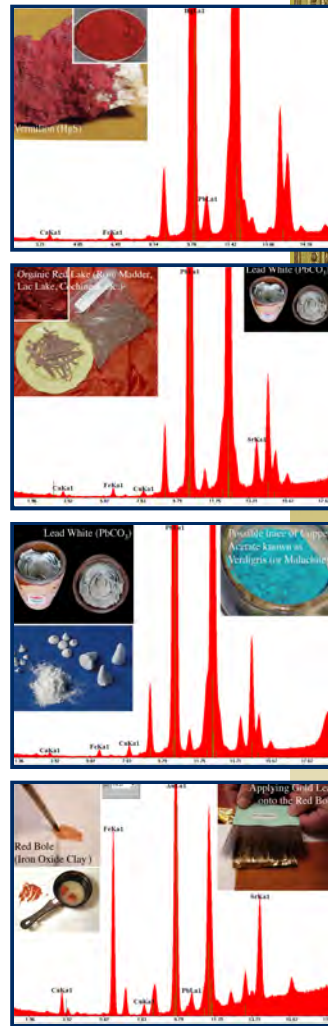
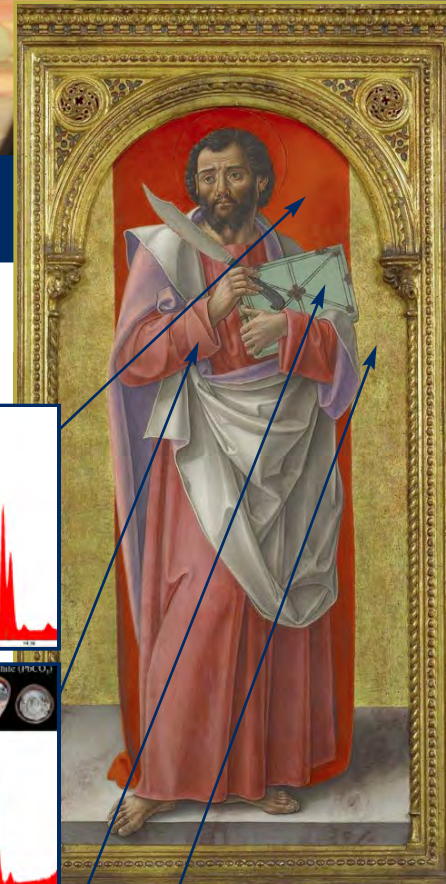
While it may be easy to appreciate the talent of an artist who created an Old Master painting, few museum visitors will be familiar with the materials the artist used or the techniques involved as paint was applied to the canvas. Yet each step is critical to the unique appearance of the finished work of art. By next fall, however, art lovers will be able to learn about these things, and in the process gain a deeper appreciation of Old Master paintings, through an in-depth, interactive website now being developed by paintings conservators Kristin deGhetaldi and Brian Baade at the University of Delaware.

The two-year project is being funded through a Samuel H. Kress Foundation grant, and the website will focus on 12 Old Master paintings, by different artists and from different eras, in the Kress Collection. The Kress Collection encompasses more than 3,000 works of European art donated to dozens of regional and academic art museums throughout the United States between 1929 and 1961.

The website will build on physical reconstructions of six Old Master paintings that Kristin, who is pursuing a PhD in Preservation Studies at UD, and Brian, an assistant professor in art conservation, completed over the past few years. The reconstructions, deliberately left unfinished, reproduce consecutive layers of the original paintings, allowing a viewer to see and understand the steps the artist took to build up the original. Six additional paintings will be reconstructed digitally, and all 12 will link to webpages that explain the materials, process, and techniques used by each artist.

To create the reconstructions, Kristin and Brian conferred with conservation scientists, art historians, conservators, and the published conservation literature. In some cases, when information about a painting was not readily available, they traveled to do material analysis themselves, on site. In July, for example, they visited the Philbrook Museum of Art in Tulsa, Oklahoma, to study Taddeo di Bartolo's *Madonna and Child*, which dates to about 1410. Kristin and Brian are being assisted by

PhD Art History students Isabel Oleas and Katrina Greene, who recently helped examine Bartolomeo Vivarini's *St. Bartholomew* (circa 1485) at the Allentown Art Museum in Allentown, Pennsylvania. Undergraduates enrolled in UD's art conservation program are also participating. The website is scheduled to go live in fall of 2014. A five-day workshop for curators of museums holding part of the Kress Collection is scheduled for next August, and downloadable education packets are being developed for grades K-12, adult learners and scholars.



ARTC Spotlight: October 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. For more news about our students and other department activities visit our web site at www.artcons.udel.edu.

Top: UD Assistant Professor Brian Baade examines a 15th-century panel at the Allentown Art Museum; Above: Bartolomeo Vivarini's *St. Bartholomew*, tempera/gold on panel, c.1485. Insets: X-ray fluorescence spectra for (from top) vermilion, a likely organic red lake pigment, lead white, and gold leaf over red bole; Left: The Bruker handheld TRACer III-V series XRF setup.

