



ARTC Spotlight—September 2015

The University of Delaware's Art Conservation Department educates and trains professional conservators who are well versed in the treatment, analysis, documentation, and preventive conservation of individual artifacts and entire collections. For more news about our students and other department activities visit our web site at www.artcons.udel.edu.

Top and right: Detail of the losses and existing fills on sections of the bottle prior to Lauren's treatment; Above: Winterthur/University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation Fellow Lauren Gottschlich applying a gloss medium to the inpainted fills; Far right: The reassembled bottle after the completion of the treatment. (Images courtesy of Lauren Gottschlich and Alexandra Nichols.)



Art Conservation *and piecing together the past*

Small and delicate, the dark purple bottle is decorated with a blue festoon design and was likely created out of blown glass in Syria in the 11th or 12th century. More recently, the 3.4 inch bottle has served as a treatment project for successive objects majors in the Winterthur/University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation (WUDPAC). This year, Fellow Lauren Gottschlich became the third WUDPAC student to work on it.

The bottle came from an archaeological dig and was later accessioned by the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, where it was initially thought to be of Roman origin. Previous treatments by WUDPAC Fellows Marlene Yandrisevits and Kelly McCauley included research that concluded that the bottle was probably created in Syria and dates instead from the medieval era.



At some point, the bottle had been broken into 34 pieces and then reassembled, but by the time it arrived at WUDPAC for treatment the fill material was yellowed and failing. The overpaint used for the design was also visually distracting. Marlene and Kelly's treatments included reversing the earlier restorations in order to separate the pieces, and then partially reassembling the bottle and

filling the losses using removable epoxy fills. When the bottle arrived at Lauren's work table, it was in three pieces. Lauren's goal was to complete the treatment so that the bottle could be returned to the Penn Museum. Her challenge, however, was that while the removable epoxy fills had worked well for most of the restoration, the method was not appropriate for fabricating the smaller, more oddly shaped fill pieces.

To make the final repairs, Lauren turned to another durable adhesive called Paraloid B-72. Though not quite as strong as epoxy, it is known to be more pliable. Lauren began by pouring tinted liquid Paraloid B-72 into molds and allowing the cast sheets to dry until they were flexible, but resistant to fingerprints. She then cut the sheets to fit the shape of the losses in the glass and attached them by moistening the edges with acetone, which reactivated the adhesive. After she allowed them to dry completely, Lauren finished her treatment by inpainting the fills to recreate the blue festoon design.

Lauren, who thought about becoming an archaeologist before opting instead to study art conservation, was happy to have a role in working with an object that combined at least two of her many art-related interests.

