



Winterthur Press Release

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Winterthur Teaches Cultural Heritage Preservation in Iraq

New Grants Ensure Sustainability of Institute

Amid an environment of conflict and change in Iraq, a remarkable school for the preservation of cultural heritage has united Iraqis from different religious and cultural backgrounds—and brought them together with the international community—in the common pursuit of conserving some of the world's most ancient sites and artifacts. Winterthur is honored to be part of this extraordinary endeavor, known as the [Iraqi Institute for the Conservation of Antiquities and Heritage](#) (IICAH), and to share the expertise in art conservation training we are known for throughout the world. Winterthur Director of Conservation Lois Olcott Price serves as the chair of the IICAH advisory council, which is composed of Iraqi and American cultural heritage professionals.

In a major step toward ensuring the Institute's sustainability and in preparing for its future under Iraqi leadership, the IICAH—through grants administered by the University of Delaware—has just been awarded significant funding from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation (\$400,000), the Getty Foundation (\$200,000), and the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad (\$550,000) for the support of the Institute's Conservation and Collection Care Program as well as nearly \$287,000 committed by the Governor of Erbil for its Architecture and Site Conservation Program. The funding supports an American academic director, visiting instructors, curriculum development, supplies, student stipends, and associated operating costs.

Additional funding has been given by several donors for scholarships for all eight second-year students and two master trainers (advanced students who are being trained to teach). The students receive \$1,000 for living expenses and \$2,000 for professional development, including tools and equipment, journal subscriptions, and conference or workshop attendance. The scholarships are provided by the Leon Levy Foundation; the Linda Noe Laine Foundation, to honor the memory of her parents, Governor and Mrs. Anna Gray Noe of Monroe, Louisiana; Gouhar Hazim Shemdin; and Mrs. Babe Stofer.

Founded in 2008 and located in Erbil, Iraq, the IICAH is a multi-institutional collaboration that brings experts from around the world to train Iraq's museum and heritage professionals in the preservation and conservation of their national treasures, ranging from ancient archeological sites like Babylon to artifacts like exquisite 8th-century BCE ivory figures from Nimrud. Participating institutions that work with the Iraqi board of directors include Winterthur Museum, University of Delaware, Walters Art Museum, the State Board of Antiquities and Heritage in Iraq, the Kurdish Regional Government, the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad, Getty Conservation Institute, University of Arizona, University of Pennsylvania, and UNESCO.

The continued existence of the IICAH—an endeavor that has progressed despite the challenges of operating in a war-torn country and the complications of coordinating numerous Iraqi and international

agencies—has not been a foregone conclusion. “This funding is a great vote of confidence for the work the IICAH has already done and ensures the survival of the Institute going forward through the next few years,” says Price. IICAH leaders will now be able to focus their attention on enhancing academic programs, training advanced students to teach, and promoting the Institute.

Ultimately, the goal of the IICAH board of directors and advisory council is for the Institute to become a conservation training center for the entire region. The recent funding has them well on their way.

Other IICAH news and upcoming projects:

- As a show of continuing U.S. and Iraqi commitment to the Institute, the IICAH was highlighted in a recent White House press release regarding the multi-faceted relationship between the two nations. [The release can be seen here.](#)
- Lois Olcott Price addressed the Iraqi-American Universities Conference in Washington DC, February 22–23, and met with Iraqi university presidents to explore possible partnerships in the training of Iraqi cultural heritage professionals.
- As part of Bank of America’s 2012 Art Conservation Program, the IICAH received funding to treat some of the Nimrud ivories, exquisite treasures of the ancient world that were damaged or destroyed due to poor storage under the reign of Saddam Hussein. Jessica Arista, a recent graduate of the Winterthur/University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation, will accompany Terry Drayman-Weisser, Director of Conservation at the Walters Art Museum, to Iraq to assist with treatment of the ivories and instruction in ivory conservation for IICAH students.
- The first annual meeting of the IICAH advisory council and board of directors was held in Erbil this past October. The meetings will continue, with the two groups gathering in Iraq one year and the U.S. the following year. Price will return to Erbil in April to meet with Iraqi colleagues, review the Institute’s progress, and plan for the fall meeting.
- The Institute’s top students are being trained as “master trainers” and will soon begin to serve as introductory-level faculty at the IICAH. One master trainer was awarded the prestigious Leon Levy Visiting Fellowship in the Conservation of Archeological Materials at NYU and is currently engaged in a year of advanced study side-by-side with American graduate students. The IICAH is seeking teaching stipends for the trainers as well as more opportunities for internships and training outside of Iraq.

For more information about the IICAH please see the [Institute's fact sheet](#) or visit www.artcons.udel.edu/public-outreach/iraq-institute.

Winterthur—known worldwide for its preeminent collection of American decorative arts, naturalistic gardens, and research library for the study of American art and material culture—offers a variety of tours, exhibitions, programs, and activities throughout the year. General admission includes a tour of some of the most notable spaces in the 175-room house as well as access to the Winterthur Garden and Galleries, special exhibitions, a narrated tram tour (weather permitting), the Campbell Collection of Soup Tureens, and the Enchanted Woods children’s garden. \$18 adults; \$16 for students and seniors; \$5 for ages 2–11. Tickets are valid for two consecutive days.

Winterthur is closed in 2012 from January 9 to February 29, reopening on March 1, 2012. Museum hours are 10 am to 5 pm, Tuesday–Sunday. Winterthur, located on Route 52, six miles northwest of Wilmington, Delaware, and five miles south of U.S. Route 1, is closed on Mondays (except during Yuletide), Thanksgiving, and Christmas Day. Winterthur is committed to accessible programming for all. For information, including special services, call 800.448.3883, 302.888.4600, or TTY 302.888.4907, or visit winterthur.org.
