

Science and Technology Group Annual Report FY2019

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1 Introduction

The goal of the Art Conservation Program at OIST is to contribute to the preservation and understanding of material culture through collaborations with museums. This year was focused on collaborations abroad with the Stanford University Archaeology Collections (SUAC) and with the deYoung Museum, Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco (FAMSF). The work with these institutions involved conservation treatment, artifact research, and condition assessments.

2 Activities and Findings

Conservation Treatments with the deYoung Museum

- Plate with Standing Figure Holding Decapitated Head, Ceramic, Maya, Guatemala, 600-900 A.D., 2009.38.3. This earthenware tripod vessel is decorated with an earth-toned slip painting of a figure holding a severed head. It is from the Maya Late Classic Period and was likely excavated in the Tikal region. Treatment involved partial deconstruction, reduction of discolored overpaint, reconstruction, and selected loss compensation.
- Plumbate Vessel with Old Fire God, Ceramic, Maya, Mexico/Guatemala, 900-1200 A.D., 2017.51.3. This earthenware anthropomorphic vessel has the characteristic plumbate metallic-like slip decoration. It had been previously repaired and was covered with dirty accretions. Examination included x-radiography to identify past joins. The object was carefully cleaned using aqueous solutions.
- Relief Panel Depicting Two Subservient Figures, Maya, Mexico/Guatemala, 650-800 A.D., 2005.107a-b. This pair of archaeological carved limestone panels had been previously restored using cement. The cement was deteriorating, dangerously putting stress on the limestone. Treatment involved mechanically reducing the fill material. Associated research involved Reflective Transformation Imaging and X-ray Fluorescence Spectroscopy.

Conservation Treatment with SUAC

- Twined Gathering Basket, Pomo (Native N. California), late 19th century-early 20th century, 08.1533. This plant fiber, conical, basket had been misshapen overtime. The bottom of the basket was broken in several locations, leaving it extremely fragile and unstable. Treatment involved slowly reshaping the basket, surface cleaning, and attaching supportive Japanese tissue repairs to the broken areas. A storage mount was created to support areas of loss, leaving the object in stable condition. The Pomo Nation will be consulted regarding future treatment.



Pomo Gathering Basket, SUAC, 08.1533, After Treatment

Condition Assessments at SUAC

- An overall conservation assessment was performed of the SUAC collections. The collection includes over 55,000 archaeological and anthropological artifacts, which are kept in the storage area and displayed in exhibition galleries. This project included assessing object conditions and providing recommendations for improvement in areas such as: safe environmental conditions, collections care and use policies, risk assessment, and emergency preparedness.
- Additional detailed condition surveys were performed for specific objects such as from the Jane Stanford collection and the Egyptian collection.

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American Institute for Conservation (AIC), Equity and Inclusion Committee (E&IC)

- As a member of the E&IC, I have helped plan, craft, and implement policies that strive to make AIC and the art conservation field more diverse, inclusive, accessible, and equitable for all.

3 Collaborations

• deYoung Museum, FAMSF

The goals of the deYoung Museum collaboration included conservation treatment and research of Maya artifacts. After treatment, the tripod vessel (2009.38.3) and plumbate vessel (2017.51.3) were placed on display in the *Arts of the Americas* galleries at the deYoung Museum, ensuring that they can be shared with the public.

• SUAC

The goals of the SUAC collaboration included conservation treatment, research, condition assessment, and student mentorship. I spent two semesters mentoring undergraduate student Kyra Hoolihan on the Pomo gathering basket (08.1533) project. We were able to identify most patterns and materials that are found in the basket, using objects in other local basketry collections as resources. Further analysis of the gathering basket was done using UV light, X-ray Fluorescence Spectroscopy, and microscopic examination. I provided Kyra with instruction on conservation documentation, research methods, and treatment. A workshop was conducted with basketry artist Charlene Chow to facilitate our understanding of twined basketry techniques.

• UCLA/Getty

I participated as an instructor in the Andrew W. Mellon Opportunity for Diversity in Conservation. This highly successful program is designed to introduce students from underrepresented demographics to the field of conservation.

4 Publications and other output

- *Far from the Mainland: The History and Conservation of Okinawan Ceramics*. Keynote. Presented at the 13th Pacific Rim Conference of Ceramic Societies – October 31, 2019.
- Dani, A. "Plate: Condition Report & Treatment Proposal", 2009.38.3, deYoung Museum, 2019.
- Dani, A. "Plate: Treatment Report", 2009.38.3, deYoung Museum, 2019.
- Dani, A. "Plumbate Vessel: Condition Report & Trmt Proposal", 2017.51.3, deYoung Museum, 2019.
- Dani, A. "Plumbate Vessel: Treatment Report", 2017.51.3, deYoung Museum, 2019.
- Dani, A. "Relief Panel: Condition Report & Trmt Proposal", 2005.107a-b, deYoung Museum, 2019.
- Dani, A. "Relief Panel: Treatment Report", 2005.107a-b, deYoung Museum, 2020.
- Hoolihan, K. "Twined Gathering Basket: Condition Report & Trmt Proposal", 08.1533, SUAC, 2019.
- Dani, A. "Twined Gathering Basket: Treatment Report", 08.1533, SUAC, 2020.
- Dani, A. "Conservation Assessment", SUAC, 2019.