Outreach in the Galleries

Caring out conservation activities in public spaces is a chance to showcase the preservation and public education work of conservators. Emerging conservators - from interns to recent graduates - are playing important roles in communicating these conservation activities to a curious public. Mollee Gull, a program intern at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, sees conservation in the galleries as a way to strengthen visitor interest in the museum. The Boston (Cultural) commissioning model, which pairs conservators with artists to address the conservation needs of artworks, has exposed her to a variety of conservation projects, she says. “Having been extremely popular, and because the treatments are ongoing, museum guests may be inclined to revisit the museum, and feel an investment in the fate of the artworks in our care.”

Public exposure has also been the goal for Allison Lewis, who carries out conservation treatments three days a week in a gallery at the Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Antiquities at UC Berkeley, where she works as a Professional Affiliate. During a recent public tour of the ancient Egyptian collection, she explains that nothing is more important to conservation than to have visitors speak to their friends about it. “I currently use Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and a WordPress blog. They are mostly linked to each other for ease of management.”

Private Practices Build Conservation Awareness and Opportunities

The benefits of outreach for any business is clear, but emerging conservation in private practice first that these efforts not only help to draw clients, but also to educate the public, and to connect with other members of the community. Phillips, working in private practice for 15 years, is in a position to pass on her knowledge and experience to new professionals. “I always engage with visitors. I engage with the public. I am interested to the public.”

Peter Green shows a clear example of the benefits of outreach, and how these efforts can help to build a clientele. He says that he did not have the biggest or best clientele in his first years, but rather those who had income in one’s own area and with whom one could begin to build a rapport. “I think it is absolutely essential to reach out to the public and to get to know them.”

Emerging Conservators in the Blogosphere

An army of emerging conservators are spreading the word about conservation through their blogs. Conservation students and recent graduates are connecting with online audiences for sharing news, ideas, as well as personal experiences, observations, and reflections through these social media platforms. Their blogs feature conservation treatments, conservation research, articles on conservation, interviews with professionals, and other topics that relate to conservation careers.

Alison Lewis spending time with visitors at the MFA

The ability to reach a wider audience has been a key benefit of participating in the blogosphere. Phillips says that her goal is to pute the interest of the general public, and to inform them about her field. Her website offers a “Pass yourself and join. The web is getting noisy with everyone starting up blogs and Facebook pages and Twitter accounts. Content has to be good, nice images only.”

Lars Olofsson, a graduate of the UCLA/SPG program whose practice is based in Orange County California, is exploring ways of connecting with the conservation community via the social web. He has been blogging at a personal blog, “Bringing the Museum to You,” and is considering creating a free web-based resource that offers financial support to other conservators and professional and community networks for its members. In fact, Olofsson’s outreach target has expanded to include conservation in museums, collectors, managers, students, and the general public.

Outreach to Allied Professionals

Outreach is a key part of many conservation projects and a great example to the work of the OSF Archaeological Conservation Group of UC. Lachlan Bourke, a conservator at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, has worked with the Office of National Historic Preservation and the National Trust for Historic Preservation to help generate interest and enthusiasm about conservation within the community. This has been an important part of our mission since we have known many conservators who have given us great opportunities for our funding. This will be the first we one is accepting applications for Indian’s financial awards so it is very exciting!”

Outreach to Allied Professionals: Ephemeral Nuggets on Facebook

Facebook is a great tool to be used with all kinds of conservation projects. Facebook can provide a huge amount of information to a huge amount of people. Facebook has the potential to reach anyone and connect with anyone. The OSF Archaeological Conservation Group of UC has a Facebook page which is used to broadcast updates about conservation projects. These updates include news about conservation, professional opportunities, and new research.

Emerging Conservators Connect via Social Media

Finally, one of the most effective ways emerging conservators have used outreach is to connect with one another, and network with established conservators in their communities. Mollee Gull, an emerging professional in Boston, recently connected with other emerging conservators on Facebook and Twitter. “It really helped me build a network of professionals.”

August 2011
Mike & Arielle
in Duluth, CA

Melissa Stone went on to help advertise a meeting for The Bay Area Art Conservation Group (BAA), with the help of email, Facebook, the Bar ACG blog and BAA confused with the AAA Conference.

“My recommendation to other conservators is to use professional organizations,” says Steve. “They are already established and have networks that can add members generally know of emerging conservators in the area.”

These experiences show that the best outreach tools are those that have helped start real conversations, that can emerge from professional events, and that give us a platform to share our field with the world.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS


TO FIND OUT MORE

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the upcoming Conference. To visit our accompanying blog post, or go to:

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