

Imag(in)ing the Future: The AIC Imaging Working Group



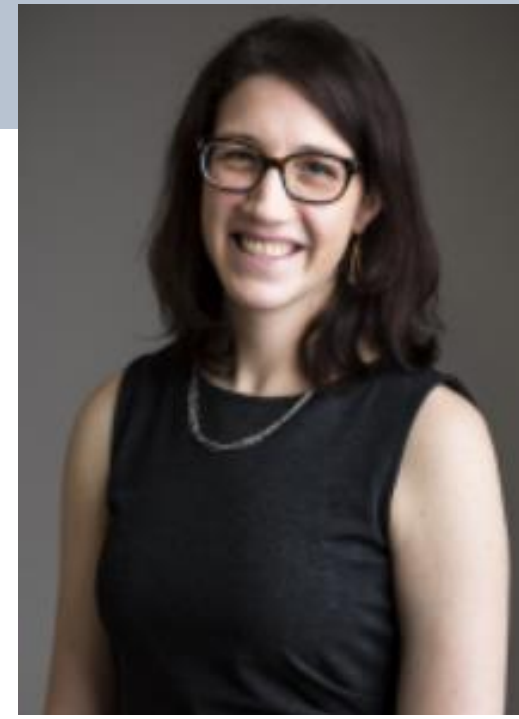
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Recognizing that imaging is important to the ethical and evolving practices of conservation, the AIC Imaging Working Group (IWG) was established in 2020. The IWG is working to identify and address the challenges conservators encounter related to imaging applications and objectives, rapidly shifting technologies, and evolving best practices. It hopes that by developing accessible resources on a nimble online platform, the community can feel empowered to actively seek solutions.

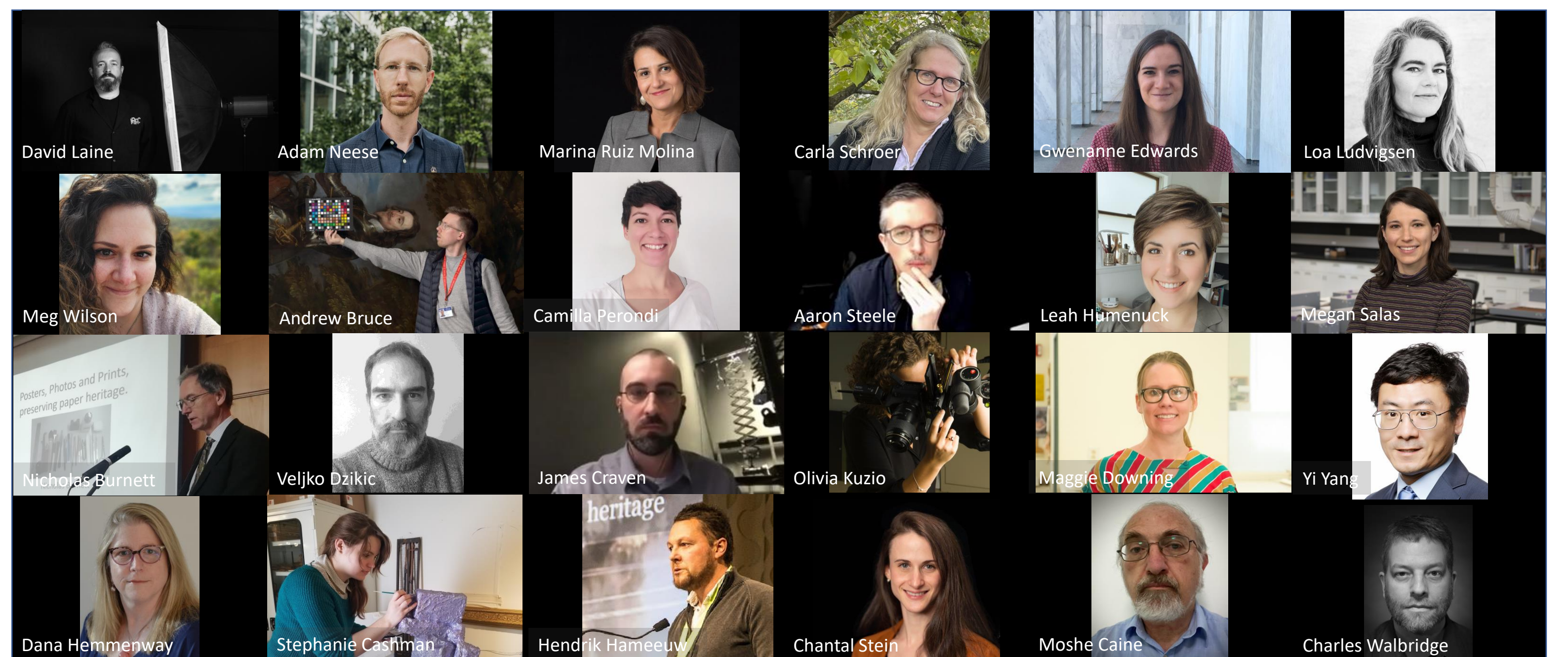
Community

The IWG is an international community of people (conservators, photographers, scientists, and more) interested in conservation and cultural heritage imaging. We prioritize communication, connection, and cross-disciplinary collaboration to develop and share resources, projects, and solutions.

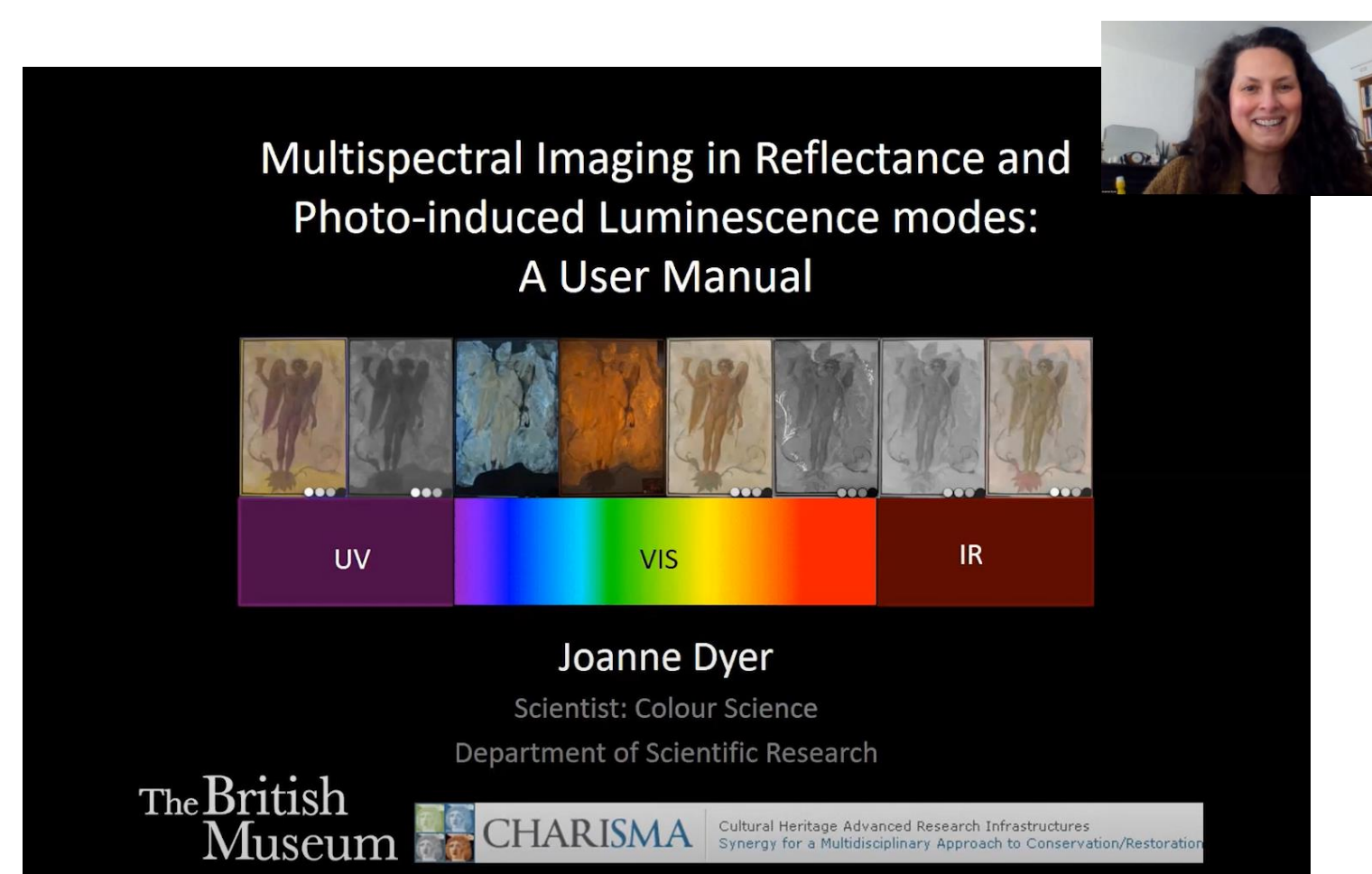
We officially kicked off the group with a meeting in October 2020 with seventy people calling in from North America, South America, Europe, and Asia. Starting during a global pandemic, we have taken advantage of the ability of virtual meetings to transcend geographical limitations and connect people from across the US and around the world. Since our inaugural meeting, we have had a series of virtual IWG meetings and gatherings. These have ranged from guest presentations on imaging-related topics, a virtual social event to connect the community, and lightning presentations for members to share projects and tips.

During the 2021 AIC/SPNHC Joint Virtual Annual Meeting, we also hosted a joint session with the Research and Technical Studies (RATS) specialty group related to the conference theme "Transform" in the context of rethinking conservation documentation and scientific imaging. The session aimed to challenge how our imaging practices reflect inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility.

Information about upcoming and past meetings and recordings of guest presenters can be accessed on the Imaging Wiki (https://www.conservation-wiki.com/wiki/IWG_Meetings).



A snapshot of some members of the IWG community.



Images from guest presentations by Dr. Joanne Dyer (left) on "Multispectral Imaging in Reflectance and Photo-induced Luminescence modes: A User Manual" (Left) and by Scott Geffert (right) on "Museum Imaging: Opportunities through standards". Recordings of the presentations can be accessed at https://www.conservation-wiki.com/wiki/IWG_Meetings#Recordings.



Wiki

In its inaugural year, the IWG created opportunities for cross-disciplinary exchange and discussions, including virtual lectures and discussions centered around emerging technologies in the field. One major effort was the compilation of a Wiki on the AIC platform which offers a resource for the community and will serve as an accessible knowledge repository and platform for resource distribution.

The presence of the IWG on the AIC Wiki aims to establish a widely accessed platform that encourages participants to share and discuss imaging resources, projects, and solutions. IWG topic groups are composed of team leads, wiki editors, and team contributors working together to develop content for the Imaging Wiki. Currently, the topic groups are primarily focused on imaging techniques, including: visible light imaging, infrared imaging, ultraviolet imaging, false-color image processing, Reflectance Transformation Imaging (RTI), 3D imaging, and X-radiography. In addition to the imaging technique topic groups, another topic group is developing resources for metadata and file naming.

Imaging Wiki link: www.conservation-wiki.com/wiki/Imaging



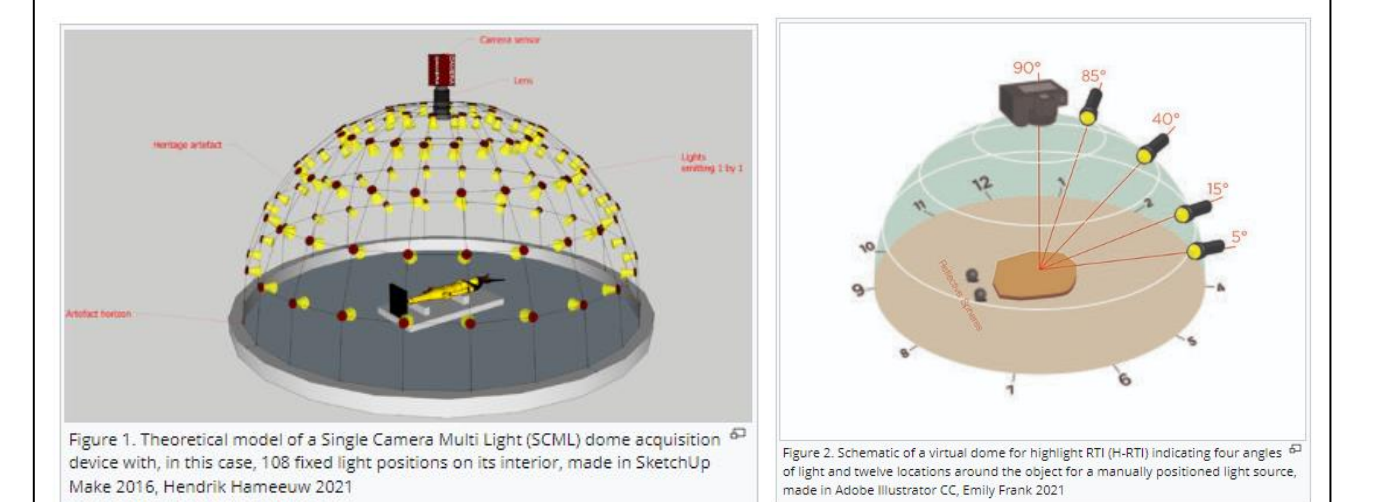
Check out the Wiki!



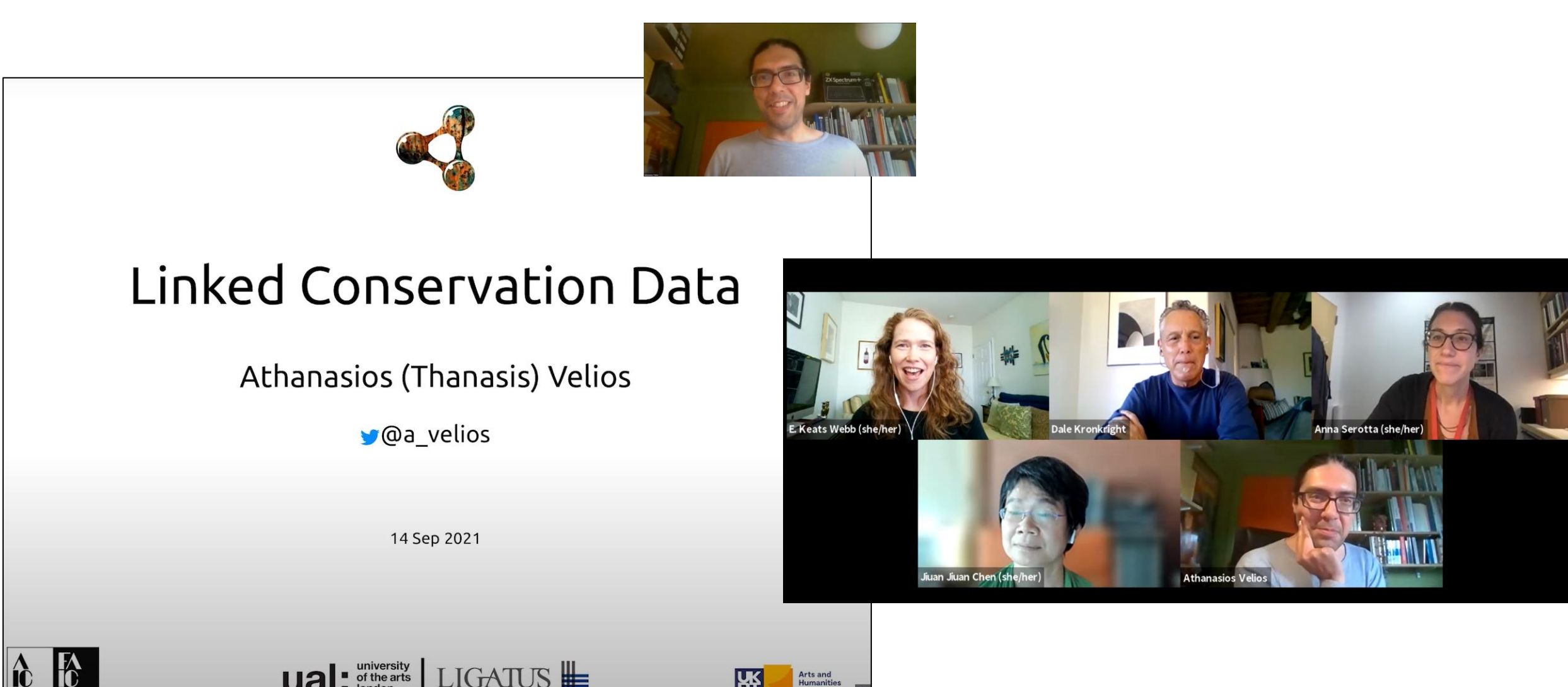
Screenshots from the Imaging Wiki

What is RTI

RTI (Reflectance Transformation Imaging) is a user-friendly, non-invasive imaging technique for the examination and documentation of cultural heritage object surfaces. In this technique, a source image set is processed into an interactive file. It allows the viewer to examine the visual appearance of an object in various lighting conditions with a range of computational enhancements, highlighting and revealing characteristics of the imaged object. Applications using this technique range from simple, accessible tools to highly calibrated scientific systems. RTI can be used for a variety of activities including documentation, access, condition monitoring, interventive conservation treatment, interactive museum displays, and research. The distinctive feature of this method is the ability to virtually re-light the imaged surface from any raking angle in a viewer interface. A processed source image set is therefore often referred to as a relightable file or image.



Imag(in)ing the Future



Images from guest presentation by Dr. Athanasios Velios on Linked Conservation Data. Recording of the presentation can be accessed at https://www.conservation-wiki.com/wiki/IWG_Meetings#Recordings.

Looking forward, the group hopes to further develop the Wiki platform and encourage the community to share and discuss imaging resources, projects, and solutions. We will also facilitate community research projects such as developing and promoting imaging standards and best practices and testing new and developing technologies. The IWG hopes to establish a sustainable, community-supported resource that can support inter- and intra-disciplinary communications centered around the ever-broadening scope of imaging technologies in the field of cultural heritage documentation.

We are excited about what we have accomplished in our first year and we are looking forward to continuing to build this community and its shared resources! If you are interested in learning more or getting involved, please take a look at the wiki (<https://www.conservation-wiki.com/wiki/Imaging>) and email AIC.ImagingWG@gmail.com.