



## FAIC Samuel H. Kress Conservation Fellowship

*NOTE: This form is provided as a MS Word form. Shaded fields will expand as you type. For best results, begin by saving the file on your computer and giving it a new name.*

### I. Institutional Information

Name of institution	Smithsonian American Art Museum (SAAM)		
Contact name and title	Tiarna Doherty, Chief of Conservation		
Mailing Address	Lunder Conservation Center, MRC 970, PO Box 37012,		
City, State, Zip	Washington, DC 20013-7012		
Phone	[phone number]	Fax	[fax number]
E-mail address	<a href="#">[email address]</a>		
Institution's website address	<a href="http://americanart.si.edu/lunder/">http://americanart.si.edu/lunder/</a>		
Fellowship supervisor(s) name and title	Helen Ingalls, Objects Conservator L. H. (Hugh) Shockey, Jr., Objects Conservator		
Department and physical location of Fellowship	SAAM Conservation Department, Lunder Conservation Center		
Dates of Fellowship	Beginning: September/October 2012 Ending: September/October 2013 Date will depend on candidate availability.		
Previous Fellowships at this institution	Has your institution hosted a Kress Conservation Fellow in the past? X Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown If yes, in what year(s)? 2009 and 2010 in Paintings Conservation		

### IIA. Fellow Information

*Complete this section only if candidate has been identified at this time. Attach curriculum vitae of candidate.*

Name of Fellow	
Training Program	
Current status at	<input type="checkbox"/> Employee <input type="checkbox"/> Intern/Fellow <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer

your institution	
Previous status at your institution	<input type="checkbox"/> Employee <input type="checkbox"/> Intern/Fellow <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer
Please describe status if any of the above boxes were checked	

**IIB. Fellow Recruitment Information**

*Complete this section only if candidate has NOT been identified at this time. Attach a position description and/or sample announcement.*

A. Please describe how the Fellowship position will be publicized.

The Kress Fellowship will be publicized as soon as possible following notification of the grant. The position will be advertised through the Conservation OnLine Distribution List, the AIC website, and the Objects Specialty Group email list. Personal emails will also be sent to professors at leading graduate school programs in the United States with the email announcement.

Sample announcement:

Kress Fellowship in Objects Conservation at the Smithsonian American Art Museum  
2012-2013

The Lunder Conservation Center at the Smithsonian American Art Museum (SAAM) is accepting applications for a Kress Fellowship in Objects Conservation. The Kress Fellowship will focus on the treatment of plaster sculpture. Plaster sculpture includes plaster casts, plaster models and solid carved plaster. There are a total of 645 plaster objects by 110 artists in the collection of the Smithsonian American Art Museum. Artists represented in the collection include: George Segal, John Rogers, Edward Kemeys, William Rimmer, George Gray Barnard, Gutzon Borglum, Jo Davidson, Chaim Gross, J-A. Houdon, Gaston Lachaise, Marisol, Ferdinand Pettrich, Augustus St. Gaudens,

Hiram Powers and Alexander Calder. Works by these artists are ~~often~~ on display and are sometimes requested for loan.

Plaster casting has played a significant role in the history of art and is part of major museum collections around the world. SAAM is developing partnerships with other museums in identifying the challenges and best protocol for the conservation and restoration of plaster sculpture.

The Kress Fellow will be encouraged to pursue avenues of research related to technical art history as well as aspects of conservation theory and ethics related to conservation treatments. A primary mission of the Lunder Conservation Center is to serve the professional and public communities through outreach. The Kress Fellow will actively participate with objects conservators and Lunder programming staff in planning a professional outreach activity related to their project(s).

B. Please describe how and by whom candidates will be evaluated and a selection made.

Application will be evaluated by a committee formed by Tiarna Doherty, Chief of Conservation, Helen Ingalls, Objects Conservator, L. H. (Hugh) Shockey, Objects Conservator, and Virginia Mecklenburg, Senior Curator of Smithsonian American Art Museum. All professional references supporting the candidates will be contacted by the Chief of Conservation during the evaluation process. Candidates who demonstrate an interest in the focus of this fellowship will be given preference.

### **III. Fellowship Information**

*If preferred, you may attach a document clearly addressing each item below.*

A. Briefly describe the Fellowship, including the scope of work to be completed.

The Kress Fellowship in Objects Conservation at the Smithsonian American Art Museum will have a focus on the conservation and restoration of plaster sculpture. The extensive collection of plaster sculpture in the Smithsonian American Art Museum is from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and includes work by 110 artists. The Smithsonian American Art Museum displays and interprets a large portion of the plaster sculpture collection in the open storage galleries of the Luce Center making them accessible to the public. Several patinated plasters are also on view in the galleries.

Plaster sculptures have played an important role in the history of art and or artistic practice. Plaster casts and models play a pivotal role in many artists' processes. They may represent an intermediate stage in the art making process or, when patinated, to be finished artworks. Often used and handled in artists' studios, the appearance of plaster models is if often very compromised on an aesthetic level. Many plaster casts have metal armatures that corrode and lead to staining of the plaster as well as structural damage to the plaster. The accumulation of grime and the materials used in previous restoration interventions may can also compromised the appearance of plaster models and plaster sculpture.

Cleaning plaster is extremely difficult due to the porous nature of the material. Aqueous cleaning systems penetrate plaster very easily and can imbed grime further and structurally weaken the plaster. Less polar solvents often are not able to solubilize the grime nor corrosion products related to metal armatures effectively and are therefore not effective in cleaning treatments.

The primary role of the Fellow will be to work with our full time conservators to develop a methodology for the treatment of the plaster sculptures. Fragments of plaster sculptures in our collections serve as ideal models for testing new methods and materials for

cleaning and consolidation treatments. The study and treatment of objects in the Luce Center will also be part of the internship. A few treatment projects of plaster sculpture from the SAAM collection will be selected in discussion with the Fellow for the fellowship year.

The treatments that take place in the objects conservation department of SAAM receive attention in group discussions related to decision making. This environment is ideal for helping young professionals explore ideas, learn how to express his or her own thoughts and questions and evaluate their work.

The Fellow, along with conservators, will work closely with curators surveying and evaluating the plaster sculpture in the collection. The Fellow will be encouraged to pursue research topics related to the treatment of plaster as well as topics of their own professional interest. This may include collaborating with curatorial departments or scientific departments depending on the project and interest of the fellow. The Fellowship supervisors would mentor the Fellow in the process of designing their research project and facilitate introductions and collaborations with professional colleagues both in and outside of the Smithsonian as deemed appropriate.

Since the conservation and restoration of plaster is a project of interest to many museum collections we will encourage the Fellow to participate in and contribute to the dialogue amongst our collaborating institutional partners. The Lunder Conservation Center will also pursue organizing a professional program(s) related to the topic of the Fellowship and encourage the Fellow to help with the organization and execution of this event (e.g. a workshop or symposium). In so doing, the Fellow will gain exposure to developing professional relationships and will be encouraged to present some of their own findings in a professional context.

The Fellow will be asked to occasionally take part in museum activities to develop an understanding of all aspects of museum work. This would include writing condition reports for loans, doing “gallery checks” (where we look for damage to artworks on view), attending staff meetings, meeting with other departments such as Registration, Design and Production, Exhibition Lighting, Packing and Shipping. While this aspect of

the Fellowship will be limited, the varied exposure to museum activities is intended to help round-out the experience of the Fellow, preparing him or her for a museum job.

B. Briefly describe the department structure in which the candidate will work.

The conservation department of the Smithsonian American Art Museum includes two full-time objects conservators, two full time paintings conservators, one full-time paper conservator, one frame conservator and a conservation technician. The conservation departments are housed in the Lunder Conservation Center, a shared facility with the National Portrait Gallery. The National Portrait Gallery has one paintings conservator, one paper conservator and one staff member who does matting and framing.

The new Chief of Conservation for the Lunder Conservation Center, a position that is part of the Smithsonian American Art Museum, is Tiarna Doherty. Tiarna is also a paintings conservator and is one of the two full time paintings conservators who work for the museum. Tiarna supervises a department of eight staff at the Smithsonian American Art Museum and works closely with colleagues in conservation from the National Portrait Gallery. Her past involvement in organizing workshops with the American Institute for Conservation as well as her own teaching experience have added to her ability to assess what the conservation profession's needs are. Tiarna has worked with numerous interns, fellows, and professionals from around the world in her career to date. She has demonstrated a commitment to research and outreach which will be further supported at the Smithsonian American Art Museum.

The objects conservation department at the Smithsonian American Art Museum is made up of two objects conservators: Helen Ingalls and L. H. (Hugh) Shockey Jr. Both Helen and Hugh have a significant amount of experience in mentoring interns and fellows. Helen has worked at the Smithsonian American Art Museum since 1991 and L. H. (Hugh) since 2005. The breadth of their treatment experience has allowed them to mentor emerging professionals and serve as consultants to professional colleagues. Helen has research specialties in the areas of American folk art; nineteenth-and twentieth-century

American sculpture; preventive conservation of acrylic urethane outdoor sculpture. Hugh has research specialties in innovative treatment methods for traditional and modern sculptural materials; including CO2 snow ablation and aqueous and solvent gel cleaning technologies; advanced adhesive system design for stabilization; treatment of composites, modern materials (plastics), new media works, and traditional sculpture materials; preventive conservation, preservation exhibit design, case design, and mountmaking.

The conservation department is part of the curatorial department at SAAM. The curatorial department for SAAM is expanding in 2012.

C. Briefly describe the work space(s) that will be available to the candidate.

The candidate will have his or her own desk space and work station (computer and phone) and they will work alongside the full-time staff members of the department in the lab spaces.

The Fellow will have access to all equipment in our conservation center including non-destructive methods of imaging (infrared reflectography capabilities and x-radiography) as well as a microscopy station and a sophisticated Hirox microscope. Access to analytical equipment is made possible through our affiliation with other Smithsonian museums and research facilities, most notably the Freer-Sackler Museum and Museum Conservation Institute.

D. Briefly describe resources that will be available to the candidate (such as analytical equipment, research materials, access to collections, personnel).

The Fellow will have access to the Archives of American Art which houses collections of artists' papers and interviews, often providing a valuable context for the study of particular artists and artistic development. Regarding artists who worked on plaster, Hiram Powers' studio tools and contents are in the museum's collection, and his records and papers are at the Archives of American Art.

SAAM has an active Fellows program in American Art which organizes numerous art historical lectures throughout the year as well as tours of art collections in Washington D.C. The conservation fellow is invited to these events and has the opportunity to develop professional relationships with this group of scholars.

The candidate will have the opportunity to collaborate with scientists at the Smithsonian Museum Conservation Institute and any collaborations with scientists at other museums or educational institutions will be encouraged.

E. Briefly describe any opportunities for professional presentations associated with the Fellowship.

Fellows in conservation at SAAM are encouraged to present at a Smithsonian-wide day for intern/fellow talks held annually at the Smithsonian Museum Conservation Institute in the summer. Fellows are also encouraged to present through the Washington Conservation Guild. We would be very supportive of working with the Fellow to produce a paper or lecture at a large venue such as a conference (e.g. the annual meeting of the American Institute for Conservation) or at a more specialized conference venue. Our former intern and Smithsonian Fellow, Laura Kubick will present at the American Institute for Conservation Annual Meeting in 2012 on 'A Comparative Study of Protective Coatings for Marble Sculpture in the Museum Setting'.



F. Briefly describe any opportunities for public outreach activities associated with the Fellowship.

During the course of the Fellowship at SAAM there will be many opportunities to engage in public outreach. Public outreach, in a broad sense, is part of the mission of the Lunder Conservation Center. We have weekly tours which we would encourage the Fellow to participate in from time to time. We are expanding the public outreach of the Lunder Conservation Center to include hosting more lectures, symposia and workshops. The Kress Fellow will be asked to participate in the organization of a program during their Fellowship year (see section III.A).

G. Briefly describe your institution's history of (or capability for) and commitment to training of conservation professionals.

All three departments of conservation: objects, paper and paintings conservation have hosted interns and are committed to offering internship opportunities in the future.

The Objects Conservation lab of SAAM has hosted a significant number of interns over the years from the conservation graduate school programs. These internships have

included both summer and third-year internships. These positions are not funded by SAAM but rather, are supported by the training programs.

When possible the conservators have applied for and have been awarded Smithsonian Institutional funding for fellowships. One third-year intern, Laura Kubick, was awarded a Smithsonian Research Fellowship for September 2010-2011. She is now an Objects Conservator at the Indianapolis Museum of Art.

The Objects Conservators at SAAM have helped support Smithsonian-wide research projects related to our collection and/or the conservation field as we believe strongly in collaboration. Our contributions include providing access to art work, information, and participation in larger initiatives, consulting on topics such as plastics and new time-based media art.

The conservation department of SAAM has received two Kress Fellowships in Paintings Conservation: one awarded to Amber Kerr-Allison in 2009 and a second one awarded to Claire Walker in 2010. In both cases, the Kress Fellowship was seen as a huge success as it allowed the conservation department to help provide a professional experience that then prepared Amber for a full-time job. Amber was hired by SAAM in 2010. Claire has been retained at SAAM from a Smithsonian Fellowship through September 2012.

While we plan to continue offering internship opportunities to conservation graduate students we recognize that Fellowships are unique positions that provide opportunities for recently trained conservators to expand in areas of research and take initiative in developing their own specializations in terms of treatment and knowledge.

[REMOVED FROM THIS SAMPLE APPLICATION: RESUME FOR TIARNA DOHERTY]



# Smithsonian American Art Museum

Elizabeth Broun  
The Margaret and Terry Stent Director

February 27, 2012

Kress Conservation Fellowships  
Foundation of the American Institute for Conservation of  
Historic and Artistic Works  
1156 15<sup>th</sup> St, NW, Suite 320  
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Selection Committee:

I am pleased to forward to you an application for a Kress Fellowship in Objects Conservation at the Lunder Conservation Center at the Smithsonian American Art Museum. The application is focused on the conservation of plaster sculpture in our collection, which range from full-scale works Hiram Powers modeled from the 1830s into the 1860s to abstract works from the 1940s by Alexander Calder and George Segal's iconic tableaus in the 1970s. We believe that studying this range of sculpture as well as the challenges posed by its preservation will make for an enriching professional year for a Kress Fellow. The Smithsonian American Art Museum conservators are committed to mentoring conservation students and emerging professionals.

Several months ago Tiarna Doherty joined the staff as chief of the museum's Lunder Conservation Center. Tiarna is recognized within the field of conservation for her contributions to research in technical art history as well as initiatives that promote professional development. Since then she has been working closely with curators and our museum administration to identify priorities both for the care of the collection and to extend and enhance our outreach activities. The Lunder Conservation Center, which we share with the National Portrait Gallery, considers outreach to both professional and public audiences to be an important component in conservation, and so is included as a key element in the program proposed here for a Kress Fellow.

Thank you to the Kress Foundation and the FAIC for considering this application.

Sincerely, [Signature Removed]



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