Art conservation is... a rewarding career that brings together the worlds of art, history, technology, science, and craft. Art conservators are part of a larger professional community devoted to preserving our tangible and intangible cultural heritage. Read more on AIC’s website.

Who, what, why? Learn more about the role and responsibilities of art conservators here and here to understand the basic principles that guide our practice. You can gain insight into our day-to-day work via social media feeds: AIC, IIC, ICOM-CC, ICON, CAC, ICCROM

What are all those acronyms?! The acronyms listed above represent national and international professional organizations that support conservation communities. These organizations provide programming, educational opportunities, and professional resources. They also facilitate knowledge exchange and advocacy work, and help to establish professional standards. Explore their websites for more information on opportunities in the field!

Conservation vs. restoration vs. preservation. Visit the ICOM-CC and AIC Terminology pages to get a handle on some of the basic terminology in the conservation field (note: definitions vary country by country!)

Want to become a conservator?

How? Advanced training is required. In the US, this is commonly pursued through graduate school. Program applicants must first complete coursework in studio art, science, and art history, archaeology, or anthropology. Candidates may also acquire hands-on experience in conservation through technician positions or internships.

This initial training phase is called “pre-program.” Visit the Become A Conservator page to learn about the stages of training, and the ECPN Wiki for information on starting a career in conservation. Also check out ICON’s "10 Traits to Succeed in Conservation" and ECPN’s article on getting started in the field.

Connect with the conservation community. AIC has a “Find a Conservator” search tool, which can be used to contact local professionals. AIC and ECPN also host networking events and online communities (see sidebar).

Find opportunities. Visit ECPN’s Wiki for a list of websites for finding internships and jobs.