

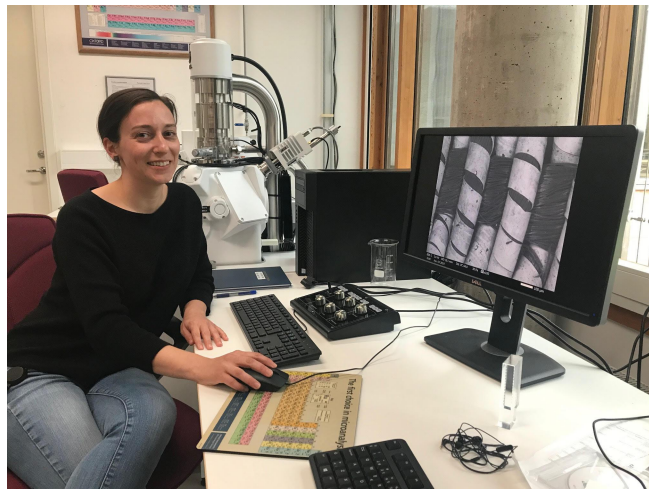


Emerging  
Conservation  
Professionals  
Network

Each month, ECPN is proud to introduce one of our amazing Specialty Group Liaisons. Specialty Group Liaisons are volunteers who serve as an intermediary between emerging conservation professionals who are interested in or part of the specialty group they represent. To learn more about ECPN liaisons contact the ECPN Outreach Officers at [ecpn.aic.outreach@gmail.com](mailto:ecpn.aic.outreach@gmail.com) or visit [ECPN's website](#).

For our June feature, we would like to introduce our Research and Technical Studies Specialty Group liaison, Elyse Canosa. Elyse has a background in materials science and engineering and is a researcher and scientific advisor at the Swedish National Heritage Board.

Photo (right): Using the scanning electron microscope at the Swedish National Heritage Board, Elyse Canosa helps to investigate the effects of cleaning 18 th century silver-wrapped silk textiles.



## **1. Of all the specializations, why did you decide to pursue research and technical studies/conservation science?**

I learned about conservation and conservation science during my final year as an undergraduate student in materials science and engineering. It felt like a sudden revelation when I discovered that I could combine my interests in science and art while making a career out of it. As a materials science student, I was interested in understanding the fundamental properties of different materials and their deterioration mechanisms. After learning about conservation science, I translated that interest over to cultural heritage materials. Soon after completing my undergraduate degree, I was lucky enough to do a summer internship with research scientists at the Smithsonian's Museum Conservation Institute, which really cemented my interest in seeking out conservation science as a career.

## **2. Are there any particular skills that you feel are important or unique to your discipline?**

As conservation science is a research-heavy field, it is generally necessary to have a PhD in either engineering or one of the physical sciences (i.e. physics, chemistry, etc.). It is also good to

have experience with multiple material characterization techniques, both organic and inorganic. Conservation scientists certainly have their own research interests and specializations, but often receive questions about a wide range of cultural heritage materials that might require several different analytical techniques. Because of this, it's good to be flexible and willing to explore new topics or new instrumentation.

### **3. What has been your favorite treatment or activity within your specialty?**

A lot of my recent work as a researcher and scientific advisor at the Swedish National Heritage Board has been really fascinating. In 2017 and 2018 I worked with conservators at Nationalmuseum in Stockholm while they were undergoing a very extensive, multi-year renovation. I was implementing air sampling tests at different points during the renovation to monitor for changes in indoor air quality and was testing construction materials for gaseous emissions that might affect collection objects. It was very rewarding to do something that directly impacted the museum. Additionally, it was really interesting to observe the building transform over time while learning about all the details and hard work that go into such a huge undertaking.

### **4. Do you have any advice for someone interested in specializing in your discipline?**

If you are a student or working as a scientist, reach out to local museums or conservators. If possible, volunteer some hours working in a conservation studio to learn about the ethics and practical elements of working with cultural heritage. Conservation science is inherently collaborative, so it's always good to integrate cross-disciplinary practices into your work as much as possible.

It is also quite a competitive field in the sense that there is a lot of interest but little funding for projects and positions. That said, one of the great things about conservation science is that research comes from so many different angles and sources, including academia, industry, and small businesses. Don't be afraid to get creative in finding new ways to maintain connections to cultural heritage research, even if you cannot dedicate 100% of your work directly to conservation science.