

How the west was won: Charles Muskavitch, James Roth, and the arrival of 'scientific' art conservation in the western United States¹

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For various reasons, the history of art conservation in the United States has yet to receive systematic study as a whole.² Nearly everything published to date has focused on the major figures and institutions of the Northeast.³ In contrast, the

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² In this article I focus exclusively on the conservation of artworks (paintings, sculptures, prints, textiles, etc.), rather than on archaeological materials or architectural preservation. For a history of the former, see Niccolo Leo Caldararo, 'An outline history of conservation in archaeology and anthropology as presented through its publications', *Journal of the American Institute for Conservation* 26: 2, Autumn 1987, 85-104; on the latter, John H. Stubbs and Emily G. Makaš, *Architectural conservation in Europe and the Americas*, Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons, 2011.

³ Important recent studies include: Barbara Whitney Keyser, 'Technical studies and visual values: Conservation and connoisseurship at the Fogg Museum 1900–1950', in Janet Bridgland, ed., *ICOM committee for conservation, 12th triennial meeting, Lyon, 29 August-3 September 1999*, 2 vols, vol. 1, London: James and James, 1999, 172-176; Ron Spronk, 'Standing on the shoulders of giants: The early years of conservation and technical examination of Netherlandish paintings at the Fogg Art Museum', in Molly Faries and Ron Spronk, eds, *Recent developments in the technical examination of early Netherlandish painting: Methodology, limitations, and perspectives*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Art Museums, 2003, 39-56; Mark Aronson, 'The conservation history of the early Italian collection at Yale', in Patricia Sherwin Garland, ed., *Early Italian paintings: Approaches to conservation. Proceeding of a symposium at the Yale University Art Gallery, April 2002*, New Haven and London: Yale



Figure 1 Charles Muskavitch, c. 1938/39. Courtesy of the Charles Muskavitch archive.

history of conservation in the western U.S. – herein defined as everywhere west of the Mississippi River – remains almost entirely uncharted and largely unrecorded prior to the last thirty to forty years, when the Western Association for Art Conservation (WAAC; formed in 1974) began publishing its *Newsletter* and holding regular annual meetings, and the Getty Conservation Institute was founded in Los Angeles (in 1983), dramatically raising the profile of conservation in the West. As a corrective, this article seeks to recuperate and reassess the careers of the first two modern, 'scientific' conservators in the American West: Charles M. Muskavitch (1904–2001) and James B. Roth (1910–1990) (figs 1, 2). Before 1967 they were virtually the only professional conservators in the region – in other words, their stories *are* the formative history of western U.S. conservation.⁴

University Press, 2003, 30-53; Joyce Hill Stoner, 'Changing approaches in art conservation: 1925 to the present', in *Scientific examination of art: Modern techniques in conservation and analysis. National academy of sciences, Washington, D.C., March 19–21, 2003*, Washington, DC: National Academies Press, 2005, 40-57 (cursory but useful); Francesca G. Bewer, *A laboratory for art: Harvard's Fogg Museum and the emergence of conservation in America, 1900–1950*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard Art Museum, 2010 (superlative); and Lawrence Becker and Deborah Schorsch, 'The practice of objects conservation in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (1870–1942)', *Metropolitan Museum Studies in Art, Science, and Technology* 1, 2010, 11-37.

⁴ Around 1940 a third, evidently self-trained conservator (and thus a marginal case) began working at the Museum of Fine Arts (MFA) of Houston, and in 1963 a trainee of Roth's began working independently in St Louis – both are discussed below. Otherwise, Muskavitch and Roth were the only conservators in the West until early 1967, when Benjamin B. Johnson (1938–1990), one of the very first conservators in North America to hold a degree in the subject (he had graduated from the Conservation Center at the Institute of

Seth Adam Hindin How the west was won: Charles Muskavitch, James Roth,
and the arrival of 'scientific' art conservation ...

Both men were art-schooled painters from modest origins, without any preliminary art historical or scientific training, who went on to study conservation at Harvard University's Fogg Art Museum; both founded museum conservation departments (Muskavitch twice) and for many years were their sole members, while



Figure 2 James Roth, c. 1940s. Courtesy of The Nelson–Atkins Museum of Art Archive.

also maintaining private practices. Between their first conservation positions in the later 1930s and their retirements in the early 1970s, both remained peripheral to powerful East Coast professional networks. Yet their personalities and careers could not be more different. Muskavitch was a dynamic if protean figure who overcame both physical challenges and an immigrant background to attain professional success and a modicum of local fame through a combination of gumption, assimilation, and tireless self-promotion, only to be virtually forgotten after his retirement. He joined the staff of the Dallas Museum of Fine Arts (since 1984 the Dallas Museum of Art) soon after its building opened in 1936, and, with support from its director, sought to mould it into a kind of 'western Fogg', with mixed success. It was perhaps through his parallel private practice that Muskavitch was first employed in 1939 by the Edwin Bryant Crocker Art Gallery in Sacramento,

Fine Arts, New York University, in 1964) founded a laboratory at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

California (since 1978 the Crocker Art Museum); soon thereafter he relocated to Sacramento and spent the remainder of his career at the Crocker, while also handling private commissions throughout California and founding a pioneering conservation education program at the University of California, Davis.⁵ In contrast, Roth was a modest, hard-working, rather provincial man who never lived outside his home state of Missouri, save for three crucial months of training at the Fogg in 1938. His decades of continuous practice at the William Rockhill Nelson Gallery of Art in Kansas City (since 1983 the Nelson–Atkins Museum of Art) can be credited with helping to raise that museum's national profile and to more firmly establish art conservation in Missouri and beyond. Ironically, even though Roth eschewed the limelight nearly as vigorously as Muskavitch sought it out, today Roth is more widely remembered because in the last decade of his career he trained several apprentices and participated in key professional conferences, whereas Muskavitch never mentored career-track trainees (though he was deeply concerned with conservation outreach and education) and remained aloof from most conservation contemporaries.

Their missionary efforts for 'scientific' conservation in the American West were aided by the fact that there were no established art restorers (the 'unscientific' precursors of modern conservators) working within a vast area of some 5.5 million square km (2.1 million sq. miles) – roughly the size of Europe – that was home to about 30% of the country's total population (1930 U.S. census).⁶ When required, treatments were undertaken by local artists (chiefly painters) without special training, or by visiting restorers from the Northeast hired on a project basis.⁷ This is understandable considering that before 1920 there were only six art museums in the western U.S., and in 1945 still fewer than twenty.⁸ Moreover, the vast majority of the

⁵ I discuss Muskavitch's post-war career in California, and especially his efforts at UC Davis, in a separate article: Seth Adam Hindin, 'Art conservation between theory and practice: The Laboratory for Research in the Fine Arts and Museology at the University of California, Davis, 1960–1978', *Journal of the American Institute for Conservation* 54: 1, February 2015, forthcoming.

⁶ The area of the western U.S. (from which I exclude Alaska and Hawaii, which did not become states until 1959) is equivalent to that of Europe, excluding Ukraine and European Russia.

⁷ For example, during the 1930s the New York-based German-American conservator William (also Wilhelm) Suhr (1896–1984) visited San Francisco to treat paintings at the M. H. de Young Memorial Museum at the behest of curator Walter Heil (1890–1973), with whom he had previously worked at the Detroit Institute of Arts c. 1927–32.

⁸ By 'art museum' I refer here specifically to a permanent (not provisional) space or building displaying a permanent collection of original artworks, not merely loans and/or reproductions. By this definition, the six oldest art museums in the western U.S. are: the Crocker Art Gallery in Sacramento (opened 1885); the M. H. de Young Memorial Museum in San Francisco (opened 1894); the City Art Museum of St Louis (opened 1904); the Portland (Oregon) Art Museum (opened 1905, but permanent collection begun 1911); the Minneapolis

artworks in these museums, and in all but a handful of private collections, had been manufactured in the nineteenth century or later, and therefore were predominantly still in good condition, despite the fact that maintaining a benign museum environment was rarely of great concern, even in the arid and widely fluctuating climate of much of the region. In other words, unlike the eastern U.S., collections of older art developed in the West in tandem with modern art conservation itself. However, this had its drawbacks as well: Muskavitch and Roth found themselves professionally isolated and frustrated by collectors that did not always place a priority on proper care and treatment of their artworks.

In what follows, I shall briefly review the formation of conservation as a 'scientific' discipline in the twentieth century before tracing the careers of Roth and Muskavitch from their initial training in the 1930s through the Second World War, emphasizing the outsized roles that class, gender, disability, and regional bias played in shaping their professional lives and later reception (or lack thereof). My narrative has inevitably been conditioned by the available sources: Muskavitch spoke freely and frequently (though sometimes falsely) to the media, whereas Roth left behind a relatively limited public record of his work. Moreover, even if Roth's technical skills were more highly estimated by his most powerful contemporaries, I believe that Muskavitch was ultimately a more consequential figure due to his innovative work in conservation outreach and education. For both of these reasons, I have treated Muskavitch's career in greater detail. However, because I have written elsewhere about Muskavitch's activities after the war, I shall end my study with a brief look at Roth's later career, after 1945.⁹

Institute of Arts (opened 1915); and the Oakland Art Gallery (opened 1916). To this pre-1920 group one might add three more marginal cases. First, the Leland Stanford Jr Museum at Stanford University opened in 1894 but was largely destroyed by the earthquake of 1906, and closed in 1945. It reopened only in the 1960s at the impetus of art historian Lorenz Eitner (1919–2009) and was refounded in 1999 as the Iris and B. Gerald Cantor Center for Visual Arts. See Carol Margot Osborne, *Museum builders in the west: The Stanfords as collectors and patrons of art, 1870–1906*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Museum of Art, 1986. Second, the Museum of New Mexico had a Fine Arts building that was completed in 1917 but which held little of significance until after 1945. (It was used chiefly for loan exhibitions by local artists.) Third, one might arguably include the Los Angeles Museum of History, Science and Art (opened 1910), a universal museum whose visual arts holdings were scant and rather neglected until after 1945, and were spun off into an independent institution only in 1965, as the Los Angeles County Museum of Art; see Nancy Moure, 'The struggle for a Los Angeles art museum, 1890–1940', *Southern California Quarterly* 74: 3, Fall 1992, 247–275. A useful if breezy overview of western U.S. museums is Nathaniel Burt, *Palaces for the people: A social history of the American art museum*, Boston: Little, Brown, 1977, 374–400.

⁹ Hindin, 'Art conservation between theory and practice'.

Prolegomenon: The emergence of 'scientific' art conservation in the U.S. before World War II

Whereas a vast literature on the history of art conservation in Europe has accrued for a half-century or longer, far less has been said about North America and other parts of the world. Despite substantial contributions made over the past several decades by Joyce Hill Stoner, Francesca Bewer, and others, a general history of U.S. art conservation has yet to be written, even if – and perhaps because – the broad outlines of its master narrative are widely known to practising conservators, induced from foundational reading and transmitted as professional lore during apprenticeships.¹⁰ However, this quasi 'guild history' remains obscure to most museum curators, art historians and critics, artists, historians of science, and other potentially interested (and invested) constituencies, and thus merits abbreviated rehearsal here.

In an expansive sense, the history of conservation is practically as old as the history of art itself: from time immemorial artworks were cleaned, repaired, mended, and altered in various ways by artists and non-artists alike.¹¹ Interventions were ad hoc and prompted by perceived distortion or deterioration of an artwork, rather than being prophylactic. At least in the Western tradition, apart from sporadic passages in artists' handbooks, there was no endeavour to share, codify, and improve procedures and practices of restoration, nor was there an articulated or agreed upon body of knowledge, theory, philosophy, or ethics.¹² The expansion of the art market and the rise of museums meant that by the later eighteenth century there were self-proclaimed 'restorers' in full- or part-time private practice, some of whom were self-taught, others of whom had apprenticed, usually to a family member; most were also practising artists.¹³ By the mid-nineteenth century, the

¹⁰ The profession's current historiographic reliance (in my estimation, overreliance) on self-reported war stories and workshop lore is epitomised in the oral history archive established in 1975 by the Foundation of the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works; for a description, see Joyce Hill Stoner, 'An oral history archive', *Museum News* 55: 6, July-August 1977, 9-12.

¹¹ For example, see Michelangelo Cagiano de Azevedo, 'Conservazione e restauro presso i greci e i romani', *Bolletino dell'Istituto Centrale del Restauro* 9-10, 1952, 53-60, and Cathleen Hoeniger, *The renovation of paintings in Tuscany, 1250–1500*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995. Additional studies of this type would be most welcome.

¹² Histories of restoration in non-Western visual traditions before the 1960s (when Western conservation practices began to be globalised) have yet to be written.

¹³ On European art restoration before 1900, some of the most important recent monographs include: Alessandro Conti, *A history of the restoration and conservation of works of art*, trans. Helen Glanville, Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann, 2007 (focusing almost exclusively on Italy, despite the general title); Ann Massing, *Painting restoration before 'La Restauration': The origins of the profession in France*, *Painting and practice* 3, London: Harvey Miller, 2012; and Noémie Etienne, *La restauration des peintures à Paris, 1750–1815: Pratiques et discours sur la*

adoption of new, synthetic pigments by artists and the disciplinary emergence of art history prompted inquiries into historical artistic materials and methods of facture, leading to several important early studies and editions, such as those of Charles Eastlake (1793–1865) and Mary Philadelphia Merrifield ('Mrs Merrifield') (1804/05–1889) in England.¹⁴

This state of affairs was transformed dramatically over the course of the twentieth century – but particularly between about 1925 and 1960 – by a relatively small number of men (and arguably one woman, Caroline Keck) who, through the force of their ideas, organizational assiduity, and borrowed or inherited social

matérialité des oeuvres d'art, Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2012. Also see the essays collected in: *Geschichte der Restaurierung in Europa / Histoire de la restauration en Europe. Akten des internationalen Kongresses 'Restauriergeschichte' / Actes du congrès international 'Histoire de la restauration', Interlaken 1989*, 2 vols, Worms: Wernersche Verlagsgesellschaft, 1991; *Geschichte der Restaurierung in Europa / Histoire de la restauration en Europe. Akten des internationalen Kongresses 'Restauriergeschichte' / Actes du congrès international 'Histoire de la restauration', Interlaken 1991*, 2 vols, Worms: Wernersche Verlagsgesellschaft, 1993; Christine Sitwell and Sarah Staniforth, eds, *Studies in the history of painting restoration*, London: Archetype Publications in association with The National Trust, 1998; Andrew Oddy and Sandra Smith, eds, *Past practice – future prospects*, British Museum occasional paper 145, London: British Museum, 2001; *Technè 27-28*, 2008 (themed issue: 'De l'artiste au restaurateur: Regards sur l'émergence d'une profession'); and Isabelle Brajer, ed., *Conservation in the nineteenth century*, London: Archetype Publications, 2013. For the UK, see the selective directory of British picture restorers, 1630–1950, organised by Jacob Simon at the National Portrait Gallery and first released online in March 2009: <http://www.npg.org.uk/research/programmes/directory-of-british-picture-restorers.php> [accessed 15 September 2013]. Canadian 'restorers' are discussed in Mervyn M. Ruggles, 'History of conservation in Canada: Development to the early 1970's [sic]', *Journal of the International Institute for Conservation – Canadian Group* 5: 1-2, 1980, 3-12, at 3-8. A similar study of American 'restorers' of the eighteenth through mid-twentieth centuries (many of whom trained in Europe) remains a desideratum. For now, see Joyce Hill Stoner, Karol Schmiegel and Janice H. Carlson, 'A portrait by C. W. Peale restored by C. Volkmar: Techniques of an 18th-century artist and a 19th-century restorer', in *Preprints of papers presented at the seventh annual meeting: Toronto, Canada, 30 May-1 June 1979*, Washington, DC: American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works, 1979, 139-148; Joyce Hill Stoner, 'The legacy of William Suhr: From Berlin to New York', in Isabelle Sourbès-Verger, ed., *ICOM committee for conservation, 14th triennial meeting, The Hague, 12-16 September 2005: Preprints*, 2 vols, vol. 2, London: James and James, 2005, 1040-1045; Ann Hoenigswald, 'Stephen Pichetto, conservator of the Kress Collection, 1927-1949', in *Studying and conserving paintings: Occasional papers on the Samuel H. Kress Collection*, London: Archetype, 2006, 30-41; and Bewer, *A laboratory for art*, 148, 155-157, 175, 179-186 (on Roger Arcadius Lyon).

¹⁴ See the essays collected in Heinz Althöfer, ed., *Das 19. Jahrhundert und die Restaurierung. Beiträge zur Malerei, Maltechnik und Konservierung*, Munich: Callwey, 1987, as well as the concise discussion in Bewer, *A laboratory for art*, 42-46. On Eastlake, see David Robertson, *Sir Charles Eastlake and the Victorian art world*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978.

capital, were able to refashion an often dubious craft practice into a respected, intellectualised profession, on par with museum curatorship and closely allied with the academically established disciplines of chemistry, art history, and studio art. This transformation can be roughly divided into two phases of about fifteen years each, punctuated by the 1939–45 war, a caesura which paradoxically helped to reify the incipient profession. Here I shall focus only on the first period, from about 1925 to 1940, in order to better situate the careers of Muskavitch and Roth within the wider historical and professional framework in which they developed and unfolded.

During the first three decades of the century, European chemists like Arthur Pillans Laurie (1861–1949) in Scotland, Alexander Eibner (1862–1935) in Germany, and the precocious Angenitus Martinus de Wild (1899–1969) in the Netherlands applied scientific methods to the study of paints and paintings, building on earlier efforts.¹⁵ Their American counterpart, Maximilian Toch (1864–1946), courted media controversy by using such analyses to authenticate and disattribute old masters.¹⁶ X-ray photographs (invented in 1895) came into widespread use for the study of artworks, especially to reveal prior restorations; they were championed in the U.S. by Alan Burroughs (1897–1965), who believed these 'shadowgraphs' offered fresh insights into the creative process of painting.¹⁷ Brahmin art collector Edward Waldo Forbes (1873–1969), director from 1909 to 1944 of the William Hayes Fogg Art Museum at his family college, Harvard, was perhaps the first art historian and curator to take a serious interest in these developments: he regularly taught an innovative seminar on the 'Methods and Processes of Painting' and delivered a seminal address on 'The Technical Study and Physical Care of Paintings' at the 1920 meeting of the College Art Association (subsequently published in its new journal, *Art Bulletin*).¹⁸ In 1925 Forbes invited Burroughs, a Harvard alumnus, to continue his X-ray experiments under the Fogg's auspices.¹⁹ This growing interest in the technical examination of artworks and the chemical study of paints and varnishes

¹⁵ Stephen G. Rees-Jones, 'Early experiments in pigment analysis', *Studies in Conservation* 35: 2, May 1990, 93-101; Jilleen Nadolny, 'The first century of published scientific analyses of the materials of historical painting and polychromy, circa 1780–1880', *Reviews in Conservation* 4, 2003, 39-51. On Eibner and his legacy, see http://www.doernerinstitut.de/en/geschichte/geschichte_1.html [accessed 15 September 2013].

¹⁶ His nephew was Ralph Mayer (1895–1979), author of the widely read *Artist's handbook of materials and techniques*, first published in 1940.

¹⁷ *Edward Waldo Forbes: Yankee visionary*, Cambridge, MA: Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University, 1971, 132-139. Burroughs was the son of Metropolitan Museum of Art paintings curator Bryson Burroughs (1864–1939).

¹⁸ Edward W. Forbes, 'The technical study and physical care of paintings', *Art Bulletin* 2: 3, March 1920, 160-170. On Forbes, see *Edward Waldo Forbes*.

¹⁹ Bewer, *A laboratory for art*, 95-104, 198-201. While at the Fogg, Burroughs assembled an archive of around 4,000 'shadowgraphs' of paintings from museums throughout the U.S. and Europe.

culminated in a major international conference on the 'Study of Scientific Methods Applied to the Examination and Conservation of Works of Art', organised by the International Museums Office of the League of Nations's International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation (effectively the predecessors of ICOM and UNESCO, respectively) and held in Rome in October 1930.²⁰ This might plausibly be considered the inaugural moment of art conservation in the modern sense.

Although earlier a handful of European chemists had formed museum-based laboratories to conduct research into the preservation and decay of archaeological finds, this model was adopted by an art museum only in 1928, when Forbes hired chemist Rutherford John Gettens (1900–1974) to work in the Fogg's new building at 32 Quincy Street, joining painter George Leslie Stout (1897–1978), who had been hired a year earlier to teach and study historical materials and techniques and who studied with a local restorer (Charles Durham) to become, retrospectively, the *ur*-paintings conservator.²¹ Together they formed the nucleus of a new Research Department (soon renamed the Department of Conservation and Technical Research) that Stout advertised at the 1930 Rome conference, where he was the sole American participant.²² Over the next five years at least seven similar 'laboratories' were founded in London (National Gallery, under F. I. G. Rawlins;

²⁰ About 125 representatives from at least twenty nations attended, and around fifty papers were given. No proceedings were issued, but some papers were published in *Museion* 13/14 and 15, 1931; also see a summary in Harold J. Plenderleith, 'The examination and preservation of paintings: A digest', *Museums Journal* 32, 1932, 308-310, 349-351, and 388-389. For one participant's impressions, see George L. Stout, 'The technical conference at Rome', *Fogg Art Museum Notes* 2: 6, June 1931, 330-332. Also see Bewer, *A laboratory for art*, 150-153.

²¹ The three earliest museum-based laboratories were at the Königliches Museum in Berlin, under Friedrich Rathgen (formed in 1888); the Nationalmuseet in Copenhagen, under Gustav A. T. Rosenberg (formed in 1896); and the British Museum in London, under Alexander Scott (formed in 1919/20). On Rathgen, see Mark Gilberg, 'Friedrich Rathgen: The father of modern archaeological conservation', *Journal of the American Institute for Conservation* 26: 2, Autumn 1987, 105-120. Similar studies of the Copenhagen and British Museum labs remain desiderata. On the new Fogg Art Museum building (which opened on 20 June 1927) and its goals, see Kathryn Brush, *Vastly more than brick and mortar: Reinventing the Fogg Art Museum in the 1920s*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Art Museums, 2003. On Stout, see his obituary by John B. Hench in *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* 88: 2, October 1978, 184-186; on Gettens, see his obituary in *Ars Orientalis* 10, 1975, 194-205, and the poignant memorial by George L. Stout in *Bulletin of the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works* 15: 1, November 1974, 3-4.

²² The standard history is now Bewer, *A laboratory for art*. The Research Department was just one among several innovations encouraged by Forbes, who sought to transform the new Fogg into a cutting-edge institution for teaching and research. In addition to Bewer's recent book and the publications of Kathryn Brush, the innovations of the Fogg during the 1920s and 1930s will also be the focus of an upcoming monograph co-authored by Andrew McClellan and Sally Anne Duncan, provisionally titled *Making museum men: Paul J. Sachs and the museum course at Harvard*.

Seth Adam Hindin How the west was won: Charles Muskavitch, James Roth,
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Courtauld Institute, under P. D. Ritchie), Paris (Louvre, under Jacques Dupont), Brussels (Musées royaux d'art et d'histoire, under Paul Coremans), and the north-eastern U.S. (Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, under William J. Young; Brooklyn Museum, under Sheldon Keck; Walters Art Gallery in Baltimore, under David Rosen and Harold Ellsworth) that united active scientific research into artistic materials (both novel and traditional) with the practical restoration of artworks, the aspiration being for science and practice to mutually inform one another.²³ The staff of these laboratories, along with a handful of curators, scientists, and sympathetic 'restorers' of the old tradition, were the main external contributors to *Technical Studies in the Field of the Fine Arts* (hereafter *Technical Studies*), founded in 1932 as the house organ of the Fogg's laboratory, and the first journal worldwide dedicated specifically to art conservation. In turn, the 1930 Rome conference, *Technical Studies* (published regularly until 1942), and the experiences of the 1939–45 war laid the groundwork for the codification and institutionalization of 'orthodox' or 'normative' art conservation in April 1950, when the International Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (IIC) was incorporated in London; two years later, it began issuing *Studies in Conservation* and *IIC Abstracts* as successors to *Technical Studies*.²⁴

Meanwhile, in the U.S., the aforementioned museum laboratories became founts of a new breed of 'scientific' conservator, who trained informally at the lab (or privately with its members), usually while working a menial museum job.²⁵ These student volunteers – who usually had (or were working towards) a degree in art history – not only received the requisite manual training and craft skills that previously would have been absorbed through apprenticeship to a 'restorer' (some of whom now worked in museum laboratories), but also imbibed the fundamentals of chemistry and materials science; the use of basic technical apparatus (e.g., X-ray machines, ultraviolet lamps, stereomicroscopes) and technical photography, including the cautious interpretation of their often ambiguous results; and the canonical body of appropriately 'scientific' literature (largely written by figures mentioned above). The terminological preference for 'conservator' and 'laboratory'

²³ On the London laboratories, see Harold J. Plenderleith, 'A history of conservation', *Studies in Conservation* 43: 3, 1998, 129-143, at 130-135.

²⁴ The founding of the IIC is discussed in Plenderleith, 'A history of conservation', 129-143, at 135-137; also see Bewer, *A laboratory for art*, 249-251.

²⁵ Unlike Europe, there were no established master-pupil (often familial) lineages of 'restorers' in the U.S.; rather, they were self-taught or had trained in Europe. This lack paved the way for the emergence of museum-based laboratories as the main conservation training centres between about 1930 and 1970. However, it must be noted that a handful of European-trained 'restorers' adapted to the new role of 'conservator' (e.g., David Rosen, William Suhr), and that many museum laboratories (including the Fogg Art Museum) employed one or more 'restorers', whose traditions thereby merged into the mainstream of modern 'conservation'.

in place of the customary 'restorer' and 'studio' was meant to signal an epistemic reorientation toward the reproducible empiricism of the natural sciences (if tempered by the humanistic understanding that science cannot hold all of the answers about art), and away from the subjective, contingent, and sometimes hermetic tradition of 'restorers'.

Finally, the emergence and rapid expansion of art conservation in the pre-war period must be understood in the context of broader cultural and artistic currents. On the one hand, the number of art museums in the U.S. increased rapidly during the 1920s and 1930s, tied to the deaths of Gilded Age tycoons (and their widows and heirs), the expansion of the federal income tax after the 1914–18 war, the increased social status of art collecting and museum patronage among elites, and the intensifying belief that public art museums augmented municipal lustre.²⁶ Accessions to these new museums (and to a growing number of private collections) often required cleaning or other treatments, and, ideally, would have an ongoing caretaker who could also act as 'scientific' advisor. This led to a growing demand for conservators; at the same time, older museums opened laboratories to study and care for their growing collections.²⁷ On the other hand, science and scientism had a rising profile in the U.S. as new discoveries were discussed in the daily press, renowned but persecuted European scientists like Albert Einstein and Enrico Fermi added new star power to American universities, 'scientific' toys like microscopes and chemistry sets were marketed to children, and technologies like shoe-store fluoroscopes, dirigibles, radio, and rockets captured the popular imagination and fed the development of science fiction. All of this, in turn, set the stage for 'scientific' art conservation – or, more often, technical studies of artworks – to receive favourable media coverage, as epitomised by the lavishly illustrated, in-depth article on 'Painting Restoration' that appeared in *Fortune Magazine* in November 1937, heroically profiling the work of George Stout at the Fogg Art Museum and David Rosen (1880–1960) at the Walters Art Gallery, and dramatically characterizing their profession as '... formerly a dark and guarded secret ... laterally a candid stepchild of science ... at any time a matter of experience and taste' but now subjected to the instruments and methodologies of the natural sciences.²⁸

²⁶ See generally Burt, *Palaces for the people*, and Anne Higonnet, *A museum of one's own: Private collecting, public gift*, Pittsburgh: Periscope Publishing, 2010.

²⁷ Edward W. Forbes was a strong advocate for the cooperation between curators and conservators, and emphasised proper collections care in his museum training courses at the Fogg, whose participants included many future curators. He also underlined this in a speech at the annual meeting of the American Association of Museums in 1935, published as 'The preservation of the integrity of works of art: An issue in training', *Museum News* 13: 19, 1 April 1936, 7-8. On Forbes, the Fogg, and curatorial training, see now Peter Stoneley, "'The fellows from the Fogg": Modernism, homosexuality, and art-world authority', *New England Quarterly* 84: 3, September 2011, 473-495.

²⁸ 'Painting restoration', *Fortune* 16: 5, November 1937, 127-131, 216, 219. The quotation is from the heading of page 127; ellipses are original. Similar articles also appeared in

Foggy beginnings: Muskavitch and Roth in training

From the very start, a career in 'scientific' art conservation in the U.S. was relatively more accessible to people from marginalised communities than were careers in academic art history and especially in museum curatorship.²⁹ This was perhaps due to its novelty and empiricist orientation, which rejected subjectivity as irrelevant, as well as to its perceived status as an 'applied' discipline associated with the natural sciences, which were traditionally eschewed by the American elite.³⁰ Surely some role was also played by the fact that Gettens and Stout themselves came from rural, working-class backgrounds: they initially accepted jobs at the Fogg to earn money for graduate study (Gettens in chemistry, Stout in fine arts, i.e., art history), and later took on private projects and second jobs to supplement their meagre Fogg salaries (Stout as paintings conservator at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Gettens as a scientific advisor to the New Deal's Federal Art Project).³¹ Nevertheless, as the early careers of both Muskavitch and Roth demonstrate, important status differences persisted: both men came from humble circumstances and were not graduates of elite colleges, unlike most early Fogg conservation trainees, and it was fortuitous that they came to study at the Fogg at all.

Because the romantic and professionally expedient stories he later told about his family, youth, and early adulthood were embellished or fabricated, nearly everything about Charles Mackaiev Muskavitch's life before his mid-twenties

newspapers, e.g., Pearl P. Strachan, 'Magicians of the museum', *Christian Science Monitor*, 26 February 1936, WM8, which is vividly subtitled: 'In the secret chambers of some such institutions, experts perform wonders in restoring and reconstructing historic or artistic works of other ages, and in preserving treasures for future generations.'

²⁹ Well before the 1970s, art conservation welcomed groups essentially excluded from curatorial leadership, including women (e.g., Elisabeth Packard [1907–1994], Caroline Keck [1908–2008], Anne F. Clapp [1910–2000], Kate C. Lefferts [1912–2000], Elizabeth H. ['Betty'] Jones [1918–2013]), Jews (e.g., David Rosen [1880–1960], Bernard Rabin [1916–2003], Louis Pomerantz [1919–1988], Gustav Berger [1920–2006]), and African-Americans (e.g., S. Felrath Hines [1913–1993]). For anecdotes about institutional discrimination in U.S. art museums during the early and mid-twentieth century, see Sally Anne Duncan, 'Paul J. Sachs and the institutionalization of museum culture between the world wars', PhD dissertation, Tufts University, 2001, 83–85, 314, and 334–335 (on women), and 283–284 and 351 (on Jews).

³⁰ Within elite universities, 'technical' subjects were customarily shunted to free-standing 'scientific schools' that required no Greek and little or no Latin for entrance, and were thus more accessible to graduates of state-run secondary schools. Well-known examples include the Lawrence Scientific School, administered separately from Harvard College from 1847 to 1906; Chandler Scientific School (Dartmouth College), 1852–1893; Sheffield Scientific School (Yale College), 1861–1956; and Towne Scientific School (University of Pennsylvania), 1876–1955.

³¹ See Bewer, *A laboratory for art*, 131–133, 190–198.

remains uncertain, except that he was born in 1904, grew up in South Boston as the younger son of recent immigrants from Imperial Russia, and from birth lived with a substantial disability: his right arm was short, withered, and practically unusable.³² By the later 1920s, he was living in Dorchester – an area of Boston with a large working-class, immigrant population – and avidly studying painting and sculpture, including formal coursework at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts (MFA), which awarded him two, year-long fellowships but at the time did not grant degrees.³³ His training brought him into contact with the well-connected New England painter Joseph Lindon Smith (1863–1950), who during the early 1930s – the height of the Depression – benevolently arranged for Muskavitch to do odd jobs at the MFA (where Smith had a long-standing association with the Egyptology department) and the nearby Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum (Smith had been a friend of the late Mrs Gardner).³⁴ At Smith's urging, Muskavitch was even invited to

³² I thank Greg and Gail Agaloff for first informing me about his disability, and Ann Bausman for sending me the article 'What difference does a crippled arm make to him?' *Boston Sunday Globe*, 21 February 1926, B, 6, in which Muskavitch discusses (and misrepresents) his disability in the press for the first and last time. Later in life Muskavitch claimed at various times to have been born in 1901 (actually the date of his older brother's birth) or 1903. However, he attended seventh grade at the Boston Latin School (BLS) in 1916–17 and in the *Globe* article of February 1926 claimed to be 21, both indicating he was actually born in mid/late 1904. (Note that Muskavitch used the middle name 'Frank' until sometime in his thirties, when he substituted the Slavic 'Mackaiev', which he had presumably been given at birth.) He claimed repeatedly to have graduated from BLS (the oldest and arguably most prestigious secondary school in Boston), but per e-mails from Valerie Uber and Patrick Hourigan of Boston Public Schools (23 October 2013), it seems he actually attended BLS only for seventh and eighth grade (in 1916–17 and 1917–18); it remains an open question whether he ever actually attended or graduated from any high school whatsoever.

³³ According to a résumé prepared by Muskavitch on 5 September 1957 (Muskavitch archive), he attended the School of the Museum of Fine Arts from 1925 to 1930. However, in the *Globe* article of February 1926 he claimed to be studying at the Massachusetts Normal Art School in the Back Bay (today known as the Massachusetts College of Art and Design and housed at a different site), which was free of charge to state residents. Despite this, no record could be found to confirm that he ever took courses there (e-mail from Sally J. Barkan of Massachusetts College of Art and Design, 7 November 2013). Regardless, throughout his lifetime Muskavitch continued to paint and, to a lesser extent, carve wooden sculpture. He showed his work on occasion, and some of his paintings of archaeological sites are in museums as well as private collections.

³⁴ Smith to Morris Carter, 11 January 1933, ISGMA. On Smith, see 'Biographical directory', in *American art annual 30 (1933)*, Washington, DC: The American Federation of Arts, 1934, 712 (s.v., 'Smith, Joseph Lindon'); Gerald M. Ackerman, *American orientalists*, Les orientalistes 10, Paris: ACR Édition, 1994, 280-281 (s.v., 'Joseph Lindon Smith'); and Barbara S. Lesko and Diana Wolfe Larkin, *Joseph Lindon Smith: Paintings from Egypt. An exhibition in celebration of the 50th anniversary of the department of Egyptology, Brown University, October 8–November 21, 1998*, Providence, RI: Department of Egyptology, Brown University, 1998. Also see his anecdotal autobiography, Joseph Lindon Smith, *Tombs, temples and ancient art*, Norman, OK: University

serve as a volunteer field artist for the 1932 season of the Harvard University–Boston Museum of Fine Arts Expedition at Giza (Egypt).³⁵ Subsequently, in the spring of 1934, Muskavitch assisted Smith at the MFA in restoring and reinstalling a colossal alabaster statue of the Old Kingdom pharaoh Menkaura (Mycerinus) (acc. no. 09.204). Several large fragments of the statue had been excavated by the Expedition at Giza in 1907, after which there had been episodic curatorial debates about how best to display them, since the remainder of the statue was never found.³⁶ The MFA's Egyptian art curator, Dows Dunham (1890–1984), in coordination with conservator William J. Young (1906–2000) of the MFA's new Research Laboratory, had Smith and Muskavitch recreate the missing portions in plaster for a new, 'integral' installation of the authentic fragments as a unified whole.³⁷ They decided to make viewers aware of which parts were recreated by tinting the plaster limbs a tone that was slightly different from, yet in harmony with, the authentic alabaster pieces.³⁸ This installation is still on view today, eighty years later.³⁹

of Oklahoma Press, 1956. His papers are now in the Archives of American Art at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC.

³⁵ Dows Dunham to Muskavitch, 18 January 1932 (Muskavitch archive). It is doubtful that Muskavitch actually took up the invitation; his archives contain no documentation to that effect, nor is Muskavitch mentioned among the myriad expedition staff active between 1902 and 1939 (among them Joseph Lindon Smith) who are acknowledged in George Andrew Reisner, *A history of the Giza necropolis 1*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1942, vii-x.

³⁶ On the excavation, see George Andrew Reisner, 'The Harvard University – Boston Museum of Fine Arts Egyptian expedition', *Museum of Fine Arts Bulletin* 9: 50, April 1911, 13–20, esp. 17, and George Andrew Reisner, *Mycerinus: The temples of the third pyramid at Giza*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1931. More broadly, see Dows Dunham, *The Egyptian department and its excavations*, Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1958.

³⁷ See Dows Dunham, 'Successive installations of a statue of king Mycerinus', *Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Arts* 33: 196, April 1935, 21–25, at 22 and 25; Walter Muir Whitehill, *Museum of Fine Arts Boston: A centennial history 2*, Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1970, 486–487; Susanne Gänsicke, Pamela Hatchfield, Abigail Hykin, Marie Svoboda and C. Mei-An Tsu, 'The ancient Egyptian collection at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Part 2, a review of former treatments at the MFA and their consequences', *Journal of the American Institute for Conservation* 42: 2, Summer 2003, 194. The results of Muskavitch's efforts can be seen in before-and-after photographs of the statue: Dunham, 'Successive installations', 22–25, at 23–24, fig. 5 (as installed in 1925) and figs. 6–8 (as installed in 1935); Whitehill, *MFA centennial history*, 486; and Gänsicke, Hatchfield, Hykin, Svoboda and Tsu, 'Ancient Egyptian collection at the MFA, part 2', 193–236, at 195, figs. 1 and 2.

³⁸ 'Boston Museum of Fine Arts holds some of world's richest treasures', *Christian Science Monitor*, 16 March 1935, 3.

³⁹ <http://www.mfa.org/collections/conservation-and-collections-care/king-menkaura> and <http://www.mfa.org/collections/object/colossal-statue-of-king-menkaura-mycerinus-138532> [both accessed 27 August 2013].

Meanwhile, at the Gardner Museum, director Morris Carter (1877–1965) was impressed by Muskavitch's artistic talents and arranged for him to apprentice as a paintings restorer with George Stout, who had founded the Museum's conservation department in February 1934 and worked there on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, while also conducting research and treatments at the Fogg's Department of Conservation and Technical Studies on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays.⁴⁰ Either through Stout or through Smith, Muskavitch soon began working part-time at the Fogg, too. For example, during the summer of 1935, he aided John Gettens and Harold Ellsworth, an analytical chemist and physicist associated with the newly opened Walters Art Gallery in Baltimore, in cleaning and restoring about thirty ancient bronzes brought from the Walters to the Fogg for treatment.⁴¹ Around the same time, he collaborated with Stout to design a custom-made steel roller and iron whose shape, handle, and temperature were ideal for relining canvases with wax, which was superseding glue as the preferred adhesive.⁴² More prosaically, he also designed a special photo stand for the use of the Fogg conservation staff.⁴³

Whereas Muskavitch grew up in an East Coast metropolis with three notable art museums, James Buford Roth was born in 1910 in a small town in rural central Missouri. After high school, he attended the Kansas City Art Institute during the turbulent years around 1930, when the Institute was preparing to relocate from downtown to the Rockhill District, near the site of the future Nelson Gallery.⁴⁴ There

⁴⁰ In the autumn of 1933, Carter recommended Muskavitch to Stout as being 'a man of great ingenuity, mechanical and artistic ability' and asked if Stout 'could help him take the first steps toward becoming a picture restorer', adding in a second letter that 'I think it would be a real contribution if the Fogg Museum could undertake the training of young men for this work There is a great dearth of restorers or cleaners, as you know. (...) I must somehow, within a year or two, get hold of someone who can put in all his time here, and I think young Muskavitch after a couple of years of apprenticeship might do.' Carter to Stout, 19 September 1933 and 27 October 1933, ISGMA. Muskavitch and a second man named Harold F. Cross began as Stout's unpaid apprentices at the Gardner in February 1934.

⁴¹ Rutherford J. Gettens and Harold D. Ellsworth, 'Examples of the restoration of corroded bronzes', *Bulletin of the Fogg Art Museum* 5: 2, March 1936, 35-38, at 36. On Ellsworth and early conservation efforts at the Walters, see William R. Johnston, *William and Henry Walters, the reticent collectors*, Baltimore: Walters Art Gallery, 1999, 225-226. For the historical context of and a more recent assessment of the electrolytic treatment of 1935, which is at odds with current attitudes towards bronze patination, see Terry Drayman-Weisser, 'A perspective on the history of the conservation of archaeological copper alloys in the United States', *Journal of the American Institute for Conservation* 33: 2, Summer 1994, 141-152.

⁴² George L. Stout, 'An iron for relining', *Technical Studies in the Field of the Fine Arts* 4: 2, 1935, 113-118 (with photos). A photo of the iron being used by Anne Clapp at the Fogg is published in Bewer, *A laboratory for art*, 170 (fig. 4.15).

⁴³ E-mail from Francesca Bewer, 12 November 2013.

⁴⁴ These and other basic biographical data are derived from the introduction to the James Roth archives at Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, online at <http://beta.worldcat.org/archivegrid/record.php?id=499190436> [accessed 1 October 2013].

Seth Adam Hindin How the west was won: Charles Muskavitch, James Roth,
and the arrival of 'scientific' art conservation ...

he studied painting under Ernest Lawson (1873–1939), Lloyd ('Bill') Ney (1893–1965), and Ross E. Braught (1898–1983).⁴⁵ Thanks to the growing ties between the two neighbouring arts institutions, he was offered a job at the Nelson Gallery as soon as it opened, in December 1933, initially as a security guard and then as an assistant to preparator George Herrick, though he also contributed to education programs, which were a particular strength of the new museum.⁴⁶ Around the same time Roth was hired, the Gallery contracted with a New York-based paintings restorer named Marcel Jules Rougeron (1875–after 1958) to come to Kansas City to treat artworks being acquired for the permanent collection.⁴⁷ (Unlike many American museums, the Nelson Gallery was founded around a large acquisitions fund, rather than a pre-existing collection.) For some months, Roth assisted Rougeron with his treatments. Despite taking a personal dislike to the sixtyish Frenchman – whom he dismissed in a late interview as a haughty, Victorian dandy who '[made] over pictures to suit himself' – Roth became fascinated by his vocation,

⁴⁵ 'Biographical directory', in *American art annual 30 (1933)*, 688 (s.v., 'Roth, James B[uford]'). Of the three, Lawson is today the best known; see recently Charles C. Eldredge, 'Ernest Lawson's Spain', *American Art* 17: 3, Autumn 2003, 82-91, and Ross Barrett, 'Speculations in paint: Ernest Lawson and the urbanization of New York', *Winterthur Portfolio* 42: 1, Spring 2008, 1-26.

⁴⁶ Interview by Maura F. Cornman (1951–1990) of James B. Roth and Helen T. Roth, 2 May 1983 (FAIC Oral History File housed at the Winterthur Museum, Library, and Archives; hereafter 'Cornman–Roth interview'); Kristie C. Wolferman, *The Nelson–Atkins Museum of Art: Culture comes to Kansas City*, Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1993, 111-112, 152, 157, 180.

⁴⁷ Rougeron had been born in France and descended from a distinguished, if today little-known, artistic family: his father was the painter Jules James Rougeron (1841–1880), who had lived as an expatriate in Madrid between 1860 and 1872 alongside Édouard Manet; his paternal grandfather was François Rougeron, a curator and paintings restorer at the Palais des Tuileries in Paris prior to its destruction in 1871 under the Commune; and his maternal grandfather was a certain L. Van den Bergh, a paintings restorer who evidently initiated Marcel into the somewhat secretive craft around the turn of the twentieth century. After a brief career in Paris, Rougeron immigrated to the U.S. and established a restoration studio near the newly opened Main Branch of the Public Library in Midtown Manhattan, which he operated for at least two decades while continuing to paint and work in pastels. In the years leading up to his engagement in Kansas City, Rougeron had been employed by a series of elite eastern clients, including the prominent art dealer Joseph Duveen (1869–1939) and the collector Grenville L. Winthrop (1864–1943) – though, notably, he had been rebuffed by the Fogg Art Museum because director Edward Waldo Forbes was displeased with the overly aggressive treatment Rougeron had carried out on one of its paintings. Rougeron was also a sometime art dealer, and owned a modest collection. See 'Rougeron's Spanish scene', *American Art News* 14: 7, 20 November 1915, 3; 'Biographical directory', in *American art annual 30 (1933)*, 688 (s.v., 'Rougeron, M[arcel] J[ules]'); David Karel, *Dictionnaire des artistes de langue française en Amérique du nord: Peintres, sculpteurs, dessinateurs, graveurs, photographes et orfèvres*, Québec: Musée du Québec and Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 1992, 707-708 (s.v., 'Rougeron, Marcel-Jules'); Bewer, *A laboratory for art*, 65-66, 269 nn. 42-43.

and sought to learn more about paintings restoration.⁴⁸ During the next few years, he taught himself about historical materials and techniques, yet also continued to paint and exhibit his own works, whose hand-made pigments and traditionalist facture were directly informed by his ongoing research into restoration.⁴⁹

Pivotal for Roth's intended career were the unusually intensive connections the Nelson Gallery had cultivated early on with the Fogg Art Museum, some 2,250 km (1,400 miles) away. Already by 1930 the chairman of the Nelson's board, Jesse Clyde ('J. C.') Nichols (1880–1950) – a prominent Kansas City real estate developer and protégé of eponymous museum founder William Rockhill Nelson (1841–1915) – had contracted with his Harvard classmate, Fogg Asian art curator Langdon Warner (1881–1955), to acquire Chinese artworks for the incipient Gallery and to serve as its official Asian art advisor.⁵⁰ The trustees also hired Warner's former student, Laurence Sickman (1907–1988), a recent Harvard graduate (AB 1930) living in Beijing on a five-year fellowship, to help them acquire Chinese art; upon his return to the U.S., in 1935, Sickman became the Gallery's first curator of 'Oriental Art'.⁵¹ Both Warner and Sickman retained close ties to the Fogg and allegiances to its 'scientific' approach to art conservation: for example, in 1939 Sickman published a short piece in *Technical Studies*.⁵² Moreover, the Nelson Gallery's young Western Art

⁴⁸ Cornman—Roth interview.

⁴⁹ The 'In gallery and studio' column, *Kansas City Star*, 12 November 1937, 23, reported:

For the last three years, Mr. Roth has been engaged in research and experimentation on color and pigment. He has been employed on the staff of the Nelson gallery [sic] as an expert on restoration and has studied the various techniques of the old masters, especially with reference to their processes of obtaining pure colors from earthen pigments. He grinds his own pigments from crude basis, and makes and prepares his own canvases and frames. The resin and oil base used by Leonardo da Vinci has been adopted by Mr. Roth in his own painting. He is exhibiting for the first time since his special researches began.

⁵⁰ Wolferman, *Culture*, 98-104; Bewer, *A laboratory for art*, 114-125. Nicholas had graduated from University of Kansas in 1902 at the top of his class and received a scholarship for a post-graduate year at Harvard in 1902–03, taking a second Harvard AB in 1903, the same year as Warner; see William S. Worley, *J. C. Nichols and the shaping of Kansas City: Innovation in planned residential communities*, Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1990, xiii, 6, 63-64.

⁵¹ Wolferman, *Culture*, 99-104, 118-119, 175; Lee Sorensen, 'Sickman, Laurence [Chalfant Stevens]', in *Dictionary of Art Historians* (website),

<http://www.dictionaryofarthistorians.org/sickmanl.htm> [accessed 4 October 2013]. For another view of Sickman, see now David E. Mungello, *Western queers in China: Flight to the land of Oz*, Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2012, 92-135.

⁵² Laurence Sickman, 'Some Chinese brushes', *Technical Studies in the Field of the Fine Arts* 8: 1, July 1939, 61-71. Two years earlier Sickman had even been offered a curatorial position at the Fogg, which he declined. After service as a 'Monuments Man' in the Pacific Theatre during

curators, Philip C. Beam (1910–2005) and Otto Wittmann (1911–2001), as well as its inaugural director, Paul Gardner (1894–1972), had all been closely involved with the Fogg as Harvard students and had participated in the influential seminar on 'Museum Work and Museum Problems' taught at the Fogg by its associate director, Paul J. Sachs (1878–1965).⁵³ Thus, when James Roth made known his desire to train further as a paintings restorer, his curatorial colleagues urged him to study current 'scientific' methods of art conservation and collections care with George Stout and John Gettens at the Fogg, rather than to apprentice with pompous Rougeron in New York or some other 'restorer' of the old dispensation. Sure enough, in 1938 Roth received funding from the Carnegie Foundation to spend three months at the Fogg's Department of Conservation and Technical Research – not coincidentally the same summer fellowship that Wittmann had received the previous year for supplementary curatorial training at the Fogg.⁵⁴ When Roth returned to the Nelson Gallery in the autumn, he established a permanent conservation laboratory and became its first resident conservator. Except for a hiatus during World War II, he continued to lead the conservation program at the Nelson Gallery until his retirement in 1973.⁵⁵ Because few details are available about Roth's activities at the

World War II, Sickman was appointed director of the Nelson Gallery in 1953, serving in that capacity until his retirement in 1977.

⁵³ Wolferman, *Culture*, 105-107, 113-114; Duncan, 'Paul J. Sachs and the institutionalization of museum culture', 342-348, 371-432, and Appendix L; Sally Anne Duncan, *Otto Wittmann: Museum man for all seasons*, Toledo, OH: Toledo Museum of Art, 2001, 7-8; Sally Anne Duncan, 'Harvard's "museum course" and the making of America's museum profession', *Archives of American Art Journal* 42, 2002, 2–16. Beam and Wittman had been undergraduate classmates (both Harvard AB in Fine Arts in 1933), and Gardner had taken graduate coursework there in 1930–1932. By 1935 Beam had left the Nelson Gallery to return to graduate school at Harvard, then became a professor of art history at Bowdoin College, in Maine, and director of the Bowdoin College Museum of Art, 1939–64; see Philip C. Beam, *Personal recollections of the Museum of Art and the department of art*, Brunswick, ME: Bowdoin College, 1991. Gardner reflected on his training at the Fogg in Paul Gardner, 'The proper training for museum work from the point of view of the director', *Museum News* 13: 16, 15 February 1936, 6-7.

⁵⁴ 'James Roth collection, 1947–1975', <http://beta.worldcat.org/archivegrid/record.php?id=499190436> [accessed 1 October 2013]; compare Duncan, *Otto Wittmann*, 8. Paul J. Sachs, associate director of the Fogg, was an advisor to the Carnegie Corporation of New York on art museum matters; see Duncan, 'Paul J. Sachs and the institutionalization of museum culture', 87-88, 90 n. 57, 103-108, and 182.

⁵⁵ Treatments that Roth performed on American paintings in the Gallery are noted throughout Margaret C. Conrads, ed., *The collections of the Nelson–Atkins Museum of Art: American paintings to 1945*, 2 vols, vol. 2, Kansas City: The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, 2007. To my knowledge, no comprehensive list exists of his technical studies and treatments in other areas of the Nelson–Atkins's vast collection, though his publications suggest he worked widely. For example, see James Roth, 'The separation of two layers of ancient Chinese wall-painting', *Artibus Asiae* 15, 1952, 145-150, and James Roth, 'A study of the X-

Seth Adam Hindin How the west was won: Charles Muskavitch, James Roth,
and the arrival of 'scientific' art conservation ...

Gallery between 1938 and the American entrance into the 1939–45 war, it is more useful here to focus on his older contemporary Charles Muskavitch, whose early career is unusually well documented.

Conservation as science and drama: Muskavitch in Dallas and Sacramento, 1937–42

Around the turn of the twentieth century, leading citizens of many cities in the western U.S. formed art societies (or 'associations') that brought together local collectors, artists, and art enthusiasts for lectures and salon-like exhibitions in improvised, rented spaces.⁵⁶ Over time, many associations acquired permanent collections and commissioned buildings, thereby bringing the art museum concept westwards from the East Coast, where collectors had gone to school, travelled on business, and patronised dealers. This was the case in Dallas, Texas, where in June 1936, after years of preliminary discussion and planning, the Dallas Museum of Fine Arts (DMFA) opened to the public in Fair Park.⁵⁷ About six months later, museum board member Karl Hoblitzelle (1879–1967), a socially prominent businessman, and his wife, Esther (1894–1943), placed forty-three European paintings on indefinite loan in the new building, at first anonymously.⁵⁸ Apart from a handful purchased in New York, most had been given to him for this purpose by his elder brother, the artist and collector Clarence Linden Hoblitzelle, Jr (1869–1951), who had bought them in 1912 (other sources say 1914) from the ennobled but impoverished Marqués of Torre Tagle, Ricardo León Ortiz de Zevallos y Tagle (1844–1915), of Lima, Peru.⁵⁹

rays of Hogarth's *Sketch, Tavern Scene: An Evening at the Rose*', *The Nelson Gallery and Atkins Museum Bulletin* 2, 1959, 1-3.

⁵⁶ Some examples include Dallas, Denver, Sacramento, Portland (Oregon), and Seattle. A fuller study of this movement remains to be written.

⁵⁷ On the early history of the DMFA, see Jerry Bywaters, *Seventy-five years of art in Dallas: The history of the Dallas art association and the Dallas Museum of Fine Arts*, Dallas: Dallas Museum of Fine Arts, 1978.

⁵⁸ E. R. C., 'Hoblitzelle named as owner of old masters at museum', *DMN*, 21 April 1939, I, 16; Bywaters, *Seventy-five years of art in Dallas: The history of the Dallas art association and the Dallas Museum of Fine Arts*, n.p. [18-19]. On Hoblitzelle, see Jane Lenz Elder, 'Karl Hoblitzelle and the inauguration of interstate theaters', *Legacies: A History Journal for Dallas and North Central Texas* 6: 2, Fall 1994, 4-11, and William H. Crain, 'Hoblitzelle, Karl St. John', in *Handbook of Texas Online*, published by the Texas State Historical Association, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fho05> [accessed 24 August 2013].

⁵⁹ Clarence Hoblitzelle, Jr had met Emilio Ortiz de Zevallos y Vidaurre (1885–1965), an American-educated son of the Marqués, during a tour of South America in 1910 and from him learned about the family's extensive collection of paintings, which at the time was being stored in a Lima warehouse; for a vivid account by Hoblitzelle (given anonymously), see 'Old masters worth millions rotting in a storehouse', *New York Times*, 8 January 1911, Sunday magazine, n.p. A catalogue of the paintings had been prepared in 1872 by the Rome-based

After shipping the paintings back to the U.S., Clarence Hoblitzelle kept them in storage for several decades because he lacked a suitable space in his St Louis home in which to display them; eventually he abandoned the idea and ceded the paintings to his brother, Karl, for exhibition in Dallas.⁶⁰ Unfortunately, during this extended period of storage, many of the paintings deteriorated and suffered varnish darkening. Richard Foster Howard (1902–1987), director of the DMFA and a loyal Harvard Fine Arts alumnus (AB, 1924; graduate study, 1929–31), suggested that Hoblitzelle contact the Fogg Art Museum about sending a conservator to treat them according to the Fogg's 'scientific' approach, to which he had been exposed through Paul J. Sachs's museum seminar.⁶¹ In turn, Fogg director Edward Waldo Forbes recommended Charles Muskavitch, who initially came to Dallas in April 1937 for six weeks but ended up staying to work on the Hoblitzelle collection until 1942.⁶² For Muskavitch, it was a crucial break, yet one with an enormous cost: as the first conservator outside the Northeast, he would be more-or-less permanently estranged not only from his family, but also from his contemporaries, whom he rarely saw in person.⁶³ Certainly Muskavitch's disability, immigrant origins, and lack of a college degree (likely even a high school diploma), played some role, perhaps a decisive one, in his assignment to what was then a new, provincial museum in the American West, rather than to well-established north-eastern institutions where his Harvard-educated contemporaries at the Fogg – Murrays Pease (1903–1964), Sheldon Keck (1910–1993), and Alfred Jakstas (1916–2000) – found positions.⁶⁴ Nevertheless,

painter and architect Bernhard Maria Jeckel (1824–1884) and subsequently published as Bernardo María Jeckel, *Gran galería de pinturas antiguas*, Lima: Imprenta del Universo de Carlos Prince, 1899. A more detailed account of the purchase and its unfortunate aftermath is given in John William Rogers, *The lusty Texans of Dallas*, new expanded ed., Dallas: Cokesbury Book Store, 1965, 257-259. Only a few years later, the heirs of the Marqués had to sell his Baroque palace, built in 1735, to the Peruvian government; it is now the Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores del Perú. Note that Clarence Hoblitzelle, Jr also donated portions of his art collection to the Metropolitan Museum in New York, where he had worked for several years as a curatorial assistant c. 1906–1910.

⁶⁰ After being on loan to the DMFA for fifty years, most of the paintings were formally donated to the museum by the Hoblitzelle Foundation in 1987. (Three were returned to Peru in February 1970.) As of 2014, they still form the core of the old masters collection of the DMA.

⁶¹ Howard had previously contracted with members of the Fogg Conservation Department to privately treat paintings in the DMFA's own collection; see Bewer, *A laboratory for art*, 190.

⁶² Rogers, *The lusty Texans of Dallas*, 258-259. Muskavitch arrived in April 1937, not in 1936, as has been reported elsewhere erroneously.

⁶³ Muskavitch had originally hoped his time in Dallas would be preparation for a future position at the Rhode Island School of Design Museum in Providence (Muskavitch to Carter, 29 June 1937, ISGMA), but this never came to be. By the 1950s, its acting conservator was Alfred Jakstas (AB Harvard, 1938; trained at the Fogg).

⁶⁴ Several of these 'canonical students' are discussed in Bewer, *A laboratory for art*, 175-178 and 237-239. It is worth noting that whereas Muskavitch was encouraged to leave New

Muskavitch thrived in Dallas, and over the next several years spent much of his time treating the Hoblitzelle Collection, which consisted chiefly of large, seventeenth-century oil paintings by unknown or lesser-known Italian, Dutch, Flemish, and Spanish artists, most of which had been purchased by the Torre Tagle family in Paris in the mid-nineteenth century.⁶⁵ Muskavitch's treatments ranged

England for Dallas, Harvard / Fogg alumni who took museum positions outside the Northeast generally came from outside the Northeast to begin with and were 'returning home'. For example, at the Nelson Gallery Philip Beam came from Dallas, Laurence Sickman from Denver, and Otto Wittmann from Kansas City. The exception seems to have been aspiring museum directors, who by necessity sought opportunities nationally, particularly if they wished to make rapid advancement. For example, Paul Gardner, the first director of the Nelson Gallery in Kansas City, was raised and educated in Boston; Beam, from Dallas, relocated to rural Maine to join the Bowdoin College Museum of Art, becoming its youngest director at age 28, just two years after arriving; Richard Foster Howard, from New Jersey, left a position at the Philadelphia Museum of Art to become the director of the DMFA.

⁶⁵ A small number date to the sixteenth century or were painted by French or German artists. Unfortunately, whereas the important collection of English and Irish silver formed by Esther Hoblitzelle is well documented, the Hoblitzelle Collection of old master paintings has yet to be comprehensively published in print or online, or studied as a group. For now, see Charles Sterling, 'Notes brèves sur quelques tableaux vénitiens inconnus à Dallas', *Arte veneta* 8, 1954, 265-271; Anne R. Bromberg, *Dallas Museum of Art: Selected works*, Dallas: Dallas Museum of Art, n.d. [1983], 108-109 (cat. nos. 104 and 105) and 110-111 (cat. no. 108); Heather L. Sale Holian, 'The power of association: A study in the legitimization of Bianca Cappello through Medici matriarchal portraiture', *Renaissance Papers*, 2006, 13-41, esp. 38 (on the portrait of Bianca Cappello de' Medici and her son, whom Holian identifies as Antonio de' Medici [1576-1621]); Richard R. Brettell, 'From boulevards to ranch roads: The private collecting of European art in Texas, 1900 to the present', in Richard R. Brettell and C. D. Dickerson III, eds, *From the private collections of Texas: European art, ancient to modern*, Fort Worth, TX: Kimbell Art Museum, 2009, 1-81, at 23-26, as well as 176-179 (cat. no. 27); and Bonnie L. Pitman, ed., *Dallas Museum of Art: A guide to the collection*, Dallas: Dallas Museum of Art, 2012, 150, 154, and 155. Twenty paintings from the collection were deaccessioned by the DMA and sold at auction: seventeen at Christie's New York on 15 October 1992 (sale no. 7516, lots 64-80; but note that due to non-payment two of these actually sold on 7 October 1993 and a third on 17 May 1994); one at Christie's New York on 17 May 1994 (sale no. 7555, lot 614); and two at Sotheby's London in 2009 (one on 9 July, lot 142, and one on 29 October, lot 81). The purchaser(s) and current whereabouts of these paintings are unknown to me. (Funds raised from these sales were used to acquire a painting attributed to Jan Massys [c. 1509-1575], *St Jerome in Meditation* [c. 1550], which is credited to the Hoblitzelle Collection by exchange [acc. no. 1992.290].) As of October 2014, at least eighteen paintings from the (original) Hoblitzelle Collection – a bit less than half – are still owned by the DMA and are listed in published catalogues, the DMA's website, and/or Artstor. In date order, with current attributions, these were: Jan van Scorel (1495-1562), *Venus and Two Cupids*, c. 1528 (oil on panel, 41.3 x 30.8 cm / 16 1/4 x 12 1/8 in.; DMA acc. no. 1987.29); *Last Supper*, Swabia, c. 1530 (oil on panel, 49.5 x 75.6 cm [or 51.3 x 78.1 cm] / 19 1/2 x 29 3/4 in. [or 20 3/16 x 30 3/4 in.]; DMA acc. no. 1987.39); *Crucifixion*, southern Germany, late 16th century

from straightforward cleanings (removal of dirt and discoloured varnish with solvents) and hand relinings (the most challenging being *Adoration of the Shepherds*, measuring 2.45 x 3.45 m; today acc. no. 1987.20) to more invasive structural modifications, such as weakening overly strong cradles or in one case 'ripping away the three canvases which [had] been put on the back and replacing the termite-eaten stretcher'.⁶⁶ As work progressed, Muskavitch eagerly announced revised attributions of the poorly documented paintings (often too-optimistic ones to well-

(oil on panel, 118.1 x 53.3 cm / 46 1/2 x 21 in.; DMA acc. no. 1987.40); Jacopo Palma Il Giovane (1544–1628), *Entombment*, 16th century (oil on canvas, 134 cm x 185.4 cm [or 133.4 x 184.6 cm] / 52 3/4 x 73 in. [or 52 1/2 x 72 11/16 in.]; DMA acc. no. 1987.14) [formerly attributed to Tintoretto and Veronese]; Henrik Bles (1480–1550), *Saint Jerome in the Wilderness*, 16th century (oil on panel, 52.7 x 81.9 cm / 20 3/4 x 32 1/4 in.; DMA acc. no. 1987.21); Alessandro Allori (1535–1607), *Portrait of Grand Duchess Bianca Capello de' Medici with Her Son [Antonio de' Medici?]*, c. 1580–1614 [or after 1582 and before 1587] (oil on canvas, 128.4 x 100.5 cm / 50 9/16 x 39 9/16 in.; DMA acc. no. 1987.11) [formerly attributed to Bronzino, then to the Bolognese painter Lavinia Fontana (1552–1614)]; Pietro Paolini (1603–1681), *Bacchic Concert*, c. 1625–30 (oil on canvas, 117.5 x 174.6 cm / 46 1/4 x 68 3/4 in.; DMA acc. no. 1987.17) [formerly attributed to Caravaggio?]; Nicolaes Cornelisz Moeyart (1591–1655), *Parable of Workmen in the Vineyard*, c. 1637 (oil on canvas, 63.8 x 84.5 cm / 25 1/8 x 33 1/4 in.; DMA acc. no. 1987.30); Nicolas Chapron (1612–c. 1656), *Union of Venus and Bacchus*, 1639 or earlier (oil on canvas, 76.8 x 91.4 cm [or 76.2 x 90.8 cm] / 30 1/4 x 36 in. [or 30 x 35 3/4 in.]; DMA acc. no. 1987.33); Michael Sweerts (1618–1664), *Portrait of an Officer [or Gentleman], Possibly a Member of the Deutz Family*, c. 1648–49 [or c. 1646–52] (oil on canvas, 99.1 x 74.3 cm / 39 x 29 1/4 in.; DMA acc. no. 1987.25 [formerly 11.1968]); Abraham Hendricksz van Beyeren (c. 1620–1690), *Still Life with Landscape*, 1650s (oil on canvas, 118.7 x 108 cm / 46 3/4 x 42 1/2 in.; DMA acc. no. 1987.3); Cornelis Saftleven (1607 [or c. 1612]–1681), *College of Animals*, 1655 (oil on canvas, 68.6 x 87 cm / 27 x 34 1/4 in.; DMA acc. no. 1987.32); Antonio de Pereda (1611–1678 [or 1599–1669]), *Sacrifice of Isaac*, c. 1659 (oil on canvas, 215.3 x 158.1 cm / 84 3/4 x 62 1/4 in.; DMA acc. no. 1987.36); Ignatius van der Stock (fl. c. 1660), *Landscape with Figures*, c. 1655–1665 (oil on canvas, 102.2 x 127 cm / 40 1/4 x 50 in.; DMA acc. no. 1987.28); Paolo de Matteis (1662–1728), *Adoration of the Shepherds*, c. 1680–1728 (oil on canvas, 245.1 x 345.4 cm / 96 1/2 x 136 in.; DMA acc. no. 1987.20) [formerly attributed to Murillo]; Pietro Bellotti (1627–1700), *Old Pilgrim*, c. 1660–80 (oil on canvas, 112.4 x 92.7 cm / 44 1/4 x 36 1/2; DMA acc. no. 1987.4); Jusepe de Ribera (1591–1652) [or 'school of'], *Saint James the Greater*, 17th century (oil on canvas, 114.9 x 84.8 cm [or 115.2 x 85.2 cm] / 45 1/4 x 33 3/8 in. [or 45 3/8 x 33 9/16 in.]; DMA acc. no. 1987.18); Johann Ulrich Mayr (1630–1704) [attributed], *Portrait of a Philosopher*, 17th century (oil on canvas, 73 x 61.3 cm [or 72.7 x 61.1 cm] / 28 3/4 x 24 1/8 in. [or 28 5/8 x 24 1/16 in.]; DMA acc. no. 1987.31).

⁶⁶ On the latter, see 'Three Hoblitzelle canvases ready; Titian to be shown', *DMN*, 1 June 1942, I, 4. Unfortunately, the plethora of newspaper articles offer relatively few concrete details about Muskavitch's treatments. However, when Ian Kennedy, director of Old Masters for Christie's, and Peter C. Sutton of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, inspected the Hoblitzelle Collection in 1985 in preparation for its formal transfer in ownership to the DMA, they were critical of Muskavitch's work; see Brettell, 'From boulevards to ranch roads', 25.

known artists or their workshops; these were usually qualified by Howard) and newly completed treatments to the local press to win continued financial backing for his work, and staged press conferences and public unveilings almost every time he finished restoring a painting.⁶⁷

After labouring for about six months under difficult conditions in a makeshift workshop in the DMFA's basement storeroom – in one letter, he complained that the ambient temperature could exceed a hundred degrees Fahrenheit (38° C) – Muskavitch persuaded the Museum to allocate and outfit a laboratory specially dedicated for the technical study and conservation of paintings, to be placed under his direction.⁶⁸ When it opened in the spring of 1938, *Museum News* reported that it was 'completely equipped, with X-ray, ultra-violet, petrographical microscope, comparative data, etc.', as well as a 'modern air-conditioned photographic laboratory ... equipped to do ... scientific investigation of paintings'.⁶⁹ Thus, Muskavitch was the first art conservator to establish a museum-based laboratory west of the Mississippi – indeed, the first west of Baltimore, where a lab had been set up at the Walters Art Gallery just four years earlier, in 1934. Although their ambitions were never fully realised, Muskavitch and DMFA director Howard envisioned the Dallas laboratory as a western counterpart to the Fogg, telling reporters in November 1937, as plans were still being finalised, that the laboratory 'would service museums all over the South and West, as well as private collectors'.⁷⁰ They added that '[m]ethods of conserving pigment and canvas and means of authenticating paintings will be explained to those desiring such information, which can be obtained now only at the Metropolitan [Museum] in New York or at the Fogg Museum ...' and explicitly stated that the DMFA lab 'would be the only one of its kind in this part of the country' and 'would be modeled on that of the Fogg Museum, with which both Mr. Howard and Mr. Muskavitch have been

⁶⁷ The press coverage about Muskavitch's work on the Hoblitzelle Collection is far too extensive to cite here in its entirety. Perhaps the best single overview was written by Muskavitch himself: Charles M. Muskavitch, '43 old masters lost then revealed here: Dallas' Hoblitzelle Collection and the process of restoration', *DMN*, 27 July 1941, IV, 7 (with photos). The attributions proposed by Muskavitch and Howard were heavily revised by Louvre curator Charles Sterling (1901–1991) in the mid-1950s, and to a lesser degree by subsequent scholarship; for details, see Brettell, 'From boulevards to ranch roads', 25.

⁶⁸ Muskavitch to Morris Carter, 29 June 1937, ISGMA.

⁶⁹ 'Dallas established art laboratory', *Museum News* 16: 2, 15 May 1938, 2.

⁷⁰ 'Museum to open laboratory for research in art', *DMN*, 21 November 1937, II, 7. In a letter the following year (to Morris Carter, 16 December 1938, ISGMA), Muskavitch wrote: 'I hope that I will be able to stay here and establish a permanent conservation department at this museum with the idea in mind to take care of the collections of the museums in this part of the country. (...) When the work is finished on the Dallas collection the existence of the department will depend on the patronage of museums from the whole section of the country west of the Mississippi.'

connected'.⁷¹ In the end, the DMFA facility became known as the 'Technical Laboratory' (evocative of the Fogg's department of 'Technical Research') and Muskavitch adopted the title of 'conservator' (earlier he had used 'restorer').⁷² However, he remained its sole employee and carried out only a single genuine research project: in the autumn of 1939 Frans Blom (1893–1963) of the Middle American Research Department at Tulane University hired Muskavitch to analyse Mayan wall-painting pigments.⁷³ (This project seems to have anticipated – and perhaps may have stimulated – an important line of research into so-called 'Maya blue', a blue pigment developed by the Maya but used into colonial times in Mesoamerica.⁷⁴) And although Muskavitch's private projects multiplied, the DMFA Laboratory only partially fulfilled his goal of evolving into a regional facility: by late 1938 it had begun servicing paintings from the Museum of Fine Arts (MFA) of Houston and the Wichita (Kansas) Art Museum.⁷⁵ Despite these shortcomings,

⁷¹ 'Museum to open laboratory for research in art'; 'To discuss new laboratory for art museum', *DMN*, 29 November 1937, I, 5; 'Research laboratory at Dallas museum', *DMN*, 19 November 1937, I, 18.

⁷² See *Dallas Museum of Fine Arts: Exhibition of Spanish art, Texas paintings*, Frank Reaugh, Dallas: State Fair of Texas, 1939; *Bulletin of the Dallas Museum of Fine Arts*, March 1939.

⁷³ On the Middle American Research Department – today the Middle American Research Institute – see now Donald McVicker, 'Institutional autonomy and its consequences: The Middle American Research Institute at Tulane University', *Histories of Anthropology Annual* 4, 2008, 34-57. Muskavitch and Blom first met in Dallas in the summer of 1937; already that December, Muskavitch visited Blom in New Orleans to discuss the possibility of future collaboration. Blom was forced out of Tulane in 1940, putting a premature end to Muskavitch's Mesoamerican research, though he continued to visit Yucatán and Guatemala privately for years to come. Note that Muskavitch also reported carrying out research on 'pigments from colonial paintings' for the Taylor Institute for Southwest Studies in Colorado Springs (later incorporated into the Colorado Springs Fine Arts Center), and on 'the study of minerals' for the Texas Institute of Natural Resources, both in 1937–38, but I have not been able to determine what these projects actually were, or even whether they actually took place. See John William Rogers, 'Dallas Museum of Fine Arts attains new importance', *Dallas Times Herald*, 11 December 1938, 18.

⁷⁴ Fundamental is Rutherford J. Gettens, 'Maya blue: An unsolved problem in ancient pigments', *American Antiquity* 27: 4, April 1962, 557-564; see most recently Dean E. Arnold, Jason R. Branden, Patrick Ryan Williams, Gary M. Feinman and J. P. Brown, 'The first direct evidence for the production of Maya blue: Rediscovery of a technology', *Antiquity* 82, 2008, 151-164 (with older literature). 'Maya (or Mayan) blue' was first documented at the ruins of Chichén Itzá in 1931 and named and introduced into the conservation literature by Rutherford J. Gettens and George L. Stout, *Painting materials: A short encyclopedia*, New York: D. van Nostrand, 1942, 130-131.

⁷⁵ Rogers, 'Dallas Museum of Fine Arts attains new importance'; 'Notes on the restoration of two paintings in the museum collections', *Bulletin of the Museum of Fine Art of Houston, Texas* 4: 1, April 1941, n.p. [1-2]. Also see the undated (but evidently late 1938) promotional brochure titled 'An announcement of the technical laboratories at the Dallas Museum of Fine Arts', as well as in a clipping from the *Houston Press* (January 1939) titled 'Deft fingers

Muskavitch clearly saw his Dallas lab as a kind of distant outpost of the Fogg, and remained in close contact with its personnel and alumni about various technical matters: among others, he corresponded with Sheldon Keck (who wrote him in 1938 for 'pictures and information' about a method Muskavitch developed for 'mounting and lining pictures'), Alan Burroughs (to whom he sent 'shadowgraphs' for the Fogg's files and who he asked about their proper interpretation), Murray Pease (who referred at least one private client to him), and his mentor, George Stout (from whom he sought advice about how to deal with a warped panel painting with a heavy cradle).⁷⁶ In early December 1939, Stout even came to Dallas to inspect the DMFA laboratory and appraise Muskavitch's treatments of the Hoblitzelle Collection.⁷⁷

From early on, Muskavitch had a particular interest in improving conservation education in the American West and beyond. In an address at the University of Texas at Austin in June 1940, he argued that there was a 'need for definite courses of study' in technical research, leading the *Dallas Morning News* to describe his address as perhaps 'the first step toward the establishment of a course of systematic study of the different methods and instruments employed in the

restore gleam to art treasures', which describes how Muskavitch had recently cleaned two sixteenth-century Greek icons belonging to the MFA of Houston (both in Muskavitch archive). According to a letter in the Muskavitch archive (James Chillman, Jr, director of MFA of Houston, to Muskavitch, 16 March 1939), the MFA of Houston worked with Muskavitch partially due to the recommendation of Paul Ganz of the University of Basel, who was a close associate of the Fogg Art Museum conservation staff. The MFA of Houston subsequently hired Muskavitch on a private basis to treat a group of Remington watercolours, and possibly also works from the Edith A. and Percy S. Straus Collection of 'Italian primitives'. Chillman to Muskavitch, 16 November 1944 (Muskavitch archive).

⁷⁶ E. R. C., 'New show at Lawrence's', *DMN*, 2 May 1938, I, 4; E. R. C., 'Science removes guesswork from art criticism', *DMN*, 9 November 1938, III, 3 (partially a review of Burroughs's *Art Criticism from a Laboratory*); Louise Long, 'Flemish work is restored, to be shown', *DMN*, 21 May 1940, I, 14; Louise Long Gossett, 'One of best of Hoblitzelle paintings will be exhibited', *DMN*, 27 June 1941, I, 9; David Myers, Forest Lawn Memorial Park (Glendale, California), to Muskavitch, 15 January 1946 ('Mr. Murray Pease of the Metropolitan Museum gave us your name and suggested that you might be able to assist us ...') (Muskavitch archive). At least some of the 'shadowgraphs' were of paintings at the Nelson Gallery of Art in Kansas City, suggesting that Muskavitch and Roth were in contact for at least a time; see Rogers, 'Dallas Museum of Fine Arts attains new importance'.

⁷⁷ John William Rogers, 'Art laboratory serves public in valuable way', *Dallas Times Herald*, 10 December 1939, 20. Rogers noted that '... even in its short career [the laboratory] has already been attacked, and it is inevitable in its nature as a public service ... there will be almost constant future campaigns to destroy it, to separate it from the museum and otherwise defeat the present set-up. (...) A young museum has the same privilege to work ... for the preservation of great paintings ... in the art world that Harvard University has, and it will be to the lasting credit of the Dallas museum that they have had the courage and vision to pioneer in this field.'

scientific investigation and restoration of works of art'.⁷⁸ Although his efforts in Austin did not bear fruit, during the 1940–41 school year Muskavitch conducted 'classes on the methods and techniques of art conservation' at the Dallas Art Institute, an open-enrollment art school then housed at the DMFA.⁷⁹ These might well have been the very first formal courses ever offered in art conservation in North America, though sadly no extant records attest to their scope or content. Muskavitch's relocation to Sacramento the following year, along with the disruptions of the 1939–45 war, curtailed his efforts to develop a formal training program in conservation, and he revived them only around 1960, at the University of California, Davis.⁸⁰

Meanwhile, intrigued by the Lima origins of the Hoblitzelle Collection, Muskavitch contacted the Peruvian government in 1938 about '[sending] a selected student to Dallas to be trained in the science of conservation to carry this science back to his own country'.⁸¹ This led to meetings in San Francisco with Fernando Berckemeyer y Pazos (1904–1981), the art-loving Peruvian consul general, who by July 1939 had hired Muskavitch to create a national department of paintings conservation in Lima; meanwhile, Muskavitch began training two Peruvian students from the University of San Marcos.⁸² In recognition of his efforts to aid conservation in Peru, Berckemeyer arranged for him to receive an honorary doctorate from the University of San Marcos.⁸³ Muskavitch reciprocated by

⁷⁸ Louise Long, 'Muskavitch to lecture before Texas U. group', *DMN*, 24 June 1940, I, 6.

⁷⁹ 'Three added to staff of Art Institute', *DMN*, 28 August 1940, II, 3. The Dallas Art Institute opened in 1926 and closed in 1945. See Kendall Curlee, 'Dallas Art Institute', in the *Handbook of Texas Online*, published by the Texas State Historical Association, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/kbd15> [accessed 22 October 2013].

⁸⁰ Hindin, 'Art conservation between theory and practice'.

⁸¹ Rogers, 'Dallas Museum of Fine Arts attains new importance'. Rogers mentions that Muskavitch was also in communication with Adolfo Dominguez, the Mexican consul in Dallas, about making a similar arrangement with Mexico; however, this does not seem to have been successful, and conservation training in Mexico did not begin until 1966 with the founding of the Centro de Estudios para la Conservación de Bienes Culturales 'Paul Coremans'.

⁸² E. R. C., 'Peruvian art to receive aid from Muskavitch', *DMN*, 28 July 1939, I, 12; 'Peruvian art expert visits island exhibits', *San Francisco Chronicle*, undated clipping (c. July 1939) in Muskavitch archive; 'Latin American consuls hear praise of Crocker Gallery', *Sacramento Union*, 13 August 1939. The names and fates of these two Peruvian students are unknown to me. Berckemeyer, who went on to serve two terms as Peruvian ambassador to the U.S. (1949–1963, 1968–1975), had a special interest in depictions of bullfights: see his catalogue *El arte y los toros*, Lima, 1966, as well as his article 'British artists and the bullfight', *Apollo* 133, May 1981, 296–301.

⁸³ Louise Long, 'Art and artists' column, *DMN*, 24 December 1940, I, 10. Henceforth, Muskavitch encouraged clients and reporters to call him 'Dr Muskavitch', and made it known that he was an 'advisor' to the Peruvian government. In fact, for unclear reasons the award ('Commander of the Order of Merit for Distinguished Services', not an honorary

presenting Berckemeyer with a leather-bound album of photos of the Torre Tagle paintings before and after treatment (fig. 3).⁸⁴ In early 1941, Luis Valcárcel (1891–1987), director of the Museo Nacional del Perú in Lima, visited Dallas to meet with Muskavitch, inspect the Hoblitzelle Collection, and further discuss improving 'scientific' conservation in Peru.⁸⁵ Muskavitch suggested that Valcárcel send 'some young ... Peruvian artist who is already well grounded in painting, art history and



Figure 3 Charles Muskavitch (right) presents photographs of the Hoblitzelle Collection to Peruvian consul general Fernando Berckemeyer y Pazos, October 1941. Courtesy of the Charles Muskavitch archive.

chemistry' to apprentice with him in the U.S., then would 'accompany his "apprentice" to [Peru] where the collections would be studied and the restoration work, to be carried to completion by the Peruvian artist, would be started'.⁸⁶ Unfortunately, the U.S. and Peruvian entrance into the 1939–45 war forestalled this scheme, and while Muskavitch remained in contact with Peruvian officials over the

doctorate *per se*) was not actually conveyed until 1957; see 'Peru presents merit medal 18 years late', *Sacramento Union*, 4 September 1957, 16.

⁸⁴ Louise Long Gossett, 'Lima gets copies of Hoblitzelle art collection', *DMN*, 9 October 1941, I, 10; 'Art treasure copies sent to Peru', *San Francisco News*, 11 October 1941.

⁸⁵ Luis E. Valcárcel, 'De mi viaje a los Estados Unidos', *Revista Iberoamericana* 6: 12, May 1943, 271-296, at 291-292.

⁸⁶ Graydon Heartsill, 'Muskavitch practices Good Neighbor Policy', *Dallas Times Herald*, 13 May 1941, 7.

Seth Adam Hindin How the west was won: Charles Muskavitch, James Roth,
and the arrival of 'scientific' art conservation ...

following decades, it seems that he never did travel to Lima or organize a conservation department there.⁸⁷

Given that Muskavitch left behind no theoretical writings of his own, it is fortunate that he articulated elements of his philosophy of conservation in an extended interview with the *Dallas Morning News* in 1937:

When questioned concerning the degree to which a restorer may use paint to repair a painting, Mr. Muskavitch answered, "As long as a restorer confines his efforts merely to retouching places on the canvas to which are glaringly in need of attention, he is within his rights. However, a restorer should never



Figure 4 Charles Muskavitch restoring *Portrait of Grand Duchess Bianca Capello de' Medici with Her Son* at the Dallas Museum of Fine Arts, Summer or Autumn 1937. Courtesy of the Charles Muskavitch archive.

attempt to demonstrate his own originality or artistic prowess. If a restorer is tempted to inject his own personality and ideas into his work, he should immediately stop restoring and devote his efforts to painting."

⁸⁷ A case study of a wall paintings conservation project gives some sense of the status of art conservation in Peru around mid-century: Roberto Carità, 'Restauri in Peru', *Bolletino dell'Istituto Centrale del Restauro* 21-22, 1955, 77-80.

Seth Adam Hindin How the west was won: Charles Muskavitch, James Roth,
and the arrival of 'scientific' art conservation ...

Mr. Muskavitch demonstrated his point with a Bronzino [sic!] canvas in the [Hoblitzelle] collection. The painting is a remarkably fine one, but pieces of paint have peeled off all over the canvas. In restoring the work, Mr. Muskavitch said that he would cover the white places with complementary colors so that the effect of the painting would be unimpaired. He will definitely not attempt to copy the work of the original artist.⁸⁸

(The 'Bronzino' to which Muskavitch refers is the sixteenth-century *Portrait of Grand Duchess Bianca Capello de' Medici with Her Son*, today attributed by the DMA to Alessandro Allori [1535–1607]; Muskavitch had at least one photo taken of his repairs to the painting [fig. 4].) However, despite advocating aesthetically minimalist choices when inpainting losses, Muskavitch – like many restorers of his era – did not hesitate to make major structural interventions, outlining for the reporter his procedures for relining 'damaged' canvases using 'two layers of wax' to 'form a strong base for the painting', as well as those for transferring a panel painting onto Masonite, which was then still a novel material introduced less than a decade earlier.⁸⁹ In another interview three years later, Muskavitch emphasised interpretive limits of technical study of paintings, as well as its possibilities, which were paraphrased by the reporter:

One major misconception with regard to the X-ray machine is that it is a gadget which automatically produces the correct answer in authenticating works of art. ... this is not the case The results simply produce additional material for study. Without comparative material these results are of little value. Alan Burroughs ... [sought to compile] a comparative library of shadowgraphs of undisputed masterpieces. ... Laurie, Constable, Martin de Wilde, Wehlte, Johannes Wilde and Graff, collaborated in this work. (...) Even with this basis ... sensitivity in interpretation and a firm grounding in historical knowledge are necessary in making accurate attributions. (...) To the restorer, the [X-ray] machine is a map by which he may outline and plan his work; to the museum, it affords a means of recording the physical condition of the painting and of fingerprinting works of art.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Frances Folsom, 'Restoring museum's loan of old masters', *Dallas Morning News*, 6 June 1937. The article ended by reporting that Muskavitch 'decries bitterly the presence in his profession of charlatans who aid and abet the less reputable dealers in their efforts to deceive unsuspecting art collectors', and fulsomely concludes that Muskavitch 'spoke highly of the ability of Richard Foster Howard, director of the Dallas Museum of Fine Arts, who ... "knows probably as much about these things as anyone except the greatest authorities".'

⁸⁹ Folsom, 'Restoring museum's loan of old masters'.

⁹⁰ Long, 'Muskavitch to lecture before Texas U. group'. Here Muskavitch is echoing arguments made by Fogg Museum affiliate Alan Burroughs – with whom Muskavitch was in correspondence – in his recent book: Alan Burroughs, *Art Criticism from a Laboratory*, New York: Little, Brown, 1938.

As the above interviews indicate, soon after his arrival in Dallas, Muskavitch became a darling of the local media, no doubt partly due to his buoyant self-presentation as a Harvard-trained 'scientist of art', as well as to the influence of his patron, Karl Hoblitzelle, who was wealthy, well-connected, and above all a supremely gifted promoter who had made his fortune as a vaudeville and movie theatre impresario. However, the press attention was orchestrated chiefly by Muskavitch's partner, Mildred C. Smith (1904–2010), who hosted a popular Dallas radio program under the stage name Gail Northe; they had met in November 1937, when Northe interviewed Muskavitch about his conservation work, and were wed in April 1939. It was no coincidence that the *Dallas Morning News*, in whose pages Muskavitch featured a remarkable ninety or so times between 1937 and 1947, shared common ownership with the station on which Northe's program aired.⁹¹ Moreover, the arts columns of the *News* and other papers were the domain of female journalists, who were generally barred from covering politics, business, foreign affairs, and other higher profile (and thus 'male') beats; Northe knew these women professionally and encouraged them to write about her husband's activities. She also taught him how to prepare effective press releases (including numerous 'action' photos of him treating paintings), and at least for a time hired a fellow Dallas woman journalist as his publicist.⁹²

Muskavitch must be credited not only with bringing the principles and practices of modern conservation to the DMFA, but also with publicizing its methods and techniques to a wider public beyond only art museum curators and art historians. He spoke regularly before community groups and local arts clubs in Dallas, Fort Worth, Houston, and San Antonio, and occasionally before interdisciplinary academic audiences (e.g., at Southern Methodist University, and at the University of Texas in Austin).⁹³ Usually these lectures focused on practices of conservation and methods of technical study, particularly X-rays and ultraviolet light, but on at least one occasion he gave 'a brief account of the education and training of the conservator in an attempt to discount the popular misconception that the conservator is simply a graduate picture framer'.⁹⁴ However, these publicity efforts were not entirely selfless: throughout his time at the DMFA, Muskavitch continued to maintain a private conservation practice on the side (typical at the time as well as today), and his lectures and media appearances simultaneously enhanced

⁹¹ Northe, who was among the first women in broadcast journalism in Texas, was briefly profiled in 'Meet the ladies', *Broadcasting: Broadcast Advertising*, 1 December 1939, 46, 48, at 46, and more extensively in Suzanne Huffman, 'Texans on the air: The Gail Northe story', *Legacies: A History Journal for Dallas and North Central Texas* 9: 1, Spring 1997, 42-50.

⁹² Muskavitch hired also press-clipping services to track his newspaper and radio appearances in order to build a media portfolio that he could show potential clients.

⁹³ Louise Long, 'Dallas authority to speak before Austin Institute', *DMN*, 21 June 1940, I, 13.

⁹⁴ Louise Long, 'Conservator will address Art League', *DMN*, 14 January 1941, I, 12.

Seth Adam Hindin How the west was won: Charles Muskavitch, James Roth,
and the arrival of 'scientific' art conservation ...

his credibility and attracted potential clients. He was especially successful in winning projects within Texas, where petroleum royalties had recently enabled a number of families to begin collecting art seriously but where there were not yet other qualified conservators to service these new collections. One important client was Cyrus ('C. R.') Smith (1900–1990), the first president of American Airlines and Muskavitch's brother-in-law, who often entrusted him to treat western-themed paintings he purchased for his New York apartment.⁹⁵ Another was the eminent Hogg family of Houston, which by the 1920s included art collectors as well as oilmen, attorneys, and politicians.⁹⁶ For example, in 1942 philanthropist Ima Hogg (1882–1975) decided to donate a large collections of paintings and other artworks by Frederic Remington (1861–1909) to the MFA of Houston, of which she was a life trustee and crucial patron.⁹⁷ However, before doing so, she hired Charles Muskavitch to assess, clean, and reline them.⁹⁸ Given that the MFA of Houston had

⁹⁵ Louise Gossett, 'Western art works bought by C. R. Smith', *DMN*, 12 June 1941, II, 2. Smith was the eldest brother of Gail Northe; his truly Horatio Alger-like rise from an impoverished upbringing in rural Texas culminated in his appointment as U.S. Secretary of Commerce by President Lyndon Johnson. See his obituary, George James, 'C. R. Smith, pioneer of aviation as head of American, dies at 90', *New York Times*, 5 April 1990, B, 13, as well as Chris Pieper, 'Smith, Cyrus Rowlett', in *Handbook of Texas Online*, published by the Texas State Historical Association, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fsm94> [accessed 24 August 2013]. Smith avidly collected works by 'western' artists like Frederic Remington (1861–1909), Charles Schreyvogel (1861–1912), and Charles M. Russell (1864–1926). He later sold a number of Remingtons to his friend, Amon G. Carter (1879–1955), who was American Airlines's largest stockholder; these are now in Carter's eponymous museum in Fort Worth. The remainder of Smith's art collection was later given to the Jack S. Blanton Museum of Art at his alma mater, the University of Texas at Austin. See B. Byron Price, 'Charles M. Russell: Icon of the old west', in B. Byron Price, ed., *Charles M. Russell: A catalogue raisonné*, Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 2007, 202, 207, 210.

⁹⁶ Kate Sayen Kirkland, *The Hogg family and Houston: Philanthropy and the civic ideal*, Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2009; Virginia Bernhard, ed., *The Hoggs of Texas: Letters and memoirs of an extraordinary family, 1887–1906*, Denton, TX: Texas State Historical Association, 2013.

⁹⁷ These had been purchased during the 1920s by her brother, attorney and businessman William Clifford Hogg (1875–1930). On the collection, see Emily Ballew Neff, *Frederic Remington: The Hogg brothers collection of the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000, which includes an excellent overview of Hogg's life and collecting habits (Neff, 'Will Hogg: Building heritage in Texas', 2-37).

⁹⁸ Kirkland, *The Hogg family and Houston*, 211-212 and 323 n. 44. On Ima Hogg, see Virginia Bernhard, *Ima Hogg: The governor's daughter*, Austin, TX: Texas Monthly Press, 1984; reprint, St James, NY: Brandywine Press, 1996, and now Lonny Taylor, 'Ima Hogg and the historic preservation movement in Texas, 1950–1975', *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 117: 1, July 2013, 1-25. Ima Hogg had probably met Muskavitch in 1939, when she lent a Picasso to the DMFA for a special exhibition; see *Dallas Museum of Fine Arts: Exhibition of Spanish art, Texas paintings*, Frank Reaugh. At least one of the Hogg Remingtons that Muskavitch restored, A

recently hired its first paintings conservator, a young local artist named Jack Key Flanagan (1920–1998), in 1940, the choice of Muskavitch is notable, and reflected his rapidly growing reputation.⁹⁹

Since museums and private collections in Texas were still in their earlier stages, Muskavitch also sought clients elsewhere. During 1937 and 1938 he treated paintings from private collections in several nearby states (e.g., Natchez, Mississippi; New Orleans and Baton Rouge, Louisiana; Wichita, Kansas; Oklahoma City, Norman, Shawnee, and Kaw City, Oklahoma), as well as from the San Francisco Bay Area (San Francisco, Oakland, Piedmont).¹⁰⁰ He also got a surprising amount of private work from collections and museums in New England through referrals from the Boston MFA and presumably also the Fogg.¹⁰¹ For example, in the summer and autumn of 1937 Muskavitch restored a set of *trompe-l'oeil* Chinoiserie murals at the Vernon House (also known as Bowler–Vernon House), a mid-eighteenth-century merchant's residence in Newport, Rhode Island, that had served

Calvary Scrap, was donated to the Jack S. Blanton Museum of Art at the University of Texas at Austin; see 'Hogg painting shown at UT', *Austin American-Statesman*, 7 June 1944.

⁹⁹ Few specifics are known about Muskavitch's treatments of the Hogg Remington paintings, but recently Wynne Hutchinson Phelan, then director of conservation at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, derided the 'thick, discolored varnish and disfiguring restorations' some of the paintings had received, perhaps attributable to Muskavitch but more likely predating his limited, chiefly structural interventions. See Wynn H. Phelan, 'Observations on Remington's technique', in Neff, *Frederic Remington*, 110-130, at 110. To my knowledge nothing has yet been written about (or by) Flanagan, who studied painting in Houston during the 1930s and began working as a conservator around 1940; he may or may not have ever had formal conservation training. Besides working for the Houston MFA, he took on outside projects for local collectors, the Isaac Delgado Art Museum (renamed the New Orleans Museum of Art in 1971), and others. Flanagan was sometimes assisted by Jeanne Billfaldt (1920–2002), a fellow painter who was also his life partner. His papers are now at the Houston MFA Archives, MS42; see <http://fa.mfah.org/main.asp?target=eaididlist&id=51&action=7> [accessed 30 October 2013].

¹⁰⁰ Rogers, 'Dallas Museum of Fine Arts attains new importance'.

¹⁰¹ These included the Currier Gallery of Art in Manchester, New Hampshire; Milton Academy, near Boston (referred to by the MFA); the Isaac Coffin School on Nantucket (Massachusetts); the New England Society for the Preservation of Antiquities, Boston; the Whaling Museum in New Bedford, Massachusetts; and the Newport Historical Museum in Newport, Rhode Island, and well as private collections in Boston and Bridgeport, Connecticut. See 'Conservator bringing new fame for Dallas museum for work with old masters', *Dallas Dispatch*, 20 February 1938; 'Art restorer to see state collections', *Daily Oklahoman*, 24 February 1938; F. F. C., 'Muskavitch leaving', *DMN*, 25 February 1938, I, 18; 'Art sleuth, city visitor, discovers who is bilked', *Daily Oklahoman*, 26 February, 1938; undated press release (February–March 1938), Muskavitch archive; E. R. C., 'Dallas art conservator finds masterpieces painted over', *DMN*, 10 June 1938, III, 2; E. R. C., 'Art and artists' column, *DMN*, 5 September 1938, I, 6; 'Priceless art work in Dallas for brief period', *Dallas Daily Times*, 28 October 1938, 1; Rogers, 'Dallas Museum of Fine Arts attains new importance'.

as the headquarters of the Comte de Rochambeau during the American Revolution.¹⁰² By the end of 1938, Muskavitch was being considered for his most important outside contract yet: three months of work at the E. B. Crocker Art Gallery in Sacramento, California, the oldest art museum in the American West.¹⁰³

The completion of the Central Pacific Railroad in 1869 connected northern California with the rest of the U.S. rail network, and vastly (some would say unjustly) enriched its four principal investors, three of whose family names are still borne by important California cultural institutions: Stanford, Huntington, and Crocker. In 1885 Margaret Crocker, the widow of Edwin Bryant Crocker (1818–1875), donated the family's art collection – most of which she and her husband had acquired rapidly during a stay in southern Germany in the early 1870s – jointly to the City of Sacramento and the quasi-private California Museum Association to establish the E. B. Crocker Art Gallery and School of Design in Sacramento.¹⁰⁴ Sadly, the collection languished under its first director, the painter William Franklin Jackson (1850–1936), who held the post as a kind of lifetime sinecure for a remarkable half-century (1885 to 1936). Sacramento received little rain and had very hot summer days and cold winter nights; over the years, dust, mould, and temperature fluctuations caused many paintings to deteriorate. According to

¹⁰² The restoration is discussed briefly in minutes to members published in *Bulletin of the Newport Historical Society* 98, September 1937, 23-24 and *Bulletin of the Newport Historical Society* 99, August 1938, 8, and more extensively in 'Prof. Muskavitch tells of mural restoration', *Newport Herald* (undated clipping in Muskavitch archive). In February 1940 Muskavitch lectured about the project in Dallas; see *DMN*, 22 February 1940, I, 15. Since 1968 the house has been a National Park Service-certified National Historic Landmark, and in 2009 it was donated to the Newport Restoration Foundation. See http://www.newportrestoration.org/preservation/historic_houses/details/78-vernon_house, with photos of the restored murals at http://www.newportrestoration.org/exhibits_collections/slideshow/23-vernon_house [both accessed 31 August 2013].

¹⁰³ Muskavitch to Morris Carter, 16 December 1938, ISGMA.

¹⁰⁴ The associated art school closed in 1896. On the Crockers and their art collections, see K. D. Kurutz, *Sacramento's pioneer patrons of art: The Edwin Bryant Crocker family*, Golden notes 31.2, Sacramento, CA: Sacramento County Historical Society, 1985. For a history of the collection to c. 1900, see Donald C. Ball, 'A history of the E. B. Crocker Art Gallery and its founder', MA thesis, College of the Pacific, 1955; Richard V. West, 'The Crockers and their collection: a brief history', in Richard Vincent West, ed., *Crocker Art Museum: Handbook of paintings*, Sacramento, CA: Crocker Art Museum, 1979, 7-12; Joseph A. Baird, Jr, 'Judge Crocker's "art gallery"', in West, ed., *Crocker Art Museum: Handbook of paintings*, 13-17; Glenn Willumson, 'Grand schemes and big things: E. B. Crocker and the transcontinental railroad legacy', in Scott A. Shields, ed., *The Crocker Art Museum collection unveiled*, Sacramento, CA: Crocker Art Museum, 2010, x-xx; and William Breazeale, 'E. B. Crocker, his family, and the museum's early years', in Shields, ed., *The Crocker Art Museum collection unveiled*, xxi-xxix.

records, Jackson took it upon himself to 'restore' some of them, despite having no formal training in this.¹⁰⁵

The Gallery's management improved under its second director, the bohemian poet and arts enthusiast Harry Noyes Pratt (1879–1944), who had previously served as the founding director of the Louis Terah Haggin Memorial Galleries in Stockton, California (1931 to 1936).¹⁰⁶ Though a passionate and opinionated critic (during the 1920s he had been San Francisco correspondent to the *Art News* of New York), Pratt had no formal education as either an artist or art historian, and recognised the need to bring in outside experts to help him catalogue the collection, assess its condition, and conserve the many paintings in clear need of treatment.¹⁰⁷ On the advice of Maurice Block, inaugural art curator of the Huntington Library near Los Angeles, Pratt hired Caesar Roman Diorio – a young, New York-based restorer who had done passable work at the Huntington – to treat paintings at the Crocker for three weeks in the summer of 1938.¹⁰⁸ Pratt seems to have been disappointed with Diorio, who was not rehired.¹⁰⁹ Instead, over the next year he assembled a cosmopolitan team of advisors, starting with the German-Jewish refugee-scholar Alfred Neumeyer (1901–1973), who was the first permanent art history professor on the West Coast (at Mills College in Oakland), and Numa S. Trivas (1899–1942), a Russian-born, Amsterdam-based art dealer and connoisseur stranded by the outbreak of the 1939–45 war during a tour of North America.¹¹⁰ Both

¹⁰⁵ In this he was sometimes assisted by one Oliver Chester Goodnow (1888–1941). See Charles Muskavitch, *The E. B. Crocker art collection: A study on its physical condition with recommendations for its future care*, Davis, CA: Laboratory for Research in the Fine Arts and Museology, University of California, Davis, 1965, ch. 2, 2 and 4. On the facing page (unnumbered), Muskavitch includes a photocopy of an invoice Jackson submitted on 28 August 1897 to the California Museum Association for \$291 for 'labor in cleaning, polishing and restoring woodwork, pictures, frames, etc.'.

¹⁰⁶ On Pratt's literary activities before moving into curatorship, see Ed Herny, Shelley Rideout and Katie Wadell, *Berkeley bohemia: Artists and visionaries of the early 20th century*, Layton, UT: Gibbs Smith, 2008, 103-114.

¹⁰⁷ Pratt attempted to revise the Crocker's catalogue, but recognised that it was still inadequate: Harry Noyes Pratt, *The E. B. Crocker Art Gallery, Sacramento, California: Hand book*, Sacramento: News Publishing Co., 1937.

¹⁰⁸ Muskavitch, *The E. B. Crocker art collection*, ch. 2, 2.

¹⁰⁹ Though little is known about him, Diorio (b. c. 1906) seems to have been of dubious character: an Associated Press wire story of 5 April 1945 (published widely) describes how he declared bankruptcy while in possession of Van Gogh's painting *The Man Is at Sea* (1889), owned by the Hollywood star Errol Flynn (1909–1959). Flynn eventually got it back, despite suspicions that it had been illegitimately imported from Nazi-occupied France by Diorio and others; it still remains in private hands.

¹¹⁰ A prolix self-reported biography of Trivas appears in Russell Holmes Fletcher, ed., *Who's who in California: A biographical reference work of notable living men and women of California, vol. 1: 1942–1943*, Los Angeles: Who's Who Publications, 1941, 918-919 (s.v. 'Trivas, Numa S., A.H.D.'). Also see William Breazeale, 'Pioneering collectors: The E. B. Crocker collection of

men were keenly sensitive to the materiality of artworks, and Neumeyer had even invited New York-based conservator William Suhr to teach a course in the 'technique [sic] of the old masters' as part of a 1936 summer session at Mills on 'the history of art as it affects problems in present day museum work'.¹¹¹ Given Neumeyer's pre-existing relationship to Suhr (who was perhaps unavailable?), it is interesting that in early 1939 Pratt hired Charles Muskavitch as the third member of his team, to begin that July.¹¹² How Muskavitch first came to Pratt's attention remains unrecorded, but perhaps he had heard of him through newspaper wire stories, Bay Area collectors, or at meetings of the Western Association of Art Museum Directors (founded in 1921). In any case, Muskavitch was initially placed on a three-month, limited-term contract similar to that held by Diorio the previous summer, but with a much happier outcome.¹¹³

Working in an improvised space in the basement, Muskavitch treated more than thirty paintings (i.e., about one every two days), focusing in particular on

drawings and its founders', in William Breazeale, *A pioneering collection: Master drawings from the Crocker Art Museum*, Sacramento, CA: Crocker Art Museum, 2010, 9-18, at 17-18.

¹¹¹ 'Old masters exhibit coming to Mills', *Berkeley Daily Gazette*, 4 June 1936, 7; 'Summer sessions', *Museum News* 14: 4, 15 June 1936, 5; *American Art Annual* 33 (1936), Washington, DC: American Federation of Arts, 1937, 413 (summer course in the 'restoration and preservation of paintings'); Isabel Wünsche, 'Mills College, Oakland, California. Ein Liberal Arts College als Anlaufpunkt, Arbeitgeber und Vernetzungsort für Künstler und Kunsthistoriker an der Westküste', in Burcu Dogramaci, Karin Wimmer and Andrea Bambi, eds, *Netzwerke des Exils. Künstlerische Verflechtungen, Austausch und Patronage nach 1933*, Berlin: Gebr. Mann, 2011, 333-354, at 348. Also compare Joyce Hill Stoner, 'Pioneers in American museums: William Suhr', *Museum News* 60: 2, November-December 1981, 31-35, at 32. Neumeyer and Suhr had a mutual friend in Walter Heil, the German-born director of the M. H. de Young Memorial Museum, whom Neumeyer had first met in Florence in 1925-26 and who later got him the job at Mills when Neumeyer had to flee Nazi Germany. Heil and Suhr had previously worked together at the Detroit Institute of Arts, and during the 1930s Suhr occasionally visited San Francisco to treat paintings at the De Young; see n. 7, above. Also see Alfred Neumeyer, *Lichter und Schatten. Eine Jugend in Deutschland*, Munich: Prestel-Verlag, 1967, 206, 296-297; Alexander Fried, 'The career of Walter Heil', in *Report 1976-78, The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco*, San Francisco: The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, 1979, 42-47. On German emigrant scholars on the West Coast during the 1930s and '40s, see further Karen Michels, *Transplantierte Kunstwissenschaft. Deutschsprachige Kunstgeschichte im amerikanischen Exil*, Studien aus dem Warburg-Haus 2, Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1999, 72-73.

¹¹² Francesca Bewer reports (e-mail, 29 August 2013) finding in the Harvard archives a copy of the letter of recommendation sent by George Stout to Pratt on 18 February 1939.

¹¹³ Sacramento City Council resolution no. 840, issued 7 July 1939, authorised Muskavitch to be paid \$600.00 per month for three months and to use up to \$200.00 worth of materials. Highlights of the team's accomplishments at the Crocker that summer were published as 'Renovations at Crocker reveal important works', *Museum News* 17: 11, 1 December 1939, 12.

seventeenth-century Flemish oils similar to those he had treated in Dallas.¹¹⁴ His work was satisfactory to Noyes and to the City Council; he also got along well with both Trivas (a fellow Russian-speaker) and Neumeyer (who gave Muskavitch a drawing by his friend Lyonel Feininger as a wedding present). Thus, he was rehired again the following summer under a nearly identical set of terms.¹¹⁵ In this way Muskavitch began to spend three months each summer in Sacramento at the Crocker while maintaining a household in Dallas, where his wife continued to host her acclaimed radio program, and where his remediation of the Hoblitzelle Collection progressed. Just as in Dallas, Muskavitch engaged in public outreach throughout northern California about the merits and practices of 'scientific' conservation, doing newspaper and radio interviews and speaking frequently to community groups and academic audiences. For example, in October 1940, at Neumeyer's invitation, Muskavitch lectured at Mills College on 'the problems of picture restoration and X-ray photography' using 'movies and slides' as visual aides, and about a year later gave a series of lectures on conservation to the Art Department at the University of California in Berkeley.¹¹⁶

While still splitting his time between Sacramento and Dallas in 1940 and 1941, Muskavitch pioneered several new methods of conservation outreach hitherto thought to have been developed only after the 1939–45 war. One was a 16 mm silent colour film he produced in the spring of 1940, which began with didactic shots of 'pictures in need of restoration, showing blistering, flaking, warping and similar deteriorations' and the 'instruments used in the process of restoration', such as X-ray equipment, and concluded with 'detailed pictures of actual work being done on two paintings, one from the Hoblitzelle Collection and one from the Crocker Gallery'.¹¹⁷ Starting in June 1940, Muskavitch screened this film intermittently for

¹¹⁴ Paul Tanner, 'Muskavitch bestowed renewed "life" on many Crocker Gallery pictures', *Sacramento Union*, 1 October 1939, n.p.

¹¹⁵ Sacramento City Council resolution no. 421, issued 2 August 1940. Muskavitch was hired for four months at \$600/month, with only \$100 allocated for materials. On the Feininger drawing (today Halle, Stiftung Moritzburg, inv. no. H 1/2004), see Joseph Armstrong Baird, Jr, ed., *Faculty art collectors, University of California at Davis: An exhibition prepared by students in Art 189, Museum Methods and Connoisseurship*, Davis, CA: Art Department, University of California, Davis, 1968, 47-48 (entry by Kristin L. Spangenberg).

¹¹⁶ *Berkeley [California] Daily Gazette*, 18 October 1940, 9; Louise Long, 'Art and artists' column, *DMN*, 28 March 1941, III, 5. Muskavitch also lectured at Mills a second time in April 1941. At the time, he mentioned that he was writing a book on 'the technique of the old masters', but this project was never realised.

¹¹⁷ Long, 'Conservator will address Art League'. Also see Long, 'Dallas authority to speak before Austin Institute' ('some 500 feet of film illustrating the particular importance of the use of the X-ray in scientific restoration and investigation of works of art'), and compare Charles W. Hackett, 'The special institute of Latin-American studies at the University of Texas in the summer of 1940', *Hispanic American Historical Review* 20: 4, November 1940, 650-654, at 653. According to an undated press clipping from the *Sacramento Bee* (Muskavitch

several years at academic venues (University of Texas in Austin [its debut], Mills College, University of California at Berkeley, etc.) and to meetings of art enthusiasts, offering a live running narration and fielding questions afterwards. Another, more radical innovation was treating paintings in front of an audience of museum-goers who could observe and ask questions – an act of profound transparency meant to distinguish his 'scientific' approach from the occultation of the old-fashioned 'restorer'.¹¹⁸ In April 1941 Muskavitch set up scaffolding in a classroom at the DMFA and allowed museum-goers to watch him treat the *Last Supper* from the Hoblitzelle Collection, while on nearby walls 'several other unrestored paintings from the collection [were] hung, together with X-ray plates, photographs and partially restored paintings', with these untreated works bearing '[educational] labels showing the condition of the paintings, what was to be done to restore each to its original perfection, and how this is done in laboratories'.¹¹⁹ The *Dallas Morning News* billed it as 'a dramatic demonstration exhibition which will take the public behind the scenes of the Museum's laboratory ... to see how and why paintings are X-rayed and restored'.¹²⁰ At the start of each day, Muskavitch gave a short, prefatory lecture about art conservation, and during breaks would project his colour film.¹²¹ To the best of my knowledge, this was the first time a conservation-focused museum exhibition had ever been mounted anywhere, prefiguring better-known post-war

archive), production of the film was assisted by Russell 'Riis' Bohr (1916–2011), a painter and art history professor at Sacramento State University, and by Lewis Waters, a medical artist at the Baylor College of Medicine in Dallas (it moved to Houston in 1943). The film started out at around twenty minutes long, but evidently Muskavitch spliced new material into the reel over the years until it was about fifty minutes long, e.g., in a 1945 press release (Muskavitch archive) it was described as being '1200 feet of color film'. Unfortunately, this unique film (I can find no evidence additional copies were ever made) does not appear to survive. To my knowledge, the next motion picture made by conservators about conservation was the thirty-minute black-and-white film *A Future for the Past*, produced by Sheldon and Caroline Keck at the Brooklyn Museum in 1954/55, and briefly described in *Art Education* 8: 7, November 1955, 15.

¹¹⁸ In recent decades this approach has been institutionalised at, among others, the Kimbell Art Museum in Fort Worth (1972), the Lunder Conservation Center of the Smithsonian American Art Museum in Washington, DC (2006), and most recently at the Dallas Art Museum itself (in November 2013).

¹¹⁹ Louise Gossett, 'Art in action demonstration set for April', *Dallas Morning News* 1941, 15.

¹²⁰ Gossett, 'Art in action demonstration set for April', 15.

¹²¹ Evidently he had conceived of staging a performative conservation exhibit as early as summer 1938, when he unsuccessfully proposed one for the 1939–40 Golden Gate International Exposition in San Francisco. Augustus Pollack (Executive Secretary, Committee on Fine Arts, Golden Gate International Exposition) to Muskavitch, 9 August 1938 (Muskavitch archive): '... yesterday your proposal to install and operate an exhibition and demonstration of a research and conservation laboratory at the Golden Gate International Exposition was discussed ... the necessary space and money for such a project [is] not available and the proposal was rejected.'

Seth Adam Hindin How the west was won: Charles Muskavitch, James Roth,
and the arrival of 'scientific' art conservation ...

shows like the *Exhibition of Cleaned Pictures (1936–1947)* at the National Gallery in London and the *Albert P. Ryder Centenary Exhibition* at the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York, both staged in 1947, or the influential *Take Care!* exhibition co-organised by Sheldon Keck and his wife and long-time collaborator, Caroline Keck (1908–2008), at the Brooklyn Museum in 1954.¹²²

By 1941, with the Hoblitzelle Collection treatments nearly finished and DMFA director Richard Foster Howard stepping down to join the U.S. Army, Muskavitch saw his future in Sacramento: after nearly three years of commuting, he and his wife relocated permanently to a large ranch near Auburn, California, in the Sierra foothills, about 56 km (35 mi.) northeast of Sacramento, though for another year he returned intermittently to Dallas to finish restoring the Hoblitzelle Collection.¹²³ Around this time he also helped the Crocker set up its first proper conservation facilities, including a laboratory on the second floor that was 'equipped with the most modern optical instruments', including X-ray and ultraviolet photographic equipment.¹²⁴ By June 1942 he was in Sacramento for good.¹²⁵ Having decided to settle in northern California, Muskavitch submitted an embellished biography to *Who's who in California* (1942) as a way of discretely advertising his private services to an elite clientele, not unlike the numerous attorneys and architects also listed therein.¹²⁶ Although he provided an authentic résumé of his recent work, he fictionalised his life before Dallas with a magpie-like pastiche of accomplishments appropriated from the lives of people he knew.¹²⁷ This is interesting for what it tells us about what Muskavitch – and his putative clients – thought an ideal conservator should be. Plainly self-conscious of his weak scientific background, he reported to *Who's who* that he had earned a Bachelor of Science degree in chemistry from Lafayette College in 1925 (his older brother, William

¹²² However, individual paintings had been put on public display before and/or after treatment as early as the mid-eighteenth century, and Edward Waldo Forbes had exhibited restoration materials and X-rays at the Fogg as early as 1932. See Noémie Étienne, 'Édifier et instruire: une typologie des restaurations exposées à Paris autour de 1750', *CeROArt – Conservation, exposition, restauration d'objets d'art* 5 (2010) [online open-access]; Bewer, *A laboratory for art*, 205 and 307 n. 273; and Ian McClure, 'Making exhibitions of ourselves', in Emily Williams, ed., *The public face of conservation*, London: Archetype Publications, 2013, 163-169.

¹²³ Huffman, 'Texans on the air', 49. They had purchased the undeveloped property in summer 1940.

¹²⁴ Letter from Muskavitch to Francis Henry Taylor, dated 26 February 1945 (Washington, DC, National Archives and Records Administration, Roberts Commission, 1943–1946, Record Group 239 [Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1942–1945], 'M').

¹²⁵ 'Three Hoblitzelle canvases ready; Titian to be shown', *DMN*, 1 June 1942, I, 4.

¹²⁶ Fletcher, ed., *Who's who in California 1942–43*, 669 (s.v. 'Muskavitch, Charles Mackaiev, B.S.').

¹²⁷ It is noteworthy that both Harry Noyes Pratt and Numa S. Trivas were included in the same edition of *Who's who*, so they must have also seen Muskavitch's entry.

Vincent, had actually graduated from Lafayette in 1925 with a BA in History), thereby bolstering his claims to be a 'scientific' art conservator.¹²⁸ Other confabulations presented him as an exotic, well-travelled man of the world, rather than the youngest son of poor, urban, Eastern European immigrants. Most these were based on the career of Joseph Lindon Smith, who travelled extensively as an archaeological painter.¹²⁹ Muskavitch perhaps intended a rather improbable 'fellowship' at Lietuvos Universitetas in Kaunas, Lithuania – which would have been unverifiable during the 1939–45 war – to evoke the biography of Bernard Berenson (1865–1959), at that time the most famous art historian writing in English, thereby dissembling that Muskavitch had no formal education in art history.¹³⁰ And his dubious claim that his mother was a Russian princess (media stories began to label him a 'prince'!) betrayed his insecurities dealing with wealthy, socially elite art collectors and museum staff, while at the same time disassociating himself from Russian Communists. His false yet studied self-presentation in *Who's who* had its visual parallels in the numerous press photos he sent to newspapers, which almost invariably portrayed him wearing a scientist's white lab coat over a gentleman's suit and tie, his disabled right arm always casually hidden or out of focus as he studied an oil painting lying on a work table (fig. 1). At hand were a stereomicroscope (often in use), improbably conspicuous pieces of laboratory glassware, artists' equipment (such as a palette), and reference books – in other words, visual signifiers that Muskavitch was a rare combination of chemist, artist, and art historian, possessing all three legs of the 'three-legged stool' of scientific conservation, as famously formulated by George Stout.¹³¹ In fact, Muskavitch was easily the least formally educated of the many conservators who had trained at the Fogg during the 1930s, nearly all of whom were graduates of Harvard, Yale, Radcliffe, Vassar, or Smith.

¹²⁸ I thank David Thomas, Associate Registrar of Lafayette College, for clarifying this for me in two e-mails on 10 October 2013. Muskavitch had already been claiming a chemistry or chemical engineering degree from Lafayette in the media for several years.

¹²⁹ For example, Muskavitch claimed he had received the 'III Order, Medijieh' from the Turkish government in 1931 – an impossibility, since this minor commendation was issued only in the late Ottoman Empire, never in Kemalist Turkey. In reality, this award had been granted to Smith for his work at the Ottoman court on behalf of the Boston MFA: compare Fletcher, ed., *Who's who in California 1942–43*, 669 (s.v. 'Muskavitch, Charles Mackaiev, B.S. '), with Smith's biography in *The Artists Year Book, 1905–06*, Chicago: Art League Publishing Association, 1905, 185. Similarly, Muskavitch's claims to *Who's who* that he had conducted unspecified 'research' in Egypt and Turkey were inspired by Smith's biography.

¹³⁰ This would be understood in tandem with Muskavitch's genuine Boston childhood and Harvard training, and his fudged claims to have graduated from the Boston Latin School (he attended seventh and eighth grade only), thereby paralleling Berenson's early life.

¹³¹ Craig Hugh Smyth, 'The Conservation Center: Origins and early years', in Norbert S. Baer, ed., *Training in conservation: A symposium on the occasion of the dedication of the Stephen Chan House, October 1, 1983*, New York: Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, 1989, 7–16, at 10.

Still, Muskavitch's attempts to refashion and represent himself were not merely rhetorical, but actually corresponded with his continuous self-education in all facets of art conservation. He kept abreast of new developments at the Fogg's Conservation Department not only through correspondence with its staff, but also by diligently following *Technical Studies*.¹³² For example, Muskavitch adopted for his own record-keeping at the Crocker the abbreviated, four-part, one-page condition report format for paintings assessment that was first developed by George Stout at the Fogg in 1938 and published in *Technical Studies* the following year, which was after Muskavitch had already left Boston.¹³³ Indeed, Muskavitch used this same report format – structure, deterioration, former treatment, and notes (or 'remarks') – throughout the rest of his career.¹³⁴ He also encouraged his colleague Numa Trivas to publish part of his ongoing research on the eighteenth-century Swiss miniaturist Jean-Étienne Liotard in *Technical Studies*, an otherwise unlike venue.¹³⁵

During these first years at the Crocker Gallery, Muskavitch took on outside projects to supplement his income, since he worked at the Gallery only three days per week. Given that Sacramento was (and is) the state capital of California, a large number of these commissions came from the state government, and particularly its State Parks division.¹³⁶ Most notably, in 1940 Muskavitch was hired to conserve *The Last Spike* (also known as *The Driving of the Last Spike*), an enormous (2.41 x 3.63 m) oil painting completed in 1881 by the English-born American artist Thomas Hill (1829–1908) that portrays a highly idealised reimagining of the ceremonial completion of the first U.S. transcontinental railroad, staged at Promontory, Utah, on 10 May 1869.¹³⁷ Unsold during Hill's lifetime, *The Last Spike* had been donated to

¹³² The Harvard Art Museum Archives at Harvard University holds letters from Muskavitch to Fogg director Arthur Pope (1880–1974) in 1945 and 1946 under call number HC 4 (Papers, 1907–1979), Series I (Correspondence as Director).

¹³³ George L. Stout, 'General notes on the condition of paintings – a brief outline for purposes of record', *Technical Studies in the Field of the Fine Arts* 7: 3, January 1939, 159-166. A longer, four-page form was first published as George L. Stout, 'A museum record of the condition of paintings', *Technical Studies in the Field of the Fine Arts* 3: 4, 1935, 200-216.

¹³⁴ On Muskavitch's examination forms, see Muskavitch, *The E. B. Crocker art collection*, Appendix I, 1-2; compare Bewer, *A laboratory for art*, 158. On the history of condition reporting in paintings conservation, see now Morwenna Blewett, 'Notes on the history of conservation documentation: Examples from the UK and USA', in Joyce Hill Stoner and Rebecca Rushfield, eds, *Conservation of easel paintings*, London: Routledge, 2012, 281-284.

¹³⁵ Numa S. Trivas, 'Two fomulas by Liotard', *Technical Studies in the Field of the Fine Arts* 10: 1, July 1941, 29-32.

¹³⁶ In June 1942 Muskavitch told the *Dallas Morning News* that he was 'in charge of all the art property of the State of California ... including that in all school and government buildings'. Whether or not this reflected a formal contract with the State, or simply his expectation of receiving steady commissions, remains an open question. See 'Three Hoblitzelle canvases ready; Titian to be shown', *DMN*, 1 June 1942, I, 4.

¹³⁷ Louise Long, 'Art restorer faces duties in California', *Dallas Morning News*, 2 July 1940. On the painting itself, see Hardy George, 'Thomas Hill's "The Driving of the Last Spike": A

Seth Adam Hindin How the west was won: Charles Muskavitch, James Roth,
and the arrival of 'scientific' art conservation ...

the State in 1937 and installed prominently in the Capitol. It was arguably the best-known painting in Sacramento, so it was a genuine coup for Muskavitch to receive the commission to restore it for \$1,500 (equivalent to roughly \$24,000 in 2013).¹³⁸ He seems to have done an outstanding job: despite his tendency to peremptorily reline paintings by hand (in keeping with accepted practices of the period), Muskavitch must be credited with sensitively preserving Hill's 'rich impasto surface', at which one critic could still marvel in the mid-1960s.¹³⁹

Western conservation during the war years

Throughout the twentieth century the theory and practice of conservation were affected profoundly by preparations for, and the aftermath of, modern mechanised warfare, from the pivotal 1930 Rome conference, which was stimulated in part by deterioration and damage to artworks and buildings during the 1914–18 war, to the perfection of infrared colour film and infrared reflectography in the 1950s as part of U.S. military research to better expose camouflaged targets and assist night-time snipers.¹⁴⁰ In the United States, efforts by the armed forces to document and protect art and architecture during and after the prosecution of the Second World War consolidated and expanded powerful social and professional networks already inchoate during the 1930s and early 1940s by bringing together art historians, curators, and museum directors from across the country putting them into contact (or back into contact) with current and former members of the Fogg's Conservation Department. In particular, both the Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives (MFAA) program and the so-called Roberts Commission provided crucial networking opportunities for the few dozen men involved, nearly all of whom came from Ivy League universities and leading East Coast museums, and many of whom had been

painting commemorating the completion of America's transcontinental railroad', *Art Quarterly* 27: 1, 1964, 83-93; Raymond L. Wilson, 'Painters of California's silver era', *American Art Journal* 16: 4, Autumn 1984, 71-92, at 83 and n. 48; John William Ott, 'The gilded rush: Art patronage, industrial capital, and social authority in Victorian California', PhD dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 2002, 76-81. California Assembly bill no. 1457, 24 January 1941, appropriated \$2,500 for 'reconditioning and framing' *The Last Spike*, i.e., \$1,500 for restoration and \$1,000 for the frame.

¹³⁸ Louise Long Gossett, 'Art Restorer To Work on Hill Painting', *DMN*, 3 July 1941, I, 9; 'Thomas Hill painting of railroad scene will be restored, reframed' (undated newspaper clipping in Muskavitch archive). Muskavitch carried out the actual work in Dallas, not Sacramento.

¹³⁹ George, 'Thomas Hill's "The Driving of the Last Spike"', 84. After being treated, *The Last Spike* was re-hung in the lobby of the State Capitol, where it remained until the late 1970s, when the Capitol was extensively renovated; at that point, it was moved to the California State Railroad Museum in Sacramento, where it is still on view.

¹⁴⁰ See Bewer, *A laboratory for art*, 78, 211-226. More generally, see Paul Virilio, *War and cinema: The logistics of perception*, trans. Patrick Camiller, London and New York: Verso, 1989.

Fogg associates.¹⁴¹ Wartime service, whether on committees in Washington or on battlefields overseas, established personal ties that endured for decades after the war and forged professional networks that to some degree persist up to the present.

Only a few months after Pearl Harbor, in March 1942, a conference on 'Emergency protection of works of art' was held at the Fogg Art Museum at Harvard for directors and curators of major museums, many of whom were alumni of the museum seminar taught by Paul J. Sachs and/or the Fogg's conservation program (e.g., Murray Pease and James J. Rorimer at the Metropolitan Museum of Art; Sheldon Keck of the Brooklyn Museum; Edmond de Beaumont of the Worcester [Mass.] Art Museum). It was facilitated by the Fogg conservation staff (George Stout, John Gettens, Evelyn Ehrlich, and Richard Buck), and resulted in a fourteen-page pamphlet of basic advice for museum staff on packing and storing artworks in preparation for possible air raids or invasion.¹⁴² More importantly, it laid the groundwork for future collaboration among many of the participants in two later projects. In Summer 1943 the American Commission for the Protection and Salvage of Artistic and Historic Monuments in War Areas (also known as the Roberts Commission, after its chairman, Supreme Court Justice Owen Roberts) was formed in Washington, DC, and by that autumn had prompted the development of the MFAA program, whose 'Monuments Men' would oversee the protection of European art and architecture during the war and the return of looted cultural properties after its conclusion.¹⁴³ Though earlier studies have acknowledged these organizations played a part in the professionalization of art conservation in North America and Western Europe, their roles cannot be overstated and have yet to be fully explored. Through the MFAA program – whose personnel appointments were determined in consultation with Roberts Commission member Paul J. Sachs – George Stout and his former student Sheldon Keck came to know the young, Princeton-trained art historians Craig Hugh Smyth (1915–2006) and Charles Parkhurst (1913–2008), and deepened their ties with the Belgian conservator Paul B. Coremans (1908–1965), who aided the MFAA at the end of the war. (Coremans had first come into contact with Stout and Keck in the 1930s.) After demobilization, Parkhurst became the director of the Allen Memorial Art Museum at Oberlin College (1949–62) and facilitated the creation of the Intermuseum Laboratory there in 1952 under the leadership of Stout's protégé Richard D. ('Dick') Buck (1903–1977), who had acted as chief conservator at the Fogg Art Museum while Stout was in

¹⁴¹ This was no coincidence: the Roberts Commission placed the Fogg's associate director, Paul J. Sachs, in charge of personnel appointments. I thank Andrew McClellan for bringing this to my attention.

¹⁴² *Emergency Protection of Works of Art*, n.p. [Cambridge, MA]: n.p. [Fogg Art Museum], 1942.

¹⁴³ From 1945 to the present, these have been the focus of a series of memoirs, journalistic accounts, and works of popular non-fiction, most notably Robert M. Edsel, *The Monuments Men: Allied heroes, Nazi thieves, and the greatest treasure hunt in history*, New York: Center Street, 2009, which also inspired the 2014 Hollywood film *Monuments Men*.

military service; Otto Wittmann, who after the war became associate director of the Toledo Museum of Art, also played a key role in its formation.¹⁴⁴ During the later 1950s, Smyth and Keck co-conceived and subsequently founded (in 1960) the Conservation Center at New York University as the first conservation research and training program associated with a U.S. university. Meanwhile, Coremans became a mentor to many young Americans who travelled to Brussels to train with him and his colleagues at the Institut Royal du Patrimoine Artistique.¹⁴⁵ These wartime networks extended beyond conservation as well: for example, Williams College art history professor S. Lane Faison (1907–2006; MA Harvard, 1930; MFA, Princeton, 1932) got to know the directors of many major U.S. museums through his work for the Roberts Commission, thereby laying the groundwork for the emergence of the so-called 'Williams Mafia' of museum curators and directors, whose early generations were Faison's former students hired by his former Army colleagues.¹⁴⁶ One important result of the war years was that ties between eastern actors and institutions were further strengthened, whereas western ones were largely left out, laying the groundwork for sustained regional differences in the U.S. conservation world for decades to come.¹⁴⁷

Significantly, Charles Muskavitch was ineligible to join the U.S. military due to his disabled right arm; thus, unlike most of his former colleagues from the Fogg, he could not serve as a 'Monuments Man'. He was shut out from important professional opportunities in conservation, as well as the social prestige that military service offered. Instead, Muskavitch performed stateside civil defence service in and around Sacramento, largely putting his conservation career aside for two years (1942–44).¹⁴⁸ More surprisingly, Muskavitch was also not invited to attend

¹⁴⁴ Bewer, *A laboratory for art*, 318 n. 146.

¹⁴⁵ On Coremans, see the special memorial issue of the *Bulletin de l'Institut Royal du Patrimoine Artistique* 8, 1965, with tributes by Harold J. Plenderleith, Erwin Panofsky, Albert and Paul Philippot, and Caroline and Sheldon Keck, among others, along with a bibliography of Coremans's writings.

¹⁴⁶ See Stephen Kinzer, 'One college's long shadow: Looking back at the "Williams Mafia"', *New York Times*, 31 March 2004, G10; Edsel, *The Monuments Men*, xv-xvi.

¹⁴⁷ The only curators from the western U.S. to become involved in the war effort – there were not yet any U.S.-born art historians teaching in western universities – were Laurence Sickman of the Nelson Gallery of Art in Kansas City, and Thomas Carr Howe, Jr (1904–1994), who had recently been appointed director of the California Palace of the Legion of Honor in San Francisco. Like Sickman, Howe was a Harvard fine arts graduate (AB, 1926; graduate work, 1926–30); moreover, he was also the son of a Harvard alumnus (AM, 1897; PhD, 1899).

¹⁴⁸ Initially Muskavitch assisted with aircraft repair training at McClellan Field in Sacramento, then attended the wartime Pennsylvania State School of Aeronautics in Harrisburg in 1943 and was subsequently put in charge of 'civilian training material' at the Sacramento Air Service Command. During his service he was able to continue working at the Crocker Art Gallery two days per month. See Patricia Peck, 'At the museums' column, *DMN*, 24 March 1943, I, 8; 'Former conservator of Dallas visits city', *DMN*, 14 October 1943, II, 6. In 1944 the Sacramento City Council appropriated \$1,300 to pay Charles Muskavitch 'for

Seth Adam Hindin How the west was won: Charles Muskavitch, James Roth,
and the arrival of 'scientific' art conservation ...

the pivotal March 1942 conference on 'Emergency protection of works of art', even though he had been hastily recalled to Sacramento from Dallas immediately after Pearl Harbor in order to pack and store the most important works in the Crocker Art Gallery's collection, and thus might have offered valuable insights to his East Coast counterparts preparing for similar evacuations.¹⁴⁹ Conversely, although logical that James Roth was not invited to the Fogg conference – Kansas City was too far from either coast to fear bombardment – it is difficult to explain why he was not asked to contribute his rare professional skills as a 'Monuments Man', except that he was from a Midwestern, working-class background and held a degree from a Kansas City art school, not an Ivy League university. Instead, Roth took leave from the Nelson Gallery to contribute to the war effort by labouring at a local aircraft factory – a role deemed more appropriate for someone of his class background.¹⁵⁰ In glaring contrast, Nelson curators Otto Wittmann (who had prepped at Kansas City's Country Day School, a precursor to today's Pembroke Hill School) and Laurence Sickman, who were his personal and professional contemporaries, were invited to serve in the MFAA in Europe and Japan, respectively; like the Nelson Gallery's director, Paul Gardner, who participated in the MFAA in Italy, they held Harvard degrees and had eastern connections.¹⁵¹ Thus,

the restoration of pictures at the Crocker Art Gallery' between 1 January and 30 June (minutes of the Sacramento City Council, 4 February 1944). This amounted to only \$216.66/month, well below his previous salary of \$600/month, reflecting his reduced time at the Crocker during defence service. There are no records of payments to Muskavitch in 1942 or 1943.

¹⁴⁹ For example, a large painting of *Hercules and Omphale* (inv. no. 1872.50), dated 1645 and attributed to Rubens' assistant Abraham van Diepenbeeck (1596–1675), was faced with paper to protect the loose paint film during possible relocation; see Muskavitch, *The E. B. Crocker art collection*, unnumbered pages after Appendix II, with photos. For further details, see 'Crocker packs up few of its most valued paintings', *Sacramento Bee*, 13 December 1941, 19; 'Precious art works now under guard', *Sacramento Union*, 14 December 1941 (with photo); Sandal Dailey, 'Art and artists' column (indelicatey subtitled 'Jap paper may help save paintings from Nipponese bombings'), *DMN*, 21 December 1941, III, 18. In his recollections of the conference, Richard Buck notes that 'Invitations were sent to the major museums on the east coast and in the midwest.' See Richard D. Buck, 'From the Fogg to Oberlin to Balboa Park', in *Preprints of papers presented at the fourth annual meeting, Dearborn, Michigan, 29 May-1 June 1976*, Washington, DC: The American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works, 1976, 5-10, at 6.

¹⁵⁰ Wolferman, *Culture*, 181; Margaret C. Conrads, 'Collecting paintings for Kansas City', in Margaret C. Conrads, ed., *The collections of the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art: American paintings to 1945*, 2 vols, vol. 1, Kansas City: The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, 2007, 15-24, at 18.

¹⁵¹ Indeed, a thorough review of a provisional list of American 'Monuments Men' reveals that nearly all came from elite educational backgrounds, and nearly all of these from wealthy homes, chiefly in the Northeast; the main exceptions are some individuals chosen specifically for their fluency in particular foreign languages, who could act as interpreters.

Seth Adam Hindin How the west was won: Charles Muskavitch, James Roth,
and the arrival of 'scientific' art conservation ...

it is important to recognize that the master narrative of U.S. conservation has been profoundly inflected not only by regional biases, but also by factors like gender (even well-connected female conservators like Evelyn Ehrlich and Minna Horwitz were not permitted to join the MFAA or Roberts Commission), disability, and social class. Indeed, the prominent role played in the MFAA by Sheldon Keck (AB, Harvard, 1932) – who narrowly escaped death during service in Germany – positioned him professionally to be the most influential conservator of his generation.¹⁵²

Epilogue: Conservation in post-war Kansas City

After World War II, Charles Muskavitch remained associated with the E. B. Crocker Art Gallery for another twenty years, while continuing to operate an active private

(Here I consulted the Americans on the list available at <http://www.monumentsmenfoundation.org/the-heroes/the-monuments-men> [accessed 12 October 2014], and followed up as necessary with additional research.) A separate study would be necessary to explore this topic in depth, but in the meantime three examples here suffice to make the point: Charles H. Sawyer (1906–2005) prepped at Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts, then received his BA from Yale in 1929 and studied briefly at Harvard Law School before participation in Paul J. Sachs's museum seminar at the Fogg redirected him to curatorship, and before serving in Europe was director of the Worcester (Mass.) Art Museum; Theodore 'Tubby' Sizer (1892–1967) grew up on the Upper West Side of Manhattan, near Central Park, studied art history at Harvard (AB, 1915), and after military service in the 1914–18 war and a short but successful career in business became a curator at the Cleveland Museum of Art and later director of the Yale University Art Gallery; Craig Hugh Smyth (1915–2006) grew up in Manhattan, prepped at Hotchkiss School, and took his BA (1938) and MFA (1941) from Princeton before joining the 'Monuments Men'. Many similar examples could be given. Those few 'Monuments Men' who did not come from rich families nevertheless came from socially distinguished ones. Again, three examples must suffice: Frederick Hartt (1914–1991) was the son of Rollin Lynde Hartt (1869–1946), a Congregationalist minister and journalist (BA, Williams, 1892; M.Div., Andover Theological Seminary, 1896), and received his BA from Columbia University in 1935 and MA at New York University in 1937, working for several years at the Yale University Art Gallery before joining the U.S. Army; Calvin S. Hathaway (1907–1974) was the son of Harry St Clair Hathaway (1871–1960; BA, Kenyon College, 1896; M.Div. Bexley Hall Seminary, 1899), an Episcopalian minister who could proudly trace his ancestry to the *Mayflower* (the first ship of English colonists to settle in Massachusetts), and graduated from Princeton University in 1930, with additional study at Harvard and New York University before becoming a curator at the Philadelphia Museum of Art and Cooper Union Museum for the Arts of Decoration (today Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum); and Thomas Carr Howe, Jr (1904–1994), though he attended a public high school in Indianapolis (albeit the oldest and most prestigious in the state), was the son of a Harvard alumnus who was president of Butler University from 1907 to 1920, i.e., throughout his childhood (see above, n. 147).

¹⁵² Jean D. Portell is currently preparing a biography of Sheldon and Caroline Keck.

practice. Beginning in 1959–60, he also co-taught an annual seminar at the University of California, Davis, near Sacramento, where in 1964 he co-founded the Laboratory for Research in the Fine Arts and Museology, one of the very first museum studies and conservation training programs in North America.¹⁵³ Muskavitch retired from teaching in 1971, and spent the last thirty years of his life on his ranch, raising prize-winning sheep; though he kept a small private studio, he evidently took on few clients in his later years.¹⁵⁴ Having outlived virtually all his Fogg contemporaries and without ties to a younger generation of California conservators – he never joined WAAC, had no apprentices, nor, for that matter, any children – he died in 2001 virtually forgotten, an unfortunate fate for the first conservator in the western U.S. and an ironic one for a highly accomplished yet chronically insecure self-made man who craved public recognition.

In contrast, James Roth spent the post-war years gradually building ties to East Coast conservators, as well as training a series of apprentices, and therefore managed to establish a modest legacy. Unlike Muskavitch, Roth remained firmly rooted in his home state throughout his career. His position at the Nelson Gallery, though permanent, was only part-time, and he maintained a thriving private practice.¹⁵⁵ By the late 1940s, he was particularly known for treating paintings by Missouri 'frontier' artist George Caleb Bingham (1811–1879), not only at the Nelson Gallery, but also at the City Art Museum of St Louis (known since 1972 as the St Louis Art Museum), the State Historical Society of Missouri in Columbia, and elsewhere around the state, and he was often consulted by curators and collectors about Bingham's work.¹⁵⁶ He also developed an expertise in transferring paintings on canvas to Masonite using an innovative wax facing technique.¹⁵⁷ Roth's outstanding performance at the Nelson Gallery encouraged other institutions and private collectors to consign their work to him for treatment, and helped to spread the modern, Fogg-inspired approach to conservation beyond Kansas City. For example, art historian Patrick Joseph Kelleher (1917–1985), who worked as a curator at the Nelson Gallery during the late 1950s, was so impressed by Roth's approach that when he became director of the Art Museum of his graduate alma mater,

¹⁵³ I have made this the focus of a separate publication: Hindin, 'Art conservation between theory and practice'.

¹⁵⁴ Interview with Tim Woodall, 26 September 2013.

¹⁵⁵ Cornman—Roth interview.

¹⁵⁶ Alan R. Havig, *A centennial history of the state historical society of Missouri, 1898–1998*, Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1998, 117. Also see James Roth, 'A unique painting technique of George Caleb Bingham', *Bulletin of the American Group, International Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works* 11: 2, 1971, 120-123.

¹⁵⁷ Cornman—Roth interview. Roth mentions that he never published or publically presented his technique, but that it nonetheless spread among U.S. conservators through word-of-mouth. Today such transfers are seldom performed.

Seth Adam Hindin How the west was won: Charles Muskavitch, James Roth,
and the arrival of 'scientific' art conservation ...

Princeton University, in 1960, he established a conservation laboratory there.¹⁵⁸ By the 1960s, Roth was treating works from the rapidly growing Museum of Art and Archaeology at the University of Missouri, and on occasion paintings were sent to him from as far away as the Witte Museum and Marion Koogler McNay Art Institute in San Antonio, Texas, the Indianapolis Museum of Art, and even the Smith College Museum of Art in Massachusetts.¹⁵⁹ He also gave talks at the nearby University of Kansas and other local venues.¹⁶⁰ But undoubtedly Roth's most direct legacy were his four apprentices, all of whom had ties to Missouri: Clements L. Robertson, who apprenticed with and assisted Roth from 1949 until 1963, when he was hired away by the City Art Museum of St Louis to found its conservation lab; Roth's own son-in-law, Perry C. Huston, who apprenticed with and assisted Roth from 1964 to 1971, when he left to found the conservation lab at the new Kimbell Art Museum in Fort Worth, Texas; Margaret Randall ('Randy') Ash, who trained with Roth from about 1968 to 1970 before going onto a career at the Baltimore Museum of Art; and Robert J. Weinberg, who trained with Roth for two years in the early 1970s before moving into paper conservation at the Graphic Conservation Department (earlier Extra Bindery Department) of R. R. Donnelly and Sons in Chicago.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁸ Norman Muller, 'Slowing the clock: Art conservation at the art museum', *Record of the Art Museum, Princeton University* 59: 1/2, 2000, 2-15, at 7. To run the new lab, Kelleher hired New Jersey-based conservator Bernard Rabin (1916–2003), who had trained with Sheldon and Caroline Keck at the Brooklyn Museum in the late 1950s.

¹⁵⁹ Cornman—Roth interview; 'First Fiesta Mexicana to benefit Witte Museum', *San Antonio Express/News*, 4 October 1964, 4-F (concerns a fundraiser for treatments by Roth); 'Early Texas art opened to public', *San Antonio Express/News*, 5 June 1965, 15-A; 'Restored 15th century work joins McNay's art display', *San Antonio Express/News*, 6 August 1967, 3-H; press release from Indiana Museum of Art ('INDIANAPOLIS MUSEUM OF ART TO ESTABLISH ART CONSERVATION SCIENCE LABORATORY'), 14 October 2008, available online at www.imamuseum.org/sites/default/files/Conservation.pdf [accessed 26 October 2013].

¹⁶⁰ Cornman—Roth interview.

¹⁶¹ Cornman—Roth interview. Robertson and Weinberg had studied at the Kansas City Art Institute; Huston came from Rolla, Missouri; Ash completed her BA in St Louis. (Note, however, that during the interview Roth – whose memory appeared to be declining – did not mention Ash at all, underscoring the unreliability and insufficiency of such interviews for art-historical scholarship.) On Robertson (who retired from St Louis in 1987), see Charles Nagel, 'Report of the director to the administrative board of control', *Bulletin of the City Art Museum of St. Louis* 47: 1-2, 1963, 6-12, at 10, and Clements L. Robertson, 'A museum conservation laboratory', *Museum News* 43: 5, January 1965, 15-21. On Huston, see Claire Barry, 'Preserving the light: Conservation at the Kimball', *Apollo* 166, October 2007, 52-57, at 52 and 54. Huston continued to work for the Kimball part-time until 1984, when he moved completely into private practice in Fort Worth. He is now retired. It is also worth noting here that Roth also trained his wife, Helen T. Roth (1910–1996), to assist him at the Nelson Gallery. She began working with him 1962 and continued to do so until his retirement a decade later.

Despite his relative isolation in Kansas City for the first twenty or so years of his career, by the 1960s Roth began to reach out to the East Coast conservation establishment.¹⁶² He spoke at the IIC-American Group annual conferences in New York (1963), Chicago (1966), and Washington, DC (1968), and in 1972 chaired a session at the thirteenth annual meeting at Winterthur, organised by its director, fellow Missourian Charles van Ravenswaay (1911–1990); Roth's former apprentice Clements Robertson also chaired a session. In 1965 influential New York-based conservator Caroline Keck lauded him in print as the 'top expert in the USA on transfer', and in the spring of 1966, he taught a four-week seminar on that topic at the Conservation Center at the Institute of Fine Arts, in New York, the first university-based conservation training program in North America, co-founded by Sheldon Keck.¹⁶³ In March 1972, Roth hosted Sheldon and Caroline Keck and several of their students from their newly founded Cooperstown (New York) Graduate Program at a special workshop at the Nelson–Atkins Museum. And upon his retirement the following year, Roth selected as his successor Forrest R. Bailey, a Midwestern native who had been a student of the Kecks at Cooperstown, reaffirming loyalties to both his home region and the eastern conservation establishment.¹⁶⁴ Over the next decade, two of Roth's former trainees served as presidents of the American Institute for Conservation (AIC) – Robertson from 1974 to 1976 and Perry Huston from 1980 to 1982 – thereby deepening his legacy.

Conclusion

Conservation is fundamentally an interpretive act.¹⁶⁵ If one abandons – as more sophisticated recent literature already has – the facile hermeneutic conceit that to 'restore' an artwork is merely to return it to its original state and therefore to once again fully reveal its author's intention, and thus the work's stable and inherent meaning, then it is clear that conservation history is of the deepest importance to,

¹⁶² For example, he attended the first meeting of the IIC-American Group in Boston in 1960; Cornman–Roth interview.

¹⁶³ Caroline K. Keck, *A handbook on the care of paintings for historical agencies and small museums*, n.p. [Nashville, TN]: American Association for State and Local History, 1965, 130. Note that Roth and his former pupil Clements L. Robertson were the only people west of Chicago named by Keck on her list of 'Recommended conservators for painting' (130-131).

¹⁶⁴ Bailey had trained as a painter at Boston University (BFA, 1959) and went on to study at Michigan State University (MA, 1960; MFA, 1961) and later at the University of Iowa (MA, 1966) with noted figural painter Byron Burford (1920–2011). For much of the 1960s and early 1970s, Bailey taught studio art courses; in 1972–73 he trained in paintings conservation with the Kecks at Cooperstown, then succeeded Roth at the Nelson–Atkins Museum, where he worked from 1973 to 1998. See <http://forrestrbailey.com/Files/Information.html> [accessed 1 October 2013].

¹⁶⁵ Thomas Brachert, 'Restaurierung als Interpretation', *Maltechnik Restauero* 89: 2, April 1983, 83-95.

and is an integral part of, the history of art, offering us insight into additional chapters in the biographical trajectories of objects.¹⁶⁶ To acknowledge that conservators – and those who pay them – actively make interpretive choices that mediate and condition other beholders' responses to artworks means that conservation history, and conservators themselves, assume a new prominence in the history and historiography of art. Rather than circumscribing and disavowing remedial work and even collections care as technical rather than interpretive, I contend that whenever possible one should foreground and critique practices of conservation, as well as the institutional and social worlds within which conservators operate, and from which they are excluded: the apprenticeship, the laboratory, and the museum, but also the conference room, the newspaper, and the clubhouse. Yet, to do this means also to question the origins, development, and current workings of modern, 'scientific' conservation itself by reminding us that conservation history was and is not simply made, but rather, like all history, made under circumstances given and transmitted from the past.¹⁶⁷ In this effort one ought to be inspired not only by the critical art historiographies that have emerged in recent decades, but also by critical histories of science that have highlighted the non-empirical, socially conditioned ways in which scientific knowledge is produced, approbated, circulated, and consumed.¹⁶⁸

As I have attempted to demonstrate in this study, the history of North American conservation is more complex and nuanced than received narratives suggest, and to move beyond these narratives it is necessary to better integrate conservation history into art historiography more generally, as well as to position it within and against more expansive social, regional, and institutional histories.

¹⁶⁶ Igor Kopytoff, 'The cultural biography of things: Commoditization as process', in Arjun Appadurai, ed., *The social life of things: Commodities in cultural perspective*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986, 64-91; Steven W. Dykstra, 'The artist's intentions and intentional fallacy in fine arts conservation', *Journal of the American Institute for Conservation* 35: 3, Fall/Winter 1996, 197-218; Jean D. Portell, 'Prior repairs: When should they be preserved?' *Journal of the American Institute for Conservation* 42: 2, Summer 2003, 363-380; Keith Christiansen, 'The truth, half-truth, and falsehood of restoration', in Patricia Sherwin Garland, ed., *Early Italian paintings: Approaches to conservation. Proceeding of a symposium at the Yale University Art Gallery, April 2002*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003, 71-81; Salvador Muñoz Viñas, *Contemporary theory of conservation*, Oxford and Burlington, MA: Elsevier Butterworth-Heinemann, 2005; Joyce Hill Stoner, 'Degrees of authenticity in the discourse between the original artist and the viewer', in Erma Hermens and Tina Fiske, eds, *Art, conservation and authenticities: Material, concept, context. Proceedings of the international conference held at the University of Glasgow, 12-14 September 2007*, London: Archetype Publications, 2009, 13-21.

¹⁶⁷ Here, of course, I paraphrase Marx's 'Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte' (1852).

¹⁶⁸ I am thinking here of works like Michael Podro, *The critical historians of art*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982, and Massimiano Bucchi, *Science in society: An introduction to social studies of science*, trans. Adrian Belton, London: Routledge, 2004, to give just two examples.

Seth Adam Hindin How the west was won: Charles Muskavitch, James Roth,
and the arrival of 'scientific' art conservation ...

Although personal recollections of conservators – whether in symposium papers, publications, or oral histories – are worth taking into account, it would be both intellectually complacent and methodologically naïve to rely upon them exclusively, or nearly so, when crafting narratives about the past. Francesca Bewer's recent book *A Laboratory for Art* has eloquently affirmed the value of careful archival work and thoughtful consideration of wider institutional politics in framing developments in conservation, and in the present study I have sought to extend her project geographically and to a certain degree chronologically by tracing the careers of two Fogg Art Museum trainees who headed west, rather than across the River Charles to Boston, or to New York, yet who remain pivotal to the permeation of 'scientific' conservation in North America. More than sixty years after the establishment of the IIC, and with the foundational generations almost entirely deceased, art conservation is now mature enough as a discipline to critically revisit and re-evaluate its twentieth-century origins and transformations; yet as a relatively small, tight-knit community rightly concerned about its perception among paying clients, it will require extra courage for conservators to reappraise their professional forebearers beyond merely their working practices and choices of materials. Here I believe that art historians and other historians of visual culture, being less directly entangled in the professional exigencies of conservation, will have important contributions to make.

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