

**IADA symposium “From Generation to Generation – Sharing Knowledge
connecting people”
3-5 May 2017, Oslo, Norway**

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From the 3rd to the 5th of May 2017, over 200 book and paper conservators met in Oslo for the IADA Symposium (International Association of Book and Paper Conservators). For this edition, conservators gathered around the theme “From Generation to Generation – Sharing Knowledge connecting people”.

Thanks to the ICOM UK travel bursary scheme and the support of the National Maritime Museum, I was able for the first time to attend an IADA symposium. Additionally, I was also able to present a paper with my colleague Clara de la Peña McTigue. The paper addressed the difficulty raised by pastel conservation and gives a unique perspective on John Russell’s work, the most famous British pastellist of the 18th century.

The first day of the symposium focused on how conservation knowledge can be shared following different paths. It was interesting to see the different yet complementary aspects of sharing and disseminating conservation knowledge. Speakers from all over the world were present. Depending on the teaching context, the transmission of knowledge can take various forms such as training in colleges, workshops, work placements, internship programs and fellowships. All these presentations were interesting, stimulating and relevant as the National Maritime Museum welcomes every year pre-program volunteers, students from various conservation program and interns.

The richness of the first day also originated in hearing different voices and points of view. Teachers, mentors and seasoned conservators took the floor but the beginning of the afternoon was dedicated to students sharing their placements experience.

I was also very interested in the presentation on the use of the different social media platforms for the development of public engagement at the Bodleian library in Oxford, addressing the benefits and the pitfalls of the different digital platforms.

At the end of the day, an evening reception was organised at the National Library of Norway to enable the attendees to continue the conversations started earlier in the day. The evening was the perfect opportunity to meet with colleagues, to strengthen established relationship and build new connections in a more casual context.



IADA organising committee at evening reception at the Norwegian National Library

During the second day, conservators addressed more practical issues and presented some case studies. I really enjoyed listening to all the presentations and hearing how conservators are keeping a critical eye on past practices whilst finding new ways to contribute to improving current practice.

At the beginning of the afternoon, one hour was dedicated to a poster session. Twelve conservators were presenting their posters addressing a large array of conservation issues, from papyrus to photographs conservation, and were available for discussion.

Our presentation *“Should a spot of Mildew appear: conservation of two John Russell’s pastels”* opened the afternoon session. We aimed to share how we addressed the issue raised by pastel conservation alongside with John Russell’s treatise, consulting pastel experts and interdisciplinary dialogue. We addressed the issues relating to pastel conservation, our methodology in determining treatment options and our research into the artist John Russell.



Emmanuelle Largeteau and Clara de la Peña McTigue presenting their talk on May 4th 2014

Presenting your work in front of your peers is, to me, always a little stressful but developing my communication skills is one of my personal objectives. The presentation was well received, generating further questions at the end of the talk but also further discussion during the following breaks. Pastel is such a delicate and fragile material that paper conservators may be apprehensive of their conservation treatment. I hope our presentation gave other conservators the confidence to

study, to approach pastel conservation serenely and not to hesitate to reach for help when in doubt.

The third day of the Symposium was dedicated to visits and tours of Museums and cultural institutions in Oslo. With a group of 15 conservators, I went to the National Gallery of Norway study room where the curator Møyfrid Tveit welcomed us and presented examples of the collection from all masters’ drawings to modern Norwegian artists.

I am very grateful for ICOM UK supporting me taking part in the IADA symposium in Oslo. It was for me a unique opportunity to meet, to discuss and to exchange with so many colleagues from all over the world and keep my knowledge up to date. Sharing the result of the research and the conservation treatment carried out at the National Maritime Museum with fellow conservators is enriching as it starts a conversation about shared difficulties, experiences and potential, future collaboration.

On a more personal level, I am very pleased to have presented my work at an international conference in front of colleagues. Public speaking was a personal challenge I wanted to face and IADA symposium was the perfect venue for it. This experience was enriching on many levels and contributed to improving my confidence as a young professional but also as a public speaker.

I am also very pleased to add that a publication in the Journal of Paper conservation should follow our presentation at the symposium.