

Session Track: Decorative Painting Conservation
Session Code: CS10a

Paper: Recreation of Spanish Colonial Interior Decoration at the Casa Ramon Power Y Giralt, Old San Juan, for the Conservation Trust of Puerto Rico

Presented by

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Speaker(s) Biography

John Canning

John Canning is one of the pre-eminent practitioners in the field of Decorative Painting. An acknowledged master of the arts of restoration, replication, and preservation, John Canning has built his reputation upon formal training and inherent skill. He studied at the Scottish Decorative Trades Institute, and the Stow College of Building, in his native Glasgow, Scotland. Upon completion of a five-year apprenticeship in Church Painting and Decorating, he earned the coveted London City and Guilds Certificate. John is also a Professional Associate of the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (AIC).

John Canning established the company that bears his name in 1976, in Southington, Connecticut. With a background of more than 35 years experience, he has successfully completed projects throughout the country. His list of clients includes federal, state, municipal and private owners of landmark historic buildings and locations.

Beatriz del Cueto, FAIA

Beatriz del Cueto is a Conservation Architect with Pantel, del Cueto & Associates, Guaynabo, Puerto Rico

Abstract

The Casa Ramón Power Y Giralt, Old San Juan, Puerto Rico is the restored home of 18th-century naval hero Don Ramón Power y Giralt. It serves as the headquarters and museum of the Conservation Trust of Puerto Rico. The project involved the creation of Spanish Colonial historic interior decoration and murals in Exhibit Rooms, Reception Area, Historic Staircase, Conference Room, Library, Galley, Executive Secretary Office and Director's Office. There was no surviving evidence of previous decoration, so the new designs relied upon research and examples from Cuba as provided by Beatriz del Cueto.

Decorative work included striping, glazing, trompe l'oeil moldings. Paintings of flora and fauna of Puerto Rico were executed incorporating the maga flower, the national flower of P.R., and such birds as the Green Throated Carib.

To meet the climatic demands of moisture, local lime paint was used. Color selections were influenced by the effects of the tropical natural light.

Session Track: Decorative Painting Conservation
Session Code: CS10b

Paper: The Discovery and Conservation of Spanish Colonial Wall Paintings in the Sacristy Rooms of the Alamo Shrine and the Church of Mission Concepcion in San Antonio, Texas

Presented by

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San Antonio, TX USA

Pamela Jary Rosser PA, AIC, Restoration Associates Limited, LLC, Park City, Utah

Speaker(s) Biography

Cisi Jary began working on the frescos in 1987 with the National Park Service Team of international conservators which began the conservation and preservation of the frescos in the Library at Mission Concepcion. Pamela Rosser and Elisa Jary have participated in the more recent projects in the Sacristy of the Alamo Shrine and in the Sacristy at Mission Concepcion.

Abstract

The Discovery and Conservation of the Spanish Colonial wall paintings in the Sacristy Room of the Alamo Shrine and in the Church of Mission Concepcion in San Antonio, Texas

The Alamo Shrine was the first of the five missions to be built in San Antonio Texas by the Franciscan Friars with the labor of the Coahuiltecan Indians who had come to live in the protected community of mission life. The construction began in 1720. This mission as well as the other four were constructed of limestone, sillar (caliche block) and lime sand mortar which were readily available in the area. The project in the Sacristy of the Alamo Shrine began with the removal of multiple layers of whitewash that had been applied over the decorative wall paintings since 1849 when the Quartermaster Corp occupied the building. The whitewash layers were removed by the application of distilled water and mechanically "lifting" each layer of whitewash until the original layer was revealed. Once revealed, the newly exposed decorative paintings were surveyed and assessed.

Reattachment, consolidation had to be completed prior to cleaning. The patterns in the Sacristy of the Alamo Shrine appear to date to the period prior to the Battle of the Alamo when the Sacristy was being used for Church services while the main sanctuary was being completed. The patterns consisted of a flower and pomegranate pattern, a sophisticated drawing of a swag pattern band, and two other bands in the frieze and wainscot area. The colors were red, orange and black. Pigment analysis indicated that the bright red in the flower and pomegranate was vermilion which had to have been imported from Europe. This discovery was unique to the pigments that had been used in the other missions. In the Sacristy in the Church of Mission Concepcion, a red yellow ochre and black painted canopy on the west wall had partially begun to reveal itself by the flaking whitewash. The same procedures were utilized to expose the complete canopy which included an orange and black stencil pattern border that is a derivative of the design element that is carved into the limestone of the main entry door surround. In the Sacristy Room of this mission, further examination of the remaining three walls revealed other decorative elements including one that utilized a transfer cartoon where the tiny dots were still present and visible on the plaster. This discovery is also unique to this mission.

In 2001, a survey was completed documenting the ongoing inevitable deterioration of historic stone and fresco due to old world masonry construction and continual exposure to climatic changes. This survey also documented the conservation procedures that had previously been applied from 1987 to 2005. In the 1600's, the Franciscan Friars established the Academy of San Carlos to train artisans and craftsmen in the skills of wood carving, stone carving and fresco painting in the traditions of Renaissance Europe. The school was later secularized but continued this training. It is not known if any of these craftsmen came as far into northern New Spain as San Antonio. There are similar examples of this craftsmanship in many of the Spanish Colonial buildings that were built over the Aztec Temple ruins in Mexico.

Session Track: Decorative Painting Conservation
Session Code: CS10c

Paper: Kiva 3 of Coronado State Monument, NM: The Program to Conserve a 1938 Replica Prehistoric Kiva and Mural Executed in True Fresco by a Zia Pueblo Artist

Presented by

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Steven Weintraub, Art Preservation Services, New York, NY USA

Speaker(s) Biography

Constance S. Silver is a professional associate of the American Institute for Conservation. She has degrees in fine arts conservation and in architectural conservation. Since 1988, she has been the president of Preservar, Inc., a firm that specializes in the planning and implementation of projects for the conservation and restoration of mural paintings, historic interiors and archeological sites. The firm's projects have received awards for excellence in preservation.

Steven Weintraub is a graduate of the conservation program of New York University's Institute of Fine Arts. He is a conservation scientist and a practicing conservator. He is the president of Art Preservation Services, a firm that provides comprehensive conservation services and scientific support. He has worked for several major museums and currently supervises the conservation of architectural and other materials salvaged from the World Trade Center.

Abstract

Coronado State Monument is located about 20 miles north of Albuquerque, New Mexico, on the site of the important fourteenth-century village of Kuaua. Coronado State Monument occupies about 100 acres along the Rio Grande River and is one of six important historic sites of the department of New Mexico State Monuments. Kuaua was excavated in the 1930s. Spectacular prehistoric mural paintings on mud plaster were uncovered in kiva 3, a subterranean ceremonial chamber used by the fourteenth-century inhabitants of Kuaua. A remarkable pioneering conservation project resulted in removal of the multiple layers of murals by using a modified strappo detachment system. A comprehensive plan was developed for the site, including: a replica ruin of the pueblo; a museum in early Spanish Colonial Revival Style by the noted architect John Gaw Meem (1902-83); and a replica of kiva 3 that could be entered by visitors. The important Pueblo artist, Ma-Pe-Wei (1902-1973) was selected to recreate the mural paintings. Sparse archival evidence suggested that Ma-Pe-Wei was instructed to execute the replica murals in true fresco, but this use of a difficult European painting technology seemed unlikely. However, current investigations have confirmed that Ma-Pe-Wei did indeed adapt true fresco to the replica kiva. Over the last decade, the kiva and its murals have suffered devastating damage from water, but the source of the water and its systems of movement within the subterranean mud brick of the kiva and its unique fresco mural paintings have remained elusive. In 2005, the author was engaged to provide a complete analysis of the kiva and its building pathologies, and to develop a program for conservation and restoration. This paper will summarize the results of this two-year study. The paper will be in three major sections. The first section will examine the transfer of the Old World painting technology of lime-based true fresco to a Native American artist and his alterations of this technology to make it "fit" a prehistoric site. The second section will describe the innovative analytical technologies developed by Weintraub to pinpoint the source of the water that is responsible for the extensive damage. Analysis of building pathologies entailed installation of modified dataloggers at thirty-three points, providing a continuous record of temperature and changes in the

presence of water levels within building materials. These data are correlated with weather conditions recorded at the site by an installed weather station. The third section will summarize the program to arrest the infiltration of water, repair the structure, and conserve and restore the mural paintings. When the full project is completed around 2009, it will provide a uniquely detailed study of how a subterranean earthen structure and its frescoes became saturated, were dried, and eventually repaired and restored to their original appearance.