

Fundamentals of the Conservation of Photographs (2008–2010)

Course Description and Instructors

Module 1

Summer School: July 21–August 8, 2008

Distance Mentoring: September 1, 2008–April 30, 2009

The Module 1 summer school was held at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design (AFAD) in Bratislava, Slovakia, July 21–August 8, 2008, with seventeen conservation professionals from the region participating. The summer school was followed by distance-learning activities which participants undertook at their own institutions, with the support of course mentors.

The three-week summer school portion of Module 1 combined lectures on photograph conservation with guided, practical, hands-on experience.

Subjects included:

- The identification and exploration of photographic materials and processes
- Deterioration characteristics
- Preventive conservation activities (such as survey, handling and rehousing, documentation, and digitization)
- Prioritizing preservation
- An exploration of surface cleaning for photographs

Instructors for Module 1:

- Monique Fischer, [Northeast Document Conservation Center](#), North Andover, Massachusetts
- Art Kaplan, Getty Conservation Institute, Los Angeles, California
- Janka Krizanova, [Academy of Fine Arts and Design](#), Bratislava, Slovakia
- Klaus Pollmeier, [Stuttgart State Academy of Art and Design](#), Stuttgart
- Jürgen Seidel, Linhof-Anagramm
- Dusan Stulik, Getty Conservation Institute, Los Angeles, California
- Tram Vo, Getty Conservation Institute, Los Angeles, California

In the second part of the module, which followed the summer school, participants worked at their institutions on specific assignments that drew upon learning acquired during the workshop. Assignments were designed to allow participants the flexibility to fit the work to their own schedules.

Participants carried out a detailed survey of a small collection of photographs (a personal or family collection), and completed three reports on the assigned work, which were submitted to a course website. During this part of the module, participants remained in contact with instructors who served as mentors, reviewing the assignments and providing shared comments for the benefit of the group. In addition, course instructors provided support for ongoing projects and responded to questions from course participants. Throughout the distance-mentoring phase of the course, participants were encouraged to pose questions and initiate group discussions of issues important to them through the course web site.

Module 2

Summer School: July 20–July 31, 2009

Distance Mentoring: September 1, 2009–April 30, 2010

Module 2 of the course began with a summer school at the Slovak National Library (SNL) in Martin, Slovakia from July 20–July 31, 2009. The Module 2 summer school combined lectures with guided, hands-on exercises in photographic process recreation (cyanotype, salted paper print and platinotype), survey, and treatment. Participants had the opportunity to work closely with the photograph collections at the Slovak National Library, surveying both objects from the collection and collection storage spaces.

Primary subjects for Module 2 included:

- The survey and identification of photographic materials and processes
- Study of negatives in collections
- Preventive conservation and collection management strategies
- Terminology
- Recreation of historic processes
- Principles of conservation treatment

Course participants also gave presentations to the group about the dissemination activities they had undertaken over the course of Module 1. These presentations reflected thoughtful efforts on the part of the participants to reach other cultural heritage professionals and to build awareness within a broader audience through a variety of means, including articles, public and academic lectures, workshops, development of websites and online content and use of social media.

Instructors for Module 2:

- Anne Cartier-Bresson, Atelier de Restauration et de Conservation de Photographies de la Ville de Paris
- Art Kaplan, Getty Conservation Institute, Los Angeles, California
- Mogens Koch, School of Conservation, Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts
- Janka Krizanova, [Academy of Fine Arts and Design](#), Bratislava, Slovakia
- Dusan Stulik, Getty Conservation Institute, Los Angeles, California
- Tram Vo, Getty Conservation Institute, Los Angeles, California

Following the summer school, participants and mentors engaged in the eight-month distance-mentoring phase of Module 2, which included activities that continued to address the themes of survey (this time applied to a larger collection) and dissemination. Another activity drew upon work that began during the summer school when instructors and participants developed a list of key photograph conservation terms in English. In one of the distance mentoring exercises, participants researched and translated this list of terms to produce a vocabulary in their own languages. These vocabularies were then combined to create a comparative vocabulary that includes 160 terms in eleven languages. As in Module 1, mentors commented on participant assignments through the course website, and participated in online discussions and provided support for participants' ongoing projects.

Module 3

Summer School: July 19 – 30, 2010

Module 3 of the Fundamentals of the Conservation of Photographs course took place at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design (AFAD) in Bratislava, Slovakia from July 19-30, 2010 and represents the final module of the “Fundamentals of the Conservation of Photographs” course.

Primary topics for Module 3 included:

- Photographic process identification
- Photographic process recreation: Daguerreotype
- Storage environment
- Exhibition of photographs
- Funding
- Treatment issues

The daguerreotype was explored in a number of ways during Module 3 through lectures on history, technology and conservation; examination of a small study collection of daguerreotypes; design of custom daguerreotype protective enclosures; and the creation of daguerreotypes by each participant using the Becquerel process.

During the Module 3 summer school, participants were again asked to share their dissemination activities from the past year, many of which were collaborative efforts involving participants from different institutions and countries. By the end of the last module of the course, collaboration between course participants on a variety of scales had become commonplace and participants continue to work together on activities such as grant writing and collaborative workshops. Module 3 culminated with a certificate of participation awarded to those who successfully completed the course.

Instructors for Module 3:

- Astrid Brandt-Grau, Research Programme Officer, Seconded National Expert, European Commission, Brussels
- Bertrand Lavedrine, Director, Centre de Recherche sur la Conservation des Collections, Paris
- Art Kaplan, Getty Conservation Institute, Los Angeles, California
- Janka Krizanova, [Academy of Fine Arts and Design](#), Bratislava, Slovakia
- Grant Romer, George Eastman House, Rochester, New York
- Dusan Stulik, Getty Conservation Institute, Los Angeles, California
- Tram Vo, Getty Conservation Institute, Los Angeles, California