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The Leon Levy Visiting Fellowship in Archaeological Conservation:

A look at one of the Conservation Center's most prestigious international education programs

THE SURVIVAL OF COUNTLESS ARTIFACTS IS AT RISK DUE TO THE LACK OF TRAINED archaeological conservators worldwide. The risk is especially high in countries that lack well-established advanced conservation education programs. Mindful of this challenge and the need to improve access to graduate-level training for conservators from those countries, the Leon Levy Foundation generously granted funding for the Conservation Center to launch the Leon Levy Visiting Fellowship in Archaeological Conservation.

Since its inception in 2009, the Leon Levy Visiting Fellowship has been awarded to seven visiting conservators from overseas, attracting candidates from a broad range of countries including Albania, Sri Lanka, Iraq, Malawi, China, and Egypt. The program presents each Levy Visiting Fellow with the unique opportunity to enroll in a one-year immersion at the Conservation Center, offering unparalleled connections to world-class faculty, adjuncts, visiting lecturers, and the resources of the Institute of Fine Arts, the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World, greater NYU, and all of New York City.

Earlier this summer, the Conservation Center welcomed Nadia Fawzy Elkourany, selected for the 2015-2016 academic year as the seventh Levy Visiting Fellow. Nadia hails from Egypt where she previously garnered archaeological field work experience at various excavation sites, including the IFA's own Osiris Temple Project in *Abydos*. She has also worked within Egypt's Ministry of Antiquities as a conservator, a position to which she will return upon completion of the fellowship.

Nadia follows an incredible legacy of distinguished Visiting Fellow alumni. The Fellowship was designed to enhance Fellows' skills and abilities so that they may further the state of archaeological conservation in their home countries and prioritize conservation efforts, manage complex collections, make critical decisions during treatment, and advocate successfully for cultural heritage in times of war, civil unrest, or rampant economic expansion.

Thus far, the program's far-reaching impact is evident in the ongoing conservation activities of our Fellowship alumni.

Moses Mkumpha '14, for example, who joined the Conservation Center as the fifth Levy Visiting Fellow, returned to Malawi shortly thereafter to resume his post as the nation's sole conservation officer. He's now the only trained conservator to have worked at Malawi's Department of Antiquities under



Moses currently working on fossils in the Department of Antiquities' collection

the Ministry of Sports and Culture (formerly the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Culture) within the last twenty years.

Moses' dedication to singlehandedly protecting his country's cultural heritage captured the attention of several global documentary crews. He was featured in CNN's *Inside Africa: Malawi's Lone Bone Minder* (<http://www.cnn.com/videos/world/2015/06/01/malawi-dinosaur-bones-history-spc-inside-africa.cnn>) and CCTV Africa's *Faces of Africa—Malawi's Hidden Treasure* (<http://cctv-africa.com/2015/04/17/faces-of-africa-malawis-hidden-treasure>).

Moses credits the Leon Levy Visiting Fellowship and his time spent at the Conservation Center, and a placement at the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH), for revolutionizing the way he views conservation work, both in theory and in practice. He says that the knowledge he gained from his classes, which emphasized scientific approaches and solutions to conservation issues, was a "game changer" that has allowed him to lead his team more effectively in preserving Malawi's antiquities collection and endangered heritage sites.

One of the most unique aspects of the Leon Levy Visiting Fellowship is that the training



Nadia presents on her textile examination during the course "Technology and Structure of Works of Art I"

provided at the Conservation Center also prepares Fellows so they may impart and share their knowledge with other emerging conservators in their own countries. Fellowship alumna Shukran Salih '12 and Nan Feng '15, for instance, have taught courses in Iraq and China respectively.

Shukran, who works at the National Museum of Iraq's Central Lab as the head of the Physical and Chemical Department, has assisted in teaching courses on cultural heritage preservation at the Iraqi Institute for the Conservation of Antiquities and Heritage. Presently, she is involved with a project using x-ray fluorescence analysis for which she has the responsibility to train staff members in operating the equipment.

Our most recent fellow alumna Nan is now a lecturer at the Research Centre for Chinese Frontier Archaeology at Jilin University in Changchun City. Earlier this year, she accompanied twenty-eight museology students to the Yantai Museum to study preventive conservation. Nan says that "right now China is witnessing a rapid development" of the museum industry, and the main concern in the local conservation community is to protect objects from experiencing irreversible damage during this period of growth and expansion.

Other fellowship alumni are similarly involved in the conservation of archaeological objects at museums and cultural institutions. Wei Liu '13, who is also from China, specializes in the treatment and conservation of archaeological metals at the Conservation Center at the National Museum of China. Recently, she has also worked on treating early Shang Dynasty archaeological bronzes from the Hubei Museum's collection in southern China.

Wei says that her time spent as a Levy Visiting Fellow highlighted the differences between conservation



Shukran (third from left) at work at the National Museum of Iraq in Baghdad

principles in the U.S. and in China. Preventive conservation, which Wei says is a newly developing subject in China that has only started to gain traction over the last three years, was one of the most helpful subjects she studied at the Conservation Center.

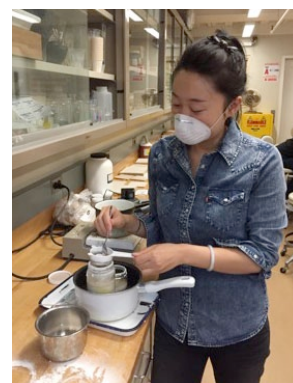
Professors and lecturers at the Center also taught her to collect historical background information, create condition reports, and basically find out every piece of information available on objects before treatment, which she says is "very important—maybe even more important than the treatment itself," adding that this level of investigation and prep work is "not commonly emphasized in many museums in China."

Our very first Levy Visiting Fellow, Alma Bardho '10 from Albania, joins the other fellows in emphasizing that her experiences at the Conservation Center immensely guided her work with the Conservation Laboratory at the Center for Albanian Studies (National Research Institutes of History,

Archaeology, Ethnology, Linguistics and Literature). As a conservator, Alma devoted her time to archaeological objects for the Archaeological Museum of Apollonia, Fier, and treating materials for the ethnographic gallery at the National Archaeological Museum, Tirana. Most recently, Alma's life has taken a new direction. She now lives in Cuneo, Italy with her two children, but hopes to return to conservation work again soon.

In addition to doing museum work, Leon Levy Visiting Fellows often work or collaborate directly with government institutions in their countries. One of our most active Levy Visiting Fellows, Anusha Kasthuri '11, is a conservator and legal custodian of artifacts, monuments, and archaeological sites with the Sri Lanka Governmental Department of Archaeology. Her main projects involve the conservation and treatment of archaeological objects from both terrestrial and underwater environments. The excavation site at Neelagiri Seya in the Eastern Province of Sri Lanka, where a number of high-tin bronze vessels and a broad range of metal and glass objects have been unearthed, has been keeping Anusha particularly busy as of late.

She says that the Levy Visiting Fellowship "greatly expanded [her] understanding of advanced examination, research and conservation practices." One of her favorite moments at the Conservation Center was when



Nan preparing for her panel painting reproduction at the Conservation Center, and (bottom) at the new archaeology lab at Jilin University



Wei performing a treatment while a student at the Center



Alma in the field laboratory of the Center for Albanian Studies

she and another student, Jessica Pace '12, went to the Metropolitan Museum of Art and technically examined in depth the materials and manufacture of a Sri Lankan Bodhisattva statute dating back to the Anuradhapura period. She says that this experience in particular encouraged her to pursue further research.

Another experience that greatly contributed to her overall training, Anusha says, was her participation in a workshop in Abu Dhabi on the interface between field archaeology and conservation. This workshop, which included an excursion to the UNESCO cultural sites of Al Ain, was sponsored by the New York University Abu Dhabi Institute and the Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage. At the workshop, Anusha had the opportunity to meet previous Fellowship alumna, Alma.

Hannelore Roemich, current Chairman of the Conservation Center, says of the Leon Levy Visiting Fellowship, "One of the greatest hallmarks of

this program is the remarkable international community it fosters. The Fellowship creates a network of trained conservators who are deeply committed to archaeological conservation and adds an essential international perspective to our student community here at the Center."

Over the last six years, Levy Visiting Fellows have achieved a wide and significant range of accomplishments in conservation efforts throughout the world. The Conservation Center is truly proud of the program and extremely grateful to the Leon Levy Foundation for its continued support and partnership in bringing this successful program to fruition.

The application deadline for the next Leon Levy Visiting Fellow is January 15, 2016. Further information on program requirements is available on the Institute of Fine Arts' [website](#).

—Alyson Vivattanapa
and Jennifer Downey
The Conservation Center



Anusha conducting a technical study on a large, hollow cast bronze Buddha statue



Alma Bardho and Anusha Kasthuri in Abu Dhabi, 2010

Uplidae mantoras

CC COMMUNITY ART SHOW

The Center is pleased to announce its inaugural Community Art Show:

Opening date: Monday, October 19, 2015

Featured artists:

Lydia Aikenhead	Kimberly Frost
Rita Berg	Kevin Martin
Joy Bloser	Laura Panadero
Emily Hishta Cohen	Soon Kai Poh
Harral DeBauche	

Curated by:

Lydia Aikenhead
Cat Lukaszewski
Chantal Stein

On view through December 18, 2015

Stephen Chan House
14 East 78th Street
New York, NY 10075

Accessible to IFA Community members (with IFA ID) and accompanied guests during regular office hours, Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm



Emily Hishta Cohen, pages from *Avis architectidae* (2008)