The Museum of Modern Art

Job Posting

David Booth Conservation Science Fellow

September 2022 — August 2024

The David Booth Conservation Department at The Museum of Modern Art is pleased to offer a two-year fellowship in conservation science, starting September 2022. The purpose of the fellowship is to learn how a scientist supports a museum’s mission. Working with staff scientists, and in conjunction with conservators, curators, museum educators, and facilities engineers, the fellow will apply their knowledge and skills to provide scientific information to these stakeholders by: helping guide and formulate conservation treatments; developing an understanding of the materiality of a collection of objects and how that knowledge may inform where, when, or how an object was made; and studying how environmental factors MAY undermine an object’s stability. The fellow will complete the program with a broadened skillset and a comprehensive understanding of how these functions interrelate. Besides developing and refining advanced techniques in conservation science, the fellow will have the opportunity to develop and carry out research projects to be disseminated or published online, at conferences, and in peer-reviewed journals.

The Museum of Modern Art is committed to nurturing the next generation of curators, art historians, conservators, scientists, and other arts professionals. This Conservation Fellowship is part of a distinctive, museum-wide fellowship program that offers opportunities for training and development through immersion in the Museum’s departments, working alongside and mentored by experienced staff members. All fellows additionally participate in a core methods and practice program with MoMA staff and invited guests which explores object-based research and inquiry; public engagement in a museum context; and arts leadership and the role of cultural institutions in society.

Responsibilities:

• Equipment use and data interpretation training: The fellow will be trained in operating and maintaining some or all of the following equipment: Fourier transform infrared spectroscopy (transmitted, ATR, and diffuse reflectance), Raman spectroscopy, gas chromatography-mass spectrometry, X-ray fluorescence, and micro-fadeometry. The fellow will also work with staff scientists to develop a search library from GC-MS data that identifies binders and pigments found in modern and contemporary art.
• Cultural heritage science training: the fellow will work with staff scientists and conservation staff to develop a project that highlights the issues and analytical tools required to study and understand the field of cultural heritage as it relates to modern and contemporary art.
• Adaptation of technologies: the fellow will be encouraged to adapt expertise developed in graduate school to enrich the field of heritage science or art conservation.
• Data archiving and report writing: The fellow will archive raw data to the department’s network and write report summaries that are linked to the Museum’s main archival software program, The Museum System (TMS).
• Environmental monitoring: The fellow will develop expertise in environmental monitoring, its importance with relationship to the storage, exhibition, and shipment of the collection, its interpretation, and learn to add new data to existing historical data.
• Material properties studies: the fellow will perform work, including light-fastness studies, to develop an understanding of the issues surrounding the aging. Stability, and instability of materials found in modern and contemporary art collections.
• Literature review: the fellow will be asked to build on the department’s existing literature holdings, read and study the literature as guided by the scientists, and communicate knowledge gained to the department.
• The fellow will be encouraged to submit at least one manuscript related to the results of their studies and projects to a peer-reviewed journal.
• Mentoring: provide training or guidance to departmental interns and peer fellows as appropriate.
• Perform any other duties reasonably related to the functions described above.

Requirements:

• A master’s degree or higher in conservation science or science in a related field, e.g. chemistry, applied physics, materials science, forensics, or polymer science.
• Demonstrated proficiencies in utilizing FTIR and Raman spectroscopy, X-ray fluorescence, or mapping XRF.
• Demonstrated interest in supporting conservation professionals with the treatment and examination of art or related media.
• Ability to aid staff scientists to the maintain chemical and environmental safety standards and protocols.
• Excellent speaking, reading, and writing skills in English. Proficiency in additional language(s) is desirable.
• Documentation of full vaccination, in compliance with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and/or the World Health Organization authorized vaccine (or approved for an exemption as a reasonable accommodation due to a qualified disability or sincerely held belief)

Reports to: The Agnes Gund Chief Conservator and The Sally and Michael Gordon Conservation Scientist

Stipend: $50,000 plus benefits and vacation, with $3,500 annually for research and travel.

Application instructions:

Candidates should apply online at MoMA Jobs. In addition to your resume, please submit a detailed letter of interest and include the name of three references; letters from references are not required. Do not include treatment reports in the application. Candidates invited for interviews will be asked to supply treatment reports at that time. Application deadline is March 14, 2022.

The Museum of Modern Art is an equal opportunity employer and considers all candidates for employment regardless of race, color, sex, age, national origin, creed, disability, marital status, sexual orientation or political affiliation.
The Museum of Modern Art’s Conservation Initiative is made possible through the David Booth Conservation Center Endowment Fund.

February 2022