The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Supports the Conservation Center’s Summer Institute of Technical Art History

The Institute of Fine Arts is pleased to announce that the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation has generously awarded the Conservation Center $400,000 in support of the Summer Institute of Technical Art History (SITAH) program through 2016.

The Conservation Center plays a leading role in innovating and creating educational workshops for art historians that give them direct, hands-on experience in examining art from its material perspective. SITAH offers an important opportunity for doctoral students from North American programs to deepen their knowledge and further their research by better understanding how an art object has evolved physically over time and how this relates to the work as it was conceived and executed.

Based at the Conservation Center, the SITAH program is a two-week intensive workshop that uses the collections of New York City as a laboratory for close engagement with museum objects and formal education in the materials and methods of artistic practice. The annual summer session of fifteen students explores specific themes in art making with conservators, scientists, curators, artists, fabricators and other professionals in the field. Previous topics include: the materials and processes of replication (2012), and theoretical subjectivities of contemporary art (2013). Future programs will focus on the artist’s book, the globalization of artists’ materials and processes, and artists’ use of industrial, mass-produced materials.

Michele Marincola, Sherman Fairchild Chairman of the Conservation Center, notes, “I am extremely grateful to the Mellon Foundation for their foresight in supporting SITAH. This is a relatively new and significant program that expands young art historians’ knowledge and understanding of the object, making material issues more accessible and vital to them. That ultimately will create new scholarship in the fields of art history and conservation.”

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Founded in 1960, the Conservation Center of the Institute of Fine Arts is dedicated to the study of the technology and conservation of works of art and historic artifacts. It prepares students for careers in conservation through a four-year program that combines practical experience in conservation with art historical, archaeological, curatorial, and scientific studies of the materials and construction of works of art. Students complete a Master’s degree in art history at the Institute of Fine Arts, one of the premier centers of graduate education in art history in the United States, and receive an Advanced Certificate in conservation.

The Institute of Fine Arts is dedicated to study and advanced research in art history, archaeology and conservation. Offering MA and PhD degrees, its mission is to train tomorrow’s leaders through in-depth objects-based training by today’s leading scholars. To date, the IFA has trained over 1,600 alumni. Among them are a significant number who have played and continue to play leadership roles in academia, museums, and the visual arts in both national and international settings. Complementing its
academic role, its extensive public programming plays a vital role in furthering the dissemination of knowledge in these fields.