Roundabout Conservation Session

Terri Yoho:

This session is going to be rather informal and we want it to be discussion based. Feel free to ask the conservators questions that you might have and also, they're taping the sessions. If you can raise your hand they will run to you with a microphone so that we can all hear. The lights are so bright that I cannot see any faces. If you're somebody I know and I don't say your name that's exactly why. As I said, the session is "Alternatives in Choices in Current Research Methods," but if I had had my druthers we would've titled this "War Stories." The reason I say that is because this is a war. We are fighting hard to preserve very important art that's out there in the world that not everyone has always valued and felt was important. The people on this panel are the soldiers that go out every day and fight the battles to see that things are preserved, stabilized, cleaned, readied for museum exposition or many times preserved, conserved so that they can stay in situ and it's not an easy task. There are many, many difficulties and challenges that arise. I probably should have introduced myself. I'm Terri Yoho. I'm the executive director, soon to retire, at Kohler Foundation.

At this roundabout we're going to talk about challenges in conservation. In this title slide you see John Salhus out there, alone, in the heat, working on Pasaquan. Challenges. We will conservators in and say, "Hey, we've got a project." When they see it, it looks like the slide that you see. It may be rubble and by the grace of god we may have vintage photos so that they have documentation of what we're working for or what this may add to. This actually did turn out to be something pretty incredible. Overgrowth. When we work outdoors and things have been left to go to nature, for a year or two or 10 or 20 or sometimes more, things can be completely encased in overgrowth. Not to
mention lichen, other biological growth, that has to be dealt with. The weather. See that thermometer? That was from Pasaquan. Those guys worked out there in the heat many, many days for two summers in temperatures in access of 100 degrees. Not to mention the humidity. By the same token, we sometimes do work where we actually have to heat the ground to thaw it so that we can dig for something. Or in this case, Shane Winter from International Artifacts. Those are L.L.Bean waders and he is in the slop almost to the top of those waders trying to recapture a piece that had fallen into the muck.

Weight. When we work in art environments and think of those that you've visited or have seen photos of, when we have to move those pieces we bring in a lot of heavy equipment. Cranes, not unusual. Strong guys. Strong women. The gamut. That was a piece I think in Iowa from the... Susan help me. Is that Madeline Boole? From the Madeline Boole grotto just across the Mississippi River. Dehumidification. When we worked in Maine nobody told us that summer only lasted five minutes or that the air, which was humid all year, was filled with salt. Thankfully, Ron Harvey and Shane Winter advised us and they built these major dehumidification chambers and we had to dehumidify pieces for a year to get enough moisture out that they could be worked on. Then, art handling. We're good customers of U.S. art, but they don't go out into an art environment and dig and pick up and pack. We have to find the right resources, working with our conservators and other skilled professionals to do that kind of work. For a conservator it's not always about being in the lab with a tiny little artifact. Some of these things are quite, quite major.

Accessibility. People who work for Kohler Foundation learn that a shovel is their best friend. We often have to relay foundations under sculptures and we have to be very careful who does that work. If we hire in just a general contractor, they don't have the expertise or the care that a conservator at the other end of a shovel does. Then there's paintings, which just suffer from incredible loss. This is something that Parma Conservation did for us. That's Will Rogers. It ended up in the Will Rogers museum, but incredible amounts of loss and just brought back to a thing of great beauty. I'm a non-drinker and my staff as very excited to get a picture of me standing on a bar in a Wisconsin tavern to look at that particular mural, which was so incredibly filthy from years of being in a smoke filled tavern that when Parma Conservation attempted to clean it the nicotine ran down in yellow streaks. They were able to bring back this amazing Ernest Tubadzin mural.

John Salhus: You can smell it. It's like you're in the bar. Our lab smelled like the bar. Just no pull tabs.

Terri Yoho: Lots and lots of challenges. I wanted to share one before and after from Pasaquan which was a combined effort. This was an enormous art environment with 900 linear feet of fencing. I think six buildings, various sculptural pieces, art in the house, art outside of the house and was a major undertaking for us. When we had looked at the project 10 years ago, we felt that it was too much of a challenge. If Kohler Foundation hadn't stepped in and preserved the Garden of
Eden and at the same time began working with Parma Conservation, we would not have had the skillset, known the right people to pull in a project of this magnitude and it's only through those kinds of collaborations that art environments can come back to life, because it's not a one conservator project. It truly takes a village and it takes a village of conservators, technicians, interns and other staff and professionals. Today, we have four people who I think will have a lot of interesting information for you. As I said, we want to make this back and forth. Think about where you've been, what you've seen, what you've done and pose questions because they're here to answer. They'll also share a little bit about their individual practices, which are hugely, hugely varied.

First on my left is Meghan Mackey, who is a conservator of decorative arts and sculpture in private practice in Middleton. She probably works on most of the nice things, because she does mostly studio work. She doesn't get out in the field too, too often. She opened her private practice in 2006. She interned at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston and was employed by the Philadelphia Museum of Art. She has an undergraduate degree in art history and visual arts from Princeton University and graduate degrees in art history and conservation from the Institute of Fine Arts at New York University. Meghan has worked for us on some of the EVB that you see displayed this week. She's also helped with the art that we have acquired from spaces. She's worked on a lot of the Stella Waitzkin work. She was very involved in the Ray Yoshida collection. Did much work on Nek Chand and also, if you look at the spaces exhibit and see Charlene from Possum Trot and a couple of other Possum Trot pieces that were beyond filthy, Meghan really brought them beautifully back to life. Did an excellent job.

Next on our panel is John Salhus. He's a senior conservator and structural engineer of paintings with Parma Conservation in Chicago. They really are one of the country's leading resources for the conservation of paintings and murals. If there's a WPA post office mural out there, there's a good chance they've seen it. They may have worked on it. He's worked on a wide variety of conservation projects all across the US. I know he's in Minnesota right now, when he's not here, but churches, courthouses, state capitals, schools and many WPA era post office murals. He was the project manager for the conservation of paint and painting and all artistic surfaces at Pasaquan, which was an intense two year project with Kohler Foundation. He's worked on the Jesse Howard paintings that you see exhibited, the signs. Also, Ernest Tubadzin, Sanford Darling, Mary Nohl. It's very commendable that when John was in Georgia, and he was there for a long time without going home, he established Buna Vista projects, a gallery and workspace for student artists. He's an accomplished painter and sculptor on his own. Has shown in many, many galleries and universities. He studied at the Minneapolis College of Art and Design and at the Skowhegan School of Painting & Sculpture. He's been active in the field of conservation since 2003 and when he's not in the lab or on a project, he's out on his bike. He's really an avid cyclist.

Ben, who we weren't expecting to see today, and if I can pronounce his name right, we just call him Ben. Kagiwa. Is that close?
Ben Kagiwa: Kagiwa.

Terri Yoho: Ben is our go to person with international artifacts on projects that involve concrete. Pasaquan, the Garden of Eden, Prairie Moon in Wisconsin. Just went back and did some conservation work on the North Prairie Houses in Wisconsin. He's worked at Mary Nohl. If it's been in Kohler Foundation in the last decade...

Ben Kagiwa: Yeah.

Terri Yoho: And there's concrete or wood, Ben's been on the project. Ben you're going to have to share where your degree is from.

Ben Kagiwa: Undergrad degree at University of Delaware for art conservation.

Terri Yoho: For art conservation. His partner is Shane Winter and together they make international artifacts. Jason Church, the one conservator on the panel who we haven't worked with, but he is the reason that the divine disorder series of conferences is here in Wisconsin. I had presented in Atlanta and Jason very graciously accepted our invitation or our offer to co-host with NCPTT and the arts center. Jason is truly a scientist. He's a materials conservator in the materials conservation program at the National Center for Preservation Technology and Training, NCPTT. He's out of Louisiana. He works in the research and training office of the National Park Service. He divides his time between original research, field work on outdoor sculpture and architectural materials and organizing various trainings and conferences. Before joining NCPTT, he was a conservator for the city of Savannah, Georgia, the Department of Cemeteries. We think he's on our team because he works with some of the same materials. He earned his MFA in historic preservation from Savannah College of Art and Design and is a professional associate of the American Institute of Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works. The really interesting thing about Jason is, well he sounds very formal, he's as passionate about outdoor environments as the rest of us.

I have a couple prepared questions that I'd kind of like to start with. Before we do that, I'd really like each conservator to talk a little bit about the challenges that they have faced, a few war stories if you may. Meghan.

Meghan Mackey: Thank you Terri. As Terri mentioned, I'm a little bit different in my work than my colleagues here because I work primarily out of my studio and not on site. I suspect my war stories are not nearly as extreme as theirs.

Terri Yoho: Think mice.

Meghan Mackey: Mice. Yes. Many of the works that do come to my studio are interesting because they are infested with rodents or insects or had been and the remnants remain. Also, I haven't had too much experience with nicotine stains from self taught artists, but certainly the Possum Trot mud is an example of some real tough
layers to get through. I think that one of the best parts about working with self-taught artists is the surprise of the materials that come by me and sometimes those present their own challenges both from researching how to deal with them and figuring out how to work with them. For example, chicken bones. If you eat chicken bones. Also, Gregory Van Maanen, bird skulls and feathers. There are times when the condition is expected to remain somewhat rustic, shall we say.

Terri Yoho: We like to retain patina and age.

Meghan Mackey: Yes. Trying to decide just how much mud to take off is a good example of that. I would say that it's more for me, since I'm not in the actual environments, it's more of the challenges of the unusual material.

Terri Yoho: Okay. John?

John Salhus: The challenges in our field it goes from dealing with weather and humidity and storms and lightning and cigarette smoke and then working outdoors at Pasaquan specifically was-

Terri Yoho: Why don't you give us a day in the life at Pasaquan.

John Salhus: A day in the life at Pasaquan. Yeah. It's dependent on the weather and what was going to be going on that day. The humidity, especially when you're working with paint and porous cement surfaces, you'd have to sort of get there and see what wall you were working on if the sun was hitting it or if you're in shadow. What happened the night before. How hot it was going to be that day, where the sun was going to be. Yeah. What crew you were working with and who was going out, sort of the shifting.

Terri Yoho: We should share a little bit about your crew. As a client, we always have to be sensitive to what it's going to cost and to stay within a budget. One of the ways we sometimes manage that is by giving lesser tasks to interns and John did an amazing thing and took three young men, essentially out of the projects in Buna Vista, Georgia, who had never done anything with art in their lives. He mentored them and not only made them productive citizens, taught them, "You're not on your telephone when you're working. You show up at 8:00 and you leave when your supervisor tells you you're finished." He taught them about art and really by taking them under his wing shared the respect and the love for the genre and changed three human beings in a pretty significant way.

John Salhus: One aspect of that was being immersed in the town of Buna Vista, Georgia. Was to not be separate from the community. It's to bring the community into it so that was to hire some of the local guys and bring them into it. It turned out to be very rewarding.
Terri Yoho: Okay. Ben, just a little bit. Want to pick up maybe the Garden of Eden and working on that? Wind and height.

Ben Kagiwa: With the Garden of Eden most of the challenges involved the stability of the ground. Having to deal with frost and heave cycles, especially with lengths of concrete fence where there's a lot of movement and trying to figure out materials that'll work with that movement or trying to eliminate that movement. Another challenge is steel armatures that when rusting occurs there's a lot of sparling and expansion of that steel and rust within the sculpture and trying to mitigate that.

Terri Yoho: Because of that sometimes it's our preference if a piece is broken. You would think if a piece was in horrible condition it would be a disaster, but sometimes for the conservator it then allows them antre to change out some of those armatures.

Ben Kagiwa: Yeah. Removal of a lot of that material that'll rust and continue expansion might be preferable in that situation.

Terri Yoho: Okay.

Ben Kagiwa: It's a balancing act between how much original to maintain.

Terri Yoho: Okay.

Speaker 5: I'm blocking. What's the artist?

Ben Kagiwa: Oh. S.P. Dinsmoor.


Jason Church: For me, I work a lot with outdoor sculptures, Terri said earlier. I work a lot with historic cemeteries and a lot with vernacular grave worker, makers. For me I work all over the country. I get calls and emails constantly and they'll send me pictures or I'll go to a site that's essentially a field or a woods and they'll say, "Well this is our cemetery," and you'll go, "Well I'll take your word for it. We've got to go in there." I worked with a cemetery for example, in Houston, where the cemetery was blocked off completely from access for 40 years. Completely unmaintained, no one had access to it at all including, for legal reasons, the family members until recently. What do we do when we go back in after 40 years?

A lot of times that's a great thing, because we haven't had these practices of landscape maintenance where everyone wants the ninth hole of a golf course, they haven't moated the death so the monuments haven't been struck and damaged that way. We have heirloom plantings that are still left now because
of it. In a lot of way it’s a good thing. Not only for me, especially working with vernacular grave makers, it’s convincing the people invested in that, that that itself is a very important resource. A lot of times everyone gets real excited about the big Italian angel and they overlook the small handmade concrete markers with the marbles pressed into it or that's carved in the wet concrete. That that's maybe even more important than these really expensive things. That these are the hands of an artist, a lot of times of a loved one. I work with that a lot.

Terri Yoho: Jason, I'm not sure you're aware, but some of our artists whose sites we have preserved have also made their own grave markers.

Jason Church: Yes.

Terri Yoho: We've got some really cool ones in Wisconsin.

Jason Church: Yeah.

Terri Yoho: Good. Okay. I will ask my questions to kind of direct this, unless someone wants to initiate some discussion. Dennis Saporsky. Chauvin, Louisiana.

Dennis Saporsky: My question is for Ben. The expansion of metals. Oh, I've got to use this. The expansion of metal inside of cement. We have a very toxic environment, is one way to put it. One of our decisions as a group was we felt it was better to re-coat the pieces with some kind of sealant, which we thought outdoor paint. Is there a type of cement paint that would be recommended over outdoor latex enamels? Is there a specific?

Ben Kagiwa: All right.

Dennis Saporsky: Or do you guys just use paint? Anybody?

Ben Kagiwa: Oh, instead of latex enamels?

John Salhus: Well, for a sealant, no. I don't know of a sealant for cement. What we used at Pasaquan was the opposite, was a paint that could breathe and let moisture in and out.

Dennis Saporsky: Even with the metal inside that rusts?

John Salhus: I can't-

Dennis Saporsky: Yeah.

Ben Kagiwa: The paint that you used was also designed to accept another H100 coating, which is a silica based.
Dennis Saporsky: So there is a special coating that we should put on?

Ben Kagiwa: Yeah. It repels water, but it also works in conjunction with that paint.

Dennis Saporsky: Where do you get that at Lowe's?

Terri Yoho: It's specialized.

John Salhus: It repels water, but it doesn't seal.

Jason Church: The problem with sealing, the concept of sealing is that you're making this waterproof coating.

Dennis Saporsky: Right.

Jason Church: Well the reality is only part of the water entering that sculpture is coming from the rain.

Dennis Saporsky: Right.

Jason Church: A good chunk of it is coming right up out of the Earth. I know your site well, that's where a lot of your water is coming from is right up. Especially the constant flooding and dew point humidity. The idea of sealing over top, that water comes up, sun heats it, it's got to go somewhere. That's going to prematurely fail that surface and cause more rusting on the inside, because now you're trapping water in it. What John was saying was they're using paints that are breathable. Latex is a plastic coating. There's a fine balance. Yes maybe that's what the artist used and that's a theoretical question on intent and what the artist used. Also, if we're going with... like we saw in [inaudible 00:23:56] yesterday, there's lots of those that have very little paint left. If we were to decide to go back maybe something a more breathable, like a lime based paint or silica based paint, might be better. I'll turn that over to some of the things that you guys are using.

Dennis Saporsky: Are we doomed because it's coming up through the ground? Is it long term? It was that the metal would expand so much inside that it would destroy the pieces.

Terri Yoho: Dennis, in some of the cases where the pieces were in horrible disrepair-

Dennis Saporsky: Right.

Terri Yoho: I think that the metal was replaced with things that aren't rusting. It's not every piece on the site. There may come a point where someone's going to have to go in to the internal.

Dennis Saporsky: Right.
Terri Yoho: And make some changes.


Terri Yoho: The work of Kenny Hill.

Ben Kagiwa: Kenny Hill is the artist.

Dennis Saporsky: Kenny Hill.

Terri Yoho: It's right on the edge of the bayou.

Dennis Saporsky: Well, it's kind of in the bayou now a little bit, but yeah you're right.

Terri Yoho: It has a tendency to flood and when the site was restored we like to say we were very clever, but we didn't know what we were doing. A chain link fence was put around the site. It acts like a colander, like a strainer, every time it floods. We keep out the debris, which is very damaging, but we can't prevent the water from coming in.

Dennis Saporsky: Yeah. I don't quite know where to go. We've done the best we can to keep it going and preserve the pieces on our expertise, which is obviously lacking, but I don't know-

Terri Yoho: I was there in April. It looked really good.

Dennis Saporsky: Thank you. If you have any recommendations we'd appreciate it.

Ben Kagiwa: Well, pouring bases and putting it over gravel, drainage helps to a certain extent.

Terri Yoho: I think that's Kevin Rose in the back. From the Turner Foundation in Springfield, Ohio.

Kevin Rose: Yes. Hi. Kevin Rose and I work with the Hartman Rock Garden, which is a 2009 Kohler Foundation site so first, thank you for everything you guys have done for our community. One quick comment first. On that last question. I think the most important thing that I could get out of this conference is hopefully, some type of commitment that long term we're going to develop some type of standards book. I know that needs to be updated continually. We've been working with Don Howlett and Lisa Stone to... we call them on the phone, I'm sure they hate us at this point, and just grill them with a million questions and then they don't send us a bill at the end, which they should be doing. We really need that in the field because we're amateurs out there. We might have an art history background or architectural history, but if we can understand questions like that, like time paint and when that should be used and when certain inhibitors should be put onto objects, when they should not be put on the objects.
My question is a little more difficult. I will not ask level of conservation, because I know you could do a conference on that. There's books on that. There was a great article recently on Shark Cathedral and the controversies of preserving and conserving the interior space there. More specifically, on sites like Hartman Rock Garden, when you have a family that maintained the site for 50 to 60 years after the death of their family member. How much consideration should be put into their techniques for conservation and also their wishes for conservation moving forward?

Terri Yoho: Who'd like to touch that hot potato? Jason?

Jason Church: Oh, everybody's looking at me.

Terri Yoho: You made eye contact.

Jason Church: All right. I think everyone has to make the decision when they start. What level are we going to take this back to. Maybe it's something like Pasaquan where they go back to when saint [inaudible 00:28:06] was there. They could've made the decision just to stabilize it as they found it. Of course, that's far from what the artist intent was and even though, I think your site had been repainted for two decades or something by volunteers.

John Salhus: Even when he was creating it, it was falling apart.

Jason Church: Yeah.

John Salhus: It was being repainted from the beginning.

Jason Church: Yeah. That's one whole debate. What point are you going to go back to or are you going to go back to anything? Are you just going to leave it as you found it and sort of stabilize it as is. That's the first decision that has to be made. Yeah, that's a sticky one. If you have the family still involved that's a great time to go back to oral histories and interviews and to get input from them. It's also a good time to educate them. If there is things that they have been doing, even though they're like, "Oh no, this is the way we do it." Yeah, but it's not the right way. It's still also your responsibility to help educate them. I don't think that answered your question at all.

Kevin Rose: No, it does make perfect sense. That question certainly bridges these two sessions that are happening simultaneously. We have done that [inaudible 00:29:23].

Terri Yoho: Kevin, we've not really experienced that with a family coming back to us and not liking the strategy or the direction we were taking. We generally will make it pretty clear that we're picking a point in time and we're going back to that.
Kevin Rose: On that, after you guys left the Hartman site when we talked to the family, and I know you guys did include them, they said we would really like to see these objects that have lost their paint of the past 20 years repainted. We really think the decayed state is not in keeping with dad's wish as Ruth would say. We've worked with the family to talk about what those colors were even though the colors are gone and with their wishes we've set a conservation policy that we'll repaint those objects because they feel as if that is the wish of their father, their grandfather, the artist of the site. We know it's controversial because at a certain point-

Terri Yoho: It is.

Kevin Rose: You're also adding something that's not there.

Terri Yoho: Remember the relative that took things off site and painted?

Kevin Rose: Yes and he's still involved in the site as well and he doesn't like the way we do things.

Terri Yoho: Okay.

Jason Church: Yeah, paint's a really hard one because with most of these sites, I don't know about all of them, but a lot of them we know that even when they were doing it they were painting it, like the Prophet Isaiah site in Niagara Falls. He repainted every year at the end of winter with no real... it's what he wants to paint it then. The paint layers on it, I have some photographs where you can kind of see, they're going already at a measurable 16th of an inch thickness on everything and he's not even doing it very long. If he keeps doing it going for a decade, you'll have a quarter inch of paint layer. Where do we go back? Is it at the end or the beginning or somewhere in the middle? I think most of these sites are constantly changing. That's a really hard debate to have amongst yourself. You have to decide. The family, I understand their wishes if they wanted a vibrant that dad preferred it maybe, then that's one issue there.

Terri Yoho: When things are painted back to a very new state we will often have people from the community come in and say, "Aw I liked it the way it was. This isn't what I remember." The other contingency, "Oh, it's back the way it is when I was a child." I don't think that, Kevin, you're ever going to keep everyone happy. You as the owners of the site now, you have to make the best decision and work with them to the best of your ability.

Speaker 9: I just want to ask a question about instead of directly going to, we have to restore these sites fully and we have to repaint these sites. Is there missions out there to catch the deterioration now for newer sites and preserve them using these breathable coatings and as conservators know, these new things we can do instead so in the future we won't have to do such massive undertakings and change these sites.
Terri Yoho: Are you asking if we can get into the process sooner?

Speaker 9: Yeah. Is there any more modern, more contemporary sites. Is somebody tracking them now? Across Wisconsin is Kohler kind of looking out for new sites that are being made or sites that haven't deteriorated completely.

Terri Yoho: That's really interesting. We always have a number of sites across the country on our radar. We're occasionally called in to consult and ask, but if an artist is still active I don't think we would try to interfere. Go ahead.

Robert Proctor: I'm an actual painting conservator and I work on hoity-toity stuff. This stuff is a passion for me. Not my profession so much.

Terri Yoho: Can you tell us your name?

Robert Proctor: Robert Proctor. My firm has worked on the Clementine Hunter murals in Nacogdoches, so we do this work too. I would just encourage people to look outside of just this group of people, because all of these issues of historical context, restoration versus conservation. Restoration in the elite is always a dirty word, but it shouldn't necessarily be. We need to really, I think, think of both of these ways. When we start talking about these E100s and things like this and for conservation you can be going down a really scary road sometimes with the reversibility issues and things like this. Sometimes restoration is actually preferable because it'll fall apart. Then on the other hand, you lose... earlier you were talking about we really value patina, but then again now we repaint things. All these things are discussed in the field and the pendulum swings back and forth and there are a lot of decisions being made. I just encourage the people that deal with self taught artists, folk artists, these things, to look towards the field because these people have wrestled with these same. I was thinking earlier when we were talking about, in the earlier session, about context and taking things into the white cube. It's like you can say this about a botanical garden, you can say this about the museum for the holocaust, it's not like going to [inaudible 00:35:55].

These things are not just this field. They are endemic in the field of preservation, architectural, of natural history, biology. I think it's really important that we look in a much more broader area. Thank you for letting me [inaudible 00:36:19].

Carlin Collie: My concern is the community engagement that has to take place. Even last night with that lovely little Tellen area. How do you keep that from being vandalized unless you really have security all the time?

Terri Yoho: Where are you from?

Carlin Collie: I'm sister Carlin Collie. I'm a folk artist here in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Terri Yoho: Okay.
Carlin Collie: The community engagement is very interesting to me.

Terri Yoho: First of all, we'll knock on wood, but vandalism and theft are almost negligible. Last year someone took a head off of one of the little people in the tavern scene at Tellen and Ben actually worked and restructured a new head for it and replaced it based on the best photo documentation we had. We had searched high and low. A number of people thinking maybe someone had tossed the head and we'd be able to find it. Well low and behold, Ben is no more than finished with replacing that head, the substitution, and here the original head shows up. In plain site at Tellen. I think whatever teenage boy took it home, mom saw it and said get it back. We have problems at Tellen with people doing wedding photos and graduation photos. They sit out on the fences and break them. It's job security for Ben and his crew. We try to put signs up. Somehow by some amazing thing vandalism is not a big, big problem for us. Community engagement is one of the biggest challenges of our jobs. We can find wonderful art all the time. We have these amazing people who can preserve it, but unless there's a steward to take on responsibility for the site, like the art center has for Tellen, it won't continue. We have to find that right recipient and someone who will do community outreach, who will do programming.

We have a number of the recipients here. We have Ricky Rolfsmeyer from Grandview. We have Dennis and Gary from Chauvin. Oh, Jared's here? Jared is here from the Wegner Grotto. I'm probably forgetting others, I haven't spotted them yet. Those people should speak up. Between the conservators and the recipients who are the stewards into the future, those are the real heroes in this process. You have to engage the community and you have to bring young people in so there's a succession plan. What happens is we take over these sites and all of a sudden everybody's gray haired. We need to have had young people come in and feel an ownership in what's there and want to preserve it in much the way that the first people on site did. Does that answer your question?

Carlin Collie: Yes. Thank you.

Speaker 12: I'm going back to the comment on the contemporary builders. For instance, Dr. Charles Smith is a very savvy artist. Why wouldn't he benefit from the knowledge of a kind of paint that might preserve. Why wouldn't he also be interested in the long time life of his piece and your counsel regarding materials that would help him?

Terri Yoho: He has complete and full access to us. He can ask those questions. He actually worked with us on the preservation of the first batch that we did. He saw had the materials had deteriorated and what we were doing on the next step to restore them. Is Dr. Smith here in the audience?

Speaker 12: He's here somewhere.

Terri Yoho: He's here. I'll ask him that question.
Speaker 12: I just wondered if because of that relationship perhaps he has-

Terri Yoho: He's a pretty stubborn guy.

Speaker 12: Changed some of his practices.

Terri Yoho: I love him, but he's stubborn.

Speaker 12: Thank you.

Speaker 13: The magic gardens in Philadelphia. Talking about neighborhood, has thousands of people going through. Hundred thousand people going through. Heads are broken. Hands are broken. Things disappear. We don't even know how or why. There are, Emily could tell you much more tomorrow, but we had to go down to Mexico and find all the people who did a lot of the work that Isaiah included in the magic gardens to maybe do them again. But, when he used them in the magic gardens they were broken to begin with. He used them because they were broken. When you go back to a craftsman and say, "We need the woman that was carrying a pineapple on her head, but she has to have broken hands or what are you going to do?" They say, "We don't do it with broken hands. I'm sorry, we only do all the arms and the whole piece." We've had to catalog now and we're buying pieces from Mexico that we will keep in our warehouse to use as those pieces disappear.

Terri Yoho: So an inventory of supplies?

Speaker 13: Inventory. Exactly. The other thing is, of course not just people breaking things, but the weather is a big deteriorator.

Terri Yoho: When you walked into the arts center there's the baker house, the structure with all the little chatchsky ceramics. Don Howlett and Lisa Stone worked on that and because they couldn't replace maybe a little doggie, or whatever ceramic, where they couldn't, if you look at it closely and you don't see it at first glance, they simple filled and left it as a neutral. Meghan we have seen do remarkable things where she will put in a composite. The one I remember is some Nek Chand sculptures where we couldn't find the coins. They were no longer in circulation. What did you do miss Meghan?

Meghan Mackey: I don't remember.

Terri Yoho: I remember. You made some sort of composite and were able to tone it.

Meghan Mackey: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Terri Yoho: We had people searching all over India for those coins and they were no longer in circulation.
Meghan Mackey: Oh yeah, now I remember that.

Michael McFalls: Yeah. Anyhow. Okay, now it's working.

Terri Yoho: Michael McFalls from Pasaquan.

Michael McFalls: Hi, I'm Michael McFalls from Pasaquan. I want to go back to the question about when to preserve and when to kind of restore something and maybe with the painting. Pasaquan had this unique opportunity. We didn't have family like Kevin like you were describing. Eddy was gone. There was nobody to tell us how, or tell them how to do it. I was hoping that John could perhaps talk about the decisions that were made on when to conserve. We know that Eddy Martin, as Katie Jentleson pointed out when she was talked about Howard Finster, that Eddy Martin's place was in constant flood. He was painting all the time and we had multiple images of different walls with different colors. Maybe you can talk about as a conservator, how do you make the decisions on which way to paint it and the decisions that Parma was making. Maybe that could kind of start this handbook. I agree. I think there needs to be a handbook on this. We don't[crosstalk 00:44:35].

John Salhus: A handbook. It would be a lot thicker than a handbook.

Michael McFalls: You were the experts making this decision and I'm wondering if you could just talk about when there is no family involved and you can do what you need to do or what you think you need to do. How did you make those decisions?

John Salhus: Well, with Pasaquan we looked at every single photograph and piece of film that we could possibly find. We had film of Eddy painting and film of Eddy working with visitors and college students and he'd literally put a brush in their hand, and hand them a can of paint and they would just be painting and talking and painting and talking. It was sort of put this color here, put this color there were his instructions. When we got there we were just sort of wow. This is an amazing coloring book. What are we going to do? The first thing that we did was we photographed every square inch of the place.

Terri Yoho: And color matched.

John Salhus: Yeah. We had an intern walk around with a pantone book and a camera and she documented the whole place for a couple of months, it took her.

Terri Yoho: Yes.

John Salhus: Maybe more and then mapped everything out and printed everything out. We had, I think, about 23 ring binders filled with pages of each wall and each totem that we could look at. I was also there looking at all the different places and noting down all the different colors. When you looked at one design at one little triangle you would see seven different colors on that triangle. Which color do
you pick? What stage do you go to? 30 years he was making this and 30 years he was painting it a different color. Which one do you pick? We did our best to bring it all together into one.

Michael McFalls: When I give a tour, I’m asked that question all the time. I told them about the pantone chart and things like that. I always find it difficult to say I’m not sure actually, how they made the exact decision. A lot of it was based on photography. A lot of it’s based off of the oldest photography that they had and maybe the last layer of paint that they pantone charted in that area.

John Salhus: It was somewhere in the middle. Every single decision was somewhere in the middle of all that. Yeah.

Terri Yoho: Thank you to all the photographers out there who have donated their work to places like spaces or sent us photographs, because that’s how we do the work.

John Salhus: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Terri Yoho: We need that vintage photography.

John Salhus: Yeah a lot of photographs were donated and just digging through the archives and talking to local people. To people that knew Eddy and that were friends of his.

Speaker 15: Wasn’t there some pairing with a paint company at some point when they were doing restoration? Somehow I remember reading that. That very first restoration. I don’t know what year it was.

Michael McFalls: Yeah, there was some rumors that Sherwin Williams was involved. We have some records of that. That’s just rumor. I think it’s speculation. Fred Fussell would probably be able to answer that question better.

Terri Yoho: John and Peter at Parma together have how many years of experience paint matching and mixing?

John Salhus: Well, we worked in a lab for years. Yeah.

Terri Yoho: Lots of year. They're really, really good at color.

John Salhus: Also, this project, we wanted to get it right. As right as we possibly could.

Speaker 16: I have a very personal question for people like you. Kohler comes in and puts a lot of money into preserving the work and then you have it. Now, for instance I’ve been doing work since 1968 with cement and I’ve colored the cement. During that time the lime has leached out the color so there are over 250 murals that I’ve done, mosaic murals, in the city of Philadelphia and they’re decaying. Where do you get the money to preserve this Pasaquan after they do it?
Michael McFalls: That's a very difficult question. We're working on it as we speak. We're constantly fundraising. Last year I think we raised over $50,000 just in private money just to help continue programming and restoring the site. It's a constant battle for the university. We are a university and we see-

Speaker 16: Oh that's it, you're a university.

Michael McFalls: Yes. A university foundation that owns the property. We see it fitting right into the mission of the university. We have students from UGA, students from Auburn, doing work on the site. Some of them are from preservation groups, some of them are actually art historians. The university president sees it connecting to our educational mission. In someways that helps and then there's outside grants. We have a friends group. In fact, we're doing some marketing where 15% of sales will come back for preservation efforts only. There's a lot of ways we're trying to do this, but it's an uphill battle to say the least. It would be great to have one big endowment to keep this thing going.

Speaker 16: How about at Chauvin. How are you doing it?

Dennis Saporsky: We do some of the same tricks that my colleague just talked about. It is good to be connected to the university. That stabilizes things, but in Louisiana universities are having a hard time too. Our university is 60 miles away from the site and we have to constantly remind our university about how important Chauvin is. The university cares about Chauvin, but the university also has its other list of priorities that oftentimes are above the sculpture site. That can be a little good and a little bad. I see, for the most part, it being a good thing to be connected to the university because generally, and through student work and student stewardship in classes, it does get constant attention. Money is hard to come by.

Michael McFalls: We have the same problem. We're 45 miles from the campus. There's this out of site, out of mind. Sometimes that's good, but sometimes you have to constantly reeducate people in the administration and say, "Hey, this place is out there. You own it. We've got to keep care of it." It's a constant fight.

Kevin Rose: At Hartman, I think I can offer an interesting perspective although it's similar. We don't tell the public but Hartman's owned by two philanthropic foundations that joined forces and own the site. It's something I would challenge Kohler to think about more and I think you probably do. There's challenges in every community, but working for a philanthropic foundation we restored a Frank Lloyd Wright house and spent about six million dollars doing it. If we could go back and do it again we would not spend all of that or we would challenge the community to raise funds for its long term care to make sure that happens. What we do is we ask for donations at the site. We've received in eight years about $30,000 just from visitors putting money into a donation bin, which I never thought was possible. Then we challenged the community to step up and help. I wish that we would've been more active while Kohler was still in town to go out to people and say, "Listen. Kohler's going to invest up to a million dollars," or
what was invested there. "Can you give $10,000 for the long term care?" "Can you give $20,000 for the long term care?" What'll ultimately happen is, Kohler did provide some money to finance what they wanted to see happen, but couldn't happen in time.

We're then left with a site that still needs restoration, that needs a lot of maintenance, has people walking on the sidewalks, cats knocking things over, a little bit of vandalism and we don't have that pool of resources. The foundations are there, but they don't want to put too much money in. They want the community to own it. Finding a strategy, and I know just like conservation, every community is different, but finding a strategy that can work in communities to say, "Hey if we're going to invest a million dollars here this community needs to step up and have a $100,000 set aside for this site for its long term care."

Speaker 17: I think we'll be talking about a lot of this tomorrow in the turn signals section. I'm part of the board of directors for the Garden of Eden in Lucas, also a Kohler Foundation project. We formed a new board to address these issues because we're in a very small, very poor town. We have no money in Lucas and it's in fact going away as our population goes away. We charge admission and we air mark a part of our admission to the preservation fund. We do have a box specifically for preservation fund and we have one person on the board dedicated to, not just getting a strategy for fundraising, but also making sure that we know where the site was when Kohler left through documentation and the preservation plan going forward and about how much money all of that's going to cost and a priority list so that we can fundraise for those specific things. We don't have the university affiliation. This really is a board run, non-profit in a small, underserved, rural community of 400 people. It is tough. We had a 40 minute hail storm three years ago that destroyed every roof in town, but only did medium damage to the garden itself. That's where we are right now is that we need to do that assessment to see where it is from now going forward.

Money is hard. I live in Kansas. It's a very, very red state so if you ask for money for an arts organization it's not going to happen, but if you ask for money for preserving a cultural heritage site. Also, a thing that tells a story that is a little bit divorced from the art world, but is actually grown up out of rural culture, you can find those other sources that you might not initially think of when you think of these art sites. They're not just art sites. They're community sites and they're a part of these rural towns that they live in.

Speaker 19: My question goes back to the source of this whole thing. Terri, tell us how did the foundation decide on this mission, this particular mission and what is the process for identifying the sites that you're going to be involved in?

Terri Yoho: Okay. I think the genesis of why we do this is a pretty lovely story and that is Ruth Kohler came into a family that the arts and education is in their DNA. When the foundation was established in 1940 that was our mission. When Ruth was a little girl she'd go driving around the countryside with her father and they'd look at roadside memorials, I don't know if you have these all over the
country, the bath tubs on their side with the virgin Mary in them and other
interesting things along the countryside. That was what they did on weekends.
They hopped in the car and drove around and looked for interesting things. Ruth
of course pursued a career in the arts, but in the 1970s a family friend and
someone who was involved in the art center, Jake Jacobson, directed her up to
Wisconsin concrete park and she met Fred Smith and she saw the art
environment and the only word that I can use is, she was smitten. So, our path
was laid and our direction was set. Still within the original mission of Kohler
Foundation, to support the arts and education, but the preservation of art
environments and self taught art became a very big part of it.

Where it's evolved to is we acquire art, either through gift or purchase. If you've
ever dealt with me I've probably said we'd much prefer gift over having to
purchase it, but we do when we have to, because that gives us money more to
invest into the project. We acquire art, hire fine people like those that are sitting
here, Ron Harvey is sitting in the front row. We preserve the pieces, in situ is our
preference. If we can't, professionals don't like this word but I have to tell you
we use it in the office, we will harvest what we can so that something can be
saved and prepare it so that it can be gifted to a weight box, to a museum or
other non-profit. Those non-profits can vary from tiny community libraries to
the Smithsonian. Major, major art institutions. In each case we have a
contractual agreement. We prepare the art, we gift it, it's theirs free and clear.
No encumbrances in terms of they get the copyrights, everything they would
want. It becomes their property and they're responsible for it into the future. If
at any time they are unable to care for it or don't want to care for it, it reverts
back to Kohler Foundation and we find a new home for it.

That has actually happened in several instances. We took back a site in
Wisconsin. It was owed by Sauk County, Wisconsin. Elected officials as they
aged, lost interest, it was costing them a few thousand dollars a year. They
wanted it gone. We took it back and found Edgewood College in Madison,
Wisconsin, who has done amazing things with that site. Incredible community
outreach and they're keeping it beautifully preserved. That's kind of how it
works. We have made gifts to about 300 museums, I think, over the last
probably 15 years. Susan Kelly where are you? How many pieces of art do you
think we've gifted?

Susan Kelly: Oh, thousands.

Terri Yoho: Ten thousand?

Susan Kelly: Yeah. Easily.

Speaker 21: That's a great story about how to shift from non-caring to a caring institution.
We are experiencing in our community a fight between sort of science and art.
The community at this point is saying that it's more important to teach the
children science than it is art and they're dividing with a giant wall. Are any of
you working with sort of, public programming that helps to break that wall
down and be able to help develop support? Do you have any more success stories?

Terri Yoho: Let's see. I don't have a success story, but I will tell you that we make small grants in Sheboygan county and STEAM initiatives versus STEM initiatives make our heart flutter in a whole different way. We tend to support the STEAM initiatives that include art. Any other questions? Okay.

Jen: I'm Jen [inaudible 01:01:44]. I work in the education department here and we are one of the recipients of the KFI grants and in response to the public programming, we do a few different things. We're really lucky we have a preschool in the arts center so every year we bring the preschoolers out to Tellen and we take them on a tour led by [inaudible 01:02:01] and we do concrete paver workshops so they get an experience to work with the materials. We also do family workshops out there and we do this thing we call the "chairsity cookout" and we invite the community. It's a free event so everyone can come there. It's really interesting to see how the public will respond to it. A lot of people have never been there before and they have and interesting relationship with it where some parents will even place their children on top of sculptures and things and we have to go to them and say, "Oh hey, maybe don't go on the art." It's really an interesting dynamic where they're really starting to learn about something that's been in their community for decades and they've never experienced it before. We're so thankful for the KFI grants that enable us to bring people out there and offer these programs that they can really engage in the sites and understand more about why it's important.

I think that across the education department, we really believe in starting with young children like the preschoolers and doing family workshops so they grow up understanding these sites and really investing in them and having an ownership over them. That's how we get the community behind as well, where people will support the sites overall.

Terri Yoho: And one in the front.

Kim Wozniak: I'm an artist and I work in concrete and I'm from Wisconsin so I've been following everything that you do for a really long time.

Terri Yoho: Tell us your name so we know who you are.

Kim Wozniak: Kim Wozniak.

Terri Yoho: Okay.

Kim Wozniak: Do you have any kind of program if I would want to come and work on one of your conservation projects and volunteer my time as both a learning experience and because I care about the work that you're preserving. Do you have any kind of a way that I could become involved in that or other artists like myself?
Terri Yoho: Send us an email. I have to say artists often want to work on our projects. They're not easy to manage because they always want to improve everything.

Kim Wozniak: Oh yeah. God no.

Terri Yoho: Send us an email. We'll keep your name on file. If we're working in the area we will call.

Kim Wozniak: Yeah and it doesn't necessarily have to be here. It's a learning thing I'm interested in all of what you guys do.

Terri Yoho: Sure.

Kim Wozniak: Thank you.

Terri Yoho: Touch base with me I'll give you my card.

Speaker 24: When you first go to a site for the preservation what type of engineering study do you do? John or Jason?

John Salhus: I'm sorry. I was trying to find you.

Terri Yoho: Who was talking?

Speaker 24: What kind of engineering study do you do-

Terri Yoho: If we need an engineer we actually wouldn't ask our conservators to do that. We generally will borrow a civil engineer from the Kohler company and we've taken them to any number of our sites where we've had drainage problems, structural problems with bridges and all those things. John does have an engineering background.

John Salhus: In the structural engineering of paintings. Paintings. Yes. I know how to build some things too, but to help out the paintings.

Terri Yoho: We all know what we don't know how to do, so we get professionals.

John Salhus: Yeah mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dennis Saporsky: I have one more question. Chapter two of your book that you're putting out. Mildew remover. Would you just use a commercial mildew remover on cement or would it be a bleach based or none of the above?

Jason Church: A quick answer to the bleach based. No.

Dennis Saporsky: Mildew remover.
Jason Church: Yeah, so there's definitely biocides on the market that are specifically designed for historic stone and concrete. I actually talked to Deb about coming down and showing you guys some of those. Bleach is bad. Bad. Why bleach is so bad is it leaves chlorine salts behind, which will actually push your materials apart every time it rains it re-solubilizes, sun dries it, it re-crystallizes it. It'll continue to push your materials apart. Stone, concrete, what have you.

Dennis Saporsky: Great.

Jason Church: There's commercial biocides, so cleaners designed to kill biological growth-

Dennis Saporsky: Great.

Jason Church: And to keep it from coming back.

Dennis Saporsky: What's chapter three?

Jason Church: Chapter three.

Dennis Saporsky: I know in your book. What are you guys going to do for chapter three. I've got chapter two already written.

Terri Yoho: Dennis for more information on that. Ron Harvey in front of you probably has a favorite brand that he uses and Ben what do you like to use for cleaning?

Ben Kagiwa: Prosoco I guess is good to use.

Jason Church: Yeah. There's quite a few.

Dennis Saporsky: Can you say that again? Say that word again?

Ben Kagiwa: Prosoco.

Terri Yoho: Prosoco.

Ben Kagiwa: Has a lot of herbicide, biocides.

Dennis Saporsky: Lowe's?

Terri Yoho: No.

Jason Church: Probably D2 is the easiest one to get a hold of now. It's a great product. You can get it on Amazon and there's several suppliers.

Terri Yoho: Ron, what do you like to use?

Ron Harvey: D2. Then again you have to know why you're using what you're using.
Speaker 26: All right. We're about out of time. Terri do you have any last comments before we wrap up for lunch? Would you like to say anything more?

Terri Yoho: I just want to thank everyone for being here, because if you weren't doing what you are doing nothing would be happening in this field. Without the passion for preserving this kind of art nobody's going to find the funding, nobody's going to find the interest. Keep moving forward. We appreciate it. Thank you. Thank you guys.