

Sabine Cotte

Paintings Conservation
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Nationalities: French and Australian. Arrived in Australia in 2001. Since 1990, works for museums, galleries and private collectors in France, Australia and the Himalayas.

Cultural Conservation Expert for UNESCO since 1997, focus on South East Asia

Honorary fellow, University of Melbourne, Faculty of Arts, Grimwade Centre for Cultural Materials Conservation

Education

- 2017** **PhD Arts**, 'Art in the making: Mirka Mora's techniques and materials and their meaning in conservation' University of Melbourne.
- 2011** **Masters by Research**. 'Tibetan paintings in Australia: conservation of a living heritage' University of Melbourne (First Class Honours)
- 1994** **Certificate in Mural Paintings Conservation** International Centre for the Preservation of Cultural Property in Rome (ICCROM)
- 1986-1990** **Masters in Conservation and Restoration** Institut National du Patrimoine (INP-IFROA) Paris. Easel painting conservation (High Distinction, Congratulations of the jury)
- 1982-1986** **Honours Bachelor in Fine Arts**, Ecole Nationale des Beaux-Arts, Paris, Screen-printing and Lithography (High Distinction).
- 1982-1986** **Honours Bachelor in Art History**. University of Paris I, History of Art and Archaeology

Professional experience

Collaboration with contemporary artists

Consultation with the artists, research and documentation of methods and materials. Work with Mirka Mora, Lara Merrett, David Keeling, Peter Booth, Paul Boston and Philip Wolfhagen, Daniel Buren, Jean Pierre Raynaud, Pierre Soulages and Christian Boltanski.

Survey of collections and condition reports

Documentation, risk assessment, prioritisation of needs, preventive conservation recommendations and planning, condition assessment. Clients include museums, auction houses and art dealers.

Treatments of paintings

Expertise for various techniques and supports (cardboard, canvas, bark, panel, silk, copper...) Professional experience includes numerous treatments of 14th to 18th century paintings involving delicate consolidation and stabilization, cleaning and in-painting; delicate cleaning and semi-transparent relining of Himalayan paintings; treatment of high profile colonial and contemporary Australian artists' works.

Treatments range from minor tear repair and superficial cleaning to consolidation, relining, strip lining, removing of varnish and over paintings, texturing the fillings and extensive in-painting.

Advice for packing, storing, displaying is also given to clients.

Clients (selected)

France : Musée du Louvre, Musée d'Orsay, Musée d'Art Moderne, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Musée du Petit Palais, National Trust, City of Paris, private collectors

Australia : National Gallery of Victoria, Ballarat Fine Arts Gallery, Bendigo Art Gallery, Geelong Art Gallery, Hamilton Art Gallery, Heide Museum of Modern Art, Sotheby's Australia, Deutscher and Hackett, Michael Buxton Collection, Niagara Galleries, Lauraine Diggins Fine Arts, City of Yarra, City of Port Phillip, National Trust, Soo Tze Oriental Antiques, private collectors.

Artists (selected)

Rick Amor, Howard Arkley, Ralph Balson, Clarice Beckett, Paddy Bedford, Tony Bevan, Charles Blackman, Peter Booth, Arthur Boyd, Daniel Buren, Judy Cassab, Robert Dickerson, William Dobell, Ian Fairweather, Othon Friesz, Théodore Géricault, Daisy Jugadai, Emily Kame Kngwarreye, David Keeling, Richard Larter, Lindy Lee, Frederick McCubbin, Albert Marquet, Roy de Maistre, Amedeo Modigliani, Mirka Mora, Albert Namatjira, Sydney Nolan, John Olsen, John Perceval, Garry Shead, Jeffrey Smart, Pierre Soulages, Chaim Soutine, Arthur Streeton, Eugene von Guerard, Prince of Wales, Judy Watson, Brett Whiteley, Philip Wolfhagen

Vietnamese war artists, thangkas, tsakli, wooden book covers, painted scrolls, mural paintings, by anonymous South East Asian artists from 13th to 21st C.

Various European artists from 8th to 21st C, paintings on wall, canvas, panel and copper.

Advocacy

Conservation awareness and community's involvement in the care of works of art, particularly for living heritage.

Rolex Award for Enterprise (Associate Laureate) for Handbook of preventive conservation, 1996

Developing content for fundraising material for the promotion of sustainable conservation with international exchanges and women's career empowerment in the Shekhawati region, Rajasthan (India) (2019-2020)

2020 The Shekhawati Project training workshop, Mandawa, Rajasthan (India). Supervising conservation and architecture students and graduates (India, Italy, France, Switzerland) for the conservation of 19th century frescoes on the façade of a haveli (Palatial mansion).

2019 The Shekhawati Project training workshop, Fatehpur, Rajasthan (India). Supervising conservation students and graduates (India, Italy, Australia) for the conservation of 19th century frescoes in a haveli (Palatial mansion). Completion of work on the south façade.

2017 'Natural disasters and cultural heritage in the Philippines: Knowledge sharing, decision making and conservation' Island of Bohol, Philippines,
Providing content and leading team for on-site assessment after disaster. Includes display and storage recommendations. 5th APTCCARN meeting organised by National Museum of the Philippines, the Grimwade Centre for Cultural Materials Conservation and SEAMEO Regional Centre for Archaeology and Fine Arts.

2016 ICCROM Workshop: Post Earthquake Recovery, Safe Storage and Access of Museum Collections, National Museum of Nepal, Kathmandu
Training of 27 heritage professionals in moving and rehousing collections affected by disaster. Design of a visible storage with strategic displays and interpretation/signage for visitors' access: selection of objects, facilitating storytelling, design of versatile storage/display racks, design of signage for Organised by ICCROM, UNESCO and Government of Nepal.

2009 Mural Paintings Conservation workshop, Mustang (Nepal)
Conservation of 15thC mural paintings on mud walls. Training of local conservators and heritage architects. Design of a better and safer access to the temple with help of local carpenter. Organised by Himalasia Foundation.
Thangka conservation workshop, Tainan University of the Arts, Asian Art Conservation Department (Taiwan)
Training of paper conservation students. Lectures and treatment on several case studies. Conservation Department, Tainan University of the Arts.

2008 Mural painting conservation, Mustang (Nepal)
Study tour and feasibility study for the conservation of a 15thC cave temple and its mural paintings, site documentation. Organised by Himalasia Foundation.

2005 UNESCO Thangka conservation workshop, Shechen Monastery, Kathmandu (Nepal)
Training of 25 Himalayan monks and lay people in conservation of Himalayan scroll paintings.

2003 UNESCO workshop, National Museum of India, Delhi
Planning of four conservation workshops in the Himalayas. UNESCO and National Departments of Culture of India, Bhutan, Nepal, Ladakh, Sikkim.

1999 UNESCO Mural painting conservation workshop, Royal Palace, Patan (Nepal)

On-site training of 2 conservators from the National Laboratory of Archaeology. Uncovering and conserving 17th century secular mural paintings newly discovered in the palace

1997 UNESCO Thangka conservation workshop, National Museum of Bhutan, Paro

Training of 2 local conservators and setting up a conservation lab in the museum. UNESCO and Ford Foundation (Delhi).

Lectures and academic reviewing

Since 2006, marking students' thesis and delivering lectures on ethics of conservation related to religious heritage, conservation of Non-Western objects, artists' interviews in conservation, preventive conservation, techniques of in-painting, disaster recovery, conservation and communities, for University of Melbourne (Masters of Conservation, Masters of Curatorship).

Peer review for several professional journals (AICCM Bulletin, ICON) and for Indigenous and World Cultures Working Group, ICOM-CC, (assistant coordinator since 2014).

Guest Lecture '*The Shekhawati Project, an international collaboration for the conservation of frescoes*', Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, Delhi (India), 25 March 2019.

Awards and Grants

- 2018 Australian Academy of the Humanities Award**, towards the publication of the book *Mirka Mora : a life making art*, Thames and Hudson (July 2019)
- 2017 AICCM Award** for Outstanding Research in the Field of Materials Conservation
- 2013 Australian Post Graduate Award**, for the PhD research 'Perspective on the conservation of Mirka Mora's art and study of her materials and working techniques', University of Melbourne
- 1996 Rolex Award for Enterprise, Associate Laureate**, for the project 'Handbook of preventive conservation for temple caretakers in Bhutan, Himalayas'

Publications

- 2020** (Forthcoming) **Mosaic, gold, and frilly skirts: Mirka Mora's legacy in Melbourne**, in *Melbourne Historical Journal*, Volume 47 'Narratives & Power'
The Shekhawati Project: international and interdisciplinary collaboration for conservation of Rajasthan mural paintings, in *ICOM CC Beijing Preprints* (co-authored with C. Charpentier, A. Khandal and H. Tanday)
- 2019** **Mirka Mora, a life making art**, Thames and Hudson Australia, Melbourne, 268p
- 2018** Artists interviews for conservation, *INSITE Magazine*, Museums Australia Victoria, November 2018-January 2019, 'Contemporary Collecting', p 5
How Mirka and Georges Mora fled the Holocaust and created bohemia across the world, *The Conversation*, 31 October 2018

- Au revoir Mirka Mora, your joie de vivre will stay on**, *The Conversation*, 29.09.2018
- 2017 Diaries, petticoats and copious research : a rare glimpse into Mirka Mora's artistic process**, *The Conversation*, 01.11.2017
- Building capacity for post-disaster recovery of museum collections in Nepal**, *ICOM-CC 18th Triennial Conference Preprints, Copenhagen, 4–8 September 2017*, ed. J. Bridgland, Paris: International Council of Museums.
- The artist at work: New material knowledge about a complex Australian mural**, *ICOM-CC 18th Triennial Conference Preprints, Copenhagen, 4–8 September 2017*, ed. J. Bridgland, Paris: International Council of Museums.
- 2016 Artists' interviews and their use in conservation : reflections on issues and practice**, in *AICCM Bulletin*, 37, 2, pp 107-118
- Paint, cloth and stuff : a technological study of Mirka Mora's painted soft sculptures, poster**, in *'Expression of sensibility. Art Technological Sources at the Rise of Modernity'*, Interim Meeting of ICOM CC working group Art Technological Source Research, 10-11 November 2016, Stuttgart.
- 2015 Research and Encounters around the conservation of a Vietnamese War Painting ; a joint venture between artist, collector and conservator**, in *CeROArt*, 10, March 2015
- 2014 Listening, watching, making and reading to better conserve: a collaborative project with the artist Mirka Mora**, Poster and short talk, in *Authenticity in transition. Changing practices in contemporary art making and conservation*, Glasgow, 1-2 December 2014
- Materials in Gonkar Gyatso's work: continuity and contrast with the Tibetan painting tradition**, in *AICCM Bulletin*, 35, p22-32
- 2013 Reflections Around the Conservation of Sacred Thangkas**, in *Journal of Conservation and Museum Studies*, 11(1), 3, p 1-12
- 2012 Conservation collaboration with Mirka Mora for three treatments of her public artworks**, in *AICCM Bulletin*, 32, p.1-9
- Destins croisés: art conservation with Mirka Mora**, in *Explorations, A Journal of French-Australian Connections*, Institute for the Study of French-Australian Relations, University of Melbourne
- 2011 Conservation of Thangkas: a review of the literature since the 1970s**, in *Studies in Conservation*, Vol.56, Issue 2, 2011
- 2009 Conservation- Restauration des Thangkas : préserver un patrimoine religieux vivant**, in *CoRe*, 22, July 2009 (in French)
- Conservation of Thangkas: Preserving a Living Religious Heritage**, in *Proceedings of the Forum on the Conservation of Thangkas*, ed. C. Dignard, ICOM-CC 15th Triennial Meeting, New Delhi, India, September 26, 2008

- 2008 A handbook of preventive conservation in Bhutan (Himalayas)**, in *ICOM-CC 15th Triennial Meeting*, New Delhi, India, September 2008 (co-authored with Singye Dorji and David Nock)
- 2007 An evaluation of the role of semi-transparent relining in conservation of thangka painting** in *Studies in Conservation*, Vol 52, 1, p.2-12
- 2006 Ethical standards: can we find a Himalayan way?** Poster, *The Object in Context: Crossing Conservation Boundaries*, IIC Munich Congress
- 1999 Urgence et restauration : l'incendie du Parlement de Bretagne**, in *ICOM-CC 12th Triennial Meeting*, Lyon, France, 1999
Restoration of thangkas in National Museum of Bhutan, in *CoRe (Conservation/Restoration of Cultural heritage)*, 7, (in French)
- 1995 Conservation problems of mural paintings related to architecture in Bhutan, Himalayas** in *Congress of the Laboratory of Conservation of Stone*, Lausanne, 1995 (co-authored with David Nock)
- 1994 Bhutan; Dzongs and their Mural Paintings**, poster, *Preventive conservation: practice, theory and research*, IIC Ottawa Congress (co-authored with David Nock)

Public presentations

- 2020 The story of art making: a multi layered research into the art of Mirka Mora**, in *Reflecting on theory, practice and ethics in the conservation of paintings*, Interim meeting of ICOM-CC working groups, Lisbon (Portugal), FCT Nova University, 6-7 February 2020.
The Shekhawati Project: international collaboration for the conservation of frescoes in Rajasthan, *Les Routes de l'Asie*, Paris (France), 3 February 2020 (Co presented with C. Charpentier)
- 2019 Artist and conservation research: collaboration with Mirka Mora**, Conversation with Associate Professor Alison Inglis, in symposium *Unlocking creativity- artists and architects' estates*, University of Melbourne, 19-20 November 2019
'Political' conservation: showcasing practice and lobbying government in Shekhawati (India), *AICCM National Conference*, Melbourne, 13-15 November 2019
- 2018 Mirka Mora's mosaic at St Kilda Pier, Melbourne, an ongoing story of conservation**, in *Stories from Conservation*, Melbourne Museum, event held in conjunction with the Australian Heritage Festival (15 May 2018)
- 2017 Building capacity for post-disaster recovery of museum collections in Nepal**, *ICOM-CC 18th Triennial Conference, Copenhagen, 4-8 September 2017*, ed. J. Bridgland, Paris: International Council of Museums
The artist at work: New material knowledge about a complex Australian mural, *ICOM-CC 18th Triennial Conference, Copenhagen, 4-8 September 2017*, ed. J. Bridgland, Paris: International Council of Museums

- Build Back Better : The ICCROM 2016 post-earthquake capacity workshop in Nepal**, in *5th APTCCARN Forum, Bohol, Philippines, 4-6 April 2017*
- 2016 Art in the making: understanding the materials and processes of Mirka Mora**, in *'The Work of Art', AAANZ Conference, 1-3 December 2016, Canberra, Australian National University*
- 2015 Artists interviews and their use; a study tour of practices**, in *AICCM National Conference 'Illuminating the new: contemporary practice and issues in materials conservation', Hobart, Tasmania, 4-6 November 2015*
- 2014 Art in the making: Mirka Mora's soft sculptures and embroideries**, public talk, *Heide Museum of Modern Art Public Programs*, during the exhibition "From the home of Mirka Mora". (11.09.2014)
- 2012 Introducing preventive conservation in the community with illustrated handbooks**, in *The Conservation of Material Culture in Tropical Climates, 3rd APTCCARN Meeting, Bangkok, April 2012* (co-authored with Singye Dorji and David Nock)
- 2011 The purpose of conservation: seeking relevance in a living heritage context**, in *Conservation in Australia: Past, Present, Future, AICCM National Conference, Canberra, October 2011*
Conserving sacred thangkas as a living religious heritage in mountain sites and beyond, in *Mountains in the Religions of South and Southeast Asia: Place, Culture, and Power, 4th SSEASR conference, Thimphu, Bhutan, July 2011*
- 2010 Conservation of public art: keeping artworks alive and reinforcing community's engagement**, in *Dialogues with Artists, 12th AICCM Paintings Symposium, Adelaide October 2010*
Conservation of living heritage, or can we adapt principles to local needs? in *'Conservation in a Changing World', ICOM General Conference, Shanghai, November 7-12, 2010*
- 2008 A handbook of preventive conservation in Bhutan (Himalayas)**, in *ICOM-CC 15th Triennial Conference, New Delhi, India, September 2008* (co-authored with Singye Dorji and David Nock)
- 1999 Urgence et restauration: l'incendie du Parlement de Bretagne**, in *ICOM-CC 12th Triennial Conference, Lyon, France, 1999*
- 1995 Conservation problems of mural paintings related to architecture in Bhutan, Himalayas** in *Congress of the Laboratory of Conservation of Stone, Lausanne, 1995* (co presented with David Nock)