Art, Museums, and Archaeology Interest group workshop report

Monday, June 1st 5:45 – 7:00pm PST in Ballroom 20BC

ASMS 2026, San Diego Convention Center

Organizers: Paul A. Haynes, Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia. Alba Alvarez Martin, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands. Daniel Vallejo, National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., USA.

This is the workshop's second annual appearance as an interest group workshop. We had another sizeable crowd of an estimated 130 people in attendance similar to last year's turnout. The workshop was promoted on several social media platforms (X, Bluesky, and LinkedIn) every day for a week in advance of the conference, which helped raise awareness once they appeared on the social media feed in the ASMS App and planner.

The workshop maintained a similar format and structure to last year's program. We began with an introduction to the context of conservation science by a co-chair and welcomes, and before the start of the workshop we incorporated a "Guess the Artist" game where attendees could interact individually or with those around them to guess the artist before the workshop began. We had slight technical difficulties with one of the speakers' PowerPoint slides that led to an approximate 5-minute delay in start time. While not by design, the game helped fill this gap while the technical difficulty was being resolved.

Four speakers selected from submitted abstracts delivered 8-minute lightning talks, and these speakers ranged the full spectrum of career stages (undergraduate, PhD candidate, postgraduate, and staff conservation scientist).

1. Alison Trettin, North Carolina State University, Analysis of Natural Dyes Found in Northern European Textile Artifacts using Mass Spectrometry.
2. Liam McEvoy, Berkeley National Laboratory, Chemical profiling of the Egyptian Blue Lotus.
3. Gazmend Elezi, UCLA, LC–MS/MS method for detecting ancient wine biomarkers in archaeological ceramics.
4. Asher Newsome, Smithsonian Institution, Handheld Probe with Position Sensor Feedback for Real-time, minimally invasive Analysis of Objects in Situ

The lightning talks were excellent in terms of both quality and presentation, and there were engaging question-and-answer sessions after several of them. The timing of the workshop also benefitted the corresponding poster session which took place later in the week with several presenters mentioning that they had attendees at their poster session mention the workshop to them.

Next a three-person expert discussion panel was convened. This included two experts from museum scientific research departments and one professor at a university.

1. Joy Mazureck, Getty Conservation Institute, USA

2. Julie Arslanoglu, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, USA
3. Sarah Noll, Pomona College, USA

Panel members introduced themselves and their backgrounds briefly. Based on last year's feedback from audience members that engagement was low we incorporated an audience engagement platform for question-and-answers. We tested a few options, and we used the "Slido" platform for the workshop and audience members were able to join via a QR code. We pre-generated several questions for the poll and we enabled an option that allowed audience members to submit their own questions. Audience members were then able to vote on the questions and the most voted for were asked, and the panelists and workshop organizers answered questions from the audience and the chairs which covered a range of topics. We had an engagement of 81% of those who joined the platform with 70/86 people participating in either submitting questions or voting. Several examples of the questions can be found below, but the most notable outcome is that questions that the audience submitted were voted on by other attendees and were answered by the panelists.

Pre-generated questions included: What is your favorite, least favorite, or the most interesting sample you've ever analyzed using mass spec? ; In your view, what are the exciting new trends in the field (methods, technologies, applications, etc.) over the last 12 months? In your view, what are the growth areas for conservation research using MS? What advice would you give those interested in entering the cultural heritage research fields? ; What opportunities are available for those interested in entering the cultural heritage fields? (fellowships, collaborations, etc.).

We closed the formal workshop at 6:55 PM, finishing off with closing remarks thanking our panelists and speakers again. We also reminded attendees to join us at future workshops, and if their work interfaces with cultural heritage to engage with us in the future ASMS meetings. Lastly, we provided a QR code for a survey to ask audience members to provide feedback and suggestions for the directions they would like to see the interest group go towards. Suggestions included more time for the panel session, a job/fellowship fair, more archaeology, and an overwhelming interest (87.5% of respondents) in a webinar series throughout the year focusing on conservation research.

Several people stayed after the workshop to discuss with presenters, panelists, and workshop organizers. Several of the presenters and audience members also went off to get dinner together, allowing the discussions to continue. This highlights how successful the workshop was at stimulating interest and bringing together people with common research interests.

In future workshops we hope to incorporate the feedback received with the survey to provide a slightly longer panel session. The implementation of the engagement platform worked well, and we plan to continue using it in the future. We will also explore the webinar's suggestion to engage with ASMS membership outside of the annual conference. This will hopefully achieve two major goals one being to deliver on the suggestions provided by the audience for subject matter they are interested in seeing (e.g. archaeology, more specific applications, etc.), and two to promote growth of the interest group by bringing together conservation scientists who perform mass spectrometry work with the ASMS membership for engaging conversations on research and career opportunities.