

Lecture

Restoration of Canvas Painting

2026

10 . 31(Sat)

13:20 - 16:10

(Registration
starts at 13:00)

Organized by

National Center for Art Research

Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties - Center for Conservation Science

Tokyo University of the Arts - Graduate School of Fine Arts

Venue

Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties – Basement Seminar Room

Participation fee

Free

Registration

Prior registration is required. (Up to 90 people)

Registration QR code → → →

Deadline: October 22



※Spoken language will be Japanese.
This lecture will not be live streamed.

Overview

In the restoration of canvas paintings, treatments aimed at structural reinforcement involve a high degree of intervention in the original work and have long been a challenge. In particular, canvas—which, sandwiched between the paint layers and the wooden stretcher, is a support that is prone to deterioration and often requires structural reinforcement—has typically been strengthened by impregnating it with adhesive and re-stretching it; however, there are still many works that present challenges when it comes to re-treatment. Methods for reinforcing damaged canvases with minimal intervention whilst preserving the work's originality are still the subject of ongoing debate, driven by experimentation with materials, the development of techniques, and a re-evaluation of restoration principles.

For this lecture, we are pleased to welcome Mr. WATANABE Ikuo (Director of Art Restoration Studio 21) and Ms. Kate SEYMOUR (Director of Art Conservation Education), who have each been involved in the restoration of canvas paintings in Japan and Europe for over 20 years and have conducted extensive research into materials and techniques. They will present new technical insights gained through the restoration of canvas paintings with different characteristics.

Program

13:00 - 13:20	Registration
13:20 - 13:30	Opening Remarks
13:30 - 14:15	Presentation 1: WATANABE Ikuo, "Two Cases of Restoration Relating to the Uniqueness of Artworks"
14:15 - 14:30	Break
14:30 - 15:15	Presentation 2: Kate SEYMOUR, "Layers of Legacy: Material Identification, Industrial Lineage, and Retreatment Strategies for Wax-Resin Lined Paintings"
15:15 - 15:30	Break
15:30 - 16:00	Discussion and Questions & Answers
16:00 - 16:10	Closing Remarks

Speaker Profile



WATANABE Ikuo

After graduating from Tokai University (department of art) and Sokei Academy of Fine Art & Design, since 1987 Mr. Watanabe has worked as easel painting conservator at the Art Restoration Studio of the Sokei Academy of Fine Art & Design (now Art Restoration Studio 21), where from 2014 he assumed the position of director. He won a research grant of Japanese Government to stay at the Rathgen Research Laboratory of the Berlin State Museums and the Prussian Palaces and Gardens Foundation in 1996-1997. Ikuo has served as a guest researcher at the Restoration Department of the Sanssouci Palaces and Gardens, and lectured extensively at the Tokyo University of the Arts and the Tokai University. He received the Achievement Award of the Japan Society for the Conservation of Cultural Property in 2016.



Kate SEYMOUR

Ms. Seymour is an art historian and easel painting conservator with over 25 years of international experience in structural conservation, technical examination, and professional training. She is the Founder and Director of Art Conservation Education (The Netherlands). She holds an MA (Hons) in Art History from the University of Aberdeen and an MA in the Conservation of Easel Paintings from Northumbria University. She spent for 25 years as Head of Education at the SRAL (Stichting Restauratie Atelier Limburg, Maastricht). Kate specializes in structural canvas treatments, minimal-intervention lining methodologies, and material science education, regularly lecturing and leading workshops worldwide.

Presentation

P1

WATANABE Ikuo, "Two Cases of Restoration Relating to the Uniqueness of Artworks"

I will present two examples relating to 'originality', a key concept in restoration and conservation.

The first example concerns the discovery of talc during a close observation of a canvas painting by FOUJITA Tsuguharu, carried out as part of the preparation for its restoration. This discovery held the potential to shed light on Foujita's unique techniques. Through extensive, long-term research into the relationship between talc and Foujita's expression—including scientific analysis—it was disclosed that he had indeed used it as part of his original technique. The second case concerns how to preserve the unique original condition of a canvas painting by Anselm KIEFER. Kiefer's works suffered damages due to the instability caused by the canvas being loosely stretched. In this instance, we regarded the loosely stretched state as the original condition and carried out treatments to minimise damage whilst maintaining it. I will introduce the approach we adopted, which involved working from the reverse side of the canvas.

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Kate SEYMOUR, "Layers of Legacy: Material Identification, Industrial Lineage, and Retreatment Strategies for Wax-Resin Lined Paintings"

Lining a canvas painting historically involved attaching a secondary canvas to reinforce damaged originals. By the nineteenth century, wax-resin lining ("The Dutch Method") replaced water-based glue-paste linings under the belief that non-aqueous adhesives made paintings impervious to moisture. However, research reveals that wax-resin lined paintings remain sensitive to relative humidity shifts while suffering severe side effects: permanent darkening, embrittlement, weave-interference, and extreme weight addition. Modern retreatment cannot follow a standardised protocol; intervention depends on identifying specific formulations and historical application tools. This lecture evaluates contemporary retreatment strategies, highlighting Mist-Lining—a low-pressure, cold-lining system—as a lightweight, retreatable alternative that stabilizes paintings without heat, moisture, or adhesive saturation.

Contact

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