

About Selecting A Conservator

Qualified conservators who provide work in accordance with the American Institute for Conservation's Code of Ethics, Guidelines for Practice, and Commentaries may be in private practice, or may be associated with a regional conservation lab. Conservators are concerned with many factors in preserving an object, including determining structural stability, counteracting chemical and physical deterioration, and performing conservation treatment based on an evaluation of an object's aesthetic, historic and scientific characteristics.

Conservation professionals have considerable practical experience, a broad range of theoretical and scientific knowledge, and commitment to high standards. They may have been trained at a conservation graduate program or by lengthy apprenticeship.

Conservators usually specialize in a particular type of object such as paintings, works on paper, textiles, sculpture, furniture, rare books, archaeological, decorative or ethnographic materials. All of these object types have been represented in Conservation Treatment Grant requests and all types of expert conservators have been funded to treat New York State's cultural objects.



The AIC suggests that institutions expect to receive the following from a conservator

- Written preliminary examination report evaluating condition, proposing treatment, describing limitations of treatment and providing an estimate of the treatment cost and duration
- Notification during treatment of major changes in the proposal
- Written and, if appropriate, photographic documentation of the treatment

Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Practice of the American Institute for Conservation of Historic & Artistic Works (AIC) ([link to the code of ethics pdf](#))

Restoration vs Conservation

Restoration refers to the reconstruction of the aesthetic appearance of an object. Although restoration can be one aspect of conservation, the latter encompasses more. Conservation involves examination, scientific analysis and research to determine original structure, materials and extent of loss. Conservation also encompasses structural and environmental treatment to retard future deterioration.

For Assistance in Finding a Conservator AIC Assistance in locating professional conservation services, regional conservation centers and individual conservators is provided by the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (AIC). A national membership directory identifying conservators by specialty and/or geography, "Guidelines for Selecting a Conservator," and information on professional practices and standards in conservation, is accessible online at www.conservation-us.org. To contact AIC, tel: 202-452-9545, ext.1; fax: 202-452-9238, or e-mail: info@conservation-us.org.