



Spring Term 2018

Discover More

Spring term 2018 has been busy at West Dean College of Arts and Conservation. January saw postgraduate Conservation students undertake six-week work placements across the world.

Thanks to the high standard of work our students achieve, and the very strong networks maintained by their tutors, students spent time in prestigious institutions including the Royal Collection at Marlborough House and St James' Palace, The Bodleian Library, Oxford, The British Museum, The Smithsonian National Museum of American History and the Library of Congress where they were able to gain invaluable experience in a conservation

team and work on real pieces from these collections.

The School of Arts hosted a number of high profile makers and artists this term, through artist residencies, lectures and symposia during which academics and students from the College and further afield joined in stimulating debates about the role of craft in contemporary culture. February also saw the unveiling of *Thefallowfield*, a collaboration between the West Dean Tapestry Studio and artist Eva Rothschild. The tapestry was exhibited as part of Collect 2018 at the Saatchi Gallery.

www.westdeantapestry.org.uk

Back at the College, as part of our strategic plans, the Collections Team has been strengthened to undertake a programme of work cataloguing and maintaining our important archive and collection.

We've dedicated the large part of this term's Discover More to introducing them to you. I hope you'll find it interesting reading.

With best wishes,

Alex Barron
Chief Executive



Thefallowfield. A collaboration between artist Eva Rothschild and the West Dean Tapestry Studio.

Alumni – where are they now?



The de Fossard Solar Time Clock

George de Fossard (Postgraduate Diploma in Conservation and Restoration of Antique Clocks) graduated in July 2005. Along with his wife Cornelia, also a West Dean alumnus (Furniture Conservation), George makes up half of the de Fossard clock company.

George's creation, The Solar Time Clock, which comprises over 750 handmade parts, has attracted significant international attention; it is the first mechanical clock which can be set for longitude and latitude, allowing it to tell the time virtually anywhere in the world. The piece has recently been exhibited at the Science Museum and is now on sale.

www.defossard.co.uk/

Ruth Stevens and Ian Watson both hold a Masters Degree in Book and Library Materials Conservation from West Dean College and are fully accredited with the Institute of Conservation (ICON). Previously working as Book Conservators at the British Library and Lambeth Palace Library respectively, they established the Sussex Conservation Consortium in May 2013 where they specialise in book and paper conservation, preventative conservation, library and archival storage and disaster planning and response.

We are delighted that they are supporting current books students at West Dean College by offering an annual prize to an exceptional Book Conservation student.

sussexconservationconsortium.co.uk/

Merna Liddawi (Master of Fine Arts) graduated in 2017 and has since been involved in art exhibitions all over the world, including The Florence Biennale, in which Merna was awarded fourth place in painting for the 'Lorenzo il Magnifico' award, from over 400 participants. She also took part in the APS Mdina Cathedral Contemporary Art Biennale on the island of Malta. The group exhibition, 'The Mediterranean: A Sea of Conflicting Spiritualities' was co-curated by fellow West Dean alumnus (Conservation of Books and Library Materials), Simon Sultana Harkins, who helped set up the exhibition.

www.mernaliddawi.com/
www.mdinabiennale.com/

Meet The West Dean College Archive, Collection and Library team



Looking after the past, investing in the future

The Edward James Foundation holds a significant collection of art works, furniture and archive materials that speak of the rich history of West Dean House and Estate and the life of Edward James; poet, lifelong art collector and patron of 20th century artists. It plays a key role in the College's strategic plan, which has firmly positioned all of the College's cultural assets and resources directly in relation to the core educational mission. This was an important development for the management of the Collection and Archive, cementing its status as a key resource for students, staff and external academic researchers.

Students from the schools of arts and conservation have access to the collection and archive both as a source of inspiration and as a working collection which they help to conserve as part of their studies. To support this key shift in the use of the materials, a new team has been established to ensure a coherent and focused approach to the management of these valuable resources:

Emma O'Driscoll, Collections Manager, oversees care and management of the collection, determines the priorities for conservation treatment and is responsible for the collections care of the archive. She organises conservator/conservation assessments via the College Conservation Departments.

Sarah Hughes, Curatorial Assistant, provides curatorial input and support for internal and external exhibitions and events. She works with the academic staff to provide sessions for students to promote awareness of the contents of the Collection and Archive. She supports partnerships with other organisations and provides interpretation materials to accompany items loaned for exhibitions.

Angie, Assistant House Steward, is responsible for preventative conservation of items in the house and collection.

John Howick, House Carpenter, maintains the house inventory. He has excellent knowledge of all collection items and supports their care.

Teresa Shergold, Librarian, manages the specialist College Library collection and supports student and staff research requests to access primary and secondary material from the library and archive.

Jackie Knee, Assistant Librarian, deputises for the Librarian in the management of the College Library.

Simon Coleman, Archivist, has joined the team, initially on a short term contract subject to future funding, to survey, assess and report on the entire archive comprising tens of thousands of individual papers, letters and photographs, in preparation for a full cataloguing project.

Collection, Archive & Library team: L to R, John Howick, House Carpenter; Angela Bulbeck, Assistant House Steward; Jackie Knee, Assistant Librarian; Teresa Shergold, Librarian; Simon Coleman, Archivist; Sarah Hughes, Curatorial Assistant; Emma O'Driscoll, Collections Manager.

Cataloguing The Edward James Archive

A new project to catalogue part of Edward James's unique personal archive has recently begun. The focus of this project will be the Cultural Papers, a diverse and illuminating body of material with content ranging over many areas of the creative arts including visual art, literature, music and ballet. The papers span the period from the late 1920s to James's death in 1984 and reflect the remarkable breadth of his international patronage of the arts which began in the 1930s. The cataloguing of this section will be a crucial first step in transforming much of the Foundation's archive collection into a usable resource for research and teaching.



Highlights include James's correspondence with leading surrealist artists such as Salvador Dalí, René Magritte and Leonora Carrington; literary figures including John Betjeman and Aldous Huxley; and composers such as Kurt Weill and Igor Markevitch.

Presenting an intricate web of artistic projects and personal connections, the Cultural Papers perfectly embody the outlook and vision of the College's founder. They have the potential to inspire new creative endeavours and open up fresh approaches to research of 20th century art.

Students from the Schools of Arts and Conservation at West Dean College have access to material in the Edward James Archive and the material is used to inspire new work, or is incorporated into teaching practice, offering a unique learning environment for staff and students alike.

Use of the Cultural Archive in its uncatalogued state is unsustainable, as it requires significant staff time to respond to enquiries, manually search for requests and invigilate researchers. As a result, many access requests currently have to be refused due to lack of staff resources.

A full catalogue of the archive will revolutionise its use for the benefit of students and external researchers. Our new archivist has been appointed on a short-term contract to lay the groundwork for this vital project and we are seeking funding to help develop the long term programme of activity to catalogue, digitise and provide wider access to this important cultural resource. If you would like to be involved in the project, please contact any member of the Development team. Our details are at the end of this message.



West Dean Open House 2017
Cloud Lester Korzilius & Hala Sabet

A valuable resource

Student access to the collection and archive results in new and exciting work. Visual Arts students were asked to create an installation inspired by West Dean House and its environment for Open House 2017. Hala Sabet and Lester Korzilius collaborated on this installation inspired by the relationship between René Magritte and Edward James. The artists installed a suspended paper 'cloud' above the Old Dining Room table. Echoing both artists' interest in geometry, design and architectural intervention, Cloud makes subtle reference to the imagery of one of the most significant artists of the twentieth century, and highlights the importance of the support and patronage offered by Edward James.

This has been a crucial role over the years, particularly at key moments such as Edward James' death which resulted in the restoration of many items of the collection which had travelled far afield with him.

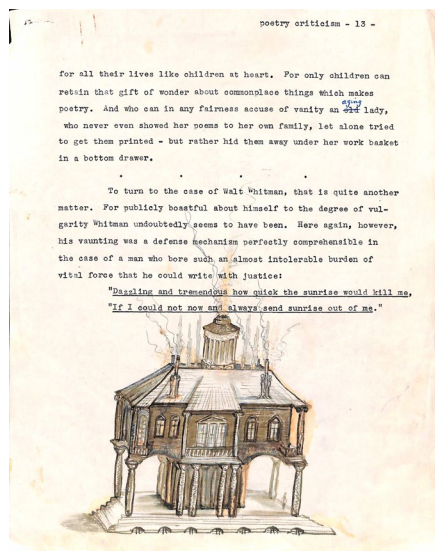
John worked directly with Edward James, framing many photographs and other art works for him, including the odd Magritte! These days, John continues to provide invaluable historical knowledge to the Collections team, and in between, there's a good chance you'll find him winding one of the numerous clocks around the building that require his daily attention.



House Carpenter – 47 years of service

John Howick has been House Carpenter since 1974, having first begun work at West Dean in 1970. He lives in West Dean village, in the house where he was born. John has lived and worked through an incredible period of history for the house and estate as it evolved and developed into the College and creative community that Edward James envisaged.

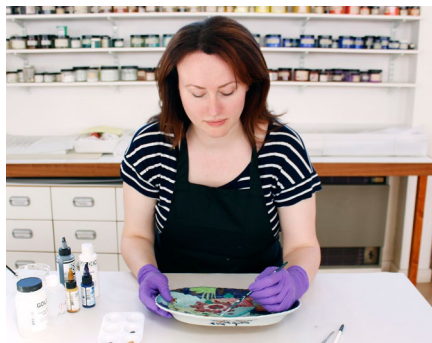
Following in his father's footsteps to work at West Dean, John has an unsurpassable knowledge of the house and the collection within it, along with the many stories that lie behind each item. The House Carpenter maintains the house inventory, including the important art works and furniture, and so John has always known where everything is.



Edward James sketch for 'The Tower of the Holy Spirit' on typewritten manuscript, c. early 1960s. West Dean College, part of the Edward James Foundation.

Spotlight on...

Holly Daws (MA Conservation specialising in Ceramics and Related Objects)



What made you choose to study ceramics conservation?

I have collected ceramics for many years and believe that they are unique in their ability to tell us about history and society from before the Neolithic age to the present. Without the skills of conservators we are putting our rich cultural heritage at risk and so I decided to train in conservation. I had previously studied across the arts and sciences and was able to combine my skills in both areas with my passion for ceramics.

What made you select West Dean College?

West Dean College is unique in offering an immersive environment where practical hand skills are at the core of its learning goals. This ethos was very much aligned with how I wanted to learn conservation. The college is able to offer small class sizes which meant I received a huge amount of supportive one to one teaching as I got to grip with materials and processes; this has really helped to grow my confidence as an emerging conservator.

This term you were on placement, based in the conservation studio of The Royal Household, with the Royal Collection Trust. What did you work on?

During my placement, I was extremely lucky to be offered a range of objects to work on, highlights included a pair of white gilded vases with a Greco-Roman design

which needed their handles bonded and re-gilded, which was an exciting challenge. I was also asked to work on a lid of an 18th century Japanese Arita vase which is on display in the Queen's Audience Chamber in Windsor Castle. The vase is one of a pair and the other lid has already been conserved, meaning my challenge was to match my lid to a similar standard.

What has been the highlight of studying at West Dean College so far?

An overarching highlight has been the opportunity to learn ceramics conservation on objects owned by real clients, I particularly enjoyed working on an 18th century tobacco leaf pattern dish, which allowed me to begin to understand many of the processes and materials I would use in conservation, whilst communicating with the client in regards to their requirements. Another significant high point has, of course, been getting the opportunity to work with pieces from the Royal Collection during a six week work placement. This was a unique experience which has really allowed me to finesse my skills and to begin to understand how to obtain a very high standard finish.

What are your hopes and plans for the future?

I will be studying at West Dean College until September to complete my Master's degree, allowing me to hone my skills to the highest level. Once I have finished my training my goal would be to gain as much experience as possible across the industry within both the museum and in the commercial sector but my long-term aim is to set up my own conservation studio. I have already made some key contacts on placements with practicing professionals and I would hope to use these and others gained during my time at West Dean College to make this a reality.

Holly is the 2017/18 BADA Joan Eyles Scholar and an Anna Plowden Scholar.

Visual Arts Summer Show

Following their highly successful Spring show, The Visual Arts Summer Show 2018 will showcase the work of students graduating from the Visual Arts degree and diploma programmes at West Dean College. Exhibiting artists will present work developed over a year of intensive study before the exhibition moves to London. West Dean College's School of Arts offers study options from taster courses right through to Master of Fine Arts.

Preview: Friday 29 June, 4-7pm

Saturday 30 June - Friday 6 July, 10am - 5pm

All welcome

The Edward James Studios

West Dean College (Gardens Entrance)

West Dean Arts and Craft Festival

West Dean Arts and Craft Festival takes place 1-3 June 2018. Try your hand at a new skill and make something to treasure under the guidance of an expert tutor; chat to a variety of skilled craftspeople, browse their handmade creations and watch them in action in the demonstration area.

There will be a unique opportunity to explore the historic state rooms and view the surrealist works of art on display as you follow a self-guided route through the Edwardian house.



During the event, visitors will have the opportunity to preview our newly restored, magnificent 200 year old Grade II listed Orangery. Situated on the north lawn, the architectural gem required substantial work to its deteriorating roof. Following a successful fundraising campaign we have raised enough money to begin the restoration works at the beginning of May. All going to plan, the precious building is due to re-open in June and will once again be used as a vital teaching space for art students. Enormous thanks go to everyone who has supported this really important project.

For further information contact the Development Office:

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westdean.org.uk

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