

The ABCs of Art Conservation

Art conservation is... a rewarding career that brings together the worlds of art, history, technology, science, and craft. Art conservators are part of a larger professional community devoted to preserving our tangible and intangible cultural heritage. Read more on [AIC's website](#).

Who, what, why? Learn more about the role and responsibilities of art conservators [here](#) and [here](#) to understand the basic principles that guide our practice. You can gain insight into our day-to-day work via social media feeds: [AIC](#), [IIC](#), [ICOM-CC](#), [ICON](#), [CAC](#), [ICCROM](#)

What are all those acronyms?! The acronyms listed above represent national and international professional organizations that support conservation communities. These organizations provide programming, educational opportunities, and professional resources. They also facilitate knowledge exchange and advocacy work, and help to establish professional standards. Explore their websites for more information on opportunities in the field!

Conservation vs. restoration vs. preservation. Visit the [ICOM-CC](#) and [AIC Terminology](#) pages to get a handle on some of the basic terminology in the conservation field (note: definitions vary country by country!)

Want to become a conservator?

How? Advanced training is required. In the US, this is commonly pursued through graduate school. Program applicants must first complete coursework in studio art, science, and art history, archaeology, or anthropology. Candidates may also acquire hands-on experience in conservation through technician positions or internships.

This initial training phase is called “pre-program.” Visit the [Become A Conservator](#) page to learn about the stages of training, and the [ECPN Wiki](#) for information on starting a career in conservation. Also check out out ICON's ["10 Traits to Succeed in Conservation"](#) and ECPN's [article on getting started in the field](#).

Connect with the conservation community. AIC has a “Find a Conservator” search tool, which can be used to contact local professionals. AIC and ECPN also host networking events and online communities (see sidebar).

Find opportunities. Visit ECPN's Wiki for a list of websites for finding [internships and jobs](#).

AIC and ECPN: A Taste of Alphabet Soup

AIC = American Institute for Conservation

ECPN = Emerging Conservation Professionals Network (part of AIC)

ECPN is a forum and network for those learning about or entering the field. Connect with our community and resources:

[Website](#)
[Facebook](#)
[Regional Liaison Program](#)
[AIC Wiki](#)
[YouTube](#)
[AIC Online Community](#)

Diving In: More Resources

- ★ ECPN's [list](#) of conservation blogs and social media accounts
- ★ [The C Word](#) Podcast
- ★ ECPN blog posts about [pre-program journeys](#) and [career pathway interviews](#)
- ★ ICON article ["Things I Wish I Knew in My First Year as a Conservator"](#)
- ★ [Reading lists](#) on conservation history, theory, practice
- ★ ECPN Webinars:
["Preparing for Graduate Education in Art Conservation"](#)
["How to Make the Most of Your Pre-program Internship"](#)