ECPN Specialty Group Feature

Emerging Conservation Professionals Network

Each month, ECPN is proud to introduce one of our amazing Specialty Group Liaisons. Specialty Group Liaisons are volunteers who serve as an intermediary between emerging conservation professionals who are interested in or part of the specialty group they represent. To learn more about ECPN liaisons contact the ECPN Outreach Officers at ecpn.aic.outreach@gmail.com or visit ECPN's website.

Hi ECP's! We would like to introduce our Electronic Media Group liaison, Lia Kramer. Lia is a fourth year MA student at the NYU Conservation Program (Class of 2019), studying the conservation of time based media.

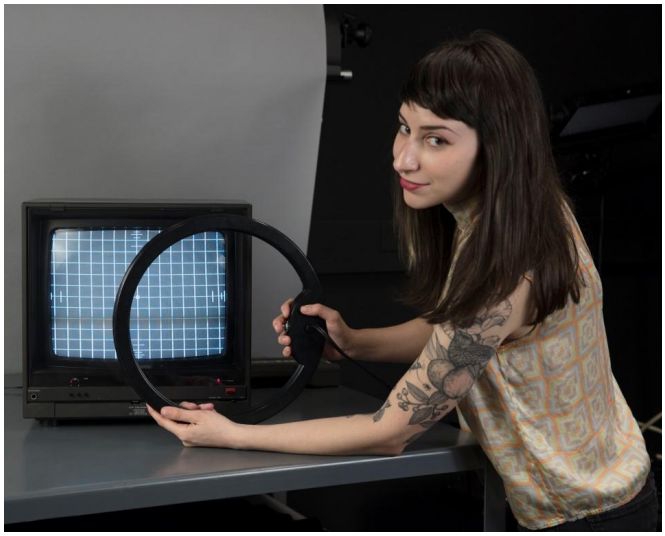

Photo (right): Various test patterns are used to adjust the display of a CRT monitor. The convergence pattern seen here is a beam alignment indicator. Lia holds a degaussing coil, which is used to eliminate color purity errors caused by the influence of stray magnetic fields. Photo by Bryan Whitney.

1. Of all the specializations, why did you decide to pursue electronic/time-based media conservation?

I chose time-based media (TBM) because it combines a lot of my interests and encourages continued learning. I studied drawing and painting in undergrad, and I realized later how much I valued being part of a community of working artists: keeping a dialogue with artists became very important to me as I moved into conservation. I was naturally drawn to performance art having trained as a dancer since childhood. Personally I am most drawn to interactive, kinetic, and light-based works, so TBM satisfied all of those interests. Although I did not have training in disciplines such as A/V engineering or computer science before beginning my graduate studies, each artwork is an opportunity to expand and deepen my knowledge.

2. Are there any particular skills that you feel are important or unique to your discipline?
Any kind of practical experience is certainly helpful - audio or video engineering, computer science, electronics, robotics, and even performance - all of these will be of great use. It's also important to recognize when a specialist should be consulted, and a collaborative mindset is key. As is common across specialties**,** a willingness to learn and grow your understanding, and possessing a natural curiosity for how things work is very important to TBM conservation.

3. What has been your favorite treatment within your specialty?
A favorite project of mine was actually a bit of a deep dive into a software-based artwork in anticipation of its treatment. It was my first introduction to web-based art during a summer internship before my second year at NYU. The focus of the project with the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum was to test a software-based art documentation template, for which I applied a case study of John F. Simon Jr.'s *Unfolding Object.* The interactive artwork was no longer functioning as it should due to aging code in a language that was no longer being supported by most web browsers - most people could not access the work and it was exhibiting performance errors. The project quickly developed into an in-depth investigation of interaction response, behaviors, and functionality. I learned a lot about programming and the value of source code, and was aided by significant research and code analysis conducted by NYU computer science (CS) students. Since my summer internship, CS students have worked to translate the code to a new language to restore access and functionality to the work, and I was inspired to take programming classes.

4. Do you have any advice for someone interested in specializing in your discipline?

My advice for someone interested in TBM conservation would be to start building their knowledge in something new and not to be intimidated if it seems too large a hurdle. Whether it's writing a simple computer program in a new coding language, a fun DIY microcontroller project, or trying out some basic soldering, these are all great ways to get your feet wet. And if you already have the technical background, try an art class in a new medium, get to know your local art community, or try a modern dance class. Go to an experimental theater show if you can. Visit any art exhibition with media works and try to figure out how they were installed. Don't hesitate to contact the Conservation Center at NYU to learn more about the new TBM specialization track which just launched this year. Attend an AIC meeting if you're able (don't forget to look into funding opportunities); it's a great way to learn about current projects and research, and network with our incredible EMG membership. And, finally, do reach out to me if you'd like to know more - I'm always happy to share my experience!