



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.

For our February Liaison Highlight we welcome the Electronic Media Group (EMG) Liaison, Taylor Healy. Taylor is currently a graduate student at the New York University Institute of Fine Arts Conservation Center and specializes in Electronic and Time-Based Media Conservation. Her experience includes fellowships completed at the Whitney Museum of American Art, National Galleries of Scotland (Edinburgh, Scotland), NYU Libraries, and the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington DC.

Photo: Taylor Healy at work. Electronic media conservation means spending an entire summer under the table trying to identify the faulty component for a software-based artwork.



1. Of all the specializations, why did you decide to electronic media conservation?

I was most drawn to the quickly developing methodologies that the electronic media art community is generating alongside artists who are creating works that fall under this category. With artists who are using current technology, it's a real-time collaborative development of creative methodologies and practices. This community fosters accessibility, shared knowledge, experimentation and curiosity. My background is in studio arts-- mainly sculpture-- but I spent much of my pre-conservation life working with artists and fabricators. Electronic media conservation by nature of complexity, works very closely with living artists and their studios. I ultimately decided on this discipline in graduate school at NYU when they debuted their time-based media curriculum.

2. Are there any particular skills that you feel are important or unique to your discipline?

Research skills are the most valuable, similar to other areas of conservation, there is no single conservator who has every skill that they will ever need. Electronic media conservation research resources often live outside traditional technical/art-historical/academic/museum spheres. Answers to questions no longer lie in publications, catalogues, or through scientific analysis-- rather they are found by accessing technical specifications, youtube tutorials, blogs, and in dialog with your electrician!

3. What has been your favorite treatment within your specialty?

Electronic media conservation treatments have particularly staggering results, right? Often, they come in dormant, non-functioning states. After a successful treatment they will work again-- thus returning its status as an artwork! I particularly love working with light-based artworks. One of which was donated to the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden. When I first encountered the light installation it was not functioning as expected; it was like trying to figure out which bulb on an old set of Christmas lights was causing failure. After weeks of diagnosing the issue in the dark and replacement of faulty components, the lights turned on and danced around!

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

Attend as many relevant professional events, lectures, and workshops as possible! This field is developing rapidly, and it is a great way to stay up to date on the creative solutions they have come up with. As I mentioned, this complex media requires constant collaboration, so it is not a bad idea to begin creating a network of experts on which to rely. In the meantime, it's not a bad idea to start taking programming classes!