



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

In 2019, we at the Samuel H. Kress Foundation celebrated several significant anniversaries. First and foremost, 2019 marked the 90th anniversary of the establishment of the Kress Foundation in 1929, making the Foundation among the oldest private foundations in the United States. We are proud of Kress's myriad contributions to the nation and humanity over the course of nearly a century.

2019 also marks the 30th anniversary of the founding in 1989 of one of our core programs: the Kress Program in Paintings Conservation at the Conservation Center of the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University (IFA CC). We wish to toast this signature program and the outstanding contributions of its leadership and students over the past three decades. We also wish to express our abiding appreciation and gratitude to the University and the IFA administration for their sustained commitment to this unique program.

The Kress Program at the IFA CC brings together two of the Kress Foundation's key programmatic and mission-driven commitments. First, it provides a wide array of conservation services to the more than eighty municipal art museums, campus museums and other cultural organizations nationwide that collectively steward the former Kress Collection. The Kress Collection includes more than 1,000 European paintings, primarily from the 13th to early 19th centuries and many of its host institutions lack any significant in-house or local conservation capacity. In 1989, in recognition of this need, a pilot course for the conservation of Kress Collection paintings was incorporated into the curriculum of the IFA CC. Through the original pilot program at NYU, a selection of paintings from Kress Regional and Study Collections around the nation came to 14 East 78th Street to be cleaned and treated by graduate students under the supervision of Dianne Dwyer Modestini. Professor Modestini's intimate knowledge of the Kress Collection, combined with her unique experience in training young paintings conservators, enabled her to tailor examinations and treatments to suit each student's evolving capacity. Close collaboration between the Institute's outstanding art history faculty and the

Conservation Center was fostered by the presence of Kress Collection paintings, which lent themselves to object-based study. Participating museums, in return, benefited not only from treatments of the highest caliber, but also as recipients of all supporting documentation, including art historical and technical analyses.

Equally important, the program further provides a unique training opportunity for graduate art conservation students wishing to learn about and potentially pursue careers in the study and conservation of old master paintings. All IFA CC students specializing in paintings conservation take at least one class allowing them to work on a Kress painting in the course of their graduate studies. Depending on the availability of projects and interest, students from other specializations may also enroll in a Kress class. Graduates of the Kress Program in Paintings Conservation have gone on to work successfully in a professional capacity in museums and private studios both throughout the country and abroad. In the United States this has included the Art Institute of Chicago, the Brooklyn Museum of Art, the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, the Guggenheim Museum, the J. Paul Getty Museum, the Kimball Art Museum, the Los Angeles County Museum, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, the Museum of Modern Art, the National Gallery of Art, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and the Walters Art Museum. And abroad they include the Fondation Beyeler (Basel), the National Gallery of Victoria (Melbourne), the Öffentliche Kunstsammlung (Basel), and the Rijksmuseum (Amsterdam), among others.

As part of this ambitious program and in recognition of its early accomplishments and great promise, in 1991 the Board of Trustees of the Kress Foundation approved the establishment of a Post Graduate Fellowship for Advanced Training in Paintings Conservation. This position evolved significantly over the following decade to meet the changing needs of the program. The responsibilities of the Kress Post Graduate Fellows have included: assisting other conservation faculty;

teaching small topical workshops and organizing new curricula; overseeing the mechanics of arrival, uncrating and documenting of Kress Collection paintings; monitoring the condition of the Kress Regional and Study Collections and assisting in the selection of paintings for examination and treatment; and recommending the purchase of essential new technologies to facilitate treatments and ensure the safety of the students. The Fellows also have the opportunity to attend numerous lectures, both in conservation and art history, to gain experience in panel work on selected Kress paintings, and to travel abroad to attend workshops and undertake related studies. Kress Post Graduate Fellows at the IFA CC have included Annette Rupprecht (1991–1995), Jennifer Sherman (1994–2000), Friederike Steckling (1998–2000), Molly March (1999–2002), Sue Ann Chui (2001–2002), Nica Gutman (2002–2015), and Shan Kuang (2016-2019).

In order to better reflect the responsibilities of the Kress Post Graduate Fellow the title of the position has recently been changed to Associate Conservator for the Kress Program in Paintings Conservation, with Ms. Kuang as the first incumbent. Today, under the close supervision of Professor Modestini and Ms. Kuang, graduate conservation students carry out thorough technical examination and materials analysis of Kress paintings prior to their treatment. The more advanced the student, the more challenging the conservation problems the selected pictures present. Paintings with more complicated needs are worked on by the instructors and serve as demonstrations of optimal approaches to formulating and executing particularly challenging treatments. The close proximity and active interest of art historians and conservators at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and other local and regional art museums often results in collaborative examinations and the discovery of new information about attribution, workshop practice, painting technique, original display, and later alterations.

The fruits of the Kress Program in Paintings Conservation at the IFA CC are myriad. In addition to helping groom the next generation of old master painting conservators, the program has resulted in the examination and/or treatment of more than 200 Kress Collection paintings since the inception of the pilot program in 1989. The program has also supported significant publications, of which the anthology *Studying and Conserving Paintings: Occasional Papers on the Samuel H. Kress Collection* (2006) is especially noteworthy. Finally, we are pleased to announce and celebrate the imminent launch of a rich website dedicated to the Kress Program in Paintings Conservation, which will document the achievements of this signal program over the course of the past three decades.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Max Marmor". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Max Marmor
President