



THE BOSTON ATHENÆUM *News Release*

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For Immediate Release

BOSTON ATHENÆUM CELEBRATES CONSERVATION LAB 50TH ANNIVERSARY WITH FREE PUBLIC LECTURES IN OCTOBER & NOVEMBER & BEHIND-THE-SCENES OPEN HOUSE DECEMBER 7

(Boston, MA, September 17, 2013)

This fall, the Boston Athenæum celebrates the fiftieth anniversary of its pioneering Conservation Laboratory, the first established in a library, with free lectures, a panel discussion, and a public open house. All explore the history, scientific underpinnings, and future



of the field of conservation as well as its vital role in both preserving and digitizing physical books for the use of future generations.

In the summer of 1963, the first conservation program housed inside a library began operations at the Boston Athenæum. It quickly became a model for other libraries around the nation.

Conservation Lab 50th Anniversary Events

Fiftieth Anniversary lectures will take place in October and November in the Athenæum's historic Long Room. All are free and open to the public on a first come, first seated basis. A behind-the-scenes public Conservation Lab Open House, with special demonstrations, and a panel discussion will take place on Saturday, December 7. Reservations or membership are not required for these events.

The full schedule of programs includes:

Tuesday, October 29, 12:00 p.m.

Lecture, Associate Conservator Dawn Walus: "On Becoming a Conservator: History, Craft, and Science."

Dawn Walus, associate conservator in the Boston Athenæum's Conservation Laboratory, provides an insider's view of the conservator's multi-disciplinary blend of history, craft, and science. What do conservators do in museums, libraries, and archives around the world? How do conservators figure out how to conserve a rare object or a precious collection? What does it take to succeed as a conservator? Using personal anecdotes and working examples from the Athenæum's Lab, Walus explores her mission to support cultural heritage collections through research, technical study, treatment, and advocacy.

Tuesday, November 5, 12:00 p.m.

Lecture, Project Conservator Evan Knight: "Investing in Rebellion: Digitization of the Athenæum's Confederate Collection"

Every year, scholars from around the nation visit the Athenæum to work with its celebrated collection of Civil War materials. Thanks to the foresight of its librarians and trustees, the Athenæum began forming its Confederate Imprints Collection before the Civil War had ended and has continued ever since. Now one of the world's most important resources on the Civil War, the collection ranges from government documents, religious pamphlets, paper currency, and stamps to soldiers' railroad tickets and Jefferson

Davis's calling cards. Evan Knight describes some highlights along with his project to digitize more than 1,600 items from the collection for viewers around the world with funds provided by a trustee emeritus. Along the way, he illustrates how conservation practice plays a fundamental role in the scanning effort.

Friday, November 15, 6:00 p.m.

Lecture, Holly Moore, Cotsen Head of Conservation, Huntington Library:

“Growing the Huntington: A Programmatic Approach”

In May 2012, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation awarded the Huntington Library of San Marino, California, with a half-million dollar grant to expand its preservation program. Holly Moore, head of the Huntington's conservation program, describes how the library seeks to create an institutional programmatic approach to conservation, with paintings staff and new paintings and objects labs added to the Huntington's existing conservation department. She discusses these important developments in the context of the Huntington's overall growth over the last decade and a half.

Saturday, December 7, 10:00 am to 12:00 p.m. and 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Conservation Lab Open House

Take a behind-the-scenes look at the Boston Athenæum's state-of-the-art Conservation Laboratory during this day-long public Open House. Athenæum conservators will demonstrate techniques they use to stabilize, preserve, and restore the Athenæum's antiquarian and contemporary treasures, including paper washing, paring the gilding leather with antique brass tools, and mending damaged documents.

Saturday, December 7, 12:00 p.m.

Panel Discussion: “Beyond the Athenæum: Life After the Laboratory”

For almost a decade, the Athenæum has provided fellowship and intern opportunities for aspiring conservation professionals, including graduates of the North Bennet Street School's Bookbinding Program, underwritten by the Von Clemm Foundation. Three former Von Clemm Fellows and a former intern return to Boston to join this panel in a discussion of their current and future work and how Athenæum experiences influenced their careers. Panelists include Fionnuala Gerrity of the Yale University Libraries, Henry Hébert of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and Claire Grund and Athena Moore of the Northeast Document Conservation Center.

Conservation Lab 50th Anniversary Events

Image: Deputy Director James Reid-Cunningham resews the textblock on a rare copy of Herman Moll's *The world described: or, a new and correct sett of maps*, printed in London from 1709-1720, in the Boston Athenæum's Conservation Laboratory.

About the Boston Athenæum:

The Boston Athenæum is located at 10 1/2 Beacon Street, Boston, Massachusetts, in the heart of historic Beacon Hill, a short walk from the Boston Common and the Massachusetts State House. The Norma Jean Calderwood Gallery and parts of the first floor are open to the public. Hours are Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.; Thursday and Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., and Saturday 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. There is a \$5 admission charge for non-members for exhibitions in the Calderwood Gallery; members are admitted free. Free tours of the entire National Historic Landmark building are offered on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 3:00 p.m. Building tours are open to members and non-members but advance reservations are required. To reserve, please call 617-227-0270, ext. 221.

Founded in 1807, the Boston Athenæum is one of the oldest cultural institutions in North America, combining a membership and research library, an art museum, and a public forum. Public and membership events include exhibitions, lectures, readings, panel discussions, films, trips, and concerts. For additional information, please stop by the Members Room on the First Floor, visit www.bostonathenaeum.org, or call 617-720-7604.

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