

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**ISABELLA
SEWART GARDNER
MUSEUM**

**Art and Politics: Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum Lecture
Explores Conservation and Historic Preservation in Iraq**

Gardner Museum's George L. Stout Memorial Lecture presents conservator Terry Drayman-Weisser on recent efforts to assist artifact conservation and preservation in Iraq



Thursday, April 29, 2010, 6:30 PM | Ticketed Event

BOSTON, APRIL 15, 2010 – Each year, the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum invites a notable speaker on the topic of art conservation to present the George L. Stout Memorial Lecture, named in honor of a former museum director remembered for his contributions to the field of scientific art conservation and the preservation of cultural patrimony. On Thursday, April 29, in the museum's Tapestry Room, Bostonians will have the opportunity to explore a fascinating topic melding current affairs and art conservation when renowned conservator **Terry Drayman-Weisser** speaks about the recovery and protection of artifacts in Iraq.

Drayman-Weisser, currently the Director of Conservation and Technical Research at the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore, MD, was part of a team of experts from the Walters Art Museum, Winterthur Museum and Country Estate, and the University of Delaware's Department of Art Conservation that helped to establish a conservation training program in Erbil, Iraq. In this lecture, Drayman-Weisser will offer an insider's perspective on this unique international collaboration as she discusses the challenges and possibilities of conservation work in Iraq. After the program, guests are invited to continue the conversation at a wine and cheese reception alongside the courtyard.

"Terry Drayman-Weisser has been a leader in the field of artifact conservation and conservation education both in the U.S. and abroad. The Gardner Museum is honored to invite her to speak on this international initiative to protect Iraq's cultural patrimony," says **Valentine Talland**, *Senior Objects Conservator* at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum. "George Stout, a former director of the Gardner Museum, was one of the Monuments Men and played a key role in the restitution of European art work following WWII. We recognize his legacy in Ms. Drayman-Weisser's important work."

Known for her skill in training conservators at the Walters Art Museum, which boasts the third oldest conservation lab in the United States and is known for its high standards in treatment and research, Drayman-Weisser's involvement with conservation in Iraq began in 2006, when the Walters was selected to train two conservators from the Iraq Museum in Baghdad in the preservation of ivory artifacts from Nimrud. In 2008, the Walters was selected--along with Winterthur and the University of Delaware--to assist in the establishment of a conservation and historic preservation institute in Erbil, Iraq. Established as part of the Iraq Cultural Heritage Project, an initiative funded by the U.S. Embassy in Iraq and administered through International Relief Development, the institute was intended to focus on technical and professional training. The Walters, Winterthur, and the University of Delaware would provide expertise for the implementation of an objects conservation program, while a historic preservation and archaeology program would be established with the expertise of the U.S. National Park Service.

The newly formed Iraqi Institute for the Conservation and Preservation of Antiquities and Heritage aims to assist in the effort to rebuild the professional capabilities of Iraq's museums and to ensure the preservation of Iraqi cultural heritage through training in conservation and historic preservation. Drayman-Weisser and the conservation team are also assisting with improvements to the Iraq National Museum in Baghdad and professional development for its museum staff.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

Terry Drayman-Weisser has served as Director of Conservation and Technical Research at the Walters Art Museum since 1977. She holds degrees from Swarthmore College, The Johns Hopkins University, and the Institute of Archaeology, University of London. Drayman-Weisser has trained many conservators who are now in leadership positions in other museums. She has lectured and published widely and is known for her work with metals, enamels, and ivory. She also served as President and Fellow of the American Institute for Conservation, which recently awarded her their Sheldon and Caroline Keck Award for mentoring conservators entering the field. She is also a Fellow of the International Institute for Conservation and has served on their Council. Drayman-Weisser has been involved with training conservators from Iraq, especially on the treatment of ancient, flood-damaged Nimrud ivories. She recently received the ICOM-US Service Award for her work in Iraq.

ABOUT THE STOUT MEMORIAL LECTURE

Held each year in honor of George L. Stout, Director of the Gardner Museum from 1955-1970 and one of the founders of the modern discipline of art conservation, the Stout Memorial Lecture celebrates excellence in the preservation and understanding of cultural patrimony.

Past speakers and topics include TK McClintock, Director of Studio TKM and Chief Technical Advisor to the World Monuments Fund on the conservation of Juanqinzhai, on coordinating conservation and restoration work within the Forbidden City; Marjorie Cohn, former conservator and director of the Harvard University Art Museums, on her polemical thesis that conservation and art history professionals have ceded the right and obligation to train their own eyes; Dean MacCannell, chair of the Landscape Architecture Program in the Department of Environmental Design at the University of California, Davis, on Piranesi's experiments with hyper-realism and the effect of the tourist perspective on cultural landmarks; and Pulitzer Prize-winning author Laurel Thatcher Ulrich on the role of Isabella Gardner's museum as both a record of its creator's own active life and a highly personal interpretation of earlier centuries.

ABOUT GEORGE L. STOUT

George Leslie Stout served as Director of the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum from 1955 to 1970. Prior to joining the Gardner Museum, he held the post of director of the Worcester Art Museum and, before that, director of art conservation at the Fogg Museum of Art, where, with his colleague Rutherford Gettens, he advanced the application of technology and scientific inquiry to the study of both artists' original materials and the agents of deterioration of art. He co-authored *Paintings Materials: A Short Encyclopedia* with Gettens in 1942 and wrote *The Care of Pictures* in 1948—both landmark texts in the study of artists' materials and conservation techniques.

He served in both World War I—as a private—and World War II—as a Navy Officer, whose contributions included the development of camouflage technique. Towards the end of the war, he was re-assigned to the newly-formed MFAA (Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives), whose purpose was to operate in combat zones to identify and inform invading officers of monuments to be protected against damage from bombing and looting. After the end of the war, Stout and the Monuments Men engaged in the inventory and reclamation of large deposits of art that had been both stashed away in remote sites for safekeeping and confiscated by invading Axis forces. Stout was awarded the Bronze Star Medal for his service, and later participated in the evaluation of recovered Japanese art under General MacArthur.

TICKETS: \$10 General Public; \$5 Members and Seniors; FREE College Students. *Tickets include the post-lecture reception alongside the courtyard.*

Tickets may be purchased by phone through the museum's box office at 617 278 5156 (open Tues.-Sun., 10am-4pm), online via www.gardnermuseum.org, or in person at the museum's entrance at 280 The Fenway (Tues.-Sun., 11am-4pm). *Handling charges apply to tickets purchased by phone and online.*

CONSERVATION AT THE GARDNER • The Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum's conservation staff, under the direction of *Head of Conservation* Gianfranco Pocobene, leads the museum's ongoing efforts to ensure the ongoing preservation and protection of the historic collection and the museum building "for the education and enjoyment of the public forever," as Isabella Gardner stipulated in her will. Recent major projects include the restoration of the Yellow Room gallery, reopened in fall 2009, and continuing improvements to gallery lighting through the use of state-of-the-art technologies such as fiberoptic and LED lighting and mechanized window shades.

ISABELLA STEWART GARDNER MUSEUM • 280 The Fenway Boston MA 02115 617 566 1401 www.gardnermuseum.org • Tue.-Sun., 11 am-5 pm • \$12 adults; \$10 seniors; \$5 students; \$2 discount w/ same day Museum of Fine Arts admission; FREE for members, children under 18, all named Isabella, and everyone on their birthday • Modeled after a 15th-century Venetian palazzo surrounding an interior courtyard garden, the Gardner Museum houses a collection of fine art spanning 30 centuries and featuring works by Titian, Rembrandt, Botticelli, and Sargent, as well as changing contemporary and historic exhibitions, courtyard displays, concerts, lectures, and special events.

Conservation work at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum is supported, in part, by the Leon Levy Foundation, the Richard C. von Hess Foundation and the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

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Image: Courtesy of Terry Drayman-Weisser