

ABSTRACT

A Reimagining: Returning the Lost Ornaments to Robert Adam's Table at the Metropolitan Museum of Art

Presenters:

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For the newly installed British Galleries at the Met, a large console table designed by Robert Adam was featured with its accompanying mirror, taking a prominent place within the galleries. The treatment concept was inspired by work completed on the Philadelphia Museum of Art's sister table by Adam, where the previously lost ornaments once attached beneath the table's apron would be reproduced and reintegrated with the table. Adam's original designs for the table were used as a direct source for interpretation and were supplemented by curatorial and scientific examination. Three representative elements were carved in basswood that served as the "masters" for our reproductions. A collaboration developed between the authors in determining how the elements would be cast, joined and discreetly installed to the underside of the table. Elements were cast in Alumilite Slow Set 7 with the mounting connectors and reinforcing wires embedded within to enable easier compatibility with the mounting system and to strengthen the thin, fragile components, respectively. In holding with conservation's tenet of reversibility, our mounting system held the new ornament reproductions in position without any direct attachment or adhesive to the table. This matrix required strength and rigidity to hold the ornaments firm as well as adjustability to allow for anomalies in the table's construction. By using milled slider components, tubing with set-screws, and Sintra washers, the precise placement of each ornament was refined to the proper position during installation. A variety of prototypes were created before arriving at the five chosen bracket types. However, due to the unique requirements for each ornament, their respective mounts were fabricated and customized as needed. The primary ornament design pattern repeated nine times, resulting in the fabrication of 23 mounting brackets and 31 embedded connectors.

BIO



Nick Pedemonti is an Assistant Conservator at the American Museum of Natural History in New York, where his focus is on the study and treatment of their Northwest Coast Gallery collection. He previously worked as an Assistant Conservator for The Met on the British Galleries renovation project, where he was part of the team responsible for the research and conservation of the collection's period furniture and the Cassiobury House staircase. He holds a MSc from the Winterthur / University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation. His experiences also include treating Della Robbia's 'Resurrection' at the Brooklyn Museum, treating sculpture and architectural details at the Doris Duke's Shangri La Center for Islamic Art and Culture in Honolulu, and archaeological fieldwork with the Centro di Conservazione Archeologica in Rome and Sardinia. Nick also has experience in the private sector having worked at Fine Wood Conservation in Brooklyn, NY and in his private practice.



Jody Hanson was born in Champaign-Urbana, IL and currently lives in Buffalo, NY. She received her Bachelor of Fine Arts in Silversmithing and Jewelry Design from Indiana University. Her career in museum work began at the Krannert Art Museum 28 years ago while earning an MFA at the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana. She is currently working as a freelance mountmaker and installation preparator and has a diverse background of working with a wide range of objects from antiquities to contemporary art. Current and past employers include the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Cooper-Hewitt: National Design Museum, Peabody Essex Museum, Guggenheim Museum, Asia Society Museum, Queens Borough Public Library and Japan Society. Her enjoyment of working with artworks never wanes as each piece is an interesting and meaningful challenge. Bringing the curator's, designer's and artist's visions to reality through sound display practices remains a focus of her work.