



CULTURE CANNOT WAIT!

# FAC 2016 Course News

June 2016

IN THIS NEWSLETTER:

## A Summary of FAC 2016

by Corine Wegener and Stacy Bowe

**First Aid to Cultural Heritage in Times of Crisis** is an international training program and its goal is to help cultural heritage professionals — particularly those working in crisis-affected or disaster-prone areas — develop disaster response skills. Organized by the Smithsonian Institution and the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM), FAC 2016 kicked off on June 2 with the opening session in the Smithsonian Castle Commons. After being introduced to the basic First Aid operational framework, situation analysis, and some teambuilding drills, the 21 participants had their first practical sessions at Congressional Cemetery, where

they learned about damage assessment and building stabilization. In the following week, the course focused more on preparedness and response for collections. Conservators and collections managers from all over the Smithsonian instructed the participants on immediate first aid interventions. In the fourth week, weighty and insightful presentations covered tough topics such as working with the military and press. In the final week, the course participants focused on preparing for the culmination of the course: the final simulation!

Continue reading for more information about our successful FAC course.



- ❖ Activity highlights
- ❖ Session summaries
- ❖ Photos, photos, photos!





# FAC 2016, a glance

Some quick facts about FAC 2016:

- 4 week-long course
- 21 participants, from 17 countries
- All types of professions represented: architects, conservators, museum professionals, 1 lawyer, and even 1 participant from the Smithsonian!
- First FAC course held in the US
- Second FAC course resulting from the current partnership between the Smithsonian and ICCROM
- Last year's FAC was hosted by the Netherlands National Commission for UNESCO in Amsterdam



*FAC 2016 participants and teachers at the conclusion of our building stabilization sessions!*



*Day 1 - Friday, June 2nd, participants got to know one another in the Ripley Center Quad.*



*U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom David N. Saperstein gave the opening keynote address at the Smithsonian Castle.*



*On Saturday, June 4th, the Netherlands Embassy in Washington D.C. hosted part 1 of the participant's conference. The highlight was a debate on the difference between preparing for natural vs. manmade hazards.*





On Monday, June 6th, First Aiders received an urgent assignment to assist the "Department of Heritage Preservation" with a damage assessment at "Historic Cemetery" (thanks go to Congressional Cemetery in Washington, D.C.!) after a devastating earthquake. During their mission they encountered helpful staff, but also an angry official (Dr. Brian Daniels, an instructor for the First Aid course) demanding to know more about them and their intentions.



First Aiders were given an overview of how different disasters affect historic buildings in different ways. Our foam core model was built by exhibition design students at the Corcoran School of the Arts and Design.



The participants were broken into teams, and each had to carry out a damage assessment in different sections of the cemetery.



On Wednesday and Thursday, June 8-9, First Aiders received training on emergency stabilization of structures. They put their training to use shoring up a distressed wall at "Historic Cemetery." They were so proud of the result, they signed their work!





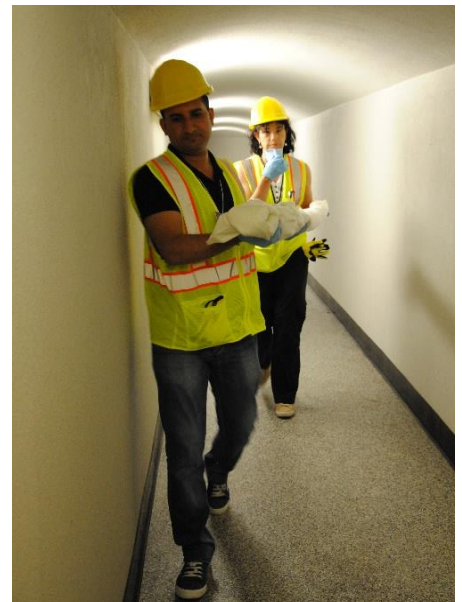
On Friday, June 10th, First Aiders visited the Smithsonian American Art Museum. They used the open storage area in the Luce Foundation Center to practice planning in the event of a hypothetical evacuation. Afterwards, staff from the museum gave a tour of the Lunder Conservation Center and highlighted their own efforts to improve the museum's disaster response plan.



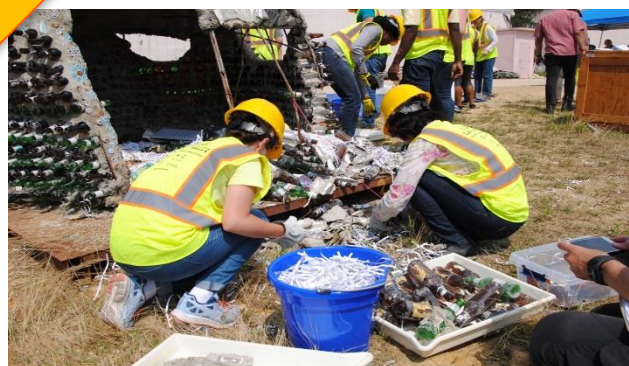
On Saturday, June 11th, the Castle Library hosted part 2 of the participant's conference. Marcy Rockman, the Climate Change Adaptation Coordinator for Cultural Resources, from the National Park Service, was the guest speaker. Along with more participants' presentations, the event concluded with a "show-and-tell" session where participants shared stories about objects they had brought from home and their meaning.



At the beginning of week 3, participants conducted an emergency evacuation drill from the Arts and Industries Building. About 50 non-Smithsonian objects were documented, packed, and removed to a "safe zone" within the building, all within the given short timeframe!







Two workshops were held at the Museum Support Center involving the salvage of damaged objects. Groups of participants rotated between tables that contained examples of damaged objects (textiles, photos, books, etc.) and Smithsonian conservators instructed on proper salvaging techniques. Later the whole group was faced with a damaged "Koori shrine" (a donated non-accessioned multi-media piece) with a collection inside that needed saving. Participants were required to directly apply their new knowledge to the simulation.



During week 4, the course focused on understanding the different kinds of organizations that are involved in disaster preparedness and response. A few highlights from the week included introductions to the military and how they operate in times of crisis [top left] and communicating effectively with the media [top right].

Dr. Richard Kurin taught the participants about the fundamentals of fundraising for disaster situations [bottom left].



# The Final Simulation!

On June 28, the participants took part in the final exercise of the FAC 2016 program, held at the Washington D.C. Fire and EMS Training Academy. The scenario explained was that a large collection of objects with contested heritage was involved in a complex emergency. The participants had to implement all of the steps within the First Aid framework during the exercise: situation analysis, on-site survey, and security and stabilization actions. Participants negotiated with the military for access, assisted emergency personnel recovering injured people from the scene, and then assessed, documented, and salvaged the at-risk collection from the unsecure and damaged storage containers. They also had to be aware of their own personal safety due to the intense summer heat. At the conclusion of the event, the participants and role players shared observations and lessons learned.



A well-earned celebration!  
Congratulations to our newest class of cultural first-aiders!







*The closing ceremony of FAC 2016, held at the Embassy of Italy in Washington, D.C. Speakers included the Director-General of ICCROM, Stefano de Caro, and the Ambassador of Italy to the United States, H.E. Armando Varricchio, and the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, Dr. David Skorton.*

Produced with program funding from the Smithsonian and ICCROM, FAC 2016 was also made possible with the support of the following sponsors:

- Prince Claus Fund
- ICCROM-ATHAR Regional Conservation Centre
- US National Committee of the International Council of Museums
- Gamma Xi Phi
- Anonymous donors

We would like to thank the following external organizations that provided institutional support to FAC 2016:

- 911th Tactical Rescue Engineer Company, U.S. Army, Ft. Belvoir, VA
- Congressional Cemetery
- Corcoran School of Art and Design
- Embassy of Italy, Washington, D.C.
- Foundation of the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (FAIC)
- National Archives and Records Administration
- The Netherlands Embassy, Washington, D.C.
- The Netherlands National Commission for UNESCO
- Washington DC Fire & EMS

The following Smithsonian units provided institutional support and expertise for FAC 2016:

- Anacostia Community Museum
- Arthur M. Sackler Gallery
- Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage
- Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden
- Museum Conservation Institute
- National Museum of American Indian
- National Museum of Natural History

*"This course offered the most well rounded training I've ever received; it kept us deeply engaged throughout a month of intense practical and theoretical work. The teachers taught with passion and deep knowledge, keeping us motivated. It was the best hard work."*

*~ Kristin Parker,  
FAC 2016 participant and  
Acting Director of the Rose Art Museum,  
Brandeis University*

- ➔ National Portrait Gallery
- ➔ Office of the Assistant Secretary for Education and Access
- ➔ Office of the Provost/Under Secretary for Museums and Research
- ➔ Office of Safety, Health and Environmental Management
- ➔ Smithsonian American Art Museum
- ➔ Smithsonian Institution Archives
- ➔ Smithsonian Facilities
- ➔ Smithsonian Libraries

In addition, we had expertise provided from the following external organizations:

- ➔ 413th Civil Affairs Battalion, Department of the Army
- ➔ Ambassadors Fund for Cultural Preservation, US Department of State
- ➔ AV Preserve
- ➔ British Broadcasting Corporation
- ➔ Cultural Heritage Without Borders, Albania
- ➔ Georgetown Library, District of Columbia Public Library System
- ➔ DIADRASIS
- ➔ Egyptian Heritage Rescue Team
- ➔ Federal Insurance and Mitigation Administration
- ➔ Forage Center for Peacebuilding and Humanitarian Education
- ➔ Library of Congress
- ➔ Marrion Fire & Risk Consulting PE
- ➔ Maryland State Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Baltimore
- ➔ National Archives and Records Administration
- ➔ National Guard Bureau
- ➔ National Park Service
- ➔ Nebesna Sotnia Memorial and the Revolution of Dignity Museum, Ukraine
- ➔ The Netherlands National Commission for UNESCO
- ➔ Office of Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, US Department of State
- ➔ Penn Cultural Heritage Center, University of Pennsylvania
- ➔ Prince Claus Fund
- ➔ Ritsumeikan University and ICOMOS-India
- ➔ Robert Silman Associates
- ➔ The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
- ➔ UN Habitat
- ➔ UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction
- ➔ University of Nebraska and Nebraska Wesleyan University

## FAC 2016 Course News

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