



**Contact:** Karen Frascona  
617.369.3442  
[kfrascona@mfa.org](mailto:kfrascona@mfa.org)

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON, ANNOUNCES \$24 MILLION RENOVATION OF CONSERVATION LABORATORIES 22,000-Square-Foot Facility Supported by Largest Fundraising Effort for Conservation in MFA History**



Rhona MacBeth, Eijk and Rose-Marie van Otterloo Conservator of Paintings, works on Frida Kahlo's painting *Dos Mujeres* at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

BOSTON (November 10, 2016)—The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (MFA), has announced a \$24 million renovation project that will create a state-of-the-art Conservation Center comprising 22,000 square feet and six laboratories. The transformational renovation is supported by gifts, grants and MFA funds, completing the largest fundraising effort for conservation in the Museum's 146-year history. The new space will provide advanced technology and foster a more interdisciplinary and collaborative approach among conservators. Additionally, the renovation project, which is scheduled to begin in 2017 and be completed in 2019, allows the Museum to convert 12,000 square feet of space into future galleries for Asian, European and Ancient World displays.

"With this new Conservation Center, the MFA will be among a small family of leading international Museums with exceptional conservation labs, strengthening the MFA's commitment to preserve our collections for future generations," said Matthew Teitelbaum, Ann and Graham Gund Director. "It will dramatically improve all facets of our conservation systems, improving infrastructure, technology and facilities while fostering an environment of teamwork. The project also provides the opportunity to open new galleries in the years to come, allowing increased display of works of art for the public to enjoy."

The \$24 million project is supported by the Sherman Fairchild Foundation, Honorary Trustee Rose-Marie van Otterloo and her husband Eijk, anonymous donors and MFA funds. The paintings conservation lab has been named the Rose-Marie and Eijk van Otterloo Paintings Conservation Studio.

The new Conservation Center will consist of six collaborative laboratories for paintings, objects, frame and furniture conservation, as well as mountmaking and exhibition preparation and scientific research. The MFA's Asian Conservation Studio, Virginia Herrick Deknatel Paper Conservation Laboratory and Gabriella and Leo Beranek Textile Conservation Laboratory will remain in their current locations.



MFA Conservator Abigail Hykin treats *St. John the Baptist* (about 1505–15) by Giovanni Francesco Rustici

Featuring upgraded technology and air-handling systems, the new Center will have open floor plans with heightened ceilings that maximize use of natural light, and increased area for public interaction. Additional improvements include direct access to the freight elevator and renovated loading dock, which will facilitate transportation of large-scale paintings, sculpture and furniture. In addition to allowing conservators to share equipment and expertise, the combined laboratories will provide examination and meeting rooms where they can work closely with curators, scientists and technicians. The Conservation Center will also increase the MFA's capacity to provide high-quality training for future museum professionals.

The MFA's commitment to care for its collections at the highest level has always been central to its mission. In the late 19th century, following the opening of the Museum in 1876, consulting specialists were engaged for repair and restoration of artworks as needed. In the early 20th century, several curatorial departments created staff positions for conservation. These efforts were formalized in 1929, when the MFA established one of the nation's first museum research laboratories. Over the decades, the conservation department has grown to encompass a total of more than 60 staff members and nine laboratories, which are currently located throughout four floors and four wings of the Museum.

Over the past five years, the MFA's conservation department has averaged 4,800 object examinations and 750 treatments on works ranging from paintings and furniture to objects and textiles. In addition to performing restoration treatments, they examine and evaluate artwork and develop and implement methods to ensure the safety and stability of objects. Their efforts can be seen across the Museum—including Frida Kahlo's *Dos Mujeres (Salvadora y Herminia)* (1928), a recent acquisition on view in the Art of the Americas Wing that was recently treated to remove discoloration, and Giovanni Francesco Rustici's *St. John the Baptist* (about 1505–15), on view in *Della Robbia: Sculpting with Color in Renaissance Florence*, which was cleaned and extensively studied for further understanding of its modeling and materials. Visitors can also see conservators at work in the MFA's Conservation in Action gallery, which currently features the monumental painting *Devout Men Taking the Body of St. Stephen* (1776) by Benjamin West and the 15th-century Monopoli Altarpiece from southern Italy. Additionally, the Museum highlights ongoing conservation efforts with the hashtag #mfaConservation on [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#), as well as an "MFA Conservation" playlist on [YouTube](#).

*The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (MFA), is recognized for the quality and scope of its collection, representing all cultures and time periods. The Museum has more than 140 galleries displaying its encyclopedic collection, which includes Art of the Americas; Art of Europe; Contemporary Art; Art of Asia, Oceania, and Africa; Art of the Ancient World; Prints, Drawings, and Photographs; Textile and Fashion Arts; and Musical Instruments. Open seven days a week, the MFA's hours are Saturday through Tuesday, 10 am–5 pm; and Wednesday through Friday, 10 am–10 pm. Admission (which includes one repeat visit within 10 days) is \$25 for adults and \$23 for seniors and students age 18 and older, and includes entry to all galleries and special exhibitions. Admission is free for University Members and individual youths age 17 and younger. Wednesday nights after 4 pm admission is by voluntary contribution (suggested donation \$25). MFA Members are always admitted for free. The Museum's mobile MFA Guide is available at ticket desks and the Sharf Visitor Center for \$5, members; \$6, non-members; and \$4, youths. The Museum is closed on New Year's Day, Patriots' Day, Independence Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. The MFA is located on the Avenue of the Arts at 465 Huntington Avenue, Boston, MA 02115. For more information, call 617.267.9300, visit [mfa.org](#) or follow the MFA on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).*