

2014 George Alexander Foundation International Fellowship

Frame Making: Carving, Gilding and Finishing



Reuben Rich

An ISS Institute Fellowship sponsored by

The George Alexander Foundation



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i. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report details the international experience of the Fellow in his quest to acquire knowledge and insight into the artisanal methodology, procedure, history and artistry of traditional picture-frame making. The Fellow travelled to Istanbul in Turkey, and to Florence, Rome and the enchanting small town of Moie in Italy. He visited galleries, museums, the Vatican and a dozen artisan framing workshops and studios during this Fellowship program. A striking common feature of the Turkish and Italian artisan workshop that surprised the Fellow were the small and simple spaces and the outdated machinery and tools used. And yet these artisans were producing some of the highest quality work that is revered internationally.

This report highlights and details the Fellow's interviews with local craftspeople of distinct artistry and showcases numerous antique and replica frames of beguiling character. A brief history focusing on the evolution of the picture frame in the Australian context, along with a brief Italian history focusing on the story of the Italian frames from the Gothic period onward, are included as appendices to provide readers with a relevant and informative context.

As part of the Fellow's international experience, the Fellow was granted the opportunity to learn how to hand-carve a Baroque-inspired timber frame from start to finish, and learn to adapt numerous traditional gilding and finishing styles and techniques into over half a dozen artisan frames.

This report imparts a unique look into the private workshops behind the skilled artisans interviewed and details the learning experiences of the Fellow as he partakes in an exclusive wood carving course and an individual gilding and faux finishing course with two unique and reputable artisans in Italy.

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ii. ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS

AGA:	Artisan Guild of Australia
AICCM:	The Australian Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Material
GOCSIG:	Gilded Objects Conservation Special Interest Group
FIAA:	Furnishing Industry Association Australia
ISS Institute:	International Specialised Skills Institute
NGV:	National Gallery of Victoria
PFGA:	Picture Framers Guild Of Australia
PPFA:	Professional Picture Framers Association

1. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Reuben Rich wishes to acknowledge and pay respect to the traditional owners of this land, the Kulin Nation, and the Wurundjeri, Boonwurrung, Taungurong, Dja Dja Wurrung and the Wathaurung people.

The Fellow would like to acknowledge the generous organisations and individuals who have assisted him in achieving, completing and publishing this Fellowship programme.

First and foremost, thank you to the awarding body, the **International Specialised Skills Institute** (ISS Institute), an independent, national organisation. In 2015 it celebrated twenty-five (25) years working with Australian governments, industry, education institutions and individuals, to enable them to gain enhanced skills, knowledge and experience in traditional trades, professions and leading edge technologies.

At the heart of the ISS Institute are our individual Fellows. Under the Overseas Applied Research Fellowship Program the Fellows travel overseas. Upon their return, they are required to pass on what they have learnt by:

- Preparing a detailed report for distribution to government departments, industry and educational institutions
- Recommending improvements to accredited educational courses
- Delivering training activities including workshops, conferences and forums.

Over 300 Australians have received Fellowships, across many industry sectors. In addition, recognised experts from overseas conduct training activities and events. To date, 25 leaders in their field have shared their expertise in Australia.

According to Skills Australia's 'Australian Workforce Futures: A National Workforce Development Strategy 2010'.

Australia requires a highly skilled population to maintain and improve our economic position in the face of increasing global competition, and to have the skills to adapt to the introduction of new technology and rapid change. International and Australian research indicates we need a deeper level of skills than currently exists in the Australian labour market to lift productivity. We need a workforce in which more people have skills and knowledge, but also multiple and higher level skills and qualifications. Deepening skills and knowledge across all occupations is crucial to achieving long-term productivity growth. It also reflects the recent trend for jobs to become more complex and the consequent increased demand for higher-level skills. This trend is projected to continue regardless of whether we experience strong or weak economic growth in the future. Future environmental challenges will also create demand for more sustainability related skills and knowledge across a range of industries and occupations.

In this context, the ISS Institute works with our Fellows, industry and government to identify specific skills and knowledge in Australia that require enhancing, where accredited courses are not available through Australian higher education institutions or other Registered Training Organisations. The Fellows' overseas experience sees them broadening and deepening their own professional knowledge, which they then share with their peers, industry and government upon their return. This is the focus of the ISS Institute's work.

For further information on our Fellows and our work see <http://www.issinstitute.org.au>.

The Fellow also thanks the former CEO (Bella Irlight AM), the current CEO (Louisa Ellum) and staff (Ken Greenhill and Paul Sumner) of ISS Institute for their assistance in planning and development of the Fellowship and completion of this report.

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The Fellow sincerely thanks The George Alexander Foundation for providing funding support for the ISS Institute and for this Fellowship. In 1972, George Alexander AM (1910 - 2008) set up an independent philanthropic Foundation as a way of sharing his wealth and giving back to the community. Today, the main focus of The George Alexander Foundation is access to education for promising young people, particularly students with financial need and those from rural and remote areas.

The George Alexander Foundation (GAF) Scholarship and Fellowship Programs form the core of the foundation's work, operating in partnership with major tertiary institutions, while our Fellowships and other Education grants provide a variety of other unique and challenging educational experiences. George Alexander believed in the notion of 'planting seeds and hoping they grow into pretty big trees'. The programs supported by the Foundation endeavour to support this ideal and as GAF students graduate and go on to contribute to the community, George's legacy and spirit lives on through their achievements. George Alexander came to Australia as a child migrant, and went on to become a mechanic, an entrepreneur and a businessman and later, a generous philanthropist, who held that you do not own the possessions you have, 'you're just minding them'. This philosophy guided him to give during his lifetime and to hope that through his example, he might inspire others to do the same.

Supporters

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2. ABOUT THE FELLOW

Rich achieved his three-year apprenticeship in Picture Framing in 2011 at Art Conservation Framers in Albert Park through The Box Hill Institute of TAFE. During this time, Rich was undertaking projects in frame and object restoration, oil and water gilding and conservation framing. From the beginning of his career in framing, Rich was inspired and driven to learn skills outside and beyond his apprenticeship course. He taught himself the basic principles of water gilding and specialised techniques in frame restoration and the replication of period frames. In 2010, Rich attended a workshop in traditional advanced gilding run by Hubert Baija (Senior Conservator at the Rijksmuseum Painting Department in Amsterdam) at the National Gallery of Victoria. Rich received a Furniture Industry Association Australia award in 2011 in Picture Framing and received the 2011 Picture Framing Apprentice of the Year award from Box Hill Institute.

In 2012, Rich attended a creative mould-making short course with the CAE run by Dominic Lowe and in 2013 attended two woodcarving courses focusing on classical European techniques with the Melbourne Guild of Fine Woodworking.

Rich has worked on complete restorations of Isaac Whitehead frames, John Thallon frames, William Williamson frames, S.A. Parker frames, Robin Vaughn Hood frames and Sarah Squire Todd frames. He has also replicated Australian period style frames for both private collectors and galleries. He has produced a range of both European and Australian period style frames and has built reproduction frames for notable artists' work such as Frederick McCubbin and Norman Lindsay.

Rich currently works at Art Conservation Framers in Albert Park, Victoria, and specialises in conservation framing, restoration of frames, as well as oil and water gilding. Rich has a strong interest in the traditional techniques of replication, restoration and repair of period-style frames, the carving of wood repairs and the preservation of antique objects and frames.

Rich is a member of the Victorian Woodworking Association, the Woodcraft Manningham Club, the Picture Framers Guild of Australia and a past member of the Society of Gilders International.

He is now in the process of setting up his own business in handcrafting artisan ornamental picture and mirror frames in Melbourne.

3. AIM OF THE FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

Gilding techniques and practices

- Develop skills in general gilding technique and refine methodology
- Develop preferable gesso and composition (compo) recipes and refine application
- Learn gesso re-cutting and engraving techniques
- Learn pastiglia methods (plaster relief ornaments)
- Learn specialised gilding techniques such as Sgraffito
- Learn specialised bole finishing techniques
- Finishing and aging techniques of gilt surfaces
- Refine technique of clay mixing and traditional layering.

Faux Finishing

- Engage in areas of specialised brush techniques used in traditional faux-finishing practices
- Gain insight into the skills and methodology of decorative paint finishes and practices
- Improve areas of practical skills in faux-finishing techniques such as marbling, imitation stone and faux graining.

Wood Carving

- Refine general carving techniques and skills
- Develop a better understanding of the varieties of timber used for carving
- Better understand the tools and appliances used to carve traditional picture frames
- Design layout for carving projects (tracing, outlining, free handing)
- Learn more about traditional architectural motifs and designs used in framing
- Learn new techniques in sharpening and maintaining carving tools
- Learn more about carving techniques in the application of restoration
- Learn how to identify classical carved motives and ornaments.

Additional Aims

- Gain an insight into the common practices, standards and materials used by master craftspeople overseas
- Gain knowledge of historical framing
- Networking.

4. THE AUSTRALIAN CONTEXT

“The subject of picture frames is possibly the least researched of any branch of history” - Paul Mitchell ¹



Caption: A hand-punched, tin frame from 1910-1920, featuring painted plum and gold details. Left hand photo of woman signed A J Levy. R.H Rich

The picture frame is more than just a physical fringe of an artwork. It is an embellishment, a cultural emblem, and a social statement, and often the picture frame is an artwork in itself. A picture frame embodies cultural contexts and symbolism by design and style, and it can generate an authoritative impression around an artwork and subtly influence the viewer's perceptual experience.² A frame should not only be viewed as a border to a work, but as a tool of cultural artistry that surrounds that work, skilfully encouraging the artist's intended gaze for the onlooker.³

The history of picture framing in Australia began thousands of years ago. Indigenous Australians utilized the position of cracks and colourings on the rock surfaces that they painted on as physical borders to their art. They painted, drew and etched borders on bark artwork, arranged stones around their work and drew lines around their art in the sand and earth. Although sometimes impermanent, these can be considered as abstract and symbolically beautiful ways to frame artwork. Similar impermanent and conceptual techniques can be seen internationally and should be considered as equally important displays of creativity and ingenuity. Although our contemporary concept of 'picture framing' today is a narrow and definitive one, these techniques undoubtedly served a similar purpose: to draw attention to and to represent the importance of artistic expression.

The settlement of European convicts brought skilled artists and craftspeople that lead us to the concept and style of the 'picture frame' that we know and use in the industry today. The history of framing in Australia is one of richness and international influence and the Fellow has detailed this on Page 89, **Appendix 11.1 – A BRIEF HISTORY OF FRAMING IN AUSTRALIA.**

¹ Mitchell, P 1984 Italian Picture Frames 1500-1825: A Brief Survey. The Furniture History Society, Vol.20, pp. 18-27.

² Pearson, J. H 1990 The Politics of Framing in the Later Nineteenth Century, Mosaic, Vol 23, No 1, p.138.

³ Mulford, T 1997 Tasmanian Framemakers 1830-1930. Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Launceston

4. THE AUSTRALIAN CONTEXT

Contemporary Australia

In contemporary Australia and throughout the world, there is a growing appreciation and recognition for the value of picture frames.⁴ Picture frames are becoming increasingly recognised as historically significant and their unique characteristics, features and beauty are now valued and preserved in many collections.⁵ Australian galleries and museums endeavour to exhibit artwork with culturally appropriate or original picture frames wherever possible⁶ and it is no longer common practice to disregard a picture frame as a mere addition to an artistic work in the professional realm.

In recent decades, antique frames have increased rapidly in value throughout Europe and America. Auction houses like Christies (in the UK) hold antique frame auctions. Frame connoisseurs such as Eli Wilner (in the USA) collect, deal, document and value historical frames. However, antique Australian frames have not seen the same progression in value as other antiques. A shorter history of European, Western and Asian influenced picture frames has resulted in a smaller market place and thus a lesser opportunity for them to rise in value. Even frames made by respected frame makers of their time often go unidentified and are treated as cheap, disposable, decorator items. In most cases the only value seen in a frame occurs when it sits around a painting. If the original artwork and frame are partnered, they have the potential to both rise in value. 19th century frames have not appreciated in value in comparison to frames from other eras, possibly due to the fact that the vast majority were mass-produced and possess less individuality⁷ or integrity compared to frames from older eras.

Today, we see the result of these frames aging in a deteriorated fashion, where many of these frames have suffered heat, light and moisture damage, and pressed composition (compo) ornaments have shrunk, cracked or fallen off, sometimes due to poor composition recipes, rushed curing time and poor craftsmanship. Rapid deterioration of 19th century frames can be prevented by storing the frames away from heat⁸ and other damaging influences, such as light and moisture, a practice which is often neglected. The majority of frame owners do not have access to such storage facilities. However, there are still many strategies that can be taken to attempt to preserve the integrity of frames outside of the ideal environment, such as keeping frames away from direct light, moisture and insects, and avoiding the storage of frames in sheds or rooms where the temperature can vary widely.

Antique frames often receive little attention or respect amongst the general population, and are thus exposed to a series of experimentations that result in irreversible damage. Other antiquities will depreciate in value when altered, however, the antique frame is often treated as something that can be removed and replaced from the original artwork it was intended for.⁹ When antique furniture of other items are altered, their value depreciates. Altering antique picture frames depreciates their value as well, however, antique picture frames are less commonly favoured amongst antique collectors, and thus important, valuable and historical frames surround us in disarray and disrepair.

The decision to separate an original frame from its artwork, or mount from its frame, can lead to the loss of historical information and thus documentation. When this occurs, we lose information about how the artworks and their frames were intended for display.¹⁰ It is important to document changes made to any original frame/artwork relationship to ensure a record for future framing decisions.¹¹

4 McGowan-Jackson, H 2008 *Frame Conservation in Australia and GOCSIG: Reflections on the Past and Thoughts for the Future*, AICCM, Australia. www.aiccm.org.au

5 *ibid*

6 Maddocks, H 1992 *Picture Frame Studies in Australia: Museum Management and Curatorship*, Vol 11, No 2, pp. 133-139.

7 Wilner, E & Kaufman, M 1995 *Antique American Frames: Identification and Price Guide*, Avon Books, New York

8 Wilner, E & Kaufman, M 1995 *Antique American Frames: Identification and Price Guide*, Avon Books, New York

9 Murphy, C 2008 *Works on Paper and Their Frames: Research, Collaboration and Documentation*, AICCM. www.aiccm.org.au

10 *ibid*

11 *ibid*

4. THE AUSTRALIAN CONTEXT

Australian galleries, museums and the AICCM promote conservation practices within the industry; with the intention of preserving the integrity of frames that are now appreciated as highly valuable. Conservation is the technique of preserving a frame and preventing further degradation to the best extent possible, and involves the use of techniques and practices that can be fully reversed. Frame conservation involves two core features: to protect a picture frame from further deterioration, and, to use only techniques and materials that can be fully reversed. Where there are large areas of an original frame missing, restoration and conservation are required.¹² Restoration is a process that strives to restore a picture frame to its' original grandeur; by replacing, refinishing, and performing repairs. This requires specialised techniques, as does conservation, however many restorative techniques are currently irreversible. Without both conservation and restoration combined and working in harmony, we will not have the means to restore and preserve our picture framing history in Australia. We need to combine the knowledge and methodology of conservation, with the skills and know-how of restoration, to fully care for our picture frames. Or, in other words, restoration practices must adopt conservation methodology. In short, conservation and restoration knowledge and practices should go hand in hand when considering preserving our historical collections.

A crucial aspect for the exhibition of artwork and frames is the appropriate use of knowledge in creating reproduction frames, and the preservation of original frames. A critical aspect for displaying artwork is identifying whether the frame is original to the artwork, or whether a reproduction frame that represents both the period and artists' aesthetic choice needs to be made. The use of a 'reproduction' frame can re-create the representation of how the artwork might have been originally intended for display. Some of the research involved in selecting an accurate reproduction frame for a work of art requires looking at the artists framing preferences, influences and choices of design. The year, historical references and architectural settings may give evidence to how the work was originally framed. Curators, conservators and historians must work alongside skilled picture frame makers to achieve the goal of exhibiting a work with the appropriate frame. The problem prevails that the lack of information documented in relation to Australian picture frames creates a challenge in making such a decision.¹³

We are now faced with the predicament of a shortage of skilled crafts-people to undertake the restoration and conservation of frames. There are only a small number of artisan frame makers who have the necessary training to execute high quality repairs in areas of frame construction, ornamentation, wood-carving, gilding and finishing; even fewer who have any knowledge in conservation practices. Due to the lack of shared knowledge and skills in the artisan community and the lack of training resources available we now face a pivotal point where there are little to no opportunities for artisans to up-skill. Skills are disappearing within the non-academic community. There are few picture framing courses available within Australia and even less that focus on specialised skills relating to picture frame conservation¹⁴ and restoration. Restoration and conservation skills are vital to the continued creation and preservation of historically appropriate frames to partner Australian artworks. As Robert Zilli aptly stated, we require education and training opportunities in conservation and restoration areas along with a variety of courses including TAFE run training.¹⁵ We also require more in-depth and practical courses relating to traditional frame making, as well as courses focusing on advanced specialised techniques. It would also be beneficial to adopt a willingness to share valuable information and skills amongst the academic and artisan community. This would be of great benefit to the long-term viability of the picture framing industry. The fellow proposes a movement towards openness and transparency within the community and a sharing of skills and information through public lectures, industry seminars and demonstrations. Only through the support of our peers and the sharing of knowledge and skills will we see progress in the contemporary Australian industry.

¹² Smeaton, S 1994 Reproductions or Exact Replica Frames? Learning to See the Difference, Eli Wilner & Company Period Frames, NYC. www.elwilner.com

¹³ Sawicki, M 2000 From 'Lady in Black' to 'Art Student: The story behind changing a frame, Art Gallery of New South Wales. www.aiccm.org.au

¹⁴ McGowan-Jackson, H 2008 Frame Conservation in Australia and GOCSIG: Reflections on the Past and Thoughts for the Future, AICCM

¹⁵ Zilli, R 2009 Conservation Gilding: Heritage Skill Deficiencies. International Specialised Skills Institute, Melbourne. www.issinstitute.org.au

4. THE AUSTRALIAN CONTEXT

SWOT Analysis of gilding, carving and finishing in frame making

Strengths

- Ability to undertake complex restorations and reproductions that require specialised skills or techniques where skills gaps remain within the Australian industry.
- Ability to employ restorative techniques that reflect those original skills that were utilised to make the original frame and preserve that frames' historic integrity
- Potential for sharing those specialised skills and techniques and methods with the community
- Skills learnt relevant to multiple industries.

Weaknesses

- Minimal opportunity to share and exchange skills and knowledge with peers
- Small target field.

Opportunities

- Sharing practical skills and knowledge (disseminate)
- Capacity to expand Australian knowledge base with international knowledge
- Valuable collections that need to be preserved conserved and replicated.

Threats

- Minimal contact with peers
- Lack of practical teaching and learning opportunities
- Absence of training bodies available
- Absence of specialised skilled craftsman teaching
- Aging population of specialised skilled frame makers
- Available work outsourced overseas for economic and practical reasons.

5. IDENTIFYING THE SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE ENHANCEMENTS REQUIRED

1. Acquiring skills, techniques and knowledge of gilding and finishing practices

- Collect information and learn skills from highly regarded professionals who specialised in gilding and finishing techniques and document learned skills and expertise.
- Collect information on the historical use of specialised gilding, finishing and lacquering techniques in relation to various styles and periods of picture frame making.
- Acquire knowledge and skills in the practices of toning, aging and decorative punch-work techniques and document methods and procedure.
- Evaluate and compare efficiency and results of various gilding and finishing techniques in relation to common practice overseas and in self-practice.
- Learn techniques of decorative finishing such as faux marbling, faux graining and other finishing techniques relevant to picture framing.
- Document a vast array of frames and styles in relation to their gilding and finishing techniques to gain insight into the variety of skills that could be employed within the Australian field.

Aim: to collect information and skills relating to the use of gilding and finishing techniques in relation to the restoration and replication of frames with the aim of enabling a high standard of work to be undertaken within Australia where there are otherwise skill deficiencies or lack of trained craftsman.

2. Gain knowledge and learn techniques and recipes for gesso work and composition (compo) ornaments

- Learn alternative methods and practices of gesso making, develop skills in gesso application and record new recipes and artistries.
- Obtain insight into the varied techniques of gesso engraving and learn about the various tools used to execute specialised techniques.
- Learn about the decorative motives used in gesso engraving in relation to contemporary and period picture framing.
- Acquire knowledge and skills in the use of the various cutting knives and scrapers used for gesso recutting.
- Gain knowledge and skills in the practice of pastiglia and decorative relief work and document processes.
- Acquire recipes and learn methods of producing traditional compo and compare methodology with results to produce a preferable product.

Aim: to collect, compare and document the various tools, practices and recipes of gesso and compo work with the intention of sharing information on the most effective methods to equip craftsman with the necessary skills to work on restoration pieces and aid in the production of replica picture frames.

3. Gain knowledge and learn techniques in classical woodcarving

- Collect information on the various types of timbers used for wood carving in relation to period style frames.
- Collect information on the various tools and equipment used by master carvers to achieve high end carved picture frames.
- Learn design and layout skills for planning carved ornaments and frames.

5. IDENTIFYING THE SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE ENHANCEMENTS REQUIRED

- Learn alternative techniques in maintaining and sharpening carving tools and determine what carving tools are most effective and observe how different sharpening techniques affects carving details.
- Develop skills in the restoration of carved ornaments and understand the different methods currently employed in the contemporary industry and compare those techniques overseas with self-practice.

Aim: To learn, explore and compare the processes, tools and timbers used to produce hand carved picture frame and to share knowledge and skills with other craftspeople to enable the production and restoration of carved ornaments and picture frames.

6. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Part 1- international artisan and gallery experiences

- **Artisans of Turkey**
- **Appendix 12.2 - A BRIEF HISTORY OF ITALIAN FRAMES**
- **Artisans of Italy**
- **Galleries**

Part 2: international learning experiences

- **Italian Wood Carving**
- **Frame Making, Gilding and Decorative Finishing**

6. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Part 1 – International Artisan and Gallery Experiences

Artisans of Turkey

Antik Varak - Furniture, Lighting and Frame Restorer

Location: Istanbul, Turkey

Contact: Celal Kodal

Objectives

Gain insight into:

- Common practices, standards and materials used by international artisans
- Different styles and techniques of framing
- Different trends, demands and markets relative to international artisans
- Antique frame restoration
- Antique frame collections.

Achieve:

- Networking opportunities.

About Antik Varak

Antik Varak is located in an enchanting area of Istanbul called Üsküdar where there are many curious antique shops and artisan workshops. It is situated in a semi-underground artisan plaza alongside numerous other antique shops and businesses. The Fellow was greeted with a tray of Cay (tea) and shown through the workshop by the owner and master artisan, Celal Kodal. Kodal grew up in the city of Adana, south east of Istanbul. He travelled to Istanbul as a young man with his brothers in 1984 for a holiday. He came across a frame maker and antique shop near Galata Tower in Istanbul and was instantly interested in craft. He took up an apprenticeship with two other young men and moved to Istanbul to become a frame maker and restorer. For many years his teacher did not share his knowledge and skills with the apprentices, but Kodal and his peers would watch their teacher through the keyhole to learn his skills. After three or four years the teacher began to teach the apprentices restoration techniques.



Kodal has worked as a frame maker and antique

View inside Antik Varak

6. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

restorer and collector for thirty years. He has three antique shops; one in Üsküdar, one in Mecidiyeköy and one in Cihangir. He has his workshop underneath his shop in Uskadar and has a large storeroom as well as an apartment to store his vast collection of picture frames. The amount, variety and value of Kodal's collection is unfathomable, and one could easily become lost amongst the mountains and valleys of frames and antiques that hide amongst the dust in his storerooms.

Kodal has frames from Russia, Romania, Bulgaria, France, Switzerland, Hungary, the UK and from many more European countries. He has worked for the major galleries and museums in Istanbul and has repaired and restored decorative architecture and ornaments in the estates of the wealthy Turkish families such as the Koc and Sabanci. He has worked on the pillars in the Emirgan Ati Kosk building owned by the Sabanci family and has also worked on the Sultanat boats at the museum of Deniz Muzesi.

He is a passionate collector of frames, paintings and antiques of all sorts. Kodal values the integrity of a frame over its commercial value and aspires to restore and preserve frames.

Outcomes

It is apparent how passionate Celal Kodal is about restoration processes. He described how difficult it is for anyone to receive training in areas relating to frame-making and restoration. There are a few courses available in Istanbul, but he says that they are designed for hobbyists, not for those who want to work in the professional field. He said that 30 years ago there were only around five to ten frame makers in Turkey, but now he says that there are over 150, however few of them possess advanced traditional carving and finishing skills.

Replicated mirror-image of opposing sides using carved composition (compo). He was unable to take a cast of the frame due to the piece being a mirror image. Clay bole has been applied to the repairs; 24-carat gold leaf will then be applied and burnished, and then the frame will be antiqued and blended to match with the original finish. Similar materials and approaches are used in Australia. There are few artisans who can undertake such a project due to the requirement for advanced carving skills and knowledge in restoration techniques.



Celal Kodal in his antique and framing shop



French frame



A restoration project

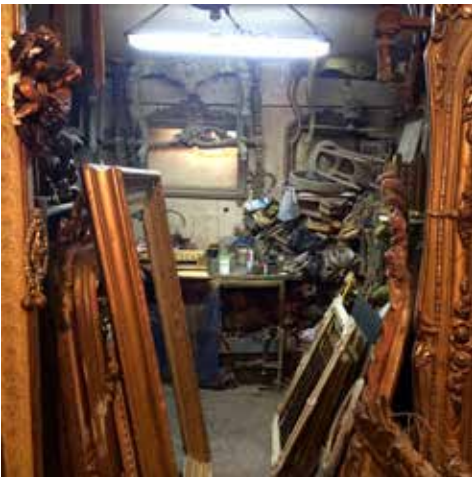
6. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE



A minute glimpse at the variety and beauty of the frames in the collection

European frame originally finished in brown lacquer - this is quite unusual. Over time this frame has been refinished in gold paint and in areas has also been water gilt. This frame has acquired a beautiful patina and the restorer has no intention of returning the frame to its original finish, but restoring and preserving its current vintage condition.

It is incredible to think that such a vast amount of expert work can be produced in such a small and simple workshop. All the tools, materials and techniques are the same as those currently used by the Fellow in his own workshop and practice; however the Fellow would like to acknowledge that the level of skill and passion exhibited by Kodal is both admirable and inspiring. Kodal was both hospitable and generous and spoke of his passion for sharing knowledge and skills with both artisans and students.



Kodal's workshop

Ahşap El Oyma Sanati - The Art of Hand Carved Wood

Location: Istanbul, Turkey

Contact: Ahsap El Oyma Sanati

www.ahsapeloymasanati.com

Objectives

Gain insight into:

- Common practices, standards and materials used by local wood carvers
- Different styles and techniques of carving
- Different tools, templates and machinery used by international artisans.

Achieve:

- Networking opportunities.

About Ahşap El Oyma Sanati

Ismail Bozbey is a wood carver based in Istanbul. Born in 1967, he grew up in a village called Bayburt, near the Syrian border of Turkey. He was first introduced to woodcarving in grade three of primary school. He continued to learn woodcarving under a teacher for seven years, with whom he learned traditional Arabic Ottoman-style carving techniques. When Ismail was 15, his father set up a workshop for him in the basement of their home. His father bought him a French work bench which is still in use in the workshop. Bozbey has been working as a wood carver ever since. He runs his business alongside his brothers who are cabinet and furniture makers. Bozbey originally carved relief



Bozbey's carving table

ornaments for furniture decoration but since the demand for such decorations has diminished, he now carves on commission for his clients. He is still carving in the traditional Arabic Ottoman style, carving flowers, leaves and patterns and never carving faces or the human form.

Bozbey tells the Fellow that there were once over 150 wood carvers in the neighbourhood, which was known for having an abundance of wood carvers and artisans. He says that now there are less than 30. He is teaching wood carving classes but laments that he never teaches the young generation as interest in the art of woodcarving is dying out. He says that most of his students are older than him and that he is concerned for the future of the trade.

6. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Outcomes

Carving decorative ornaments for furniture decoration. The timber has been machine-cut then temporarily fixed to a board to then be carved. It is then removed from the board and applied to the furniture in traditional ottoman style.



Paper carving templates



Carved ornaments



Carved and lacquered ottoman-style frame. Made from multiple pieces of timber and then joined and finished



Ismail Bozbey in his small but highly efficient workshop.

Artisans of Italy (please also see Page 99, Appendix 11.2 – A BRIEF HISTORY OF ITALIAN FRAMES for further information)

Alberto Migliarini – Florence Art and Workshops

Location: Florence, Italy

Contact: Alberto Migliarini

www.florenceartworkshops.com

Objectives

Gain insight into:

- Common practices, standards and materials used by local artisans
- Different styles and techniques of carving, frame making and finishing
- Trends, demands and markets relative to overseas craftspeople
- Reproduction furniture and frames.

Achieve:

- Networking opportunities.

About Alberto Migliarini

Since he was a child, Alberto Migliarini has been hand-making objects and toys and was interested in the ways of manual craft. After high school he studied at the Art Institute of Florence for five years where he specialised in plastic art and decoration. Here he learned to sculpt with plaster and clay, to paint, to create marble finishes and to carve wood. He spent his afternoons in an artisan's workshop where he was able to practice the skills and techniques that he was learning in his course. He worked for a large restoration organisation for seven years, working on the restoration of important churches, cathedrals, altars, religious objects and architectural restorations such as inlay marble restorations. He then opened his own workshop, working with antique dealers and museums. He has since worked on the restorations of objects and architecture in the Ducal Palace and on objects for the Naval Museum. He has also worked on reproductions for religious groups in Australia and for interior designers in America.

Migliarini is predominantly working on restorations, restoring frames, furniture, and objects of all materials including carved stone statues. Migliarini is also producing furniture and frame reproductions, using traditional hand-skills to do so.

Outcomes

Alberto had a workshop full of colourful pigments, shellacs, resins, clay boles, carving tools and moulding planes. Everything was neatly organised and in its appropriate place. Two large traditional cabinet-making benches were used in Alberto's workshop, just another example of a small space being used to its fullest potential. It is common for Italian artisans to merge their shop front and their workshop into one room, creating an interesting arrangement of both functional workspace and decorative displays; the effect was both compelling and inviting, where the clientele and the public can see into the artisan at work.

6. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE



*Left: Migliarini in his shop with a carved Florentine Cassetta-style frame, a full reproduction project by Migliarini
Right: A typical Italian frame makers' shelf*

While in Migliarini's shop, the Fellow noticed what he thought was a dusty old paper press sitting on the top of a cupboard. Migliarini excitedly brought it down and showed the Fellow what an antique scratch-block machine was.

This machine is used for producing small and delicate mouldings. The Fellow has not seen a machine of this nature before, and Migliarini explains that this is the only machine left to his knowledge in the city of Florence, and, he suspects the last one left in all of Italy. He believes that most of these ingenious and superb machines have been lost, thrown out or destroyed.



Migliarini's scratch-block machine

6. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE



Restoration of Italian style tabernacle frame with damaged water gilding

Modern Tabernacle frame with malachite imitation stone finish, a traditional Italian paint finish. Tabernacle frames were traditionally used to house religious catholic icon paintings and are very common in Florence. The malachite finish was commonly used in the 15th century and showcases undertones of dark green with flowing circular patterns. It was often used on furniture and architectural embellishments as well as for frames.

Unfinished frames in various stages were stored on racks around the workshop showcasing the various stages and processes of carving, gilding and finishing. The above frame is an example. Partially water gilt, it displays the process of some of the key stages a frame maker goes through to produce a masterpiece.

Frames, items and furniture were awaiting restoration in all corners of the workshop. Migliarini possesses great skill in both frame and furniture restoration and his reproductions of furniture using traditional hand-techniques were exceptional. Migliarini was an incredibly gifted artisan of many skills. Where most artisans in Italy specialise in a single area of craftsmanship, Migliarini is an exception, showing adeptness and proficiency in many areas.

Migliarini had a beautiful shop display of carved mirror frames, religious sculptures and a myriad of treasures. Migliarini's works of art are made to the highest standard and demonstrated a life-long dedication to the arts. He is truly a master to be inspired by.



Venetian-style carved frame in the process of gilding.

6. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Gabriele Maselli

Location: Florence, Italy

Contact: Gabriel Maselli

www.cornicimaselli.com

Objectives

Gain insight into:

- Production of Italian and Florentine style frames
- Common practices, standards and materials used by local artisans
- Different trends, demands and markets relative to overseas artisans
- Styles and techniques of wood carving.

Achieve:

- Networking opportunities.

About Gabriele Maselli

Gabriele Maselli is a well-known frame maker, carver and restorer of objects and artwork in Florence. His father started the Maselli business in 1955 making artisan carved frames and selling antique prints. Gabriele joined his father's business in 1979 while studying gilding, restoration and carving at the Palazzo Spinelli School of Art. He took over the business in 2003. He says that when he was a child, he was enchanted by the decorations on the ceilings of churches and this inspired him to follow an artisan path.

Maselli wants to see the younger generation embrace the historical artisan culture. He believes that a hands-on approach would highly benefit children and inspire them to follow a path in artisan areas of work. Maselli teaches woodcarving at the artisan's school, the Sacred Art School Firenze. Maselli is the Regional President of Framers and Artistic Framers in Confartigianato



Gabriele Maselli in his shop

6. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE



Maselli since 1955



Hand carved water gilt frame in the Baroque Florentine style.

Outcomes

A detail of the many frames Maselli makes by hand. Maselli's business was unique in the way that he had many small stock frames in standard sizes for purchase and for demonstration of the styles of framing available to order. Many of them were very small and extremely detailed.

A mixture of hand-carved frames and gold water gilt frames. All of the walls of Maselli's shop were covered in highly detailed frames. Maselli also specialised in the making of hand-carved and beautifully finished Pinocchio figures.

A broad range of framing styles were on display in Maselli's shop, including French empire reproductions and German tramp style chip carving frame reproductions.

Maselli's work showcases his extremely high level of skill in the areas of wood carving, gilding and finishing. His frames display intricate details and balanced proportions. Maselli is also adept at producing large-scale frames and has done so for important historical sites and cathedrals. Some of these frames are assembled and gilded on site. The Fellow recalls seeing mouldings in Maselli's shop that were over 30cm wide and required multiple leaves of gold to cover the width of the mouldings.



6. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Alison Woolley - FlorenceArt Net Studios

Location: Florence, Italy

Contact: Alison Woolley

www.florenceart.net

Objectives

Gain insight into:

- Common practices, standards and materials used by local artisans
- Different trends, demands and markets relative to overseas craftspeople
- The use of traditional techniques and processes in contemporary work
- Decorative finishes.

Achieve:

- Networking opportunities.

About Alison Woolley

Alison Woolley is an artist and decorator and owner of FlorenceArt Net in Florence. She graduated with honours from the Ontario College of Art and Design in Canada and worked under Florentine master guilders in Florence for 15 years before opening her own business and studio. Woolley specialises in furniture finishing and decoration, gilding and traditional design techniques. She works with international interior designers and private collectors. Her work has been exhibited in the Bottega d'Arte showroom, Artigianato e Palazzo Artisan Show, Diladdarno Artisan show of Florence's traditional artisan district, Marta Artisan Show, and has exhibited in numerous Italian and international exhibitions.

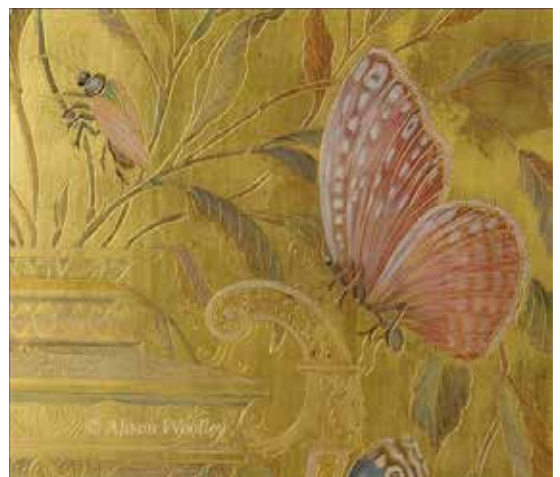
6. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Outcomes



Polpi Triptych, 22-carat gold, incised and punched with casein paint. Photo courtesy of Alison Woolley

Renaissance-technique gilded panels, burnished, punched and incised by hand. Hand-painted and gilded frames.



Polpo Detail. Photo courtesy of Alison Woolley (left), Farfalle Details, 22-carat gold, incised and punched with casein paint. Photo courtesy of Alison Woolley (right)

Renaissance-technique gilded panels, burnished, punched and incised by hand. Hand-painted and gilded frames.

6. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Julia Markert

Location: Florence, Italy

Contact: Julia Markert

www.juliamarkert.com

Objectives

Gain insight into:

- Common practices, standards and materials used by local artisans
- Reproduction techniques and processes
- Different trends, demands and markets relative to overseas artisans
- Techniques and styles of historical Italian frames.

Achieve:

- Networking opportunities.

About Julia Markert

Julia Markert grew up in Hamburg, Germany and travelled to Florence after finishing high school. She studied for two years at the Academy for the Art and Restoration of the Palazzo Spinelli and then spent several years gaining hands-on experience through an apprenticeship in several important traditional framing workshops in Florence. Markert specialises in areas such as antique frame restoration, gilding, frame decoration and furnishings, Italian framing techniques and finishing, imitation and faux finishing and punch work. She has worked for herself in her workshop for over 15 years, creating frames faithful to their tradition using classical techniques and materials. She has an admirable collection of antique picture frames on display in her impressive yet quaint framing shop. Markert has made frames for important historical artworks such as those of Titian and Caravaggio for private clients throughout Europe and Russia. She also works alongside antique dealers in the United Kingdom and Russia and provides frames to accompany artwork.

Markert regularly chooses to work with antique timber, as she believes that wherever she can, she should add authentic antiquity into her work. Markert is expert in gilding and finishing. The majority of carving work is outsourced to local wood carvers, as do many other high-end Italian frame making businesses.

Markert was both intriguing and generous, and fervently spoke about her interest in sharing her passion with others.

6. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Outcomes



Markert's beautiful collection of 15th century Renaissance frames



Markert in her workshop



Antique Cassetta style frame finished with gesso 'inciso' engraving and 'bulinatura' punch work with faux tortoise shell

A frame that caught the Fellow's attention in Julia's workshop was an original Marche region, antique Cassetta frame with engraved gesso and punch work. This frame had a faux tortoise shell finish. The clay bole or tempera finish was rustic, a humble example of the tortoise shell. This style of faux finishing is quite different from 19th Century faux finishing, less refined, more organic and equally handsome.

The tortoise shell was always done on the flat surface (frieze) of the frame or in the concave of a frame. It is traditionally done with faux segmentation to imitate the segment lines of real tortoise shell.

6. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE



Qualified apprentice Francesca working on the Spanish reproduction frames

Markert showed the Fellow two Spanish reproductions that were still in production. A professional wood carver had reproduced the carved frames from a photo. The frames were then sent to Julia's workshop for finishing. Julia's skilled employee Francesca was applying gesso mixed with a cracking agent that will create crack lines in the gesso layer and give the frames a naturally-aged look. Francesca completed a two-year apprenticeship with Markert.



Reproduction frames with their antique originals

6. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

The Fellow saw some admirable examples of reproduction frames made by Markert. Antique Cirmolo pine was used for the manufacturing of the frames and the details portraying age were found on both the face and back of the frames. Every detail had been copied and had undergone extensive aging processes (including the addition of man-made borer holes, dips, cracks, the application of layers of built up dirt and the fabrication of aged joinery and patina). Markert explained that it was sometimes necessary for her to double gild her reproduction frames, as the original craftspeople would use gold often five times thicker than commercial gold leaf. She stated that she preferred to double gild her gold leaf rather than use thicker gold that she deemed was not right for the job.

Markert informed the Fellow that her favourite thing about her profession was having the pleasure to work on old frames. Markert commented that there was sadly a decline in the demand for restoration projects due to the state of the Italian economy.

6. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Carlo Puccini

Location: Florence, Italy

Contact: Carlo Puccini

www.woodcarving.altervista.org

Objectives

Gain insight into:

- Common practices, standards and materials used by local craftspeople
- Different styles and techniques of carving, frame making and finishing
- Different trends, demands and markets relative to overseas craftspeople.

Achieve:

- Networking opportunities
- Make record of Italian frame books.

About Carlo Puccini

Carlo was introduced to wood carving at the age of 17 in high school when he took a class in woodworking. When he left high school he completed a three-year course focusing on woodcarving. He worked for 10 years with a company who specialised in carving. This company was commissioned to work on restoration of many important historical sites and objects for the city of Florence. After 10 years he opened a workshop with two other wood carvers and later broke away to start his own wood carving business.

Puccini began his self-employed career focusing predominantly on antique furniture restoration and reproduction, as there was a large market for this kind of work. He worked for museums and galleries and for private clients seeking copies of original antique items. Puccini told the Fellow that his favourite items to work on are restorations. He said that there is something special in working on restoration projects for two reasons. Firstly, you are working on something with history and integrity and are always able to learn something new, and secondly because it is always a pleasurable challenge to adapt to certain carving styles. Puccini says that the decoration and detail of individual items is of high value and interest to him and he enjoys working on these elements immensely.

Puccini describes the changes that have developed in Florence relating to woodcarving. He says that it was not long ago that artisans specialised in one area and worked exclusively in that one area, which resulted in very high quality work. He says that now there are only 10 wood carvers left in Florence, and many of these wood carvers are skilled in other areas other than woodcarving. He notes that this has resulted in a loss of quality as well as a loss in variety of wood carving skill. He informs us that there are no wood carving apprentices in Florence to his knowledge, and no form of formal training in wood carving, only privately-run courses operated by the artisans themselves.

Puccini does not use glue when he is making frames for galleries. Instead he uses traditional wood joining techniques. Impressively, the only machinery that he uses to craft his unique picture frames are a drill, a handsaw and a belt sander.

6. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Outcomes



A mixture of reproduction and antique frames and objects in Puccini's shop

The Fellow noted that it was a common theme in Italian artisan galleries and workshops to display frames in an enchanting disarray without artwork but as-they-are on the wall.

The inscription translates to 'wood-carving'.



Empire-style frame from the city of Lucca, Tuscany.



Hand-carved frames

The creatures depicted appear to be griffons painted in gold and ebonised. This is a poor version of an empire-style frame, indicated by the lack of gold and the use of red pigment.



Large hand-carved Cassetta style frame, possibly originating from the Marche region, featuring fantasy marble faux-finish.

6. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE



Puccini's small but highly functional workshop



Puccini in his workshop

Virgilio Contadini

Location: Moie di Maiolati Spontini, Italy

Contact: Virgilio Contadini and Patrizia Martizzi

www.virgiliocontadini.com

Objectives

Gain insight into:

- Common practices, standards and materials used by local craftspeople
- Different styles and techniques of frame finishing
- Different trends, demands and markets relative to Italian artisans.

Achieve:

- Networking opportunities
- History of Italian frames
- Italian frame books.

About Virgilio Contadini

Contadini's father had a hardware shop. Part of his business was picture framing until the 1970s. When the 20 year-old Contadini came back from the army in 1987, he opened a shop in his hometown, offering picture-framing services. Contadini is inquisitive and clever; he sought to improve his skills in areas of picture framing. He travelled to Florence to study, and would stay for a month or a few weeks at a time then travel back home to practice what he had learnt. Contadini was dedicated to bettering himself as an artisan and it was not long before private clients were buying more expensive, customised and specialised picture frames. His business grew and he had numerous reproductions of antique frames, antique artworks (including canvas paintings) to work on. He was also occasionally commissioned to work on luxury villas for Russian clients, as well as commissioned to gild the interiors of luxury yachts. Contadini expanded his gilding skills to meet his clients' needs. He has gilded numerous interior decorator items such as plaster, wood pulp decorations, furniture and iron railings. Contadini has also gilded large statues, including a bronze Madonna for a church and a large bronze figure of Jesus which was currently being worked on in the studio. Contadini is most passionate about working on reproduction frames and restoring antique frames. He is also passionate about grotesque painting and decorations, and about the history and stories relating to picture framing in Italy. He showed the Fellow his expansive collection of Italian art history books and specialised picture framing books, and described in great detail the history and use of many popular Italian motifs, trends and styles.

Patrizia Matizzi, Contadini's bright and affable wife, is involved in the management and organization of the business, and spends most of her days liaising with clients, taking orders and managing the advertising and communication end of the business.

Contadini and Matizzi offer courses in picture framing, gilding, finishing and furniture decoration, and are able to cater to their individual pupil's needs. Contadini explained that he has always loved to teach and share his skills and love for the arts with others. They began offering courses in 2011 when a lady from New Zealand enquired if she could come and learn from them. Since then, they have hosted clients from Australia, Ukraine, Israel, Lithuania and from every corner of Italy.

6. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Outcomes

Contadini has made a large replica frame for his local church, Santa Mario in Moie, which is of old Roman style. The original frame was stolen and was of 18th Century flamboyants' style. He commissioned a carver in Florence to carve the reproduction. It took Contadini 40 days to gild and assemble the reproduction. The reproduction frame was re-created with the use of community members' photographs of the original frame, and the original artwork was reclaimed. Contadini's remarkable reproduction can be seen with the original artwork in the local church.



Contadini with his finished reproduction frame (Courtesy of Virgilio Contadini, 2015)



XVIII century flamboyant style frame (Courtesy of Virgilio Contadini, 2015)

The finish was achieved with traditional water gilding methods. The gold was picked up by a gilder's tip brush and applied with gilder's liquor (a mixture of glue and water). The liquor is then brushed onto the required area and the gold leaf is then immediately applied. A three-millimetre overlap is traditionally done to create a uniform and consistent aesthetic.



Detail of grotesque-style Mascherone decoration (Courtesy of Virgilio Contadini, 2015)



Decorazione pittorica murale (Courtesy of Virgilio Contadini, 2015)

6. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Vincenzo Piovano

Location: Roma, Italy

Contact: Vincenzo Piovano

Objectives

Gain insight into:

- Common practices, standards and materials used by local craftspeople
- Different styles and techniques of frame finishing
- Different trends, demands and markets relative to Italian artisans.

Achieve:

- Networking opportunities.

About Vincenzo Piovano

Piovano began studying as an artisan at the age of 13 and attended a night school of design called Scuola Arti Ornamentali. He opened his own professional laboratory at the age of 23 and then moved to a larger workshop to allow the incorporation of his family into his business. Piovano is multi-skilled in areas of wood, stone, marble and bone carving. He has produced many carved statues and ornaments that have been bronzed and has presented carved sculptural gifts to a previous Pope.

Piovano has two talented daughters, one of whom is a successful mosaic artist and the other a master gilder. Alessandra and Michaela both work alongside Piovano in their specialised fields of work.



Piovano and his daughter in their workshop. Piovano is seen here carving a pattern for a frame.

Prior to the economic crisis in Italy, Piovano used to do lots of work for major museums, restoring and touching up antique picture frames. He specialises in woodcarving, clay sculpting and bronze casting, and had many examples of his work in his workshop. Piovano explained to the Fellow that one of the key reasons the artisans of Italy were struggling to stay in business was because of the high government tax on their work, which strained small businesses and specialised artisans to stay in their field of work. He explained that artisans were often forced to close their doors and find work elsewhere and explained that the few artisans that were still in businesses were those older, more established family businesses. Vincenzo's work is of high calibre and he has numerous clients overseas, including clients such as the National gallery of Victoria in Melbourne.

6. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Outcomes



A Baroque-style frame showing the processes involved in woodcarving and water gilding. From the bottom right-hand corner anti-clockwise, we can see the raw carving, the gesso layer, the bole layer and the finished gilded result. Piovono made this frame to illustrate the complexity of the carving and gilding processes to his clients, who were often naive to the skill and complexity of the processes involved in making a frame.

Bruno Muratori

Location: Rome, Italy

Contact: Bruno Muratori

www.brunomuratori.com

Objectives

Gain insight into:

- Common practices, standards and materials used by local craftspeople
- Different styles and techniques of frame finishing
- Different trends, demands and markets relative to Italian artisans.

Achieve:

- Networking opportunities.

About Bruno Muratori

Bruno Muratori comes from a line of picture framers and works for the same business that his grandfather set up in the 1950s. Muratori started working for his father after high school and he now owns the unique framing business and employs a master water gilder on his staff. Muratori both restores and replicates frames. He has made and restored many frames and objects for the Vatican, including the chair used by the Pope. He specialises in lacquering, gilding and finishing in a business that embraces antiques of all varieties, not just frames. As a third-generation artisan, Muratori has a wealth of experience and knowledge in the area. He states that the most beautiful aspect of his work is in the satisfaction of being able to be creative and passionate in his work. Muratori says that the most fascinating aspect of his work is in the opportunity to experience and realise the different processes: the journey and in the process of decoration. He expressed the urgency that we need to continue to invest in the younger generation; in creating opportunities for them to learn and appreciate



A restoration project in progress. A mixture of new and antique frames adorn the walls of the shop.



Collection of antique Italian frames in Muratori's workshop.

6. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

the craft of working with the crafts of Italy; and in guiding young people to see working with art and antiques as potential career pathways.

Outcomes

Bruno employs a professional gilder. I was lucky enough to see him in action water gilding a frame in the workshop.



Muratori behind his desk. Bruno is in the process of preparing two octagonal frames for gesso.



Water gilding.

Nazzareno Fontana Restauri – Cristine Fontana

Location: Rome, Italy

Contact: Cristine Fontana

www.nazzarenofontana.it

Objectives

Gain insight into:

- Common practices, standards and materials used by local craftspeople
- Different styles and techniques of frame finishing
- Different trends, demands and markets relative to Italian artisans.

Achieve:

- Networking opportunities.

About Cristine Fontana

Fontana began working in her father's framing and art restoration shop after she finished high school in 1985. Fontana explained that for her father and for the older generations, their job is their life and all aspects of work and life are celebrated as interconnected. Fontana works on a wide range of objects and frames, offers restoration services for a large variety of objects (including ancient statues) and offers picture frame reproduction that she states is her favourite area of work. She has worked for various museums - both public and private - and has restored indoor furnishings and architectural structures such as restoring and gilding antique windows and doors in private residences. Fontana's favourite styles of frames are of the Baroque period, the 17th century frames from Rome and South Italy, and frames of the Sansovino style.

Fontana shared many of her interesting tips and tricks with the Fellow and explained how she only uses Italian gold leaf rather than the Russian gold, which she believes does not age with character. Only two clay boles were in her workshop, a yellow and a red and Fontana mixes them with other pigments that she has in her workshop to get the desired colour for an individual project.

The unique aspect of Fontana's workshop was the large array of various mecca finishes on frames, objects, statues and candle holders. Fontana specialises in mecca finishes and collects antique examples to sell. Like every Italian artisan the Fellow had the pleasure of meeting, Fontana's workshop was simple and understated; but like the other Italian artisans, high-quality work was being produced, and history was being cherished.

6. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Outcomes

Here, Fontana is in her workshop, gilding silver leaf onto an antique chair that she is refinishing. Fontana is a collector of antique architectural elements that she repurposes into functional items for her clients.

Mecca-finished candleholder. Fontana was proficient and experienced in the application of mecca and her workshop was brimming with both new and antique examples of mecca finishes.

Fontana's antique gilder's pad, gilders tip and leaf knife. She stated that she prefers to use these old tools rather than newer ones, and stated that they may be old and worn, but that they serve her well. The knife has been used for so long, that the blade has worn away in the middle. These are the original tools used by her artisan father.



The workshop.



6. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE



Fontana at work.

6. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Galleries

Uffizi Gallery

Location: Florence, Italy
www.uffizi.com

Objectives

Gain insight into:

- The various types of frames made and used in both Renaissance and contemporary Italy
- The relationships of Italian artworks and their frames
- Common practices, standards and materials
- Different styles and techniques of Florentine style frame.

About Uffizi Gallery

The Uffizi Gallery was built between 1560 and 1574 and was intended as the house of administrative and judiciary offices of Florence. The building was opened as a gallery in 1581 by Francesco I de' Medici, and was opened as a public museum by the Grand Duke Leopold in 1769, making it one of the oldest art museums of Europe. The gallery has more than 45 halls dedicated to housing the important historical artworks, objects and frames of Italy. Many of the frames are naturally from the Renaissance period and some date back to the 1400s. Some of the frames are more contemporary and have been made to replace old frames.

Many of the frames showcase

Florentine carving styles and there are myriad tabernacle examples: cassetta frames from Milan, Bologna and Venice and unique frames that do not belong to any style or trend. Large mirror frames, impressive Gothic frames and decorative carved ornaments were also on display. Many of the frames showcase details and figures that tell the stories of the artworks that they were built for and many collections share similar iconography. The vast majority of the frames at the Uffizi were carved timber frames and most were gilt with water or mordant gilding techniques.



Titian, 1538, Venus of Urbino. 18th century frame of unknown maker and origin.

Hand-carved, water-gilt Florentine style frame.

6. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Outcomes



Top: Botticelli, 1484, *The Birth of Venus*, 17th century frame of unknown maker and origin
Right: Detail



Water-gilt, hand-carved frame featuring mascherone (decorative face masks) in the corners. The mascherone are inspired by flora and fauna or 'vegetation', as the Italians would say.



Left: Filippino Lippi, *Virgin and Child, 'Otto Altarpiece'* 1485-1486. Original frame by Chimenti Del Tasso, Florence 1430-1516
Right: Detail



6. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE



Antonio del Pollaiuolo and Piero del Pollaiuolo, SS. Jacob, Vincent and Eustachian 'Altarpiece of the Cardinal of Portugal', 1466-1468, original frame by Giuliano da Maiano

6. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE



Bortolomeo Vivarini, Saint Louis of Toulouse, 1465 circa, frame of unknown maker and origin

6. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE



Francesco Raibolini detto Il Francia, Portrait of Exangelista Scrappi, 1505, frame of unknown maker and origin



6. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE



Pontormo, Expulsion of Adam and Eve from Earthly Paradise, 1518-1520, 17th century frame

6. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE



Sebastiano Del Piombo, Portrait of a Woman, known as 'The Fornarina', 1512, 17th century frame

6. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE



Tiziano Vecellio, St. Margaret 1565-1570, 17th century frame

Pallazo Pitti – The Palatine Gallery

Location: Florence, Italy

Objectives

Gain insight into:

- Baroque and Renaissance Florentine style frames
- Various designs and patterns of antique Florentine carved frames
- Different styles and techniques of carving, frame making and finishing.

About The Palatine Gallery

The Pitti Palace is south of the Arno River and houses the largest collections of Renaissance paintings and art in Italy. Filippo Brunelleschi designed the palace in 1440 and the construction of the palace commenced in 1446 . It was purchased by Cosimo I de' Medici (who was the Duke of Tuscany) and thereafter became the property of the ruling family of Florence. The palace now houses the paintings, jewellery and valuable possessions of the Medici family. The Palazzo Pitti is the main gallery is home to over 500 artworks in the collection. Many of the collections are displayed in the former residence of the Italian Royal family.

Vitorio Emanuele III donated the Palace and its contents to the people of Italy in 1919.

Outcomes



6. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE



Baroque Florentine style carved and water gilt frame, table and candelabras

6. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE



Modified Baroque Florentine style carved and water gilt chandelier

6. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Vatican Museum

Location: Viale Vaticano, Roma, Italy

Objectives

Gain insight into:

- Gothic-style Italian framing and aesthetics
- Antique alta and panel-frame construction techniques.

About The Vatican Museum

The Vatican Museum houses one of the largest collections of art and antiquities of which the Popes of Italy collected most throughout the centuries. The Museum houses some of the most highly renowned sculptures and artworks of the Renaissance period. The museums originated from a group of sculptures collected by Pope Julius II in the early 16th century and grew exponentially over the centuries. The Popes of Italy were among the first to host art collections and allow public viewing. There are numerous buildings and 54 galleries dedicated as museums of art inside Vatican City and it would take hours to explore all the halls and treasures within.

Outcomes

Below are three outstanding Gothic altar frames in the Vatican Museum collection that show incredible skill and artistry in both the architectural and artistic aesthetic elements. These frames are not mobile, they are integral and unchangeable elements of the artwork itself and both the frame and decorative elements were designed to complement each other.



Antonio Vivarini and Bartolomeo Vivarini, Polyptych, 1464, tempera and gold on wood panel with central wooden polychrome statue. Restored in 2008.

6. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE



Niccolò di Liberatore detto L'Alunno, Foligno, Perugia, 1466, Coronation of the virgin, deposition of Christ and Saints known as the Montelparo Polyptych, tempera and gold on wood panel. Restored in 2008.

6. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE



Bartolomeo di Tommaso, Foligno, 1445, Coronation of the Virgin, Nativity, Adoration of the Magi known as the 'Rospigliosi Triptych', tempera and gold on wood panel. Restored in 1991.

International Learning Experiences

Italian Wood Carving Course

Frame making, Gilding and Decorative Finishing



Baroque Florentine carved frame and corner piece

Two week (80 hour course) in Italian wood carving with master carver Carlo Puccini. The language for this course is Italian, therefore the Fellow used a translator.

Location: Workshop of Carlo Puccini, Florence, Italy

Contact: Carlo Puccini

Objectives

Achieve:

- Design and application of carving templates
- Knowledge of various techniques and procedures relating to Italian woodcarving

6. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Knowledge and skills of wood carving tools
- Competence in tool sharpening and maintenance
- Skills in Italian woodcarving.

Outcomes

Design, Layout and Free-Hand Template Drawing

Baroque Florentine-style frames were often made using free-hand designs to map out the carving. The Fellow used a protractor and a pencil to map out the design. When carving Baroque style, understanding form is the most important element to successfully carving a work of high quality. Baroque Florentine style is often described as sculptural carving, due to the nature of the design and the large amount of movement in the pattern.

Tools

The tools used by Puccini in his workshop were all hand tools, except for a belt sander and a band saw. Puccini worked proficiently using simple tools such as chisels, moulding planes, clamps, glues, measuring and marking tools, and a grinding wheel. The Fellow used only hand tools for the duration of the carving course.

Timber

The Fellow used Cirmolo pine for the carving projects. Cirmolo pine is from northern Italy and has been used for woodcarving and frame-making since the 18th Century. Cirmolo timber has a fragrant smell when cut. After a few weeks the timber oxidises and changes colour from pale yellow to brown. The timber is soft and pliable and well suited for complex carving projects. However, like most pine timbers, Cirmolo has small to large knots in the grain making some areas more difficult to carve. The Fellow experienced carving out knots that were too large or obstructive, and replacing those areas with new pieces of workable wood. This is a common practice used in woodcarving and restoration. Some other timbers that the Fellow came across in the woodcarving community in Italy were Tiglio and Pioppo (also known as Gattice).

Books

Puccini shared his collection of historical frame books with the Fellow. These books can be found listed in the Recommended Resources section of the report.

Traditional Techniques and Tricks

Chisels were traditionally used throughout Italy to smooth the wood after the carving was done. Often, sanding was not required post chisel 'smoothing' as thick layers of gesso were popular. The Fellow learnt that carved frames that would remain partly un-gessoed or parcel-gilt were traditionally sanded using fish scales. Fish scales were preferred to glass paper because the glass paper would leave glass fragments in the wood.

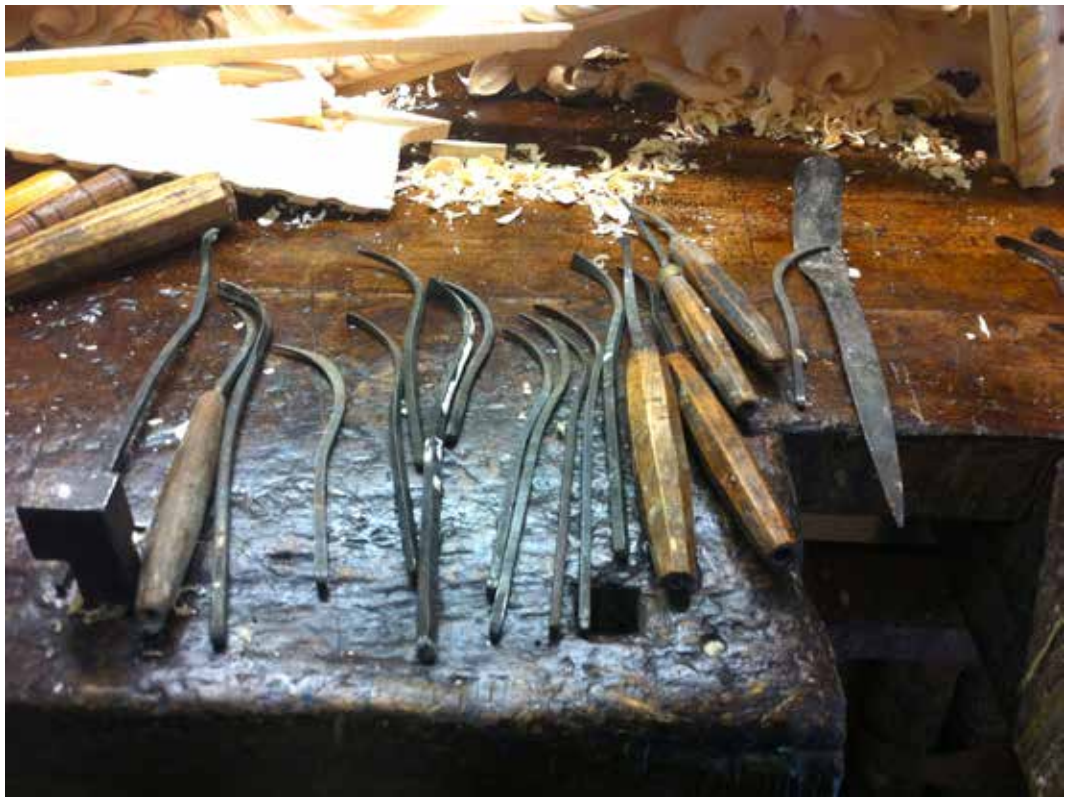
The most common joints used in traditional Italian frame making were mitre and lap joints and glue was not always used.

Fellow's Additional Experiences and Knowledge

During the Fellow's time spent in Puccini's shop, he was introduced to many interesting artisans from many fields of work. Puccini introduced the Fellow to a 90 year-old woodcarver as well as a Dutch gilder. He was also given a guided tour through Puccini's friend's traditional marble carving workshop.

6. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

The Fellow learned about the use of French gesso recutting tools from Puccini, who has a wonderful collection. These tools are used for refining details in gesso and decorative work. Elaborate Louis Philippe style frames were often recut and detailed with these tools to create a refined look. Italians do not commonly favour the use of these tools as they often preferred a softer, more organic look in their gesso work. However gesso 'Inciso' tools were used to engrave decorative motifs such as the acanthus leaf (which is a popular decoration used in Cassetta frames). The Italians also use gesso-recutting tools for cleaning the gesso off the backs and reverse edges of frames.



Puccini's gesso re-cutting tools. Puccini gave three of these tools to the Fellow

6. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Project 1

Corner frame, XVII century, Baroque inspired.



Corner frame made by the Fellow

The design used for the Fellow's carved frame project was selected from a book in Puccini's collection. Putting multiple pieces of wood together to create the corner was a common practice used in traditional frame-making in Italy. As the frame would be coated in gesso and gilt, the fact that different pieces of timber were used was irrelevant.



Wood clamps

6. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

These handmade wood clamps were made from old chair springs. These clamps are ideal for positioning small and delicate pieces of timber that required attaching and gluing.

Project 2

Florentine Baroque, La Palatina frame.

The Medici family changed all of the frames surrounding the artworks in their collection with frames of this style in the 1500s.



Left: Design sketched onto frame. Right: The beginning of the carving process

The frame was constructed using eight pieces of timber, excluding the rebate. The timber used was Cirmolo pine and the frame was put together using glue. The outline of the frame was roughly jigged out with the use of a band saw and the timber profile was then carved to the appropriate depth and shape. A protractor was used to map out the rough measurements of the designs and the design was then drawn onto the timber by hand. The next stage was the carving of a rough outline of the design. The block carving technique was used for this style of carving. The Fellow had an original carved frame of the same design to carve from.



Image of the Fellow carving



*Left: Image of finished frame in raw timber after sanding
Right: Image of gilded and finished frame*

6. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE



Image of two carved samples

The Fellow carved two samples of classic patterns in pine timber. This style of carving is repetitive and is often used for creating ornaments and details for frames and furniture.



Image of Puccini carving

Puccini carved lengths of a rope decoration for a large frame. The frame was made from an imported carving timber called jelutong.



Decorative patterned lengths carved by Carlo Puccini

Frame Making, Gilding and Decorative Finishing Course

Two-week (112 hours) course in Italian gilding and finishing techniques with master artisan Virgilio Contadini. The languages available for this course are English, Italian and French.

Location: Moie de Maiolati Spontini, Italy
www.virgiliocontadini.com

Objectives

Achieve:

- Knowledge of various gesso recipes and improve application technique
- Skills in clay bole layering and gauche layering
- Skills in Italian gilding
- Gold and silver aging techniques
- Skills in decorative finishing techniques such as faux marble, faux wood and faux tortoise shell
- Skills in lacquer work
- Skills in prezzemolo and sgraffito
- Skills in gesso engraving (inciso)
- Skills in decorative punch work
- Decorative relief chalk work
- Knowledge of various techniques and procedures relating to Italian finishing.

6. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Outcomes

Gesso, Glue and Lacquer Recipes

The Fellow obtained new recipes for glue preparations and learnt that most Italian frames were made with three to four coats of gesso. The Italians apply the gesso in thick layers and the final coat is left to dry fully before it is wet-sanded and then dry-sanded before the clay bole is applied. High-quality chalk from Tuscany is used in the gesso. The Fellow also obtained a lacquer recipe and a glue/pigment recipe for the sgraffito technique.

Clay Bole, Gauche and Pigment Techniques

Clay bole is used underneath gilding and lacquer work to allow the surface to be burnished to a high sheen and to create reflective surfaces that add warm and cool areas to a frame, and emphasise pattern and movement. Glue was mixed with gauche clay or pigment to make the finish hardier (a strong mix of glue was used for the base coat and a weaker mix applied as the top layer). This layering technique was done to make it easier to antique the finish at the end, it leaves the top layers transparent without cutting into the base layers of the finish. Yellow ochre, soft red, black and brown bole were used appropriately for the Fellow's projects. Yellow ochre and soft red were favoured under gold, whereas black or brown bole were used under silver and mecca gold finishes.

Skills in Italian Gilding and Aging Techniques

The Fellow learned finer methods of handling gold and silver leaf. The Fellow was shown new methods of aging silver and gold, and obtained a recipe for 'velatura', which is a method used to antique silver and gold finishes. The Fellow also learnt the prezzemolo and sgraffito techniques and methodology.

Skills in Decorative Finishing Techniques such as Faux Marble, Faux Wood and Faux Tortoise Shell

The Fellow was demonstrated the processes of layering paint, sponging decoration and the various brush techniques used to create the faux finish. The Fellow was also shown the different distressing, adding and burnishing techniques used for decorative paint finishes.

Gesso engraving (Inciso) punch work and decorative relief chalk work

The Fellow was shown how to engrave fine decoration into chalk and two different gold-punch methods. The Fellow was also shown how to produce low and high chalk relief decorations.

Traditional Techniques and Tricks

The Fellow used gesso scraping and cutting tools (raschietto), some of which were specialised for the use of cleaning the back edge of the frame.

The Fellow used stencils for the design preparation for the frames made in this course.

Books

Virgilio shared his collection of historical frame books with the Fellow. These books can be found listed in the Recommended Resources section of the report.

Project 4 - Gilded and Lacquered Frame

This contemporary revival Cassetta style frame has yellow and red bole with burnished 23-carat water gilding and burnished black gauche lacquer work. The gold has been distressed and dulled down with an aging method called *velatura*. Finished with brown wax patina and rottenstone.



Project 5 - Burl Walnut and Gold Gesso Inciso, Punch-Work Frame

Marche region, XVI century Cassetta-inspired frame.

This frame has yellow and red bole with both matt and burnished 23carat water gilding. Burnished black gauche lacquer work. The decorative acanthus leaf corners are gesso engraved with gold punch work. The centres of the frame have been finished with gauche in burl walnut. The frame has been distressed and given patina with dark wax and rottenstone.



Project 6 - Aged Silver and Green Faux Marble Chalk Relief Frame

Marche style XVIII century inspired

This frame has yellow and brown bole with both matt and burnished sterling silver water gilding. Burnished black gauche lacquer work and gauche Mediterranean green sea marble. The decorative acanthus leaf is gesso-engraved with chalk relief work and silver punch work. The silver has been aged with burnt amber and plumb pigment, shellac and brown wax patina and rottenstone.



6. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Project 7 - Faux Tortoise Shell and Gold Gesso Inciso Frame

Baroque Florentine-inspired.

This frame has yellow and red bole with both matt and burnished 23-carat water gilding. Burnished black gauche lacquer finish, with gauche faux-finished tortoise shell inlay. Decorative gold acanthus leaf corners are gesso-engraved and distressed with brown wax patina and rottenstone.

Traditional tortoise shell finishes were placed in segments on the flat frieze or cavetto of a frame's profile.



Project 8 - Octagon Dark Brown Lacquer with Gold Prezzemolo

Tuscan, XVII century-Cassetta inspired profile

This frame has yellow and red bole and dark brown lacquer finish with orange/brown 'mixon' and gold prezzemolo with burnished water gilding. Frame has been distressed and aged with dark wax patina.



Project 9 - Gold Sgraffito and Prezzemolo with Blue/Green Turquoise Pigment and Paint Finish

Marche, XVII century, Cassetta-inspired profile.

This frame has yellow and red bole. Aged yellow ochre polychrome and gold prezzemolo with blue/green turquoise and etched 23-carat water gilt sgraffito. The frame has been distressed and aged with dark wax patina and rotten stone.



6. THE INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

Concluding Remarks

The Fellow's trip to Turkey and Italy provided invaluable insight into both the culture and the functioning industry surrounding frame making in Europe. The Fellowship provided the opportunity to learn, understand and be inspired by the eclectic, ancient and diverse culture of picture framing in a European context. It has provided the opportunity for the Fellow to apply what he has learnt to his own practice and to provide information to share within the greater artisan community of Australia.

By travelling and interacting with European craftspeople through conversations, demonstrations and exposure to the tangible passion of the craftspeople have provided the Fellow with the impression of the romantic element that an artist can bring to his work; where a framer transcends to a master artisan. The Fellowship and international experience enabled the Fellow to meet all of his aims and to gain more knowledge and skills than he originally set out to obtain. The Fellowship surpassed the Fellow's expectations and proved that where passion meets support, great outcomes can be achieved.

7. KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER: APPLYING THE OUTCOMES

1. Presentations and Seminars

The Fellow will deliver a small number of presentations about his trip to Turkey and Italy and his fellowship experience over the next twelve months. The intention of these presentations is to inform, educate and inspire others about the fellowship journey and to disseminate some of the knowledge gained from the experience. The Fellow will exhibit some of the frames he made while overseas during his fellowship and will discuss the two courses that he attended.

The Fellow may deliver extra speeches and is open to travelling to other states and territories within Australia to talk about his experience and to share his knowledge with those who are interested.

2. Production of Resources

The distribution of this report will provide some insight into the current picture-framing industry within Australia and in Italy, and hopefully inspire others to travel and research areas they are passionate about.

3. Networking and Inspiration

The Fellowship experience and the delivery of these speeches may provide the opportunity to network with like-minded craftspeople and allies within the artisan and frame-making community.

Rich encourages the expansion of a community of progressive, open-minded learners in sharing and disseminating skills and knowledge relating to frame-making and frame-history in Australia.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

The government, public and private sectors all play a vital role in the provision of education opportunities and the collection, provision and accessibility of information that will be the foundation for the picture-framing industry for Australia's future.

The Fellow recommends the following actions be taken in order that the picture-framing industry in Australia takes advantage of the possible gains identified during the Fellow's research, investigation and observation.

Government

- Allocate funding to public, and to a lesser extent, private sectors, that provides education, resources and support to those studying, researching and working within the picture-framing industry. This foundational step is greatly needed in numerous industry sectors within Australia, picture-framing and timber craftsmanship included.
- Allocate funding for the expansion and creation of tertiary, TAFE, short and distance education courses relevant to picture framing and general timber production industry areas. It is evident that the prior governmental adjustments in the distribution of economic support to technical schools (which sadly no longer exist) and TAFE courses are misaligned with economic stability or progress in the industry sectors.
- Allocate funding for apprenticeship schemes and internships within the industry and related industries. Apprenticeships and internships remain the primary opportunities for both young and older Australians to gain access to learning opportunities and employment, as well as offering valuable and much-needed retraining opportunities for those already involved in similar industries.

Industry

- Industry bodies and organisations need to work together to create better standards within the industry.
- The encouragement and support of willing craftspeople to source knowledge and apply this knowledge to their industry.
- A change of culture to promote the sharing of information and the removal of ageist and elitist barriers that sometimes inhibit this industry.
- The development of nationally-recognised and widely available guidelines that stipulate protocols and procedures applicable to different historical works in regard to their restoration and historically appropriate treatment.
- Promoting the collaboration between frame restorers, craftspeople and conservators in the appropriate treatment of frames.

Professional Associations

- Professional associations representing the framing, gilding, carving and decorative painting industries and associations need to utilise, create or support available platforms that share up-to-date information and standards.
- Continue to host information nights and events that showcase high-quality work within the industry.
- Foster an inclusive and progressive approach to information gathering and sharing within their networks.
- Contribute funding to grants, internships and apprenticeships where appropriate.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

Education and Training

There is currently no specific course on conservation or restoration of picture frames available with in Australia. Both the University of Melbourne and the University of Canberra offer higher education courses in art and object conservation. The AICCM provide two special interest groups: Conservation Framers Special Interest Group, (CFSIG,) and Gilded Objects Conservation Special Interest Group, (GOSIG). The problem still remains that there is no course or group available to the Fellow's knowledge that focuses on the conservation and restoration of picture frames. This qualifies as an issue when there are large amounts of work that require conservation and restoration treatment that do not receive the appropriate treatment or even respect amongst many in the field.

The Fellow advocates that courses and published materials focusing on conservation and restoration practices and methodologies are made available to everyone seeking to learn these skills and that information about appropriate conservation and restoration practices is shared openly within the community and not restricted to those obtaining higher qualifications such as university degrees. If the Australian community continues to restrict the circulation of relevant information, important collections will simply not be preserved. The reality is that there is too great a volume of frames requiring conservation and restoration for the select few trained conservators to achieve. We need to re-educate those in the industry and make information more accessible to enable the protection of valuable Australian frames. The Fellow advocates that the information shared within the community be used appropriately.

The Fellow advocates that courses be created with structure and standards. These courses should be available to everyone seeking to learn these skills and should not be restricted to only those who have obtained a higher qualification.

- Tertiary Courses: tertiary courses focusing on frame conservation and restoration practices should be developed. These courses could be run alongside existing courses that focus on object or art conservation.
- TAFE Courses: TAFE courses with pathways to tertiary education should be developed in areas relating to picture-frame making, conservation and restoration.
- Short Courses: short courses should be offered through TAFE and private organisations. These courses should build on skills and knowledge relating to picture framing conservation and restoration. These courses should focus on the relevant individual skills required, such as gilding, carving, compo/gesso work, mould making and decorative finishing.
- Distance Education: distance education is and always has been essential in equipping those that wish to learn but do not have access to practical training. Distance education programs should be developed and run by TAFE or private organisations. They should include the use of online or distance mentors who can aid those wishing to develop specialised skills.
- Online Tuition: online tuition could be made available through TAFE and private organisations. Online tuition is important to help those who are living in rural or isolated areas to develop their skill and knowledge. A series of practical step-by-step videos could be made, and online information, protocols and industry standards made available to everyone.
- Industry Seminars and Lectures: seminars, lectures, meetings and talks play an important role in including various members of the professional and non-professional artisan community. Specialists in their field, lecturers, craftspeople and historians should be encouraged and enabled to share their information and passion with the community.
- Apprenticeships: apprenticeships are the core method of training within this industry. The Fellow advocates that apprenticeships continue, and that they include a greater depth of knowledge relating to art and framing history, and that they encourage the a greater level and diversity of skill.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Internships: internships are often undervalued and overlooked. They are incredibly important for young people, and for those seeking to learn and trial new areas of industry. The Fellow encourages the development and provision of internships within the entire artisan community, including the frame-making sectors.

Community

Historically important frames and artworks are often disregarded, mistreated and thus damaged by careless separation of original elements (such as the removal of the original label, mount, artwork, frame, etc).

- The Fellow encourages everyone within the industry and artisan community to respect the heritage and importance of the frame/artwork relationship. Where frames are removed or disposed of, preservation or documentation of this act is encouraged, as this provides details for those seeking to restore the original frame/artwork relationship after alteration or damage.

International Specialised Skills Institute

- Continue to provide the opportunity for further learning within the industry and related industries through the offering of grants and study ventures.
- Consider offering larger grants pertaining to research and/or travel to enable a greater depth of learning in important industries that continue to have skill gaps.

Further Skills Enhancement

- The creation of a digital platform (such as a website or blog) to collate resources such as framing articles, publications, journals and books. Information should be made available within the picture framing industry and community. The fellow encourages a shift away from privatisation and academic exclusivity, and the progressive movement towards information sharing, the abandonment of hierarchical exclusion and a revival of community initiatives.

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10. DEFINITIONS

Acanthus:

Stylised ornamentation inspired by the Mediterranean acanthus plant used in classical decorative framing.

Acanthus and Tongue:

A running pattern of alternative tongue and acanthus leaf designs.

Aedicule:

Another term for a Tabernacle frame.

Agate Burnisher:

A tool utilising agate-stone or blood-stone as the medium to burnish the clay beneath gold leaf in gilding.

Anthemion:

A Greek term for a stylised floral decoration derived from a honeysuckle flower.

Appliqué:

The application of an ornament onto the surface of a frame.

Arabesque:

An ornament incorporating complex floral designs, foliage and geometrical elements.

Architrave Frame:

A simple, non-decorative frame often incorporating sharp angles and steps.

Auricular Frame:

A style of frame where stylised depictions of animals, marine life and floral ornaments decorate the frame in a free-flowing fashion. The English auricular frames are referred to as 'Sunderland' frames.

Baguette Frame:

A simple, narrow frame that acts as a support to an artwork, typically a watercolour or a print

Baroque:

Relating to a period of European style from the 17th century that is characterised by ornate detail, bold form and flamboyancy.

Base:

A simple moulding or block of timber that sits beneath a column.

Bead and Bar Course:

10. DEFINITIONS

A decorative carved band consisting of half spheres (pearls) alternative with elongated bars. Also known as a 'bead and reed' course.

Bole:

See 'clay bole'.

Boxwood Mould:

Close-grained dense timber that has been carved in the negative to make a mould for compo.

Bulinatura:

Italian word for the punch-work technique.

Bulino:

Italian for chisel or punch tool.

Burnishing:

The process of polishing by rubbing the clay bole underneath gold leaf with an agate stone.

Butt Joint:

A joint where two pieces of timber are in direct contact with each other without overlapping. Usually fastened with nails, screws, dowel, biscuit or glue.

Campanula:

Tulip of bell-shaped flower decoration that runs as a repetitive pattern.

Carving:

The removal of a portion of medium which results in a pattern or an object.

Cassetta:

A simple box-like frame with a flat, central frieze.

Chalk:

Calcium carbonate mineral used in casts, mediums and to create a smooth surface in frame making.

Chisel gage:

The size and shape of a chisel tool.

Chisel gauge:

A scooped shaped chisel used for removing a large area of timber.

Clay bole:

A specialised clay layer used for the underside of a gold leaf surface that enables the gold leaf to be polished and burnished.

Composition (Compo):

An early form of thermo, hard setting dough, made from chalk, rosin, linseed oil, glycerine, glue and turps, and used for creating decorative ornaments.

Colophony:

Pine rosin.

Dragon's blood resin:

Natural resin used as an ingredient for finishing.

Dutch metal:

Imitation gold leaf made from cheaper alloys of copper and zinc.

Also known as Schlag metal.

Ebonized:

A stain finish imitating authentic ebony timber.

Empire Style:

Early 19th Century architectural style that draws its influences from Roman architecture.

Engaged frame:

A frame that is permanently attached to a panel painting.

Faux Finishing:

The imitation of wood, rock, marble and metal surfaces.

Festoon:

A decoration of a garland or chain of flowers, foliage or ribbons as a hanging curve or a running pattern.

Fluted Cove:

A scooped moulding that features a fluted repetitive pattern.

Foliate:

A decoration of foliage and leaf-like motifs.

Frieze:

The flat section of a frame, generally in the middle.

10. DEFINITIONS

Gamboge:

Natural rosin yellow pigment.

Gouache:

An opaque water-soluble paint.

Gesso:

A preparation of chalk, glue and water used to create a smooth surface to gild onto.

Gesso engraving:

A technique of scoring patterns into gesso to create decorative texture to be gild onto. Called 'inciso' in Italian.

Gesso recutting:

The refining of decorative gesso work with a knife or scraping tool.

Gesso texturing:

The manipulation of wet gesso to create texture.

Gilding (Oil):

The use of oil size to apply pure gold leaf or cheaper alloy leaf to create a gold finished surface

Gilding (Water):

The application of gold leaf onto clay bole with water and alcohol that produces a highly burnished or matt gold finish.

Gilding (Flash):

An umbrella term for the various uses of bronze, silver and gold powders to produce a finish using oil or water gilding techniques.

Gilder's brushes:

Specialised brushes used for gilding techniques.

Gilder's cushion:

Suede cushion used for cutting gold leaf.

Gilder's tip:

A wide flat brush tool used for picking up and placing down gold leaf.

Gold skewings:

Small fragments of gold leaf used for touching up gilt surfaces and ornaments.

Gothic:

A style of architecture, art and picture framing in the medieval period that was succeeded by the Renaissance style.

Glycerin:

A viscous liquid used in compo making.

Integral:

A frame that is made from the same piece of wood as the painting.

Lacquering:

The application of layers of lacquer varnish that is often pigmented and used to create a glossy surface.

Lap Joint:

The halving of the ends of two pieces of timber, that are then fitted together to make a joint.

Laurel:

A repetitive leaf decoration commonly featuring the Laurus Nobilis plant.

Linseed oil:

Oil made from linseeds used in a variety of frame making recipes and techniques.

Marche:

A region of Italy that produces a unique framing style. Each region of Italy has its own signature framing and finishing techniques.

Mascherone:

Translating as 'big mask' in Italian, they appear in the corner decoration of many antique carved Italian frames and are inspired by flora and fauna or as the Italian's would say, 'vegetation'.

Mecca:

The alteration of silver leaf with shellac and yellow pigment to create the illusion of gold leaf

Mitre Joint:

A 90-degree angle cut joint between two pieces of timber.

Ormolu:

A liquid that gives lustre to gold, giving the appearance traditional 18th century gold gilt bronze.

Ottoman style:

A style of architecture that was dominant during the Islamic Ottoman Empire.

10. DEFINITIONS

Pastiglia:

Gesso relief work, also called 'pastilia' by the Italians.

Patina:

The presence of senescence, damage or other factors associated with the age of a frame. Patina is often a celebrated characteristic, as it shows history and integrity.

Piecrust frames:

Also known as 'elephant-ear' frames, commonly featured in the Art-Nouveau period, are frames featuring hand modelled compo corner ornaments.

Polychrome gilding:

The various uses of yellow clay bole to create the illusion of gold leaf.

Polyptych:

A painting that is divided into multiple sections or panels.

Prezzemolo:

A decoration inspired by the form of the parsley leaf, traditionally used in the corner decorations of Italian frames.

Punch work:

The use of a metal object to punch a decorative pattern into a frame.

Rococo style:

Originating during the French Renaissance, the 18th century Rococo style featured grotesque and unique shapes, with little symmetry but an emphasis on harmony, and featuring shells, leaves, rocks, flowers and birds.

Relief chalk work:

Engraving the gesso surface to create a decorative pattern before gilding or finishing.

Renaissance:

An artistic movement that centred its ideology in the concept of 'rebirth' during the 14th to 17th century.

Rosette:

A circular flower decoration.

Rosin:

Also known as colophony, is a solid resin obtained from pines and other plants.

Sandracca:

The Italian word for a specific type of a small cypress-type tree resin, also known as Sandrac.

Sansovino Style:

A Venetian style of frame named after architect Jacopo Sansovino from the 16th century. This frame features human faces in each corner.

Scraffito:

Also called 'graffito' by the Italians, is the decorative scratching away of pigment to unveil the gold leaf behind.

Sliding Dovetail Joint:

A joint shaped like a dovetail often used on the back side of mitre joints to increase strength.

Spindle Moulder:

Also known as a vertical spindle moulder, is a machine that is used to create picture mouldings.

Steam-Pressed Mouldings:

Timber mouldings that have been embossed with the use of metal wheels.

Strap Work:

A flat, ribbon-like strap decoration, generally used over the mitres in the corners of a frame or as centre ribbons.

Swept runs:

The curved sweep that connects the centre and the corner ornament of a frame.

Tabernacle:

A style of Italian alter frame used to display religious icons.

Tondo:

A circular frame.

Torus:

A convex moulding, or the semicircular concave of the moulding.

Tramp style:

A style of framing characterised by chip carving, 'crown of thorns', or simple to complex geometric block-style features.

Tympanum:

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The semi-circular or triangular decorative wall surface on top of a frame, which often contains decoration or sculptures.

Venetian style:

Can refer to myriad styles. Today, the term is most often used to refer to the iconic mirror frame that features mirrored panels.

Whistlerian Style:

Frames featuring reeded moulding.

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APPENDIX 11.1 – A BRIEF HISTORY OF FRAMING IN AUSTRALIA

The picture frames built by the early settlers were simply made. They were produced from Australian timbers and designed for bordering photographs, prints and small artworks. Where frames were more decorative, the craftsperson used leather, gumnuts, shells and other available objects to embellish their work. These early colonial craftspeople frequently had limited skills and thus their frames were often humble, but they were certainly by no means insignificant. The persistent stream of immigration meant an influx of artists, and a broad range of clientele, ranging from working families to wealthy families with distinctive picture framing needs.

During the 1830s, Australian towns and cities developed rapidly in both population and trade. The prominent styles were influenced by the Regency style vogue and the George IV style, which were flourishing in England, along with the classical revival trends. The Australian frames of this era featured ornamental decorations made from composition (compo). The popular decorations were running patterns of acanthus and lamb's tongue, and floral scrolling and strap work. Large foliate corner ornaments were common, as was the use of crosshatched netting for added textural detail. The frame makers of the early 1800s used woodcarving in combination with compo work to speed up production and reduce the cost of making a frame. The frames of this time were produced with hand tools, used profile planes to fashion the moulding, and the compo ornaments made with reverse-carved wooden moulds. The frames were usually gilt with a combination of oil and water gilding, and the corners were joined with either a lap joint or a mitre joint (sometimes in combination); some frames were joined with tapered sliding dovetails. Picture framers of this time were fewer and far between, and many lacked formal or comprehensive training in the field. This meant that although many frames were not of highest quality, many interesting and diverse frames were being produced. It wasn't until the next few decades that picture framing became widespread in Australia, and standards were not yet confined to narrow expectations of artistic trends and styles.



Left: A mix of early boxwood moulds from the Fellow's collection. Used for making Composition (Compo) ornaments. R.H. Rich



Right: Boxwood mould detail from fellow's collection. R.H.Rich

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Detail of a compo running pattern with netting: A reproduction frame, the original made by an unknown Australian framemaker in the 1850s. Restoration for Ipswich Gallery. Image courtesy of Art Conservation Framers and R.H. Rich.

By the mid 1800s, the picture framing trade began to become established in the larger cities such as Sydney, Melbourne, Hobart, Launceston, and Adelaide.¹ The constant influx of immigrants brought new skilled craftspeople, new artists and new clientele. Around 1850, R L Hood produced a range of Tasmanian frames made from huon pine, musk, myrtle, blackwood and other specialty Tasmanian timbers. These timbers had not been used before in picture framing and were considered exotic in Europe. Ranges of these frames were on display at the Great Exhibition in London in 1851.² Around the same time, William Wilson and James Bennell produced a range of hand-carved and water-gilt frames.³ Wilson had a distinctive style and often chose Rococo-influenced designs, patterns and ornamentations in both his carved and compo work. These were some of the first high-end, highly ornamental frames to be produced in Australia. Another significant framer of this time was Lawrence Cetta in NSW. Cetta was one of the first Italian immigrant professional picture framers and was one of the first to run a thriving inter-colonial exporting business in picture framing in Australia.⁴ Edwin Baldwin and John Bernasconi were also prominent on the picture-framing scene in NSW, where there was a boom in demand for ornamental compo frames and looking-glass mirrors amongst the middle and upper classes.

The amalgamation of Australian influence and colonial technique and fashion in the 1800s resulted in a unique picture framing style. Conservative English-style frames were decorated with Australian motifs of flora and fauna that developed into an internationally recognised framing style. These frames were exported along with their accompanying artworks to England and Europe where they experienced a period of vogue. The union of Australian-themed decoration and iconography with English style framing can be seen in numerous works

many decades later by artisans such as Isaac Whitehead,⁵ and John and Thomas Thallon. This stylistic union between Australian and English features can also be seen in the frames of German-Australian wood carver Robert Prenzel, who emerged out of the Arts and Crafts movement in the late 19th and early 20th century. Prenzel produced a range of hand-carved photo frames, carved panels and interior furnishings, all of which are of the utmost beauty and skilfully executed. Gumnut and leaf motifs were often featured in Australian Art Nouveau style, and it was common that the frames were made from distinctive Australian timbers.

¹ Cant, E 1999 *Entrepreneurship and Picture Frame Making in Nineteenth-Century Australia: Lawrence Cetta and the Quick Profit*, *The World of Antiques and Art* incorporating the *Australian Antique Collector*, 57th edition, Australia pp.44-45.

² Mulford, T 1997 *Tasmanian Framemakers 1830-1930*, Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery, Launceston

³ *ibid*

⁴ Cant, E 1999 *Entrepreneurship and Picture Frame Making in Nineteenth-Century Australia: Lawrence Cetta and the Quick Profit*, *The World of Antiques and Art* incorporating the *Australian Antique Collector*, 57th edition, Australia pp.44-45.

⁵ Maddocks, H 1992 *Picture Frame Studies in Australia: Museum Management and Curatorship*, Vol 11, No 2, pp. 133-139. www.tandfonline.com



A carved frame by Robert Prenzel, with a portrait of Frederic John Clendinnen of the Arts and Crafts movement. Clendinnen Collection. Image courtesy of Leonard Joel.



Carved frame attributed to Robert Prenzel of the Arts and Crafts movement. Clendinnen Collection. Image courtesy of Leonard Joel.

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The Australian frame-maker was multi-skilled and resourceful. Unique and reputable frames existed in all facets of Australian craftsmanship, however only a small number of tradespeople possessed specialised or advanced skills. A large percentage of Australian framers lacked certain sophisticated skills relating to gilding, carving and finishing practices. Many tradespeople also lacked specialist equipment and materials required for modern advancements in frame production. In the late 1800s, the Spilker machine (which was modelled on the French guillotine) came onto the market in America. ⁶Prior to the Spilker machine, the slower and less accurate mitre box was used to cut timber in Australia. The Mitre box remained a common element in most framing workshops in Australia until the 1960s due to the expense of the Spilker machine and the difficulty importing goods into Australia after the World Wars. The vertical spindle moulder was used from the 1850's onwards to mass produce mouldings, which freed up time for frame makers to focus on other areas of frame making. The English and American markets had access to machinery earlier and in larger quantity compared to their Australian counterparts, which resulted in the importation of large amounts of timber moulding from overseas that was then cut and joined in the hundreds of picture framing workshops around Australia. It was common that these imported timber mouldings came pre-finished with gesso ("in the white") and a range of standard finishes, and some could be ordered with compo ornaments already placed. The picture frame mouldings that were produced in Australia were rarely pre-finished and usually only available in raw 'red' and 'yellow' pines. This continued until wood-machining companies became more established in Australia. It was common for Australian framers to expand their skills and apply their talents to other areas of the industry. For example, it was common that hardware shops would offer picture framing services, as well as cabinet-making services and restoration services. With the rise of machinery use in the industry and with the shortage of artisan frame makers, quick and cheap methods of construction were favoured amongst the standard, multi-skilled Australian picture framer come general tradesperson, and traditional practices were often sacrificed.⁷

Frames with composition ornaments were similarly more popular than carved timber frames in Australia due to the expensive nature of carving and the shortage of skilled carvers. It was only the affluent and well-established artists that could afford carved decorative Louis XV and XVI style classic revival frames. Working class Australians could only afford frames constructed from factory-made timber lengths that were assembled and finished in Australian workshops. These kinds of frames made from cheap pine and assembled by local craftspeople remain to this day the most common form of picture framing in Australia and in most developed countries. Picture framers such as Isaac Whitehead, and later John and Thomas Thallon, set themselves apart from other picture framers by creating unique artisan frames. These framers would sometimes use timber mouldings (often imported from the UK) and then add their own composition ornaments to the corners.⁸ By using unfinished or "in the white" mouldings, Whitehead and the Thallons were able to create unique frames, and due to their exceptional skills in composition ornament production, design and gilding,⁹ they produced frames that are now some of the most notable and reputable picture frames that exhibit in numerous Australian collections today. It is commonly believed that a few picture-frame moulding companies in the United Kingdom had the machinery and set up to produce mouldings 'in the white' with pre-laid compo ornaments. They had access to gesso-coating and profiling machines (to coat the lengths of moulding with an even and smooth layer of gesso and to ensure absolute precision of the dried gesso layer), embossing machines, and compo running wheels that could churn out compo running

6 2015, J. J. Spilker History, Vintage Machinery, vintagemachinery.org. Accessed 02/10/15

7 Espinoza, A. M 1999 A Framemaker of Colonial Melbourne: Isaac Whitehead c. 1819-1881, Melbourne Journal of Technical Studies in Art, The University of Melbourne, Vol 1, pp. 33-48.

8 Reynolds, G 2001 The Australian Framing Industry, Graham Reynolds Pty Ltd, Brisbane, Australia

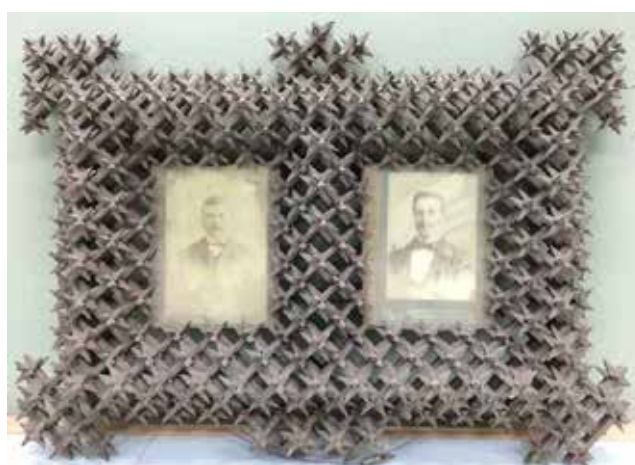
9 *ibid*

patterns quickly and accurately.¹⁰ These companies could quickly produce highly-detailed and quality-controlled picture frame mouldings, which simply could not be created in Australia due to a lack of machines, skills and knowledge.

Tramp Art frames were popular for a long period ranging from the early 1800s to the 1940s in America, Europe and Australia. Influences of Tramp style were seen throughout Australia from much earlier dates, with some beautiful examples dating back to early colonial settlement in Tasmania. The Tramp frame experienced a period of vogue during the gold rushes of Australia, and were particularly popular amongst those in lower socioeconomic and working class communities. They were inexpensive to make, most often made out of recycled materials such as cork, matches, cigar boxes or timber, and often featured carved hearts, pyramids or rosettes. Travellers and swagmen from a diverse background of cultures made Tramp frames, however very few were ever signed or attributed to their maker. There is a relationship between the Tramp frame and the Oxford frames (influenced by the Oxford religious movement). There are Tramp 'Oxford' frames, and the Oxford-style frame may have been influenced by the Tramp-style frame, or may have developed as a separate stylistic frame. The Term 'Tramp Work' was coined by ¹¹ Pennsylvania folklorist, Frances Lichten, in 1959 in the Pennsylvania Folklife magazine ¹² Collectors Weekly. However, many earlier frames with similar craftsmanship and appearance are referred to under the umbrella term 'Tramp'. Tramp art can be understood as not merely a 'style' of craftsmanship: but as a social, political, economical and cultural movement. It was a bold statement against the fashions and styles celebrated and endorsed by the royalist and colonial English Australia. Furthermore, it could be said that the Tramp style frame was significantly influenced by poverty. Today, the Tramp art period remains one of the most interesting and unique tangents of framing history.



A 1890s Tramp frame, with 159 individually slotted pieces. (Image courtesy of Hunters and Collectors Antiques, New South Wales).



A crown of thorns frame dating between 1870s-1890s. (Image courtesy of Recherche Framing, Melbourne).

The late 1800s saw an influx of cultural and social diversity with the boom of the gold trade. The number

¹⁰ *ibid*

¹¹ Wallach, C 2005, Tramp Art, Folk Art & Americana, History of Tramp Art. www.trampart.com

¹² Keane, M 2009 Looking at Tramp Art With Author Clifford Wallach, Collectors Weekly. www.collectorsweekly.com

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and talents of craftspeople flourished and framing styles changed with the new clientele.¹³ “Melbourne became the arts Capital of Australia”.¹⁴ However Melbourne was comparatively conservative in many aspects in comparison to the European artisans and frame makers, and experimental frames were less common in comparison with some other countries.¹⁵ One of the framing styles popular in the 1890s featured the profile of the Carlo Maratta frame. This profile was commonly mass-produced in timber moulding lengths, and the frame often featured a running laurel top edge or ribbon twist, acanthus leaf and lamb’s tongue running patterns and a subtle, sometimes carved cove.

Another style of frame that was popular through the 1870s-1900s, was the James Whistler frame¹⁶ which featured reeded mouldings of varying classic revival shapes. The Watt’s style frame by George Alfred Watts, which was influenced by 15th century Cassetta frames,¹⁷ also experienced a period of popularity. This frame featured a gilded oak veneered frieze, running acanthus leaf patterns and corners, and bead and reel edges with a running festoon inner edge. Many variations of this style were designed in Australia by the John and Thomas Thallon Company, and featured eucalyptus leaf and gum nut ornaments. The union of Australian-themed decoration and English-style themes can be seen in the frames of artisans such as Isaac Whitehead¹⁸ and various other Australian frame makers.

The Pre-Raphaelite style (influenced from the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood movement in the mid 1800s in England) and the later Arts and Crafts style were dominant in Australia during the middle-late 1800s. The process of gilding directly onto timber (often oak) was distinctive of the Pre-Raphaelite style, and especially evident in the Watt’s style frame. Roughly sawn, cheap cuts of Oak were routinely used to give texture and enhance the beauty of the wood grain under the gold¹⁹ for this gilding process.

Stained oak ogee moulding frames and similar simple timber frames were commonly favoured in Federation style houses, however the Arts and Crafts style frame remained dominant in the 1890s-1920s. The Edwardian style house favoured similar simple mouldings, occasionally featuring fretwork oak decoration, and large flat top-scrolls to suit the vogue of architecture. Polished mahogany and teak timber frames with minimalistic gilt borders were also common.

Another fashionable style of picture framing of this time was chip carving. Although chip carving was at its height around 1910, it began its popularity in the Arts and Crafts period (1880s-1930s). Chip-carving, which was often featured in a variety of contexts in the Tramp Art movement, became popular amongst the middle-class hobbyist craftspeople, especially amongst middle-class women.²⁰ Chip carved frames frequently featured symmetrical and geometric designs that included rosettes and outlines of animals, birds and flowers. Designs and ideas for chip-carved photo frames and decorator items were readily available in fashionable books and magazines targeted towards the suburban home-maker.

13 Maddocks, H 1992 *Picture Frame Studies in Australia: Museum Management and Curatorship*, Vol 11, No 2, pp. 133-139. www.tandfonline.com

14 Reynolds, G 2001 *The Australian Framing Industry*, Graham Reynolds Pty Ltd, Brisbane, Australia

15 Maddocks, H 1992 *Picture Frame Studies in Australia: Museum Management and Curatorship*, Vol 11, No 2, pp. 133-139. www.tandfonline.com

16 Payne, J 2007 *Framing the Nineteenth Century: Picture Frames 1837-1935*, The Images Publishing Group, Australia

17 *ibid*

18 Maddocks, H 1992 *Picture Frame Studies in Australia: Museum Management and Curatorship*, Vol 11, No 2, pp. 133-139. www.tandfonline.com

19 Simon, J 1997 *The Art of the Picture Frame: Artists, Patrons and the Framing of Portraits in Britain*, National Portrait Gallery Publications, London

20 2011 *Chip-Carving Display*, Caroline Simson Library and Research Collection, Australia. www.sydneylivingmuseums.com.au. Accessed 04/10/15



An Australian chip-carved wooden picture frame, dating between 1890-1910. Maker Unknown. R.H Rich

A great number of frames from the early 20th century were altered, adjusted or separated from their original artworks.²¹ Frames were sometimes removed and replaced to suit the vogue of architecture and interior fashion, and damaged frames were simply discarded. Patina, natural wear and slight decay were unfashionable traits, and many frames were over-finished with cheap gold paint, gold or bronze powder (and even house paint during the 1950s) to achieve a refreshed 'new' look. Many frames were lost, destroyed or defaced due to the common belief that frames were merely temporary display cases for their artworks and were not valued as culturally significant or as works of art in themselves.²² Those frames that survived were often un-partnered with their original artwork and had often undergone numerous crude restoration processes. People with minimal knowledge of appropriate frame restoration techniques were frequently modifying and defacing frames. Frame restoration skills are now respected areas of specialty in the picture-framing industry, and this has become so as the importance of historical works is recognised and their unique place in history and in the contemporary artistic realm celebrated.

Although many frames were displaced and destroyed, the 20th century saw a new chapter in frame making. Picture framers were creating large compound angled frames that were stacked with the use of several profiles.²³ These frames were made in oak or pine and were frequently stained brown or black. The New Zealand picture framer John Leech's business created a unique range of these frames for the artist Charles Fredrick Goldie, who was prominent in the early 20th century. Leech's frames were frequently made from Kauri pine with etched timber details and black painted finishes.

21 Murphy, C 2008 Works on Paper and Their Frames: Research, Collaboration and Documentation, AICCM. www.aiccm.org.au

22 Sawicki, M 1995 Picture Frames Conservation or Repairing, AICCM Bulletin, Vol 20, No 2. www.aiccm.org.au

23 Reynolds, G 2001 The Australian Framing Industry, Graham Reynolds Pty Ltd, Brisbane, Australia

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Queen Victoria style frames were favoured in the 1900s with some popular frames featuring steam-pressed mouldings or carved timber or compo ornaments (or a combination). Maple-veneered mouldings and faux imitation wood mouldings were in demand, as were ebonised and gold varnish or sprayed mouldings, green and gold mouldings, bronze mouldings or oxidised silver mouldings.²⁴ The Queen Victorian style can be understood as one of the most dominant and persevering styles in Australian picture framing history. Some of the artists that made or designed their own frames in the early 20th century were Charles Conder, Robert Prenzel, Lillie Williamson and Sarah Squire Todd. Williamson who was married to Tom Roberts, a famous Australian artist, produced hand carved frames that were of notable distinction. These makers were producing unique, hand-carved frames in the Art Nouveau style. Much of the Art Nouveau-style architecture, decoration and consequently the picture frames, were influenced heavily by the trend in women's fashion; and some might argue that the popular motifs and layouts distinctive of this period were a celebration of the woman's curves and figure. Tasmanian wood-carver Todd, made frames (along with many other things) that featured popular Australian flora and fauna motifs. Another Tasmanian wood carver, Nellie Payne, created numerous large, decorative relief-carved frames and furniture during the early 20th century.²⁵ A group of socially prominent female wood-carvers in Rockhampton, Queensland were also carving frames, panels and furniture at this time.²⁶ In summary, the framing styles dominant in the early 20th century were the Arts and Crafts style, the Art Nouveau style, the Queen Victoria style, and the early Art Deco style.



An Australian carved frame featuring a gum leaf design relief carving and punch work, of the Arts and Crafts movement, dating around early 20th century, by Sarah S Todd. Exhibited in 1903 by the Tasmanian Arts and Crafts Society (Image courtesy of Art Conservation Framers, Melbourne)

After WW1, a shortage of traditional framing skills lead to the utilisation of cheaper methods of production, and overall, many businesses went through difficult times. The Australian Government's post-war restrictions on the importation of framing equipment and materials made it difficult for framers to continue their production.²⁷ Many UK factories that were responsible for exporting picture frame moulding lengths internationally were closed down, and during the same time few new manufacturers opened their doors within Australia.²⁸ It is important to mention that the majority of these companies struggled to establish themselves. The Australasian Marbut Carving Company produced a range of timber picture mouldings for the framing industry in Melbourne in the early 20th century. Just over a decade later in 1916, Whitelum and Catts emerged, and produced a range of raw, steam-pressed and gesso-coated mouldings, as well as oval photo frames. The company had two locations, one in Balmain, Sydney and one in Melbourne in 1918.²⁹ During this time, stained steam-pressed pine

²⁴ Morell, H 1991 Victorian Wooden molding and frame Designs: The 1910 Morell Catalog, London

²⁵ 2015 Nellie Payne Woodcarver, Sesquicentenary Exhibition Westbury, Westbury & Districts Historical Society, Tasmania, Australia

²⁶ 2015 Lady Woodcarvers of Rockhampton, Queensland Art Gallery, Rockhampton City Council, Australia. www.visualarts.qld.gov.au. accessed 15/10/2015

²⁷ Reynolds, G 2001 The Australian Framing Industry, Graham Reynolds Pty Ltd, Brisbane, Australia

²⁸ *ibid*

²⁹ *ibid*

profiles were favoured for Australian artworks.³⁰ Plywood photo frames with compo decoration and the 'Pie-Crust' frame³¹, also known as the 'Elephant Ear' frame, came into fashion. These frames were regularly coated with stippled gesso or tulle fabric that was glued down to the surface of the frame. Australian picture framers drew inspiration from European catalogues showcasing what was fashionable in Europe and particularly the United Kingdom. Many frames were of the Louis XV and XVI style, however were often greatly simplified. Picture framers of this era were able to adapt their skills in compo-ornament making and gesso effects to mimic the fashionable styles overseas, however their skills almost always fell short of the European competition.³²

During the late 1930s and early 1940s, the National Gallery of Victoria made a decision to reframe a large quantity of artworks, and many 19th century frames were removed and replaced with Whistlerian style frames.³³ The Melbourne Herald, June 21, 1941, gives evidence of the decisions and changes made by the Gallery in that period.³⁴

During the Second World War, framers were producing large quantities of photo frames and there was a reduced output of ornamental frames. Gold leaf was virtually unavailable from the beginning of the war until the 1950s, and Dutch metal was also in short supply during the war,³⁵ so bronze powder and alternative finishing techniques were common in the 1940s. Conroy-Moffatt was one of the last businesses in Melbourne that produced ornamental burnished bronze frames in the 40s and 50s; most other frame makers were using sprayed bronze powder shellac solution. After WWII, many new, small businesses began throughout Australia, and picture framers needed only a small amount of capital to enter the industry.³⁶ Well-established businesses that prospered during this time were S.A Parker Frames, Geo Styles and Distinctive Wood Products in Sydney,³⁷ and John Thallon, Conroy-Moffatt and Jarmans in Melbourne.

Picture framers in late 1940s and 1950s used mainly materials produced and made in Australia.³⁸ Prior to WWII, most gold leaf was imported from Germany. After the war, William Ashcroft Masonry suppliers in Melbourne began producing hand-beaten gold leaf. This gold leaf varied in quality and was not suitable for water gilding; hence oil gilding was popular during this time when higher quality gold leaf was unavailable in Australia.³⁹ Oval frames for family portraits were being mass-produced across Australia and were hand-finished with gesso and faux grained with bitumen. Reeded mouldings with compo corners were often finished with a white paint or sprayed lacquer bronze. Frames of this type almost always lacked detailed ornaments, and the profile proportions of these frames were often chunky and lacked the sophistication of the frames from earlier periods.

Handcrafted compo frames were a thing of the past and were rarely produced during the 1960s and 1970s, and only a handful of specialised picture-framing businesses operated throughout Australia. Jarmans, a well-established picture framing business in Melbourne, was one of the few that produced a range of handcrafted compo frames. Jarmans originally operated as WJ Tiller, and in 1973 The Thallon Company (that was under the name 'Crawford, Burman and Co'), merged with the Jarmans

30 *ibid*

31 *ibid*

32 Reynolds, G 2001 *The Australian Framing Industry*, Graham Reynolds Pty Ltd, Brisbane, Australia

33 Villis, C & Ellem, A (eds) 2008 *Paintings Conservation in Australia from the Nineteenth Century to the Present: Connecting the Past to the Future*, AICCM. www.aiccm.org.au

34 McGowan-Jackson, H 2008 *Frame Conservation in Australia and GOCSIG: Reflections on the Past and Thoughts for the Future*, AICCM, Australia. www.aiccm.org.au

35 Reynolds, G 2001 *The Australian Framing Industry*, Graham Reynolds Pty Ltd, Brisbane, Australia

36 *ibid*

37 *ibid*

38 *ibid*

39 *ibid*

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Company that remains under the same name.^{40 41}

From the 1980s onwards, Australia saw a rapid increase in imported pre-made frames from China, Mexico and other countries, which created tough competition for the Australian frame market. A large amount of commercial framing businesses opened, and these businesses focused on making frames for the average Australian's prints and photographs. There was a boom in 'backyard' picture-framing setups and businesses, and a slump in the quality and longevity of frames. A lot of damage was done to artworks and important frames during this period; at the same time, conservators were starting to recognise the value of old frames and initiated conservation practices for a select few collections. In the mid 1980s, antique frames and old, ornamental picture frames became both valuable and collectable, and some galleries and private collectors strived to maintain their collections. The conservation of period frames and the production of reproduction frames were now recognised as important. Frames were now becoming recognised as significant elements in the presentation of art in exhibitions. The creation of ornamental frames became privatised, and high-end ornamental reproductions were rarely available to the public for commission. Private, specialised conservation framers and contractors built ornamental frames for museums and galleries. The number of picture framers who possessed the skills to produce the appropriate reproduction frames for large galleries dwindled, and much knowledge and expertise was lost with the rapid expansion of population and importation of goods, and the rapid contraction of specialised framers. Picture framers of these decades catered to the rapidly growing decorator market, and it was a grim time for the artisan frame in Australia.

A common theme throughout the first centuries of the history of picture-frame making in Australia is the prevailing belief that frames, although often unique and showcasing ingenuity and great skill, were replaceable, disposable or not worthy of artistic celebration. In a reversal of trends in the diverse history of the Australian framer, that the picture frame is celebrated, or even treasured.

It is in reflection that we can see the diverse history of the Australian framer and it is on reflection that the picture frame is now treasured and celebrated. It is in retrospect that we can appreciate the enormity of the frame's contribution to culture, society, and to artistic exhibition. Although the history of the picture frame in Australia is brief in comparison to countries such as England, Italy, Spain, Germany, France or the Netherlands, there is an abundance of diversity, and a proud history of enterprise.

40 Newhouse, C 1999 John Thallon 1848-1918, Melbourne Journal of Technical Studies in Art, Vol 1, Frames, The University of Melbourne Conservation Service, Australia

41 2009 Antique Collectors Club Talk 5th November, Brighton Antique Collectors Society. www.giltwood.com.au

APPENDIX 11.2 - A BRIEF HISTORY OF ITALIAN FRAMES

During the Gothic art era, the picture frame was ultimately a structural platform for an artwork, and was almost always of the same structure as the artwork. High arches and flat tympanums were iconic, as was the heavy emphasis on gilding and austere decadence. The frames of this time were entirely influenced by religious architecture, and most frames were decorated in a way that matched or complemented the architecture and decoration of the church where the artwork was displayed. There was limited variance in decoration amongst frames during this time, however there are some of the most impressive and immaculate examples of the use of gold leaf and toning amongst those frames that remain today.

It was in 1424 that Gentile da Fabriano from the Marche region in Italy introduced the picture frame as a separate construct from an artwork.⁴² Prior to this, picture frames did not exist as their own form, but were rather expressed through architectural structures and flourishes where artwork was displayed. The picture frame slowly developed from the simple arches that were common in religious architecture, and eventually evolved into a the square and rectangle. The picture frame then gradually began to change from the previous rigid concept of a window to a freer, celebratory emblem that became a proud symbol of culture and society.⁴³

The Renaissance was a movement of thinking and artistic expression that centred on the concept of rebirth and rediscovery of grandeur and classic antiquity in Italy from the 14th to the 16th centuries.⁴⁴ During the Renaissance, the picture frame became significantly important to the collector or patron as they became symbolic of culture, lifestyle and class status. The picture frame was an important emblem, which was designed to complement the other furnishings and architectural flourishes of the affluent and prominent Italian estates and palaces.⁴⁵

The three common types of frames popular at the beginning of the Renaissance in Italy were the aedicule, the tondo and the cassetta.⁴⁶ The aedicule picture frame (also known as the 'Tabernacle' frame in later literature), was developed with a strong link to the architectural trend inspired by Brunelleschi. The Roman triumphal arches and Donatello ultimately influenced Brunelleschi and the classical triangular or arched tympanum can be seen in many of the aedicule frames. The first examples of the cassetta frame were simple rectangular borders of flat strips. They evolved over the decades to become embellished frames, with carved profiles and a wide range of decoration styles. The flat surface of the cassetta frame lends itself to a wide range of decorative options, and for many artists and prominent families, cassetta frames were a favourite. The cassetta frame developed its own style in each of the areas of Italy. In central Italy, the cassetta frame often had a black background with gold motifs in the corners. In the Emilia region, the Albana cassetta frame was gilded with a chiselled background and tendril motifs. The tondo frame was born during 15th and 16th centuries where artistic expression was at its height and the Medici family were dominant. The tondo frames were most often circular or featuring a circular artwork, and the word 'tondo' comes from the Italian word 'rotondo', meaning round, and was born from inspiration from the 'terracotta della robbia'.⁴⁷

Italians were exceptionally proud of their art and antiquities during the Gothic period and the Renaissance and nearly all frames were made in collaboration with the artists and painters who were commissioned to create artwork. This is evident where original frames remain partnered with original artworks, as many themes or decorations are carried across from artwork to frame.

42 Colle, E & Zambrano, P 2009 *La Cornice Italiana: Dal Rinascimento al Neoclassico*, Mondadori Electa, Italy

43 Sabatelli, F & Nistri, R, *Le Cornici Italiane*, AlborNews, Florence, Italy. www.albor.it

44 Lodi, R & Montanari, A 2003 *Repertorio Della Cornice Europea: Italia, Francia, Spagna, Paesi Bassi*, 2nd edition, Modena, Italy

45 Colle, E & Zambrano, P 2009 *La Cornice Italiana: Dal Rinascimento al Neoclassico*, Mondadori Electa, Italy

46 Lodi, R & Montanari, A 2003 *Repertorio Della Cornice Europea: Italia, Francia, Spagna, Paesi Bassi*, 2nd edition, Modena, Italy

47 Colle, E & Zambrano, P 2009 *La Cornice Italiana: Dal Rinascimento al Neoclassico*, Mondadori Electa, Italy

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In the 17th century, the picture frame gained even more attention and distinction, and Italian frames of this period showcase an incredible variety of carving detail, rich designs with a heavy focus on leaf designs, both real and fantasy. Shells and elaborate masks (*mascheroni*) were also common features. The period of artistic expression is now known as the Baroque period, where movement, form and balance were the prominent elements of the picture frame. It was around this time that the artist Salvator Rosa developed his own style of picture framing of the same name, which quickly became popular throughout Italy.⁴⁸ The Salvator Rosa frame was also known as the Maratta Frame, named after Carlo Maratta who was one of the last great Italian Baroque painters who favoured that particular style of frame and whose name is used as an umbrella term for many Romanesque style frames.⁴⁹

The 18th century saw a change in the picture frame's manner, with simpler, smaller shapes and more refined, elegant carvings garnering favour. Vegetable decorations, *mascheroni* and images of classical human forms were prominent along with flora and fauna designs and ribbons. The popular frame during this time was the 'Arte Povera' frame from Venezia. This frame featured engraved paper that was then varnished with shellac or Sandracca.⁵⁰

Throughout the Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque period the picture frame was often just as, if not more, expensive than the painted artwork. For example, in the year 1503, a particular painting cost 250 Scuri to commission while the frame was 450 Scuri.⁵¹ This price difference did not however mean that frames were more valued than artworks, and indeed frames were often considered less important than the paintings.⁵²

Traditionally, much care would go into the process of making a picture frame. The maker would choose a timber suited to his needs. The centre of the tree was ultimately preferred as it was the area of timber where the grain was most compact and suited to delicate carving. Different timbers experienced different periods of favour: chestnut and walnut timbers were favoured during the 16th century, whereas the apple and pear fruit trees were favoured later as they were a cheaper replacement for the walnut. Other timbers that were commonly used for wood carving in picture framing were *tiglio*, *cipressio* and *laris*, and later the *cirmolo* pine was the preferred timber. Different timbers again were favoured for canvas stretching; the most popular being the *cipresso*, *piopo*, *olmo*, *abete* and *pino*.

Because the designs and styles of the frames were repeated over time, it is impossible to know the exact details, and for most of the picture frames from the Gothic and Renaissance period, the exact dates and makers are not known. Different styles would come and go and frames were replaced with new frames as was common practice in other parts of the world. There are however distinctive styles of decoration, carving and finishing relative to different areas of Italy. The Italians are incredibly proud of their history in antiquity and artistic accomplishment, and many small towns and provinces remain loyal to the iconic styles of picture frames that were born in their region. The notion that traditional technique and style deserve the utmost respect remains a prominent aspect of Italian culture. Many respectable Italian picture framers will vividly describe the history of the artistic movement and picture-framing styles particular to their area and every Italian artisan will argue that Italian style and craftsmanship is unmatched for its beauty, quality and divineness.

48 *ibid*

49 Simon, J 1997 *The Art of the Picture Frame: Artists, Patrons and the Framing of Portraits in Britain*, National Portrait Gallery Publications, London

50 Colle, E & Zambrano, P 2009 *La Cornice Italiana: Dal Rinascimento al Neoclassico*, Mondadori Electa, Italy

51 *ibid*

52 Sabatelli, F & Nistri, R, *Le Cornici Italiane*, AlborNews, Florence, Italy. www.albor.it

