

## Exchanges & Collaborations



Zaid Ghazi, Mosul Cultural Museum, preparing to cast his carved design in pewter while the instructor, Met conservator Donna Strahan, assists. Translator Abudulah observes in the background.

### Conservation training in Iraq

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Iraq, U.S.A.  
2010–2011

A central objective of the Iraqi Cultural Heritage Project is to assist Iraq in rebuilding the professional capabilities of its museums, its heritage, and its archaeology organizations. A major initiative of that project, the Iraqi Institute for the Conservation of Antiquities and Heritage, launched in the fall of 2008 by the U.S. State Department with grant funding from the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad, was

established in the city of Erbil to provide training in conservation and preservation. Two programs have been developed within the Institute: Collections Conservation and Management, which focuses on museums and artifacts, and Historic Preservation, with an emphasis on architecture and immovable heritage.



The Institute building has laboratories, classrooms, computer and documentation spaces, dormitory facilities, and a conservation and historic preservation library created by a unique partnership of American and Iraqi organizations and individuals. Equipment and supplies were purchased and conservation and heritage preservation experts created a training curriculum to the highest international standards. The Institute was handed over to the Iraqi government in January 2011 and is managed through a partnership between the State Board of Antiquities and Heritage and the Erbil Governor's office.



The Collections Conservation and Management Program is continuing in 2012 with support from the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad and managed by the University of Delaware. The students—men and women representing a diverse mix of ethnicities and religious beliefs—are conservators, collection managers, and archaeologists from museums throughout Iraq. The curriculum is taught by Visiting Faculty experts brought in from around the world to teach specific topics. The Metropolitan Museum's conservator has conducted intensive workshops on metals conservation.

By the end of 2010, 52 individuals had received training at the Institute and many others had attended public lectures. In 2011, seventeen more trainees attended the University of Delaware Programs; and many others received training in the facility through

programs funded by the Italian government. This ambitious initiative to save Iraq's cultural treasures is unprecedented in U.S. conservation history. Regardless of Iraq's political future, these people will have training that they can pass on to future generations.



Partnered with the Iraqi Institute for the Conservation of Antiquities and Heritage (IICAH).