
Executive Summary: Future Directions for Lacquer Conservation

The collective feedback and the results of the workshop highlight four primary pillars for the development of the field: **Technical Research, Conservation Practice, Science & Preventive Care, Education/Collaboration**. The overarching sentiment is a move away from purely academic dissemination toward **applied, accessible, and inclusive practice** that bridges the gap between the laboratory and the conservation studio.

1. Materials and Regional Specificity

There is a strong mandate to move beyond generalities and embrace the chemical and cultural nuances of different traditions.

- **Comparative Studies:** Deepening research into regional variations in materials and primers across Japan (Urushi), China, Korea, Vietnam, Taiwan, and Southeast Asia.
- **Non-Asian Lacquers:** Expanding the scope to include Latin American lacquers and other "western" traditions.
- **Object-Specific Knowledge:** Developing specialized guidelines for complex items like armor, Buddha sculptures, and export-market wares.
- **Characterization:** Continued focus on both organic and inorganic components to understand regional technical literacy.

2. Conservation Treatment and Methodology

Conservators are seeking evidence-based, practical guidance that can be integrated into daily workflows.

- **Cleaning & Stabilization:** High interest in green solvents, and comparing "Western vs. Eastern" conservation practices.
- **The "Failure" Initiative:** A request for safe spaces to share conservation failures and negative results and to help train younger professionals.
- **Practical Demonstrations:** A shift toward hands-on workshops, live demonstrations of traditional techniques, and laboratory visits over traditional lectures.
- **Ethics & Standards:** Defining the ethical boundaries of restoration and standardizing terminology to avoid cross-disciplinary confusion.

3. Science and Preventive Conservation

The field identifies a "bottleneck" where scientific data is often too slow or complex for practical application.

- **Standardization:** A critical need to keep standardizing Py-GC/MS protocols and shared analytical databases to ensure data comparability.
- **Environmental Management:** Moving beyond generic rules to create science-based recommendations for light-exposure and RH guidelines specifically tailored to the unique surfaces of lacquer.

- **Non-Invasive Testing:** Prioritizing the development of reliable, non-destructive testing and interpretation.
- **Accessibility:** Scientific support should be made affordable and accessible to independent conservators and smaller institutions.

4. Training, Collaboration, and Outreach

The future of the field depends on relational trust and the formal transfer of "hidden" knowledge.

- **The Scientist-Conservator Bridge:** Promoting "co-creation" where researchers and practitioners collaborate at the *start* of a project rather than at the end.
- **Artisan Engagement:** Facilitating practical exchanges with traditional artisans to preserve craft knowledge.
- **Formal Education:** Creating multidisciplinary opportunities for non-Asian conservators to learn traditional techniques.
- **Inclusivity:** Ensuring that freelancers and private practitioners have equal footing with institutional staff in global exchanges.

Strategic Action Plan

Initiative	Key Components
International Lacquer Network	Mailing list, newsletter, forums and/or a central "Wiki" for shared knowledge.
Standardization Working Group	Creating a database of analytical protocols (ISO engagement).
Applied Research Hubs	Subsidized analytical access for freelancers and rapid-response consultations.