

Conserve ART^{LLC}

ANALYSIS – RESEARCH – TREATMENT

BIOGRAPHY OF FRANCIS MILLER & CONSERVE ART LLC

Francis Miller received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Studio Arts from the University of California, Davis in 1984 and a Masters of Fine Arts degree in Sculpture in 1992 from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. During Graduate School he became focused on issues associated with public sculpture which led to a career in fine art conservation at the Chicago Park District (CPD). The CPD Conservation Program began in 1991 under the direction of Andrzej Dajnowski, a senior conservator who studied conservation in Poland and at the Strauss Conservation Center, Harvard University. The Conservation Program established sculpture conservation archives and a treatment facility for public sculpture in Chicago. The collection required condition surveys, budget analysis for future conservation treatment and the purchase and organization of conservation equipment and materials.

During the three years that followed the initial organization, Mr. Miller performed in-depth condition assessment, treatment, and maintenance for the notable bronze and stone sculpture in Chicago's Parks and those under the care of the Ferguson Monument Fund governed by the Art Institute of Chicago. Projects included: Henry Moore's *Nuclear Energy*, Daniel Chester French's *Republic*, Augustus Saint-Gaudens' *Standing Lincoln*, George Segal's *Man on Bench*, and Albin Polasek's *Theodore Thomas Memorial*.

The *Theodore Thomas Memorial* had been disassembled for 40 years and had sections dumped along Lake Michigan as shore protection. The treatment entailed the cleaning, pinning, Dutchman repair and resetting of the once discarded massive granite relief panels and accompanying architectural stone work. The entire granite grouping was reassembled and reunited with the accompanying bronze muse *The Spirit of Music*.

Mr. Miller's involvement in complex conservation treatments continued after joining Conservation Technical Associates, a private conservation firm under the direction of Linda Merk-Gould, Fellow of AIC. Large bronze and gilt copper projects included Daniel Chester French's gilt *Quadriga* at the Minnesota State Capitol, *The Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument* in Cleveland, Ohio, and *Victory* in Portland, Maine. Large stone treatments included Barnard's colossal marble *Barnard Statuary* at the Pennsylvania State Capitol; McKim Mead and White's neoclassical marble *Kimball Monument* in Graceland Cemetery; and the conservation of the limestone False Door and adjoining walls of the Ancient Egyptian *Mastaba of Kapura* from the University of Pennsylvania.

The limestone *Mastaba of Kapura* was a complex treatment that required consultation from several senior conservators, including George Wheeler from the Metropolitan Museum of Art and Martin Weaver from Columbia University. Mr. Miller managed the overall treatment, which included the removal of sodium salts with poultices and pressure chambers, consolidation of friable paint and stone layers, cleaning the carved and painted surfaces, mending broken sections (weighing from 30 to 1200 lbs.) with stainless steel pins and epoxy, plaster fills that matched the adjoining texture and contours of the surrounding original stone, and inpainting. The walls and 8 ton false door complex were mounted on a sectional stainless steel armature system allowing to *Mastaba* to travel for several years throughout the country.

Additional projects entailed the treatment of numerous modern and contemporary work such as Christian Petersen's terra cotta *Dairy Industry Mural*, Henry Moore's bronze *Reclining Nude*, Barbara Hepworth's *Divided Circle*, Alberto Giacometti's painted bronze *The Caged Figure* and Abaconowitz' bronze *Standing Figures*. In 1999 Mr. Miller received the title of Professional Associate by the American Institute for the Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (AIC).

The conservation of a wide range of objects, from stone and bronze monuments to the survey and treatment of terra cotta and plaster sculpture collections has continued with Conserve Art LLC. Founded by Francis

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19 Lansdowne Avenue, Hamden, Connecticut 06517 Phone: 203-248-2530 E-mail:millerfrancis@hotmail.com

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Miller in 1999, Conserve Art LLC provides care to historic cemeteries, monuments, sculpture and architectural elements held in public, museum and private collections. Projects have included the 100' tall *Soldiers' and Sailors Monument*, in New Haven, Connecticut; the 55' limestone *Gordon Monument*, Savannah, GA; the unique, large scale, terra cotta relief sculptures by Christian Petersen at Iowa State University; 16th Century Renaissance marbles, and grand marble fountain, Stamford Museum and Nature Center, Connecticut; Henry Moore's *Mother and Child*, private collection; the bronze entry doors to Scroll & Key and Berzelius Secrete Societies, Yale University; wrought iron handrails on Gracie Mansion, New York, NY; and the conservation of Enid Yandell's *Bajnotti Fountain* in Providence, Rhode Island.

Yandell, a student of Rodin, sculpted the multi-figured bronze base and upper bronze fountain as the highlight of the central square in downtown Providence. The complex treatment consisted of corrosion removal, welding open holes, removal of internal cementitious material that caused the bronze to rupture during freeze-thaw cycles, lead joint repairs, and the application of a polyethylene/microcrystalline protective wax coating.

Since the 1996 treatment of notable cemetery monuments and grave markers in Graceland Cemetery, Chicago, IL, Mr. Miller has extensively researched and repaired historic granite, marble, sandstone, slate and bronze monuments in cemeteries listed on state and national historic registries. Conservation treatments consisted of cleaning, consolidation, complex crack injection, pinning, patching, and resetting of deteriorating, vandalized and improperly repaired markers notable Colonial era cemeteries include the *Williams Family Cemetery*, Providence (1723), the *North Burial Ground*, Providence (1710), the *Old Burial Ground*, Durham, CT (1700), The Olde Burying Ground, Lexington, MA (1690), the *Granary Burying Ground*, Boston (1660), the *Ancient Burying Ground*, Hartford, CT (1640), and *Dorchester North Burying Ground*, Boston (1633). To aid in the preservation of these invaluable resources, Mr. Miller has lead conservation workshops for the National Parks Service's National Center for Preservation Technology and Training (NCPTT), and the Association for Gravestone Studies, where he currently sits on the Board of Directors.

Completed projects over the past five years include the treatment of the granite base on the *National Iwo Jima Memorial*, Newington, CT; the assessment and treatment of historic Civil War monuments for the National Cemetery Administration, including the bronze *Minnesota Monument*, Little Rock, AR; the historic bronze figures, relief sculptures and grand honor rolls on the 100' *Soldiers and Sailors Monument*, New Haven, CT; the cleaning, repair, armature design and installation of limestone sculpture and terra cotta relief sculptures *The Four Seasons Fountain*, *The Three Athletes*, *The History of Dairying Industry Mural*, and *The Reclining Nudes for Iowa State University*; and the assessment, cleaning and salt analysis of a limestone Ian Finlay sculpture in the Bucksbaum and Learsy Collection, Sharon, CT.

A noteworthy project, also recently completed, is the conservation of approximately 40 cast stone sculptures by Constanino Nivola, Yale University. As both free standing and wall relief sculptures, Nivola integrated the unique geometric artworks into and around Eero Saarinen's architectural designs of Morse College and Stiles College. The treatment entailed assessment, material analysis, cleaning, deposit removal, crack repair, stabilization and color & aggregate matched loss replacement. Three of sculptures required removal from the site, were treated and reinstalled by Conserve Art LLC as part of the AIA designated "Gold Medal" Renovation of the Colleges by Kieran Timberlake.

Current projects include the conservation of the unique, terra cotta Spanish American War Memorial in front of the historic VA Hospital, Newington, CT.

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