

## MCI Weekly Highlight – 11 June 2010

Collaborative partnerships with outside agencies and institutions fosters creativity and stimulates transfer of our knowledge and skills among researchers. Through such partnerships MCI researchers are motivated to pursue unique research questions using innovative and oftentimes cross-disciplinary approaches to examine collections and develop effective conservation treatments; to collaborate with researchers and organizations with complementary interests and skills; to develop and use specialized scientific instruments; to teach courses and mentor graduate students; and to apply for grant and contract funding. Over the past five years one of our most profitable international partnerships has been with the Universidad Politécnica de Valencia (UPV), Spain, and its Department of Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Heritage. This collaborative effort helps MCI support the Smithsonian's themes of *The American Experience* and *Valuing World Cultures*.

- MCI was a co-sponsor of the international conference *Cleaning 2010: New Insights into the Cleaning of Paintings*, held May 26-28, 2010, at the Universidad Politécnica de Valencia, Spain. The conference was fully subscribed with 480 attendees from all over the world, and representing every major cultural institution from the Metropolitan Museum of Art to the Louvre, and a waiting list of over 100. The conference included 20 invited presentations by major researchers in the field and 24 posters. The papers and poster abstracts will be printed as a volume of the SISP Contributions to Museum Conservation. The lead organizers for the conference were Laura Fuster Lopez, UPV Assistant Professor and MCI fellow in the summers of 2005 and 2007, and Marion F. Mecklenburg, Senior Research Scientist at MCI.
- On May 25, 2010, Julio M. del Hoyo-Melendez successfully defended his Ph.D. dissertation (*summa cum laude*), *A Study on the Action of Light on Objects of Cultural Interest by Evaluating the Light Levels in the Museum and Performing Micro-Fading Tests of Materials*, Co-advisors, Marion F. Mecklenburg, MCI, and M. Teresa Domenech-Carbo, UPV. The dissertation research has thus far produced four papers in press and two manuscripts in review. The research was initiated during the time del Hoyo-Melendez was a fellow at MCI, September 2007 through October 2008, and focused on light levels in the recently renovated exhibit spaces of SAAM and NPG in the Old Patent Office Building (now the Donald W. Reynolds Center for American Art and Portraiture) and its potential fading effects on paintings.
- The collaboration between Universidad Politécnica de Valencia and MCI, formalized in a Memorandum of Understanding signed May 2008, has been very successful, producing an annual course taught by Mecklenburg and Fuster Lopez, *The Structure of Paintings and the Mechanical Properties of Cultural Materials*, 2008-2009; three Ph.D. programs: Fuster Lopez (2006), del Hoyo-Melendez (2010), and Miguel Silva (current); and 19 publications and manuscripts.