

POSTER:

Title: Preserving Idols in Stained Glass: An Investigation into the Conservation Needs of Napier Waller's Stained Glass Windows in the Hall of Memory at the Australian War Memorial

Author: Jacqueline Jordan, Objects and Preventive Conservator

Institutions: Australian War Memorial and the University of Melbourne, Australia

Research Supervisors: Dr Gina Levenspiel, Dr Andrea Nicole Tse (University of Melbourne), and George Bailey (Australian War Memorial)

Abstract:

Between 1937 and 1950, the distinguished Australian artisanal craftsman Napier Waller designed, fabricated, and installed three sets of stained glass windows for the Hall of Memory by commission of the Australian War Memorial in Canberra. Today, as then, the windows are deeply valued artworks at the heart of the Memorial's commemorative role.

This research has informed the development of a conservation strategy for the windows through a discussion of conservation priorities, challenges and opportunities. It includes exploring the key elements of significance of the stained glass (aesthetic symbolism and commemorative function), and a life-cycle analysis of the complex materials. Data was collected in three stages: primary examination and analysis of the stained glass; stakeholder engagement; and a review of historical data. The conservation strategy aims to mitigate physical and management risks, as well as provide opportunities to enhance the windows' value through appropriate conservation management and intervention in the long term.

Statement of Proposal

This research was completed as a minor-thesis in the Master of Cultural Materials Conservation at the University of Melbourne in 2018. The holistic investigation of the conservation priorities in this research is informed by global decision making trends and ethical culture. However, there are some specific points that leverage the conservation of the integrity of the glass on its visual and functional identity. This identity is the prime principle for conservation decision making, and the character by which we intend to measure the retention and enhancement of the windows integrity.

This research will illuminate attendees to stained glass conservation challenges particular to the windows at the Australian War Memorial, and the relevance and application of global research and approaches to Australian stained glass.