

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Foundation of the American Institute for Conservation Awarded \$3.46 Million  
from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Foundation of the American Institute for Conservation (FAIC) was recently awarded a grant of \$3,460,000 by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for a 4-year initiative to establish a photograph conservation department at the State Hermitage Museum in Saint Petersburg, Russia. This initiative continues the Mellon Foundation's longstanding commitment to develop the field of photograph conservation.

A Mellon-funded 2008-2009 comprehensive survey of the Hermitage's collections identified 44 repositories holding over 472,000 photographs. Due to the cultural value and vulnerability of these holdings, the Museum leadership has recently completed plans for staff positions and a new centralized state-of-the-art department of photograph conservation that will also include storage and curatorial facilities. Conservation and collection management staff will be trained to undertake, in collaboration with curators, the cataloguing, care, and preservation of these photograph collections, as well as to address the preservation priorities identified by the 2008-2009 survey.

Paul Messier, who undertook the 2008 Mellon survey, is serving as Project Director. Over the past two years, he has worked closely with Dr. Vyacheslav Fedorov (Director of the Hermitage department of Russian History and Culture) and with other colleagues in St. Petersburg and the United States to design the 4-year program. Angelica Zander Rudenstine, formerly Program Officer for Museums and Art Conservation at the Mellon Foundation where she engaged in a lengthy planning process with Hermitage Director Mikhail Piotrovsky, has agreed to serve as

consultant to oversee the initiative.

FAIC is supporting this major commitment by providing administrative and financial oversight, together with its expertise in conservation education and training. An international Advisory Committee for the initiative has been established including specialists in the fields of photograph and preventive conservation, education, documentation, cataloguing, digital imaging, and scientific research. FAIC Institutional Advancement Director Eric Pourchot, who oversees professional development activities at FAIC, will serve on the Advisory Committee to ensure that these resources are made available throughout the grant period.

FAIC will also facilitate the creation of a Russian- and English-language library of essential photograph conservation and collection management texts to be made available on FAIC's online resource, Conservation OnLine (CoOL). Documentation of the initiative on CoOL will serve as an example for best practices in photograph conservation, cataloguing, and digital imaging, and will provide a lasting resource for the preservation community.

This initiative represents a significant recognition and expansion of FAIC's ongoing professional development programs and its continued effort to engage and educate conservators in the United States and internationally.

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## **About FAIC**

FAIC, the Foundation of the American Institute for Conservation of Historic & Artistic Works,

supports conservation education, research, and outreach activities that increase understanding of our global cultural heritage. Learn more about FAIC at [www.conservation-us.org/aboutfaic](http://www.conservation-us.org/aboutfaic).

### **About The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation**

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation makes grants in six core program areas, including Museum and Art Conservation. Its grant-making philosophy is to build, strengthen, and sustain institutions and their core capabilities. More information about the Mellon Foundation can be found at [www.mellon.org](http://www.mellon.org).

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