

Fellows Haga Huis September 2025-Augustus 2026



Biography

Victoria Ward is a paintings conservator with a bachelor of arts in the History of Art from University College London and an MA in the Conservation of Easel Paintings from the Courtauld Institute of Art in London. Victoria has held conservation positions at the National Trust (England), Palaces of Westminster (London),

Southampton City Art Galleries and a research role at the British Museums' Latin American Art department. She has published on sustainable, alternative materials for paintings conservation. Victoria is the current Migelien Gerritzen Fellow for Conservation and Scientific Research at the Rijksmuseum.

About the project

This project re-examines historical cleaning recipes as sustainable alternatives for varnish removal in painting conservation. From a database of over 1,000 recipes, 'greener', low-tech methods were tested on varnished mock-ups and oil paintings. Materials explored include salt, rainwater, clays, sorrel leaves, and heated solvents used to soften varnishes. Paint surfaces were evaluated visually and with advanced, non-invasive techniques (HIROX 3D, ER-FTIR, LSI). Another outcome of the study is a visual database, documenting damage patterns from earlier conservation treatments on Old Master paintings at the Rijksmuseum. By revisiting recipes dating back to 1560, this project offers insights into both the risks and potential benefits of historical cleaning methods.

Aims of the project

This project seeks to re-introduce historic cleaning recipes dating from the 16th to the 20th century into modern conservation practice. These nature-inspired, bio-based and low-tech cleaning recipes merit investigation as 'greener' options for cleaning oil paintings.



Biography

Maria Puzyreva is an art historian and curator specializing in modern Japanese printmaking (such as the *Sōsaku-hanga* movement) and global artistic exchange. She connects [University of Pennsylvania](#) (Penn) and the [Rijksmuseum](#).

Education and Academic

Background

- University of Pennsylvania: She is currently a PhD candidate within the *History of Art Department*. Her dissertation focuses on Russian-Japanese artistic exchange.
- New York University (NYU): Earned her Master's degree in Museology and Museum Studies.
- Higher School of Economics (Moscow): Completed her Bachelor's degree in East Asian Studies.

About the project

Scholars have long emphasized that the creative print movement in Japan owes its genesis in the first decade of the 20th century to Western European influences.

This project challenges and clarifies the often vague notion of 'European influences' by tracing the international artistic encounters and collaborations that contributed to the development of the creative print movement. It shows that Japanese printmakers were integral to the worldwide networks of modernist experimentation that defined the artistic landscape in the first half of the century.

Aims of the project

This project forms part of dissertation research examining cases of international exchange between Japanese creative printmakers and artists across Europe, Russia, China and the United States. By focusing on the reciprocal nature of this exchange, the project repositions *sōsaku hanga* as a significant component of global 20th-century modernism, complicating previous narratives that have marginalized the role of Japanese artists in shaping modern print history.