

ABSTRACT

Mounting Religious Objects with a Consideration for Access to the Object

Presenter:

Louise Bradley, Conservation Framing for Works of Art, Rye, Victoria, AU

An object of faith that must be protected and preserved may also need to be touched by the owners. In this presentation I will discuss two objects where the owners requested that the objects could be accessed for touching on religious holy days.

The first object is a conserved fragment of the coffin of Australian Saint Mary MacKillop, (1842 - 1909), owned by a Catholic Church parish. The priest requested a minimal, elegant, presentation in a frame, with preservation of the object the key concern. The piece would be stored horizontally but the fragment had to be secure within the frame so it could be held up vertically to show to the congregation at a Mass. The priest also requested that the fragment be accessible so it could be blessed or touched. The solution was to fabricate an acrylic cradle, secure that to a backing board, and set both in a deep frame glazed with UV filtering acrylic. The backing board was fitted into the frame so that the mounted fragment could be removed.

The second object is a Greek icon owned by an Australian family. The patriarch of the family brought the icon to me with the request that it be mounted and framed for vertical display but with a removable back so that the family could touch or kiss the icon on holy days. The solution was to mount the icon on an acrylic cradle secured to a backing, and fitted into a deep box-like frame glazed with UV filtering acrylic. The project included the complication that the owner would not part with the icon because it was so precious to his family. I had to take measurements during the owners first visit, then prepare the cradle and frame, and finally fit the object in a relatively short time during the owners second visit.

BIO



Louise Bradley is a conservation framer in private practice specialising in the mounting and framing of work on paper, reproduction of period mounts, and framing of modern and contemporary art. She is the convenor of the AICCM (Australian Institute for the Conservation of Cultural Material) Conservation Framers Special Interest Group.