

WINTERTHUR



## Winterthur Press Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Winterthur's Scientific Research and Analysis Laboratory Reopens**

*Important work resumes in state-of-the-art facility*

Winterthur, DE, October 1, 2018— Winterthur Museum, Garden & Library is pleased to announce the reopening of its Scientific Research and Analysis Laboratory (SRAL) after a \$450,000 improvement that, among other things, will allow visitors to observe the important work that happens there, at the interface of art and science.

The SRAL opened October 1, after more than four months of work that updated its heating-ventilation-air conditioning system, created a more functional floor space, and installed custom lab furniture and new windows. The lab houses 11 high-tech instruments and several microscopes that museum scientists employ to identify the materials used in objects of art in nondestructive and minimally invasive ways. Winterthur scientists collaborate with conservators, curators, students from the renowned Winterthur/UD Program in Art Conservation and the Winterthur Program in American Material Culture, preservation students, other museums, and visiting scholars from around the world.

“We are very excited about the possibilities our improved lab will afford, especially the opportunity to engage with the public. The renovated lab will facilitate the study, preservation, and conservation of the important works in Winterthur’s unique collection, as well as host state-of-the-art preventive conservation and treatment research,” said Dr. Rosie Grayburn, Head of SRAL.

The SRAL is one of only 18 museum laboratories in the United States. It is also one of the most well equipped. Opened at the behest of Winterthur founder Henry Francis du Pont, shortly after his death in 1969, it is equal to similar labs at such esteemed institutions as the Smithsonian and The Metropolitan Museum of Art. The SRAL also occasionally conducts science for other exhibitions and institutions. The SRAL renovation was the first since it opened nearly 50 years ago.

Recent work in the SRAL includes an investigation of the toxicity of antique mirrors and looking glasses, finding new ways of identifying and conserving silver objects, and the study of materials and methods of manufacture of Chinese-export lacquered objects attributed to production in Guangzhou (Canton) from the 18th to 19th centuries.

Maria Joao Petisca, a doctoral candidate in the Preservation Studies program at the University of Delaware, used the lab to identify and understand the way various material were applied in the manufacturing of Chinese export lacquerware. “Working with the SRAL allowed me to complete all the material analysis necessary for my Ph.D. research,” she said. “It was crucial for my study

to have the support of a scientific lab like the SRAL at Winterthur and to have access to state-of-the-art equipment. It was essential to work with Catherine Matsen, who has extensive experience in lacquer analysis.” Over the past four years, SRAL Scientist Catherine Matsen and volunteer scientist Dr. Judy Rudolph have performed various instrumental analyses on the materials of 41 Chinese export lacquer objects. The results of material analyses contribute to the archival research and object study involved in this multi-disciplinary research.

Renovation of Winterthur’s Scientific Research and Analysis Laboratory was made possible in part by gifts from private funders. Winterthur offers monthly tours of the Conservation Department. To schedule, call 800.448.3883 or e-mail [tourinfo@winterthur.org](mailto:tourinfo@winterthur.org).

Winterthur—known worldwide for its preeminent collection of American decorative arts, naturalistic gardens, and research library for the study of American art and material culture—offers a variety of tours, exhibitions, programs, and activities throughout the year. General admission includes a tour of some of the most notable spaces in the 175-room house as well as access to the Winterthur Garden and Galleries, special exhibitions, a narrated tram tour (weather permitting), the Campbell Collection of Soup Tureens, and Enchanted Woods children’s garden. \$20 adults; \$18 students and seniors; \$6 ages 2–11.

Museum hours are 10:00 am–5:00 pm, Tuesday–Sunday. Winterthur, located on Route 52, six miles northwest of Wilmington, Delaware, and five miles south of U.S. Route 1, is closed on Mondays (except during Yuletide), Thanksgiving, and Christmas Day.

Winterthur is committed to accessible programming for all. For information, including special services, call 800.448.3883, 302.888.4600, or TTY 302.888.4907, or visit [winterthur.org](http://winterthur.org).

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