



# Art Conservation *and world travelers*

*Bright, bold, and beautiful, this late-19th-century Chinese folding fan was made for export, carrying with it a romanticized message about wealth, leisure, and happiness that was China's image at the time. On the fan, Chinese men and women in vibrantly colored clothing are surrounded by blooming plants and flowers, pagodas, and other architectural structures. Their faces are made of ivory appliques, and their clothing is made of textile appliques, possibly silk.*

The fan is being treated this year by WUDPAC second-year Fellow Kacey Green, an objects major and a paper minor. It arrived at Winterthur in a black lacquered wooden box from Philadelphia's Penn Museum, where it is one of dozens in the museum's collection. Comprised of 14 carved ivory sticks with an open-work design and a tapered ivory guard on each end, the fan has thirty painted paper leaves attached to the ribs, one layer of paper on each side, and reinforced along the top edge with a metallic-toned paper band. The guards and sticks are gathered at the bottom with a metal hanging loop.

Kacey found the fan in fair condition overall, with extensive treatment needs that included tears in the paper leaves at the points where they attached to the sticks and ribs and distorted ivory and textile appliques that were lifting from the paper.

Kacey's goal was to stabilize and reshape the ivory and paper components so the fan can be easily handled and stored until a future WUDPAC Fellow is able to complete the treatment. Kacey first cleaned the fan and then placed the ivory sticks in small humidification packages to make the ivory more pliable. She blocked the ivory sticks with pieces of non-woven polyester and blotter papers, applied weights, and allowed them to dry. She consolidated any flaking paint on the paper leaves with a dilute solution of methylcellulose.

Kacey cleaned the fan's box inside and out. She adhered the detaching paper on the inside of the box with wheat starch paste and adhered flaking lacquer on the outside with rabbit skin glue.

Kacey will clean the fan, reshape the ivory components, and consolidate the flaking paint but the structural component of the treatment will be completed by a future WUDPAC Fellow. Until then, the fan will be placed in storage. Once all treatment is complete the fan and box will be returned to the Penn Museum, where researchers will be able to handle them with confidence.



**ARTC Spotlight—May 2024**  
*The University of Delaware's Art Conservation Department educates and trains professional conservators who are well versed in the treatment, analysis, documentation, and preventive conservation of individual artifact and archive collections. For more news about our students and other department activities visit our web site at [www.artcons.udel.edu](http://www.artcons.udel.edu).*

*Top: WUDPAC Fellow Kacey Green examines the lifting ivory faces and fraying textile applique using a microscope. Above: Kacey realigns the ivory sticks of the fan into their proper orientation before humidifying them. Right: The fan was examined under visible and longwave UV light to characterize the paint on the leaves and confirm the sticks of the fan are ivory. The bright blue fluorescence of the sticks and figures' faces is typical for ivory. (Images: E. Krape, C. Ching, K. Green.)*