

Conservation Internship at the Buffalo Bill Center of the West

Though I understood the general idea of museum conservation work, when I was accepted into a conservation internship at the Center of the West, I had no idea how valuable the experience would be. Most people think of conservation as preservation of old artwork. However, what I learned was that the world of conservation work is far more vast. The Buffalo Bill Center of the West is a wildly diverse museum, with everything from fine art, to ethnographic objects. Because I worked in each of the four museums within the Center of the West, I was exposed to a wide array of conservation practices. I learned about textile care and the individual fibers and weaving patterns that can be used as clues for identification. I learned about the chemistry of several different metals as I was working with a pair of 19th century spurs. What I found the most interesting, however, was working with indigenous objects because of the understanding and fundamental ethical process that is incredibly important when conducting conservation work on ethnographic objects. I will be sharing my process of understanding the basics of conservation, to conducting my own conservation treatments of several diverse objects.