

CONSERVATION

SAM conservation staff played an important part in the intensive planning for the downtown museum expansion and the Olympic Sculpture Park. High-density compact art storage was added, continuing our plans to develop superb storage.

In November, associate conservator Liz Brown joined SAM, augmenting the museum's capacity to treat works of art at the Neukom Conservation Studio.

The exhibition *Renaissance Art in Focus: Neri di Bicci and Devotional Painting in Italy* culminated in a procession of the altarpiece to St. James Cathedral, where a symposium focused on Neri di Bicci and the conservation treatment.

The museum has been fortunate to receive support for several conservation projects that commenced in the last year. SAAM's *Crow Screen* and *White Path between Two Rivers* are being conserved with support from the National Research Institute for Cultural Properties, Tokyo, and *Moonlit Bamboo Grove* is being conserved, thanks to a bequest from donor Duane H. Shipman and a Sumitomo Foundation grant. In May, SAM was awarded fifty thousand dollars by The Clowes Fund to begin conservation and examination of a centuries-old Italian paneled room which will become a key installation in the expanded SAM galleries.

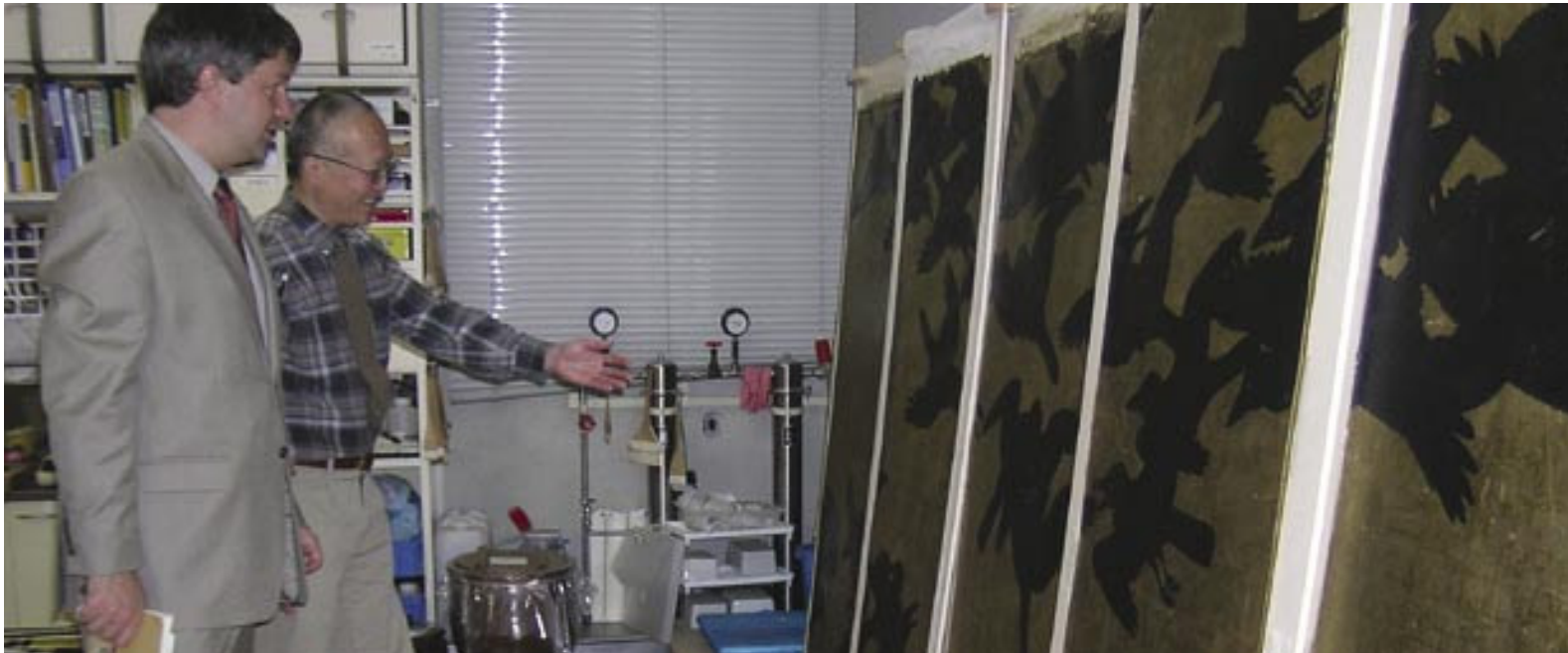
Conservation at SAM would not be possible without the generous support of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation with matching contributions from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, William and Sally Neukom and Charles Simonyi.

RENOVATIONS WILL IMPROVE A BELOVED LANDMARK

Director Mimi Gates calls the Seattle Asian Art Museum, the elegant 1933 building designed by Seattle architect Carl Gould, "one of the greatest works of art in the collection." The curatorial and exhibition design staff agree that the pleasing proportions of the galleries and skylights, which admit controlled natural light, create a uniquely gracious environment in which to display works of art.

In 1994 the building was renovated and dedicated as the Seattle Asian Art Museum; in 2002 the Activities Room was redesigned and improved as the Alvord Board Room; in 2005 the roof and skylights were replaced. When renovations like these are undertaken, every effort is made to preserve the landmark building's original character. However, there is one area in which the Seattle Asian Art Museum must be modernized: its environmental systems are antiquated and have not been updated in many years.

Fortunately, these long-needed renovations are planned to begin in 2008. Once completed, SAAM will continue to be the jewel in SAM's crown, but it will have state-of-the-art climate control systems that will allow us greater flexibility in our displays and greater access to international exhibitions that relate to our celebrated collections.



SAM's chief Conservator Nick Dorman and Hiroyuki Suzuki who coordinated this project for the NRICPT, examine *Crows* screen in the Oka Bokkodo Studio in Kyoto. Photo: Yukiko Shirahara