Conservation of a contemporary painting: identifying the working methods and materials used by John Wilcox in the creation of *Crucifix*.

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This project is one of the initial studies to be undertaken as a collaboration between the Edith O'Donnell Institute of Art History at the University of Texas at Dallas, the Dallas Museum of Art and the School of Natural Sciences and Mathematics at UT Dallas.

**Project Summary:**

The aim of this project is to fully characterise all the materials and processes used by the artist John Wilcox in the creation of a very important work, the *Crucifix*. Many complimentary analytical techniques covering many length and energy scales will be applied in order to fully understand the object and the damage it has sustained over the years. This information will inform restoration protocols and after restoration the *Crucifix* will be exhibited at the Dallas Museum of Art. This is a great opportunity to lead a comprehensive scientific study of a very important piece of art, and to provide advice on its treatment prior to display.

The work of John Wilcox, a contemporary Texas artist working throughout the 1980s to the early 2000s, is specific, planned, and methodical. His working methods are rhythmic, his materials meaningful and purposeful and the final images a reflection of his complex working process. John Wilcox passed away in 2012, leaving behind a sizable collection of works of art on canvas and paper. His work spans several different styles, using a broad range of materials and techniques, ultimately creating abstract, subtle surfaces and colour compositions.

This project will focus on understanding the artist’s working methods and materials through technical study, including surface examination and materials analysis. The examination will focus upon a specific work, *Crucifix*, a polyptych created in 1993. The work was created with four different materials (ash, red clay, sawdust, and cloth) applied to the surface of stretched canvases with unknown adhesives. When exhibited, the four panels are assembled together in the shape of a cross. Another Wilcox piece, *Third Prayer*, which is in the collection of the Dallas Museum of Art, will also be examined in relation to *Crucifix*. Additional works by the artist will also be available for further technical analysis if needed.

The scientific examination will play a fundamental role in development of a successful conservation treatment plan. A wide range of analytical techniques will be available to provide complimentary information on the materials and processes used to create the *Crucifix*. The work has, unfortunately, sustained water damage in storage and a treatment technique must be developed to address the tide-line staining that interferes with the intended final appearance for each individual panel.

After completion of the technical studies and treatment, *Crucifix* will be exhibited at the Dallas Museum of Art.

**Resources:**

http://johnwilcoxart.com/about/

**Further information:**

For further information and/or to initiate an informal discussion please contact:

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