

ELEANOR VON ADERKAS

2009 CCSF SCHOLAR

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CCSF Committee Member

After a fascinating talk by fellow Canadian Lily Harriss of the Dulwich Picture Gallery, Deborah Bowsher and I had the privilege of lunching with and learning more about Eleanor von Aderkas, the 2009 recipient of the prestigious Belle Shenkman Award for the Arts.



Eleanor working on a reconstruction of Botticelli's *Mystic Nativity*

Eleanor, originally from British Columbia, is a remarkable young woman who received an honours degree in chemistry and a minor in art history from McGill University. With her passion for both the arts and the sciences, Eleanor has managed to combine her two subjects of study into one career path: art conservation.

With financial help from the CCSF, Eleanor is now in her second year studying Easel Painting Conservation at the Hamilton Kerr Institute, University of Cambridge. She tells us how “incredibly grateful” she is for the scholarship and adds, “the donation really makes a difference to my financial situation and allows me to keep my

mind on my studies. It is also very encouraging to have help from a Canadian source.”

Restoring and researching some truly spectacular works of art, Eleanor is currently undertaking structural conservation on a seventeenth century damaged wood panel painting. Intrigued, we want to know more, but are told she can't disclose details of this work from a private collection that cannot be named! However, she did reveal the names of other pieces she is working on and tells us about the large canvas, *Apollo and the Muses* by Jacopo Tintoretto, which belongs to the National Trust Property, Kingston Lacy House. The painting was so grimy and discoloured in its original state that it was hard to distinguish the figures and their attributes, she told us, but after its cleaning she is now using the painting as a research project to analyze Tintoretto's painting technique.

Eleanor loves what she does and her enthusiasm is palpable. She is fortunate enough to have been chosen to participate in the historical reconstruction of Botticelli's *Mystic Nativity* for the BBC programme *The Private Life of Masterpiece* in which she can be seen reproducing the painting for the documentary.

Eleanor's ultimate aim is to return to Canada and contribute to the restoration of Canadian art work with the knowledge she has gained in Britain. Of the CCSF Eleanor says, “This scholarship has helped me alleviate the financial burden of multiple student loans and to maintain links with my home country...Canada will always be home”.

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