

EO for Cultural and Natural Heritage Workshop 2024 15-16 October 2024 | ESA/ESRIN

From the Low Earth Orbit to Cultural Heritage and the Horizon Europe MOXY Project:

Tailored Cold Plasma-Generated Atomic Oxygen for Non-Contact Cleaning Sensitive Works of Art

EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION

OF REMOTE SENSING LABORATORIES





JNCLASSIFIED - For ESA Official Use Only

Tomas Markevicius^{1,3}, Nina Olsson^{2,8}, Anton Nikiforov¹, Klaas Jan van den Berg³, Bruce Banks⁴, Sharon Miller⁵, Ilaria Bonaduce⁶, Gianluca Pastorelli⁷

1: Ghent University, Belgium, 2: Nina Olsson Art Conservation, USA; 3: University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands; 4: Science Applications International Corp. at NASA Glenn Research, USA; 5: NASA Glenn Research Centre, USA; 6: University of Pisa, Italy; 7: National Gallery of Denmark, Denmark; 8: ICOMOS Lietuva, Lithuania

Green Atmospheric Plasma-Generated Monoatomic Oxygen Technology for Restoration of Works of Art

Funded by the European Union

→ THE EUROPEAN SPACE AGENCY



Origins of Atmospheric Atomic Oxygen Cleaning

Bruce A. Banks Science Applications International Corp. at NASA Glenn Research Center



and Sharon K.R. Miller NASA Glenn Research Center





"The Moxy project stands alone in the world as it embarks upon the development of new and non-traditional methods of art restoration that may enable cleaning of artworks not previously possible through the use of atomic oxygen."



16 Oct/2024

NASA scientists Bruce Banks and Sharon Miller pioneered AO in art conservation. They opened the MOXY project kick-off meeting on November 1, 2022, via a virtual bridge between NASA Glenn Center and Ghent University.

Bruce and Sharon are members of the Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) of the MOXY project.

→ THE EUROPEAN SPACE AGENCY





- The MOXY project
- Research consortium and researchers
- Challenges of cleaning carbon-based contaminants
- Atomic oxygen in outer space and rocket science
- Atomic oxygen origins in conservation
- The new atmospheric AO concept
- Investigating and tailoring AO for conservation
- Substrates and contaminants
- Investigating AO effects







Objectives

04

05

06

07

08

- O1 Green AO technology elicitation
- O2 Research and development of an atmospheric AO device
- O3 Investigate AO generation and transport to the substrate
 - Investigate AO interactions with contaminants and art materials
 - Test, characterize and tailor AO for conservation
 - Investigate and develop an AO sensor for conservation
 - Road-map AO technology, assess environmental impact via LCA
 - Communicate, demonstrate and disseminate the results

www.moxyproject.eu

moxy.project

Horizon Europe Grant agreement 101061336 Start date: Nov. 1, 2022 Duration: 48 months







University of Ghent, (Ghent, BE), University of Amsterdam (Amsterdam NL), Technical University Eindhoven (Eindhoven NL), University of Antwerp (Antwerp, BE), WeLoop (Lambersart, FR), University of Pisa (Pisa, IT), ICOMOS Lietuva (Vilnius, LT), Modernamuseet (Stockholm, SE), KPV (Vilnius, LT), National Gallery of Denmark (Copenhagen, DK).

16 Oct/2024



Formation of the

Green Cluster for Science and Conservation Research

Horizon Europe | Type of action: RIA | Topic: CL2-2021-HERITAGE-01-01



Coordinated by the University of Amsterdam, 13 partners

MCXY

Coordinated by the RUPT, University of Ghent,10 partners



16 Oct/2024

Coordinated by the CSGI, University of Florence, 30 partners



GREEN CLUSTER FOR SCIENCE AND CONSERVATION RESEARCH

53 organizations

Research teams





16 Oct/2024



*

Challenges cleaning carbon-based contaminants

Carbon-based contaminants constitute a significant portion of soiling materials: soot, organic carbons, fine particulate matter, tobacco smoke, tar, handprints, bacteria, fungi, conservation materials, biocides, defacement materials, material degradation products



Major chemical component composition of PM2.5 in London, Beijing and Delhi*

*Harrison RM. 2020 Airborne particulate matter. Phil. Trans. R. Soc. A 378: 20190319 http://dx.doi.org/10.1098/rsta.2019.0319

16 Oct/2024

8

MCXY @esa

Challenges cleaning carbon-based contaminants



Human hair 60 µm Fine sand grain 90

um

Soot particle size: 0,01-0,8 μm Dust, pollen, mold 10 μm

Soot particles at 0,01-0,8 µm are considerably smaller than pores in typical art substrates soot aerosols will easily penetrate the smallest cracks and porosities

50 µm





Cultural Heritage and Climate Change



August 10, 2024 NASA image of wildfires in BC, Canada

I-5 Southbound Salem OR, August 2021



Challenges cleaning carbon-based contaminants

11

Sustainable preservation of tangible cultural heritage is inherently linked to the UN's Sustainability Development Goals (SDG 11, **Target 11.4** *Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage.*)

The conservation field currently lacks empowering green technologies, especially in cleaning treatments.

Conservators, equipped only with contact methods encounter sensitive surfaces where soiling cannot be removed at all.

Contact cleaning is particularly problematic with sensitive object surfaces (SOS), such as porous mineral materials (plaster, alabaster), friable media (pastels, modern paints), woven and nonwoven materials (unprimed canvases, textiles, paper), animal-sourced materials (feathers, silk, ivory, bone), plastics, and modern media, which can be exacerbated challenging geometries and topographies.

The available "wet" and "dry" contact cleaning methods used to remove CBC risk abrading the surface and transporting contaminants into the porous substrate, displacing loose fragments, swelling and shrinking the paint, and facilitating the migration of leachable components.

MCX

Atomic oxygen (AO) origins in NASA and ESA research: erosion effects on spacecraft materials in Low Earth Orbit (LEO)



16 Oct/2024



Silver interconnector 25 µm retri Oxidized silver is flaked off and oxidized again. Photo: E54, Ro 10.1002/9780470686652.eae242

from European Retrievable Carrier EURECA. uses the underlying fresh material, which is Antonius. (2010). Corrosion in Space. doi:

AO is a space environment element naturally present in the LEO: low Earth Orbit (80 - 1000 km) and is extremely short-lived on the ground (a few milliseconds). In LEO, AO is produced by the dissociation of O_2 by UV radiation. AO is highly unstable and reactive and, in space, exists without recombination since only about 10^9 atoms are found in 1 cm³.

MCXY

AO origins in NASA and ESA research: erosion effects on spacecraft materials



Species	Oxidation potential eV		
Fluorine F	3.03		
Hydroxyl radical OH	2.80		
Atomic oxygen O	2.24		
Ozone O ₃	2.07		
Hydrogen peroxide H ₂ O ₂	1.78		
Oxygen molecule O ₂	1.26		

MOX

Image: Sharon Miller, NASA

AO is a space environment element in the region known as LEO: low Earth orbit (80 - 1000 km) and is extremely shortlived on the ground (a few milliseconds). In space, AO is produced by the dissociation of O_2 by UV radiation. AO is highly unstable and reactive and, in space, exists without recombination since only about 10⁹ atoms are found in 1 cm³.



AO Origins in NASA and ESA research:

Low-pressure AO chambers for space environment simulation





MISSE-2 Atomic Oxygen Erosion



16 Oct/2024

NASA MISSE-2 AO testing in space environment. Photo: NASA

ESA

European Space Agency LEOX facility FAST-1TM AO Source by AMOS, Liege, Belgium. Photo: ESA

For the past thirty years, NASA and the European Space Agency (ESA) have investigated AO interactions with aerospace materials and developed AO simulation systems that typically work under low pressure and require sophisticated chambers.

Atmospheric AO origins in cultural heritage conservation: Andy Warhol's *The Bathtub* (1961) treatment by NASA, 1997





AO cleaning spot test: surface dirt



Bruce Banks and Sharon Miller during Andy Warhol's treatment at the Andy Warhol Museum. Image: NASA

16 Oct/2024



Lipstick mockups: half-cleaned and cleaning test spots



NASA prototype system by B. Banks and S. Miller. The system used He (4,3 l/min) and O2 (0,1-0,2 l/min) and 7 kV and 5.8 mA DC arc. (21-42 W). Dissembled in 2019.



https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10616579





Atomic oxygen treatment: before and after Images: The Andy Warhol Museum



Andy Warhol's "The Bathtub" (1961) and Eva Szabo's 302 Coral lipstick. Images: NASA and The Andy Warhol Museum 15



Tailoring AO for conservation:

16

Designing cold RF plasma generator at atmospheric pressure:



- RF power cable
- Main gas supply line: He+O₂ (flow controller)
- Shield gas supply line: Ar or He (flow controller)
- Cold plasma AO generator "jet"
- Function generator to produce RF power
- Broadband RF power amplifier
- Matching network to maintain RF power stable
- Moving stage XYZ
- Real-time probe for plasma parameters
- Computer, software for gas flow, plasma, stage



Tailoring AO: AO generation at atmospheric pressure



Main parameters of the MOXY AO generation system



MCXY Cesa

Main elements of the AO generator and a crosssection of the nozzle with the main and shield gas flow dynamics



17

Tailored AO at atmospheric pressure

MCXY @esa

18



Typical contaminants affecting works of art are carbon-based materials, such as soot, hydrocarbons, and organic compounds, which AO converts into volatile species (CO, CO₂, water vapor). AO cleaning is limited to the surface, and AO needs to be produced and used instantaneously.

Testing AO on CH materials: AO at atmospheric pressure



Carbon-based contaminants constitute a significant portion of soiling materials: soot, organic carbons, fine particulate matter, tobacco smoke, tar, handprints, bacteria, fungi, past conservation materials, degradation products, biocides, foods, and vandalism materials.



Radial and axial AO distribution: optical emission spectroscopy



20

16 Oct/2024

20



Tailoring AO: optimizing treatment temperature



16 Oct/2024

→ THE EUROPEAN SPACE AGENCY

MCXY @esa

Tailoring AO temperature: plasma parameters





Pre-cooling He: temperature drop



• Power

16 Oct/2024

- Gas-phase ratio
- 2nd harmonics
- Pre-cooling He
- Distance from the sample
- Sample moving speed (using XY stage)

2nd harmonic (sin wave) applied to RF plasma voltage



→ THE EUROPEAN SPACE AGENCY



16 Oct/2024



24

Tailoring AO for conservation: QCM mass loss measurement as AO probe



Testing AO on CH materials: substrates and challenges

MCXY @esa

Substrates

25

- Organic substrates (cotton, paper, silk, wood)
- Sensitive paints (gouache, pastel, acrylic and oil paints)
- Raw pigments

16 Oct/2024

- Porous inorganic substrates (plaster, alabaster, ceramics, glass)
- Problematic plastics (PMMA, PVC)
- Biomaterials (feathers, leather, bone)
- Metals (high polish alluminum, copper, steel, silver)

Challenges

- Non-contact cleaning without health and environental concerns
- Tailored for delicate mechanically unstable materials
- Cleaning materials sensitive to water and organic solvents
- Limit tansport of contaminants / residues into porous substrates
- New ways to remove toxic biocides and biological contaminants
- Non-contact cleaning sensitive high polish surfaces
- Explore synergies with existing cleaning methods
- Radically new cleaning methods based on reactive species

Testing AO on CH materials: the contaminants





Testing AO on CH materials: Andy Warhol lipstick mockup

27

16 Oct/2024

MCXY Cesa



Testing AO on CH materials: lipstick on acrylic paint



L'Oreal 337 Perfect Red lipstick on cotton duck canvas primed with acrylic paint. Half lipstick removed with AO (right)

16 Oct/2024

MCXY Cesa

Testing AO on CH materials: natural and artificial soiling

Natural soiling

16 Oct/2024



Paper (1896) with ink signature and natural surface dirt with AO cleaning tests

AO tested positive on both natural and artificial soiling; however, depending on chemical composition, not all natural and artificial soil can be treated using AO Model soiling



"Tate mixture" with AO cleaning

Composition % by mass:

Carbon black 0.2 Iron oxide 0.1 Kaolin 2.4 Gelatin powder 1.2 Starch 1.2 Cement (Type1) 2.1 Olive oil 1.2 Mineral oil 1.9 VM&P naphtha 89.6



MCXY @esa

C5 ISO 11378-2 standard soiling with AO cleaning spot tests.

Composition % by mass:

Peat moss 38 Portland cement 17 Silica (200 mesh) 17 Carbon (lamp black) 1.75 Red iron oxide 0.5 Mineral oil 8,75

→ THE EUROPEAN SPACE AGENCY

Testing AO on CH materials: fire-born soot models





SEM: cotton duck canvas with soot contamination



Cadmium yellow acrylic paint on cotton duck canvas with after soot contamination

16 Oct/2024

Soot produced by Shellsol D40 combustion

Soot soiling	Shellsol D40 ml.	Time min.	T °C avg.
Light	20	10	43
Medium	50	30	43
Heavy	100	60	43





- 1. Laboratory power supply
- 2. Electric rotor
- 3. Temperature sensor
- 4. Smoke exit
- 5. Disck with samples
- 6. Metal chamber
- 7. Beaker with Shellsol D40
- 8. Opening for air intake
- 9. Sample disk can be lifted
- 10. Air

Testing AO on CH materials: plaster gypsum and porous substrates





AO cleaning in process



Testing AO on CH materials: Soot on plaster gypsum



Hirox x 120





AO cleaned



Testing AO on CH materials: Soot on plaster gypsum



Pristine

16 Oct/2024

Soot

AO cleaned

33

SEM: plaster microstructure at 900x magnification



Testing AO on CH materials: soot on plaster, impact on microroughness





AO effects cleaning soot: gouache on paper



During treatment

35

Soot on W&A Cobalt Blue gouache / Arches Aquarelle cold-pressed paper

AO effects cleaning soot: gouache on paper





Pristine paint

16 Oct/2024

Soot on paint

AO cleaning



AO effects cleaning soot: gouache on paper, and chemical changes







AO effects cleaning soot: unprimed cotton duck canvas

Soot

38

AO cleaned



Cotton duck canvas/soot (left). AO cleaned preserved inherent lignin impurities

³⁹ AO effects : unprimed cotton duck canvas







Pristine

Soot on cotton

AO cleaning







AO cleaning: soot on acrylic paint, unsized cotton duck canvas

Before

After



Golden Cobal Blue easy-flow acrylic on cotton duck canvas/soot (left). Cleaned using atomic oxygen AO (right)



AO cleaning soot on Golden acrylic paint on unsized cotton duck canvas

Pristine

After AO



High-definition 3D microscopy (Hirox)

AO testing on plastics: fatty acid exudates on PVC



Analysis of exudates using Py-GC-MS. The additives were thermally desorbed at 350°C while the polymer pyrolysis was performed at 600°C. A mixture of stearate/stearic acid and phthalates (2-ethylhexyl stearate, 2-ethylhexyl phthalate, other). **Py-GC-MS a**nalysis by Jacopo La Nasa, UNIPI.

16 Oct/2024

- The AO effect was nearly instant at 36.9 °C, below the melting point of stearic acid at 69.3 °C.
- Heating at ~40 °C did not produce the same effect.



AO treatment of fatty acid exudates on PVC: T.Markevicius (UGent), J. Bobeck, M. Florescu (Modernamuseet).



AO effects cleaning soot: feathers



SEM: Natural feathers contaminated with fire-born soot and AO cleaned

16 Oct/2024

→ THE EUROPEAN SPACE AGENCY



From lab to works of art: AO cleaning soot on 1977 oil painting



Ghent University's RUPT collaboration with Prof. Aviva Burnstock, Courtauld Institute of Art, Art Conservation, London

Conclusions: AO value for cultural heritage

45

16 Oct/2024

- AO provides contactless treatment opportunities for fragile materials that cannot sustain "wet" and "dry" cleaning methods, water, and solvents. It can be applied to a
 broad range of materials, and it is especially suitable for fire-damaged materials. It is an alternative to traditional environmentally unfriendly methods.
- The process can be tailored, but there are limitations regarding the temperature, as temperature is connected to oxidation reactions.
- Safe for health and the environment: AO will reduce the carbon footprint of treatments, waste, and reliance on chemicals. Treatment products are environmentally benign.
- Non-contact and non-liquid: For friable, mechanically unstable, and/or liquid-sensitive materials. Minimally invasive and non-mechanical. The atomic surface area of contact with volatile species is much less intense than with fluids.
- Volatile, non-thermal: It can access contaminants in porous 3D matrixes but will not drive contaminants deeper into the pores.
- The contactless cleaning method, using oxygen as a natural element, is culturally accepted by indigenous and world culture communities. This is particularly important as these communities often do not consent to using man-made materials to treat their indigenous material culture, such as rock art and sacred objects. Using a natural element like oxygen respects their cultural values and practices.
- New material for first responder actions treating CH objects that suffered from soot and smoke during wildfires and fires.
- New ways to completely remove soot and biological contaminants, such as mold, bacteria, and dead fragmented cells, to optimize gel-based cleaning and consolidation by using AO to temporarily make hydrophobic soils and surfaces hydrophilic; potential to remove toxic organic pesticides, such as DDT, from porous substrates, such as wood objects, textiles, books, and leather.

45

MCXY Cesa

Looking into the future: upscaling AO technology



MCXY Cesa

Looking into the future: upscaling AO





- Manually operated with an assisted mechanical arm
- XYZ stage with small spot treatment area
- Linear AO generator with XYX stage







GREEN CLUSTER FOR SCIENCE AND CONSERVATION RESEARCH

FIRESAVE

Integrated space and green conservation solutions to save and restore humanity's cultural heritage assets from fire-born disasters

WP 1 Project coordination and management
WP2 Fire disaster monitoring and forecast using Earth Observation and AI technologies
WP3 Fire disaster resilience and response solutions and methodology
WP4 Fire Museum App *FireMapp* app design and prototyping
WP5 Fire disaster remediation, cleaning and stabilization using sustainable and green approaches
WP6 Fire disaster effects on cultural heritage materials
WP7 Fire disaster education
WP8 Communication, dissemination, outreach







Tomas Markevicius tmarkevicius@fulbrightmail.org

Thank y u!

Tomas Markevicius^{1,3}, Nina Olsson^{2,8}, Anton Nikiforov¹, Klaas Jan van den Berg³, Bruce Banks⁴, Sharon Miller⁵, Ilaria Bonaduce⁶, Gianluca Pastorelli⁷

1: Ghent University, Belgium, 2: Nina Olsson Art Conservation, USA; 3: University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands; 4: Science Applications International Corp. at NASA Glenn Research, USA; 5: NASA Glenn Research Centre, USA; 6: University of Pisa, Italy; 7: National Gallery of Denmark, Denmark; 8: ICOMOS Lietuva, Lithuania

