

Print ISSN No 1175-5288
Online ISSN No 1179-7118



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NEWSLETTER

Number 47

March 2013

Research on Earthquake Preparedness for heritage and cultural institutions
Report on the Scholarship at the Getty Institute Lynn Campbell September 24th – December 14th 2012



San Andreas Fault California

Introduction

After being extensively involved in the salvage of heritage collections throughout the series of earthquakes in Canterbury, it became somewhat apparent that some cultural institutions were not prepared. Having formed the Canterbury Disaster Salvage Team in 1987, producing annual workshops, stressing the importance of preparation and awareness of possible threats to collections it was obvious that accepted practices did not work. After participating in many salvage operations during the quakes in Canterbury it became apparent to me that this was because there was little time or money to develop training programmes or plans in cultural institutions. Unfortunately there is no one size fits all solution and coming up with a template or plan for all is not an effective option due to the differences in the various institutions.

Liquefaction



Damage after February 22nd 2011

My research looked at new ways of looking at risk assessment and disaster planning and incorporating fresh ways of managing any potential disaster. This should be of some assistance should disaster strike again. I was particularly interested in pursuing a line of research into effective processes and procedures that can be used to mitigate the effects of a catastrophic disaster, not only gleaning information from the museum sphere alone but in areas such as engineering, project management, private storage and retrieval companies and governmental agencies such as FEMA etc to discover methods that can be applied in the cultural heritage sector. A key to the success of lack of damage to collections is to be prepared. My project looked at methods and processes to help smaller institutions, in particular, in New Zealand and elsewhere in the world to find cost effective preventive measures that lessen the amount of damage in major disasters such as earthquake. The components pursued at the Getty included the interviewing of experts in the field, and researching articles using the extensive library there.

Review of Problems: –

The production of a disaster plan can be very time consuming and costly in funds and person power. Therefore, my research centred on this topic and also looked further afield in other professions to see if there are any alternative processes that can be used effectively in cultural institutions.

Questions asked included:

- Why is disaster planning so difficult for museums to achieve and keep updated?
- What sorts of procedures would make life easier for them to maintain a good level of disaster preparedness?
- Is there something wrong with the current thinking where it may be too difficult to achieve any form of disaster proficiency in smaller museums and galleries?



Damage to wooden structures.

My aim was to research and look at preventive measures, relating to disaster preparedness, that can be achieved on a limited budget:

Methods used to assess these problems included:

- interviewing known experts in the field, if available, and people that have experienced destruction in their museums in the United States and from this gleaning information to pass on via workshops and lectures.
- researching related peer reviewed articles in the Getty Library and on the internet.

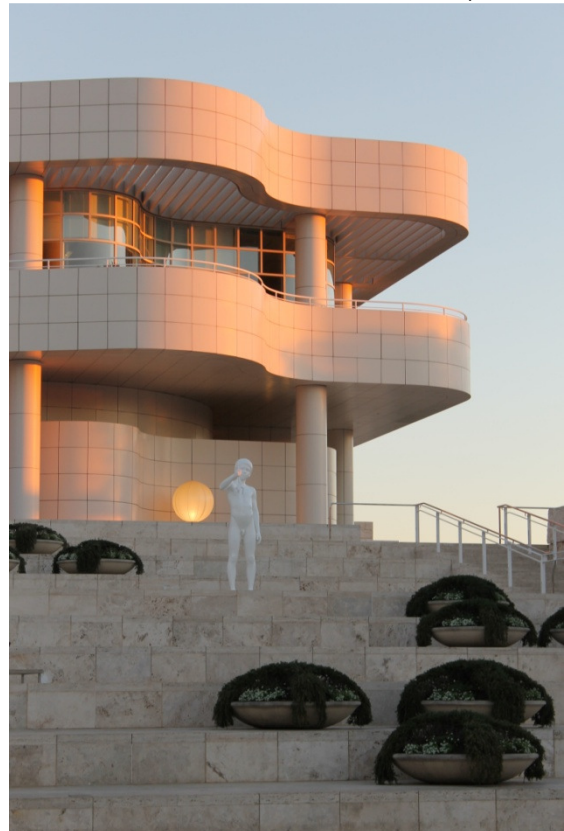
Outcomes

For cultural heritage professionals in New Zealand, the Canterbury events have proved to be a salutary lesson on what to expect should the very worst happen. Future disaster planning should take in to account not just the normal disaster scenarios but also ones that were not immediately apparent, such as government granting extended powers that have a severe impact on the safety and retrieval of cultural heritage collections. I have now returned to New Zealand with some hard data and new methods that can hopefully persuade museums and galleries to adopt preventive measures that are useful in a major catastrophe.

Contribution the project will make in the conservation field

Contributions in this field include a line of enquiry that could open up new possibilities and processes that can be utilised to ensure that the impact of future aftershocks and new earthquakes will not affect cultural and heritage collections in New Zealand.

The Getty Institute



COMING SOON

The Canterbury Disaster Salvage Team

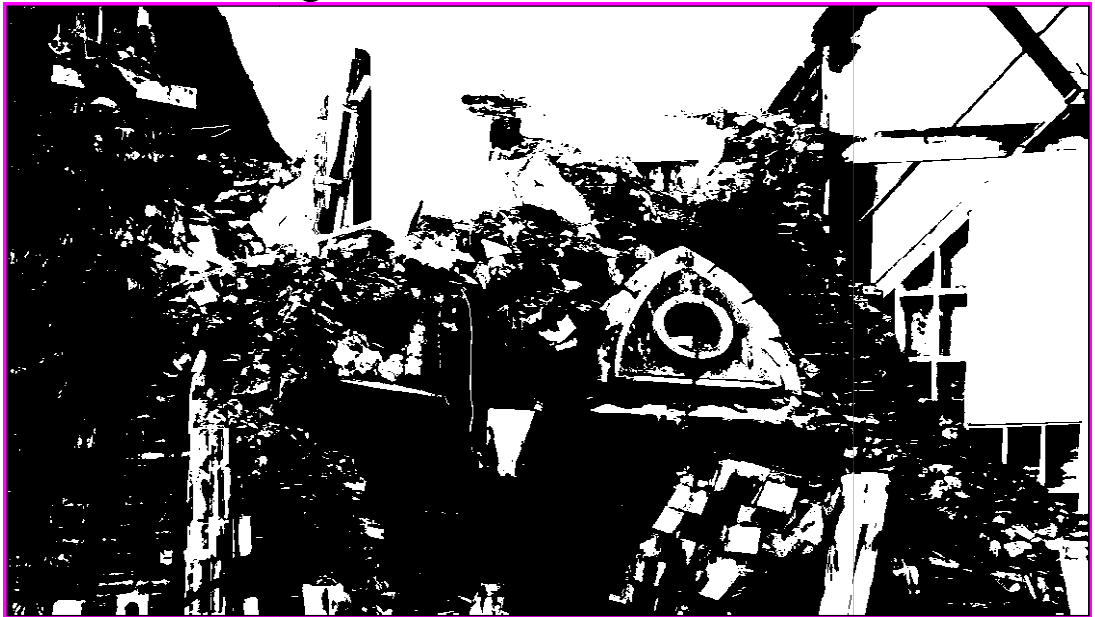
(Disaster Preparedness, Education and Training for Heritage and Cultural Institutions)

PRESENTS

A WORKSHOP ON

Earthquake Preparedness

for heritage and cultural institutions



A PRACTICAL WORKSHOP THAT WILL LOOK AT
VARIOUS METHODS AND PROCESSES THAT WORK
(to protect against disaster)

Date: To be advised

Venue University Department of Canterbury, Engineering Department

Cost: To be advised

Please contact Julie Humby on 03 9408219 or artcurator@cpit.ac.nz to express interest