

Retouching Course with Iris Carr

This 5-day course is aimed at anyone who wants to improve their retouching and finishing skills at the end of a restoration once all the woodwork has been completed.

It will include an initial analysis of the different layers of ground and varnish in day-light and under UV-lights, wood preparation of new repairs, sealing of joints and cracks, creating surface texture and apply retouch as well as simulated patina and finishing of the instrument to achieve a natural look.

As time is limited, the retouch work might have to be restricted to one particular part of the instrument. Each participant will bring their own instruments with all repairs and woodwork completed.

The course is limited to 6 students and will be taught in English.

Theoretical Schedule for the week:

During the 5 – Day course I will be talking about the following subjects:

- General cleaning of an instrument
- Removal of retouch
- Crack cleaning
- Colouring new wood, including a new neckgraft (if available)

- Filling of cracks (shavings, wood filler and varnish filler)
- Creation of texture and retouching of various areas
- Patina
- Finishing

On the first day I will observe all the work the participants have brought with them. It is important that we get any preparatory work done on the first day (like applying filler varnish to cracks) to be able to proceed with texture and retouching on the following days.

Practical schedule for the week:

Day 1

- Observation and analysis of each instrument in day-light and under the UV regarding the different layers of wood, ground and varnish including patina and transparency and how much colour there is in each and visualizing an ideal end result
- Ideally, old wood would have been used for repairs but where necessary, new repairs will be treated to achieve the right colour in the wood – we will discuss and try out different options of achieving this
- Demonstration of treating, staining and colouring a neck after neck graft has been completed
- Sealing of cracks and joints with filler varnish and new wood with clear varnish

Day 2

- Scraping down filler varnish
- Demonstration of creation of texture over filler varnish
- Demonstration of preparation, mixing and application of retouching varnish with pigments on the instrument
- This will include painting in grain lines, simulating natural features, joining medullary rays across a crack, how to deal with difficult reflections etc.
- If time, the participants will start retouching their instruments with guidance on application of varnish and working the area from different angles
- More application of filler varnish if necessary

Day 3+4

- Demonstration of retouching of coloured neck at chin and heel
- Preparation of simulated patina and demonstration of applying it to the instrument
- Participants continue with applying retouch to specific areas of their instruments using varnish as well as patina and taking care the gloss-matt value of the retouch matches the surrounding varnish layer by layer
- At the same time, the surface texture will be developed using various methods which will be demonstrated beforehand like the creation of different kinds of craqueleure, building up convex soft grain between grainlines, indenting hard grain lines etc.

Day 5

- Finalizing of retouch and texture in the chosen area
- Matching the surface shine of areas of retouch with those of the original varnish to finish with a natural look of the instrument