

FAIC and the Hermitage

FAIC's Hermitage Initiative in Photographic Conservation reached a milestone this summer by conducting the first in what will be a series of workshops and practica held in the U.S. designed to help train staff from the **State Hermitage** Museum of Saint Petersburg, Russia in photograph conservation.

Tatiana Sayatina and Natalia Laytar (conservators), and Natalia Avetyan (curator) of the **State Hermitage** Museum received intensive training in characterization and causes of deterioration in 19th century photographic materials at the Winterthur/University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation, under the guidance of Debra Hess Norris and Jennifer Jae Gutierrez. The group then went to the Center for Conservation of Art and Historic Artifacts (CCAHA) in Philadelphia, where Barbara Lemmen and the CCAHA staff introduced the Russian group to the documentation and work flow used for photograph conservation in a busy laboratory. Finally, the group went to New York City, where Nora Kennedy and the staff of the Metropolitan Museum introduced them to special issues involving daguerreotypes.

At the Hermitage, conservators and curators work closely together to plan conservation work on collections. It is therefore important to ensure that curators of photograph collections have a strong understanding of photographic materials and treatment alternatives.

The next activity under the project will be a workshop on chemistry and materials testing, to be taught by Bernard Lavédrine at the Centre de Recherche sur la Conservation des Collections in Paris.

The Hermitage initiative is a four-year project funded by a grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. It is designed to create a photographic conservation program at the **State Hermitage** Museum. The project is directed by conservator Paul Messier, assisted by Karina Beeman. An advisory committee and FAIC staff **support** the project.