

## What is MIRU?



The Mobile Icon Restoration Unit is a fully functioning portable workshop that fits into seven cases. It is simple and sturdy so it can travel in a car to the icons. The workshop can be set up in any location with two well-lit rooms, two work tables and a 220V electrical outlet.

The heavy-duty trunks are sand-proof and afford durable protection of the contents. Separate items are stored in each trunk: optical instruments, fine tools, materials and chemicals. The range of optical instruments, lamps, UV magnifying glasses and microscopes allows visual examination of icons to facilitate both preliminary analysis and cleaning of details / inscriptions. The aim is to maintain and conserve icon collections without neglecting basic scientific principles.

### MIRU Equipment & Resources

**Electronics:** cameras, laptop, printer, scanner, mobile phone

**Optical Instruments:** binocular microscope with arm and table holder, small binocular microscope and oculars, head and UV lens

**Tools and Materials:** adaptor, vacuum cleaner, electric spatulas, fine brushes, scalpels, retouching water colours and *colori di vernice*, gold foil and powder, varnish, glues, balsa and powder wood, gesso, wax, Japanese paper

**Protective Items for Restorers:** mosquito nets, heater, masks

**Books and Papers:** ICOM CC proceedings on icon conservation

**Website:** Webside: to raise awareness of existing icon conservation expertise through the Icon Network ([www.icon-network.org](http://www.icon-network.org)) and to set-up a regional / international network to encourage the exchange of information

The idea of the MIRU was inspired by increasing global concern about heritage conservation and by the examples of already established portable laboratories, the European network MOLAB, and in America, the Paul Getty Institute's Lab for Analysis of Archival Photographs.

St. John the Baptist icon photographs © 2008 Zuzana Skalova (Foundation for the Conservation of Icons in the Middle East). Electronically published by the kind permission from the Monastery.

## Mobile Icon Restoration Unit In Egypt

The portable workshop (MIRU) was created with a grant provided by the Prince Claus Fund for Culture and Development, in the Netherlands

MIRU is available for loan to professional projects:  
Netherlands-Flemish Institute in Cairo (NVIC)  
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**M I R U EQUIPMENT**  
**NETHERLANDS-FLEMISH INSTITUTE IN CAIRO**  
**(in seven cases)**

Administration-file with the keys, Catalogue of Instruments and Materials, Portable Apple Computer, Printer, Scanner, Mobile Phone

**Books and Papers:**

- *The Conservation of Late Icons*, Valamo 1997
- *The Conservation of Icons: An Approach towards Problems, Methods & Materials used*, Athens 1999
- *The Conservation of Icons: Exchange of Experience*, Valamo 2001
- *ICOM Cultural Heritage Disaster Preparedness and Response*. International Symposium 23-27 November 2003. Salar Jung Museum, Hyderabad, India
- File including the papers generated by the Coptic Icons Conservation Projects in Egypt (1989-2006).

**Instruments, Tools and Materials in Seven Cases:**

**1. Cameras** (orange trolley)

Canon digital reflex camera with all equipment; Canon Power Shot camera, accumulators, instructions; tripod.

**2. Optical Instruments** (black upholstered trolley)

Binocular microscope with arm, table and camera holders; binocular compact microscope and oculars; head and UV lens; head loupe.

**3. Tools and Materials** (large orange heavy-duty case)

Electrical rheostat with one large and one small spatula; small electric iron; retouching and varnishing brushes; scalpels and surgical blades; ox-gall; Maimeri retouching colours; fine water colours; powdergold, golden foil (22 carat) and shells; achat stones; Colnasol for water-gilding; bolus: orange, black and red; haze and white glues; balsa and powder wood; Japanese and fixing paper; Rowney gesso and chalk powder.

**4. Tools** (small orange heavy-duty case)

Portable vacuum cleaner with accessories and filter; two small electric au-bain-Marie heaters; tongs for spanning icons painted on canvas; two tubes of Schminke cleaning paste; plastic syringes; plastic and metallic palette; protective oculars, paper masks and gloves; various sand papers; bee and micro-crystalline wax.

**5 – 6. Two grey/blue boxes for chemicals**

Two holders with plastic bottles for solvents; one bottle and four Retouching Lefranc varnish sprays; three boxes of cleaning agent.

**7. Black/blue rucksag**

Small electric heater

Blanket; quality mosquito nets; set of locks.