

A museum's dream: Preservation past physical life



Case study video:
contex.com/case-cbmm



PRODUCTS: HD Apeiron/42 and Nextimage Apeiron software

CHALLENGE

Over-handling of fragile archive

“We want to make sure that we’re preserving [the archive] past its physical life.”

SOLUTION

Digitize and preserve

“I think [the high-res image files] are even better than the originals because I don’t need a magnifying glass, right?”

RESULT

Better and sharable images

“We were able to change our ship’s plans into kind of what they’re meant to be: Their original format which is just the line drawings. And we’re able to share those.”

Gabriella Cantelmo



“We are now able to meet best practices for museum preservation and digitization.”

*Gabriella Cantelmo, Assistant Curator
Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum*

Curators at Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum can rest assured that their originals are handled for the last time when they digitize their fragile archive with their HD Apeiron/42 contact-free scanner.

“There is no risk of potential damage to the originals, so that has been one of the biggest key features of this scanner,” says Gabriella Cantelmo, Assistant Curator at Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum (CBMM) a month after investing in their HD Apeiron/42 contact-free scanner. The museum

covers the largest bay in USA, located on the East Coast.

The museum has a very large collection of ship’s plans, and they hope to complete one-third of the scanning of the 10,000 original plans within a year.

Preservation, not handling

Their primary motivation for needing a contact-free scanner is to minimize handling of the original documents.

“Our best practices are the least amount of handling. We don’t want

to keep pulling them out every time somebody wants to see them,” says Gabriella Cantelmo.

Improved workflow and results

Their specific scanning workflow is to retrieve the ship’s plan from the archive, place it on the scanner table using an acid-free board, and then place a sheet of plexiglass very gently on top to keep the ship’s plan flat. The scan is saved in two different versions: One which closely resembles the original and a second file which shows how you would want a line drawing to appear, using the software features in Nextimage Apeiron for black and white, enhanced black and despeckling.

Gabriella Cantelmo explains: “The Nextimage Apeiron software itself and how usable it is, is huge and we were able to change our ship’s plans into kind of what they’re meant to be: Their original format which is just the line drawings.”

Boosting access and clearing backlog

Another key reason for CBMM to undertake the massive task of digitizing their archives is to improve accessibility. The ability to produce high-quality printed copies or easily share digital versions of ship plans represents a significant enhancement.

“The black and white and the line fill features have been amazing,” says Gabriella Cantelmo, who is finally able to fulfil a huge backlog of requests.

An impressed curatorial committee

Previously, images had to be taken with a digital camera or smartphone, but the HD Apeiron/42 scanner now produces images that greatly impress the CBMM curatorial committee with levels of detail and quality that weren’t possible before.

“We are now able to meet best practices for museum preservation and digitization, and to me that has been our biggest benefit and our biggest profit gained from HD Apeiron/42,” says Gabriella Cantelmo.

In total, CBMM has around 80,000 physical originals archived and registered, and a majority of these will be going through the HD Apeiron/42 scanner and then made available in good quality for the public and organizations.

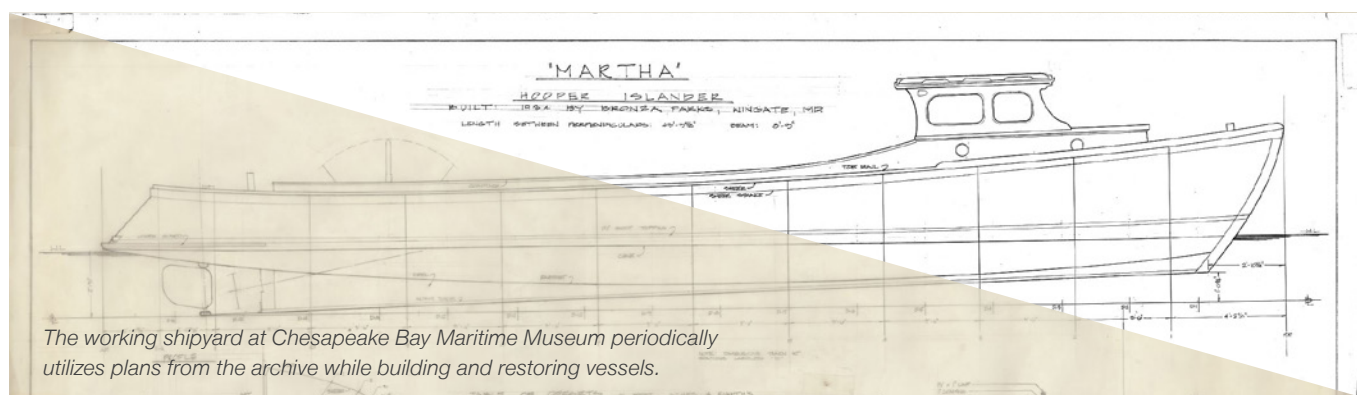
At the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum, Gabriella Cantelmo concludes: “Preventative preservation is the name of the game.”



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