



*Detail of still image from Solo Flight, Tony Labat, 1977. Courtesy of the artist and Long Beach Museum of Art Video Archive, and Research Library, The Getty Research Institute. Transferred by the Long Beach Museum of Art Foundation and the City of Long Beach, 2005.*

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Modern Materials and Contemporary Art is the official newsletter of the ICOM-CC Working Group Modern Materials and Contemporary Art.

April 2014

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### From your Coordinator

Welcome to the 2014 Newsletter from the Modern Materials and Contemporary Art (MMCA) working group of ICOM-CC. It’s yet another great issue – with plenty of info on meetings, workshops, and project updates from our members. This time our two colleagues featured in the ‘In Conversation with:’ section are Jay Krueger (Head of Conservation at the National Gallery of Art, Washington DC) and Karen te Brake Baldock (coordinator of INCCA – the International Network for the Conservation of Contemporary Art). A big thank you to all of you who contributed content to this Newsletter.

This past year has been another one of high activity for MMCA: we held a wonderful Interim meeting on *Conserving Outdoor Painted Sculpture* at the Kröller Müller Museum, Otterlo in June 2013 (more about that later) and now we look forward to a great MMCA session (amongst other things) at September’s ICOM-CC Triennial conference in Melbourne. And with 270 members signed up at [www.icom-cc.org](http://www.icom-cc.org) we are getting tantalizingly close to our (admittedly rather ambitious) target of growing our membership to 300. As always - your help in encouraging others to sign up is much appreciated.

In terms of the Triennial, I encourage you all to attend. We are announcing the full line up of speakers in the MMCA session as well as the accepted posters in this Newsletter, and the accepted papers from all the other 20 working groups can be viewed on the conference website: [www.icom-cc2014.org](http://www.icom-cc2014.org)

Just a reminder that a number of functions are always open to you on the MMCA website, which is easily found from [www.icom-cc.org](http://www.icom-cc.org) homepage or through this direct link <http://www.icom-cc.org/32/modern-materials-and-contemporary-art/> including on-line

forums, latest news, a whole string of downloads, back copies of our MMCA Newsletter, the ICOM-CC calendar of events, and all the contact info you need to contact us. And please do feel free to contact us about any issue to do with MMCA, including feedback on this Newsletter. Your current MMCA team remains:

- Tom Learner: coordinator, [tlearner@getty.edu](mailto:tlearner@getty.edu)
- Rachel Rivenc: assistant coordinator, [rivenc@getty.edu](mailto:rivenc@getty.edu)
- Lydia Beerkens, assistant coordinator [lydia.beerkens@planet.nl](mailto:lydia.beerkens@planet.nl)
- Gunnar Heydenreich, assistant coordinator [gunnar.heydenreich@fh-koeln.de](mailto:gunnar.heydenreich@fh-koeln.de)
- Louise Cone, assistant coordinator [louise@contemporaryconservation.com](mailto:louise@contemporaryconservation.com)

As many of you will know, in September I will reach the end of my 6-year term as MMCA coordinator, and will therefore soon be handing over the reigns to the next coordinator. It really has been a great experience, and I look forward to remaining part of this strong and active working group as it develops even further. I wish to extend my sincere thanks to all the hard work carried out by my wonderful assistant coordinators over these last three years (and in Rachel’s case: six years!). You all helped so much, especially in the task of ranking all the abstracts and papers for the Triennial. Gunnar also conducted a very successful membership drive in the lead up to the Interim meeting, Lydia was at the center of organizing the Interim meeting itself and is now hard at work reviewing and editing the papers from it, and Rachel has continued to design and coordinate our great-looking Newsletters. So thanks to all of you for being part of the MMCA journey – and I look forward to seeing many of you in September.

Tom Learner  
MMCA coordinator

**Triennial Meeting Melbourne 2014  
MMCA's list of papers and posters**

MMCA's session in Melbourne promises to be packed with fascinating talks and posters. And for those of you who don't make it to Melbourne, there's always the preprints!

**Papers:**

***"I try to keep surfaces as anonymous as possible".  
Conservation issues in Richard Serra's monumental  
paintstick drawings on canvas.***

Meta Chavannes, Margje Leeuwestein, Marc Bongaarts, Suzan Catucci-de Groot, Hannie Diependaal, Henk van Keulen and Louise Wijnberg

***Bridging the gap – linking conservation strategies in  
the preservation of our ethno-anthropological  
heritage and contemporary art***

Barbara Ferriani, Marina Pugliese, Carolina Orsini, Mattia Patti and Irene Bernardeschi

***Physical originality versus authentic  
experienceability. Heinz Mack's light-kinetics as a  
case study in conservation theory and practice***

Julia Giebeler

***The role of science in the presentation and  
conservation of perishable art with food:  
Autoportrait by Wim Delvoye***

Julie Gilman, Liesbeth Jacxsens and Bruno De Meulenaer

***Preserving Memory and the Ephemeral: Reconciling  
conservation and conceptual art practice – The case  
of Roberto Chabet***

Victoria Herrera

***Looking through plastics: Investigating options for  
the treatment of scratches and losses in cast  
unsaturated polyester and polymethylmethacrylate  
works of art.***

Anna Laganà, Rachel Rivenc, Julia Langenbacher, John Griswold, and Tom Learner

***Angelic Engineering: the conservation and treatment  
of Heri Dono's Flying angels***

Roy Marchant and Beata Tworek-Matuszkiewicz

***The removal of graffiti ink from Mark Rothko's Black  
on Maroon, 1958; a collaborative approach***

Bronwyn Ormsby, Melinda Keefe, Rachel Barker, Chris Tucker, Felipe Donate and Patricia Smithen

***Effect of the Application of a Barrier Coating on the  
Deterioration of Cellulose Diacetate***

Diana Rambaldi, Charlotte Eng, Stefano Farris, Carlo Cozzolino and Frank D. Preusser

***Characterization of chemical and physical properties  
of animation cels from the Walt Disney Animation  
Research Library***

Michael Schilling, Miriam Truffa Giachet, Michael Schilling, Christel Pesme, Herant Khanjian, Emma Richardson, Tom Learner, Kristen McCormick

***The effectiveness of conservation adsorbents at  
inhibiting degradation of cellulose acetate***

Yvonne Shashoua, Michael Schilling and Joy Mazurek

***Kurt Schwitters' British sculptures: materials analysis  
and assessment of stability***

Joyce Townsend, Nelly von Aderkas, Bronwyn Ormsby and Gates Sofer

***The conservation of an early assemblage by Richard  
Serra, a rubber issue***

Sandra Weerdenburg, Thea van Oosten, Suzan de Groot and Leontine Coelewijn

**Posters:**

***Characterisation of three early Australian emulsion  
house paints using FTIR***

Anne Carter, Gillian Osmond and Bronwyn Ormsby

***Ashes to ashes, polypropylene to dust.***

Celia Cramer

***Surveying plastics at a design museum***

Annie Hall and Kate Wight

***Surface streaking on a matt PVA-acrylic painting***

Sarah Hillary and Bronwyn Ormsby

***The use of Mw value to characterize the conservation  
condition of cellulose nitrate based objects***

Agnès Lattuati-Derieux

***Polyurethane foam in contemporary art: The  
conservation and partial remake of Marianna  
Uutinen's Jesus (1993)***

Satu Mäkelä

***Building Legacy in Contemporary Art Programs in  
Timor-Leste***

Frances Paterson, Lisa Yeats and Robyn Sloggett

***The finite nature of plastics: challenges in the  
conservation of unstable synthetic polymers at the  
Pinacoteca do Estado de São Paulo***

Patricia Schossler, Camilla Vitti Mariano, Teodora Camargo Carneiro and Valéria de Mendonça

***The new INCCA website: giving context to curated  
information on the conservation of contemporary art***

Karen te Brake-Baldock

***A microfading study of Mark Rothko's materials for  
the Seagram murals (1958-59)***

Joyce Townsend, Bronwyn Ormsby, Rachel Barker, and Patricia Smithen

***Tal R: Liquefying paint – a new collaboration between museum and artist's studio.***

Anna Vila, Cecilie L. Andersen, Kathrine Segel and Pil Rasmussen

***Moisture sorption measurements by Dynamic Vapor Sorption (DVS) on audiotapes, before and after artificial ageing. Impact upon their stability and storage properties***

Leon-Bavi Vilmont, and Elena Gomez Sanchez

***On Parr: An investigation into the materials and techniques of Mike Parr's prints in the collection of the National Gallery of Australia***

Leah Williams

**Conference, Meetings, Courses: Reviews**

**Interim meeting of MMCA: Conserving Outdoor Painted Sculpture**

Kröller-Muller Museum (KMM), Otterlo, the Netherlands, June 12-13, 2013.

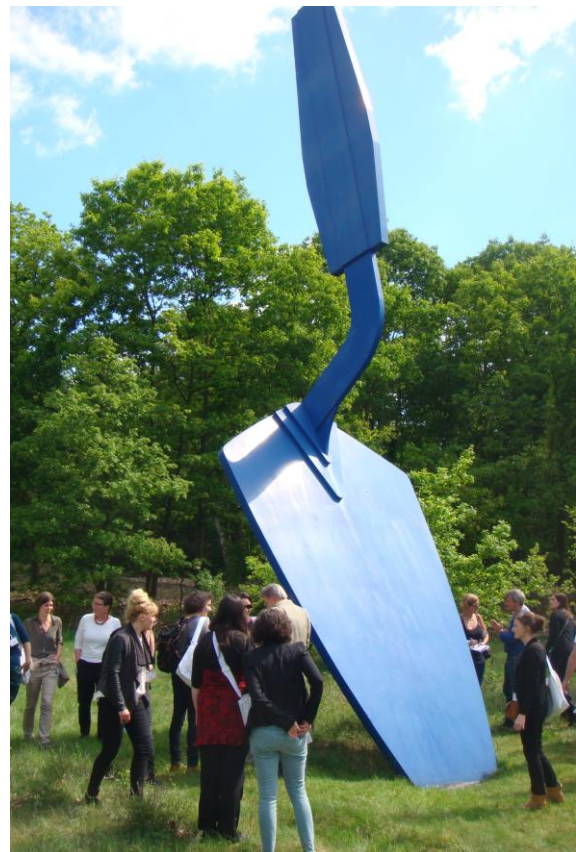
Outdoor painted sculpture presents some unique conservation challenges due to the extreme difficulty in keeping paint layers pristine amid the harsh environments to which they are usually exposed. Intense light/UV radiation, adverse weather conditions, as well as vandalism or accidental damage, all quickly affect a paint surface. Current conservation practice for these works tends to favor the preservation of the original aesthetic qualities of the sculpture while providing optimal protection to the substrate. Consequently, typical treatments usually involve full repainting of the sculpture, often accompanied by removal of all earlier coats of paint. Although this approach optimizes the longevity of the latest paint applied, the downside is a possible loss of significant information on the original paint systems used.

Entitled *Conserving Outdoor Painted Sculpture*, the primary aim of this two-day MMCA Interim meeting was to explore some of these statements and discuss existing approaches to conserving this genre of modern and contemporary art.

Nearly one hundred professionals attended, from all over Europe, North America and Asia. The meeting included eighteen talks covering technical and philosophical aspects, and case studies were presented on sculptures of influential artists working in this medium, including Calder, Dubuffet, Lichtenstein, Oldenburg, Di Suvero, and Tajiri. Three papers focused on works in the Kröller-Muller

Museum (KMM) collection, and participants visited the KMM sculpture park to view the works and discuss their conservation with the professionals involved. The meeting concluded with a panel discussion of conservators and representatives from the Dubuffet and Tajiri Foundations, as well as members of the paint industry; the discussion focused on identifying ways for conservators to work with artist foundations and industry.

The meeting was actually one of the specific recommendations that came out of a focus meeting held in June 2012 organized by the GCI at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. The report produced from the meeting addresses issues, responses, and priorities related to the conservation of outdoor painted sculpture and is available on-line: [http://www.getty.edu/conservation/our\\_projects/science/outdoor/outdoor\\_focus\\_mtg.pdf](http://www.getty.edu/conservation/our_projects/science/outdoor/outdoor_focus_mtg.pdf).



*Meeting Participants in front of Trowel, 1971, Claes Oldenburg, Kröller-Müller Museum*

We are currently working hard to produce the meeting proceedings – these will be available on-line, but also as a print-on-demand option. All papers have already been submitted and peer-reviewed; they are currently in the copy-editing and design phase, and we are still hopeful of meeting our intended production schedule of having the proceedings available this summer (2014).

The full list of papers will be:

- Conserving outdoor painted sculpture at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden (Gwynne Ryan)
- Issues of (and responses to) conserving outdoor painted sculpture: outcomes from a focus meeting (Tom Learner and Rachel Rivenc)
- As good as new: on the recoating of Tajiri's *Square Knot* (1974) in Venlo (Lydia Beerkens)
- The Conservation of Nam June Paks *32 Cars for the 20<sup>th</sup> C.: Play Mozart's Requiem Quietly* (1997) (Zeeyoung Chin)
- *Three Brushstrokes*: recreating Roy Lichtenstein's early techniques for painted outdoor sculpture (Julie Wolfe)
- The decision-making process for the treatment of Christo's *56 Barrels* (1968/1977) (Susanne Kensche)
- On the (im) possibilities of local repair and inpainting in the longterm conservation of outdoor painted sculptures. The case study of *Trowel* by Claes Oldenburg (Nikki van Basten)
- Maintenance of hand-painted outdoor sculptures by Niki de Sainte Phalle and Jean Dubuffet (Frederike Breder)
- A memory of materials: From production to documentation of painted outdoor sculptures today (Julia Lütolf and Peter von Bartheld)
- Some considerations in determining new paint systems for use in the treatment of painted steel, fiberglass, and wooden outdoor sculptures (Paul Benson)
- Technological changes due to wear and tear in outdoor paint coatings (Hans Springvloed Dubbeld)
- High end coatings: research for a perfect surface for an outdoor sculpture by John Hoskin (Calvin Winner)
- Not for eternity maybe: the conservation of '*Fluase*' (1998) an outdoor painted sculpture by Franz West (Florian Szibor)
- Museum procedures for dealing with large metal objects—case study of Calder's *The Halberd Bearer* (Angelika Gervais)
- Preventive conservation of outdoor painted sculpture in Quebec: When the quantity is beyond the understanding (Stéphanie Gagné)

I would like to thank Lydia Beerkens, in particular, for all her amazing work in organizing this successful and most enjoyable meeting, and her on-going enthusiasm for reviewing and editing all the papers. Thanks also to Karen te Brake Baldock for agreeing to have [www.incca.org](http://www.incca.org) host the conference website, and to the staff at the KMM for all their support and assistance.

Tom Learner

### FUTURE TALKS 013

#### Lectures and Workshops on Technology and Conservation of Modern Materials in Design.

Conference organized by the Conservation Department of Die Neue Sammlung – The International Design Museum Munich  
October 23 – 25, 2013

For the third time, the biannual conference FUTURE TALKS took place at the *Pinakothek der Moderne* in Munich last October. Once again, the Conservation Department of *Die Neue Sammlung, The International Design Museum Munich* with Tim Bechthold as Head of Conservation, gathered participants from all over the world – including countries such as Qatar, Pakistan and Singapore – to talk about the technology of modern materials and challenges in the conservation of design objects and contemporary artworks. The museum - with some 90,000 objects from the fields of industrial design, the applied arts and graphic design - was the perfect location to host this conference.

As for the first two FUTURE TALKS, the informal atmosphere and the great venue created the perfect platform to share knowledge and experience between both emerging and established conservators and researchers. To emphasize the conference's focus on practical approaches, one entire day of the three-day conference was dedicated to workshops and excursions. Another great highlight, newly introduced to FUTURE TALKS, was a panel discussion on design and sustainability of plastic furniture with Konstantin Grcic - one of the most famous and innovative German designers.

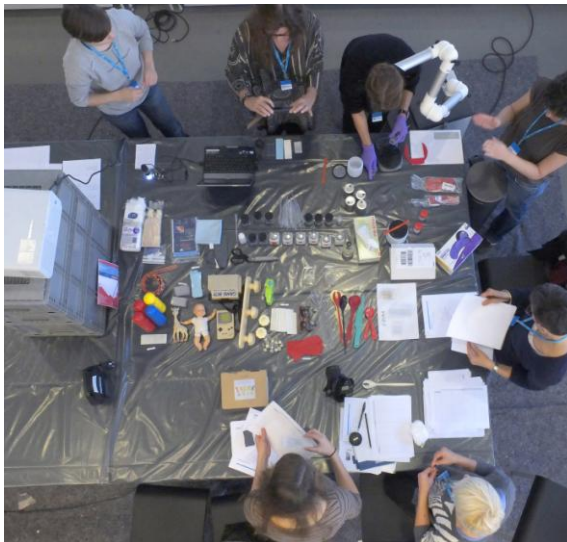
Speakers included specialists from museums, research institutes, universities and private practice and covered a wide range of topics in the lectures. The contributions marked a shift away from previous conference talks about 'traditional' materials such as cellulose nitrate, PVC and synthetic rubber. FUTURE TALKS 013 introduced innovative plastics less known in the field of conservation like Aquaplast® and Corian®. Contemporary artists and designers often use these materials because of their unique characteristics - workability, softness and elasticity - and are less concerned about their durability.

Scientific contributions were given by representatives from leading institutions such as the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands (RCE), on the discoloration of plastic objects and the Pratt Institute New York, on non-invasive investigation techniques. Practical solutions on the treatment of degraded modern materials were presented, including methods for consolidation of polyurethane foam, reversible airbrush inpainting techniques on faded fibre-



reinforced polyester, and testing and use of adhesives appropriate for the bonding of plastic materials.

The multifaceted topics of the lectures pointed out that the great number of variations and innovations of plastics engineering often makes reliable predictions on materials' characteristics and aging behaviour difficult and emphasized the importance of collaboration between plastics material scientists, conservators, and specialized education.



*Future Talks 013 Workshop: Cleaning of Plastics*

During the one- to two-hour workshops, conservators, engineers, scientists and technologists shared their precious knowledge. In contrast to the lectures, this format gave the participants the opportunity to sit together and discuss questions and ideas with specialists within an intimate atmosphere.

In between the lectures and workshops the conference attendees could browse the many interesting posters or have a coffee and pretzels and use the time for networking and informal conversations.

In the panel discussion Christian Bonten (Institut für Kunststofftechnik Stuttgart), Christian Maegerlin (BASF Ludwigshafen, Germany), Friederike Waentig (Cologne Institute for Conservation Sciences), Tim Bechthold (Die Neue Sammlung Munich) Nicola Stattmann (designer and researcher on innovative materials, Frankfurt) and Konstantin Grcic (designer, Munich) lively discussed questions related to the development of design objects and the possible changes in their reception through musealization and material degradation. The discussion highlighted the necessity for conservators to communicate with designers and engineers in order to understand the intention and material composition of an object.



*Future Talks 013 Workshop: Reversible Airbrush of GRP*

As long as specialists and conservators remain interested in sharing information, conferences like FUTURE TALKS will greatly contribute to the progress in the preservation and conservation of modern materials used in art and design.

The post-prints of the lectures will be released at the next conference FUTURE TALKS 015. We are looking forward to it!

Giuliana Moretto and Delia Müller-Wüsten

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### **Fail Better - A Symposium about Conservation Practice and Decision Making in Modern and Contemporary Art**

Hamburger Kunsthalle, December 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> 2013



Barbara Sommermeyer, conservator at the Hamburger Kunsthalle, and the German Conservators' Association (VDR) organized another interdisciplinary symposium in Hamburg, Germany, about learning from failure, since the first conference - *From Setback to Success* – dating back to 2004. Almost a decade later international experts return to *Fail Better* to pursue the discussion concerning conservational, curatorial, philosophical and ethical aspects in conservation practice in Modern and Contemporary Art. For this purpose, the Hamburger Kunsthalle, with its large

collections of modern and contemporary artworks, provided the ideal venue.

The opening remarks by Prof. Hubertus Gaßner, director of the museum, were followed by an introductory talk by Barbara Sommermeyer presenting case studies from the collection. Four sessions with two speakers each and subsequent discussion duly filled the two days with a highly interesting programme. During the intermissions, not only lunch and coffee with Hamburg delicacies were provided, but also guided tours offered through the exhibitions of Eva Hesse and Gego. The evening reception was enjoyed by the bravest among the participants despite the announced thunderstorm on a touring barge boat along the Hamburg harbour with music, food and drinks. The third day offered guided visits through the construction site of the Elbphilharmonie and the Santiago Sierra exhibition.

During the first session, chaired by IJsbrand Hummelen, senior researcher at the RCE, Amsterdam/Amersfoort, the two speakers – Silke Zeich, conservator at Museum Folkwang, Essen, and Brigitte Kölle, curator at the Hamburger Kunsthalle – opened the topic on how artists and conservators deal with failure in their work. The second session, chaired by Iris Winkelmeier, head conservator at Lenbachhaus, Munich, the two speakers – Eleonary Nagy, conservator at the Whitney Museum, New York, and Elisabeth Bushart, head conservator at Museum Brandhorst, Munich – brought conservation approaches into focus. Major questions discussed included the replacement of degrading artworks as opposed to accepting damages in due consideration and evaluation of artists' statements. Derek Pullen, freelance conservator, SculpCons Ltd. London, chaired the third session with Lyndsey Morgan, freelance conservator, Patina Art Collection Care Ltd., London, and Michelle Barger, conservator at San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. Both speakers took the audience on a journey of case studies with special emphasis on processes of decision-making about replacements in cooperation with artists and artists' descendants respectively.

Furthermore, the feasibility of fabricating replacements using new technical appliances was discussed. In the fourth and last session, chaired by Derek Pullen, IJsbrand Hummelen, RCE, Amsterdam/Amersfoort, and Matthew Gale, curator at Tate Modern, London, spoke about roles in decision-making. Hummelen emphasized the understanding of decisions as ongoing processes and suggested to look at the artwork as an archive. Matthew Gale presented a manifesto for replacements, in which he defined the understanding of decisions as the result of multidisciplinary cooperation.

The symposium responded to our times of change, where artworks show increasingly dramatic transformations, where changing perceptions and interpretations of these works need to be addressed, where conservational approaches require rethinking, and where the roles in decision-making are shifting. The symposium accommodated the necessity for present-day conservators to lead a critical discourse with neighbouring disciplines. Thus, from an original impasse where the role of conservation rotates between the poles of the artwork itself, the artist, the curators, and the public, each frequently representing opposing interests, the symposium has pointed towards possible solutions. One important aspect is the significance of joined forces in interdisciplinary cooperation for a process-based, dynamic decision-making. In addition, the ongoing thorough study of objects, and the growing body of case studies, which will eventually form the fundament for guidelines, was highlighted. A particularly acute issue concerned questions around replicas. The definition of the extent, the motivation, and the purpose of replicas, also in contrast to forgery, will all be important aspects for the development of necessary ethical and legal guidelines.

We are grateful to the organisers and all speakers for yet another important milestone on the way to fail even better.

All talks and discussions have been recorded. The publication of the video material will be announced soon via VDR, ICOM, INCCA etc.

Esther Rapoport

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### **Study day: The Conservation of Nicolas Schöffer's Cybernetic Tower**

March 25, 2014

In 1961, the city of Liège (Belgium) commissioned a monumental work measuring 52 metres high from Nicolas Schöffer, a Hungarian artist living in France and the father of cybernetic art. At the time, the Cybernetic Tower was at the cutting edge of modernity and interactivity: equipped with thermal and hygrometric sensors, as well sensors concerning the town's activity, it "reacted" in phase with its urban and human environment by producing movement, sound and light. Equipped with an electronic brain and a set of organs coordinating its random expression, it was a venue for several sound and light shows, in particular in collaboration with Henri Pousseur and Arnaud Pierre. This extraordinary work, misunderstood by its contemporaries, experienced a series of breakdowns as a result of a lack of maintenance and, in the 1970s, became completely inert. Public authorities have just released the funding needed for its restoration, but it was via the press that

conservators-restorers found out that these restoration works had been entrusted to an architect's firm and a civil engineering company.



Therefore, a study day was organised in Liège on 25 March by INCCA-F in the frame of a research project entitled *Replace or Remake*. It brought together all of the stakeholders (public authorities, architect's firms, the Friends of the Cybernetic Tower), as well as about twenty international researchers and restorers, including Gilles Barabant and Cecile Dazord (C2RMF), Anne Castenet (Bordeaux Museum of Contemporary Art), Lydia Beerkens (UvA), Arnaud Pierre (Paris-Sorbonne), Isabelle Astic (Museum of Arts and Crafts - Cnam, Paris). All were given access to the Tower's installations.

These experts had many questions about the work's restoration. Indeed, mainly for political and budgetary reasons, the work of art is listed as a "monument" and not as a work of art. Consequently, it is the material features (foundation, structure, projectors, etc.) which are favoured in the specifications. Although the work's documentation, the preservation of the original magnetic strips, the storage of the dismantled and replaced parts are provided for in theory, no details are available about these points. Also, compliance with the work's aesthetic integrity is uncertain, owing to a lack of complete documentation: therefore, the restoration of its functionality is very uncertain. The experts were unable to obtain clear replies to these

key points; however, suggestions were made and national and international collaborations were proposed.

Although it is important to recognise the wish of the public authorities to revive this exceptional work of art after all these years, the non-involvement of conservators-restorers from the project's outset has given rise to a number of methodological errors. These can be repaired, but, on the one hand, they come up against the reality of an intangible budget and, on the other hand, the reticence of certain stakeholders who see the experts' approach as intrusive.



In conclusion, as pointed out by Manon D'Haenens, researcher and doctoral student at the University of Liège-ESA Saint-Luc de Liège, it is a dual non-recognition - that of the Tower as a work of art and that of contemporary art restorers as stakeholders - which generate current concerns. All of the contributors present at the study day highlighted the work's exceptional character and the need for the rigorous conservation of its elements. As for the restoration, it is important that aesthetics and functionality are the subject of the same detail and the same specifications as those for the work's material features.

Another INCCA-F study day is already planned in order to ensure close monitoring by conservators-restorers



of a restoration project with which they would have preferred to have been more closely associated.

Muriel Verbeeck

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### **Plastics in Art and for Art - Synthetic Polymers as Artistic and Restoration Materials**

The definition of Restoration of Contemporary Art is still in progress, mostly because of its relatively recent emergence, but also because of the complexity and sensitivity to degradation of many of its artworks if compared to ancient and modern ones. The conservation problems arise from the multitude of materials and techniques adopted by the artists: most artefacts are and made of non-artistic and heterogeneous materials. Some of them, or some parts of them, are made of perishable or even biodegradable components.

Furthermore, the introduction of issues like conceptuality or subjectivity into the artwork has greatly complicated the restorer's job, even though it has made the practice of restoration more intellectually stimulating: contemporary art restorers must have (besides to scientific, artistic and technical skills) great methodological creativeness and critical capability.



*The participants restoring some degraded objects during the Workshop held by Thea van Oosten and Anna Laganà. © Fondazione Plart*

Among all the different materials selected by contemporary artists and designers, synthetic polymers have been greatly used as medium and as support/object of their creations. But even though they are commonly considered to be indestructible materials, plastics often show sudden and irreversible signs of degradation and require specific conservation treatments still to be organically expressed.

The idea of organising interdisciplinary courses about the Degradation, Conservation and Restoration of Plastic Art and Design arose from Plart's need to gather knowledge about the most recent experimental

research carried out around Europe; to share information about the tools, the methods and the different approaches to conservation, by promoting a debate between experts; to make up for the growing interest to these particular issues registered among Plart's public, by developing a specialised professional figure capable of preserving synthetic Cultural Heritage, increasingly found in public and private collections.

*Plastics in Art and for Art* is organised with the patronage of ICCROM in collaboration with illustrious partners - Scientific Research Centres, Universities, Museums, International Organizations, public and private Conservation Centres, such as C.N.R., Accademia di Belle Arti di Napoli, Polo Museale Sapienza, Istituto per l'Arte e il Restauro Palazzo Spinelli, Università Suor Orsola Benincasa, INCCA-Italia, Danish National Museum, Laboratorio Polimaterico dei Musei Vaticani, Open Care Restauri, CTS Srl, etc. (The complete list of Partners can be found by downloading the *Plastics in Art and for Art* brochures at <http://www.fondazioneplart.it/restauro.aspx>).

The Scientific Committee is chaired by prof. Luigi Nicolais (Honorary President), Mrs Maria Pia Incutti (President), prof. Ezio Martuscelli (Director), Alice Hansen (Coordinator). The courses are open to students, freelancers and experts [coming from different professional contexts](#), such as restorers, conservation scientists, designers, collectors, curators.

The venue selected for the training activities is the Plart Foundation of Naples (Italy), a private museum created in order to promote the history and the culture of polymeric materials. The permanent collection shows the evolution of plastics, from semi-synthetic polymers such as cellulose nitrate to the recently conceived bio plastics, from common use/anonymous design objects to innovative design and contemporary art. Plart is also a research centre on Eco-sustainable Design and on Conservation of Plastic Artefacts – therefore seminars, workshops, conferences and temporary exhibitions are organised. A scientific laboratory for the identification, the artificial ageing and the study of degradation phenomena of polymers was therefore set up.

A selection of artefacts and more information about the Museum's activities can be found online at [www.fondazioneplart.it](http://www.fondazioneplart.it).

The 1<sup>st</sup> Interdisciplinary Course "*Plastics in Art and for Art - Synthetic Polymers as Artistic and Restoration Materials*" started in October 2012 and lasted four months.

Four modules were held in close contact with Plart's collection, divided in 110 hours of frontal lessons:

1. Science, Technologies and Identification of Synthetic Polymers;
2. The Degradation of Plastic Artefacts;
3. Synthetic Polymers used in the Conservation of Cultural Heritage;
4. Diagnostics, Conservation and Restoration of Plastic Art and Design

At the end of the Course, practical internships were held by the Partner Institutions and a publication was sponsored by the University of Rome La Sapienza, thanks to the kind cooperation of prof. Luigi Campanella.



Degraded objects from Plart's collection used during the Workshop. © Fondazione Plart.

*Plastics in Art and for Art 2014/2015* will consist in a dozen of individual but interconnected basic and advanced master classes, taught in English and Italian by internationally recognised experts. They will offer more specific and practical skills, by focusing on particular issues, such as: Plart's Collection Risk Management, Acrylic Paintings, Synthetic Textiles, Celluloid artefacts, Expanded Polyurethane artefacts, Synthetic Polymers as Conservation Materials for Contemporary Art.

A specific interdisciplinary training is needed to restore plastic artefacts. Restorers must be ready to face ideological challenges, to constantly follow the development of experimental research, to promptly acknowledge innovations and to put aside, if necessary, the assimilated theory of restoration. Open mind, ethical sense and a rigorous scientific method are required, together with the awareness of not

having yet a complete understanding of this particularly fragile kind of artworks.

Alice Hansen and Antonella Russo

## Upcoming Conferences, Meetings, and Workshops

### The *Dialogues*

Spring 2014

The UPV-Polytechnical University of Valencia (Spain) has launched a series of seminars covering different topics dealing with modern and contemporary art. The series, called *Dialogues*, will be held at the Auditorium of the Fine Arts Faculty. The name of the series respond to the fact that two specialists will be presenting their research and studio cases within a same field of study and will show how multidisciplinary and shared decisions are essential nowadays in our profession to deal with the great challenges that modern and contemporary artworks represent.

These seminars are in line with previous conferences and seminars organized by the UPV recently and that are mainly intended to look into materials, understand their behavior and aging and to provide conservators with a deeper knowledge on the work of art when approaching conservation treatments. The seminars are addressed to students but also to professionals that want to gain an insight into very specific topics by attending talks given by specialists in the conservation field.



The first *Dialogue* (4<sup>th</sup> April) focused on acrylics and is given by Bronwyn Ormsby (Conservation Scientist) and Rachel Barker (Conservator), both from Tate-UK, who addressed issues of acrylics' composition and aging as well as the strategies for their proper conservation through different case studies. Similarly, on May 9<sup>th</sup>, Aviva Burnstock (Conservation scientist at the Courtauld Institute) and Klaas Jan Van der Berg (Conservation scientist at RCE- Cultural Heritage Agency in the Netherlands) will give a similar overview but this time on modern oils. The third *Dialogue* (June 6<sup>th</sup>) will bring Thea Van Oosten (Conservation scientists formerly at RCE) and Anna Lagana (Conservator of

modern materials) to UPV to speak on plastics, their history, composition, degradation and conservation treatments. Last but not least important, and even if cleaning issues will arise in the first two *Dialogues* on acrylics and modern oils, the fourth Dialogue (June 30<sup>th</sup>) will count on Richard Wolbers (Conservation scientist at the Univ. of Delaware) and Paolo Cremonesi (Freelance conservation scientist) who will discuss on the dos and don'ts of aqueous cleaning methods and materials in an attempt to raise awareness about the implications of such methods and their possibilities but also about their boundaries for the safe preservation of the work of art.

All the information as well as the link to the registration on line can be found at: [www.cfp.upv.es](http://www.cfp.upv.es)  
For any additional information please contact: [conservacion&restauracion@upv.es](mailto:conservacion&restauracion@upv.es)

Laura Fuster Lopez

## Project Updates

### Adhesives for Polystyrene

In 2012 a research project investigating adhesives for polystyrene was carried out by The Swedish National Heritage Board together with The Royal Institute of Technology (KTH) and the research institute Swerea KIMAB. Parts of the results are digitally available in an online article in *Studies in Conservation (Adhesives for adhering polystyrene plastic and their long-term effect, <http://www.maneyonline.com/doi/full/10.1179/2047058413Y.0000000105>)*. A full report on the project can be downloaded from the web site of The Swedish National Heritage Board: *Joining plastics together – what happens over time?*, <http://samla.raa.se/xmlui/handle/raa/6469?show=full>



The adhesives tested for the project

Damage such as cracks and breakage will occur with handling and the process of time, and there are occasions when an adhesive bonding is necessary. For preservation purposes it is important to choose an adhesive that will be stable over time and have as little impact as possible on the object. Seven adhesives have been tested for their effect on the plastic material

before and after light aging. The project has investigated the impact of adhesives on polystyrene in the museum environment studying such factors as stability, impact on original material, working properties, aesthetics and aging of the adhesive join. Furthermore, the question of reversibility has been considered and some of the tested adhesives were applied to three-dimensional objects. Methods applied were assessment of working properties, appearance, colour measurement, tensile testing, hardness measurement, assessment of break type, SEM-imaging, ATR FTIR-imaging and assessment of reversibility. Ageing was performed by light ageing with a UV component.

Based on a survey among conservators, the adhesives included were acrylates (Paraloid B72 in acetone:ethanol, or ethanol, Paraloid B67 in isopropanol, Primal AC-35, Acrifix 116), epoxies (Hxtal NYL-1, Araldite 2020) and one cyanoacrylate (Loctite Super Attak Precision). They have been tested on extruded sheet material of transparent general purpose polystyrene and white high impact polystyrene (HIPS) applied on adhered edges and as an open layer.



A broken polystyrene object used for testing

A damaging effect to the plastic could be seen for Acrifix 116 and Loctite Super Attak Precision. The strength of the adhesive joins was not severely affected by light ageing for most of the tested adhesives in terms of tensile strength. The cyanoacrylate was weakened on the transparent plastic, but for Acrifix 116 (on both transparent and HIPS) and Primal AC-35 on HIPS, the bond was strengthened. In general, the cyanoacrylate was the strongest and Paraloid B67 the weakest. None of the adhesives resulted in a cohesive break in the plastic. Adhesive breaks could be seen for the epoxies.

Most adhesives showed visible yellowing apart from Acrifix and Hxtal NYL-1. None of the tested adhesives matched the refractive index of polystyrene which results in visible bonds on transparent polystyrene. The bonds of the adhered edges for the cyanoacrylate and Araldite 2020 showed visible yellowing.



Reversibility was possible for the Paraloids and the dispersion Primal AC-35. It was possible to remove the epoxies and Acrifix manually with some difficulty. The cyanoacrylate was not possible to remove.

Thea Winther

### **Treatment of *Untitled/101 Spring St* by David Novros**

The treatment of David Novros's mural *Untitled/101 Spring St* located at Donald Judd's domicile and studio in 101 Spring St, New York City, was undertaken last year by a group of conservators led by Kiernan Graves, Daniela Cocco and Judd Foundation's conservator Mette Carlsen.

Donald Judd commissioned the mural for a wall on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of 101 Spring St in 1970. It was Novros's first mural using fresco technique. He worked with a professional plasterer who prepared the brickwork with quick lime upon which Novros applied the paint; raw pigments mixed with limewater. The first paint layer (fresco) was, in most color fields, painted over in a lighter color, producing a second original layer.

Over the years various issues affected the condition of the artwork. Oil stained the plaster and flaking of the some paint layers occurred. In agreement with Judd, Novros restored the artwork on several occasions. The oil stain was sealed with shellac and over-painted with acrylic-based paint, whilst the flaking paint was mostly sanded off and the colorfields were painted over with pigments and marble dust mixed with an acrylic binder to replicate the texture of the original plaster surface. Novros also took the opportunity to alter the composition-lines. The issue of oil staining and flaking paint continued and the restored painted surface's dull and flat character, in some colorfields, was typical to a mat acrylic paint but unlike a fresco surface. On several occasions the artist expressed the wish to re-make the mural.



*Untitled/101 Spring St during the removal of the restoration layers. The lighter blue color is the original surface as showing in colorfields: top row left, top row center and middle row, right.*

In 2012 after a comprehensive restoration of the entire building, the examination of the mural began along with conversations with the artist. Paint and substrate samples were taken for cross-section analysis and combined with solubility testing. From this an understanding of the stratigraphy of the paint layering emerged, as well as an understanding of which layers were original and which were from subsequent restorations. Trust was developed between the conservators and the artist. Through conversations and as the treatment progressed the artist concurred with our findings and recalled more of his undertakings. A few areas that he did not recall he had over-painted turned out to have subsequent restoration layers.

The aim of the treatment was to remove the artist's restoration layers in order to uncover the original mural; to separate the acrylic paint from the pigment-limewater paint that was, in some instances, not bound in the plaster but to the acrylic paint. Each colorfield had its unique combination of materials, previous conditions and restorations. An individual treatment method was tested and developed for each area whilst preserving the integrity of the artwork.



*During treatment. The oil stain is visible at the top*

In two instances it was not possible to separate the restoration layers from the original second layers. It seemed likely that there would be losses here (in the second original layer) because Novros would have removed the flaking paint before he painted over it. It was decided to remove the restoration layers to uncover the first paint layer (fresco). Because the fresco here was a different color from the original second layer, the two colorfields were in-painted. Novros undertook the in-painting himself. Novros' technique and brushstrokes, seen throughout the mural, are clearly recognizable in the in-painted areas.



The artist was satisfied with the conservation treatment of the artwork and felt his original intent was now expressed again. He also recognized the importance and appreciated the mark of time in the artwork, preserved within the context of a newly restored building.

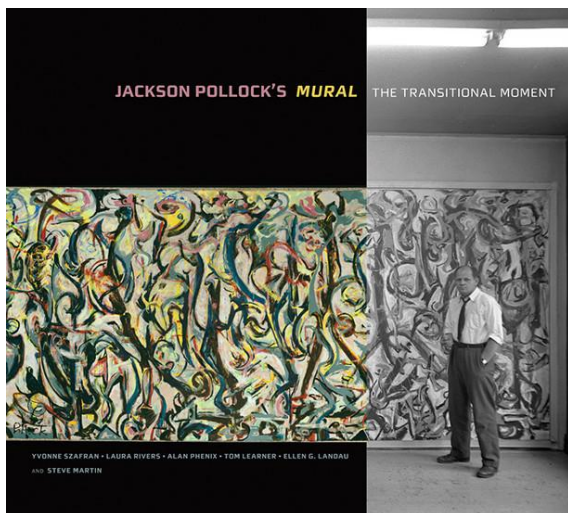
The complex condition of the mural and the detail of its conservation and restoration cannot be fully conveyed in this short update. For further information contact [mcarlson@juddfoundation.org](mailto:mcarlson@juddfoundation.org).

Mette Carlsen

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### Conservation of Jackson Pollock's *Mural* culminates with Exhibition

On view at the Getty Center through June 1, 2014 is an exhibition focused on *Mural*, Jackson Pollock's seminal work from 1943. The exhibit draws on findings from a two-year project of conservation and research by the GCI and the J. Paul Getty Museum. *Mural*, which is owned by the University of Iowa Museum of Art, is featured in its own gallery, alongside a second one that examines the materials and techniques used to create the painting, explores some of the legends surrounding it, explains how the painting has changed since 1943, and discusses its recent conservation treatment at the Getty.



Scientific research undertaken by the GCI confirmed that high quality artist's oils were used on most of the work but also identified a water-based white casein house paint that Pollock used in numerous places across the painting, possibly to quickly regain areas of white space in places already painted. Although the idea that *Mural* was completed in one painting session has long been disproved, the Getty study found that Pollock's initial paint marks were made in four highly

diluted colors applied wet-in-wet across much of the canvas, suggesting perhaps that Pollock did complete an initial composition in a single session. Pollock's application techniques were also explored, especially for a stringy, pink oil paint that had a similar appearance to the enamel house paints used in his later works for pouring onto a canvas on the floor.

The recent conservation treatment involved removing a synthetic varnish that had been applied during a previous conservation treatment in 1973, and addressing the effects that a wax-resin lining had on the current aesthetics of the painting. Whereas the lining successfully mitigated a long history of flaking, it also locked into place a sag in the canvas resulting in a misalignment of the painted image with its rectangular stretcher. As part of the Getty treatment, the stretcher was replaced with one that followed the existing painted edges, thereby returning all areas of unpainted canvas to the sides of the stretcher, and to re-establish the original edges of Pollock's work.

More information on the exhibition can be found at: <http://www.getty.edu/art/exhibitions/pollock/> and three short videos made for the exhibition can be viewed on line at <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLij2XTFgmBSQUFnIkKFTjOus4ZKRrRX54>. These are on paint analysis, paint application studies, and the conservation treatment of *Mural*.

The research and analysis work can be found in detail in the related illustrated book, *Jackson Pollock's Mural: The Transitional Moment* available at <http://shop.getty.edu/products/jackson-pollock-s-i-mural-i-the-transitional-moment-978-1606063231>

### Publications

#### *From Can to Canvas*

Worth noting this year is the publication of two volumes of the Special Issue "*From Can to Canvas*" published in Volume 52, numbers 3 and 4, of the *Journal of the American Institute for Conservation*. The contributions contained in part one and two of this special issue represent the most comprehensive exploration to date of the use of oil-based enamel paints by modern avant-garde artists, with a special focus on the historic house paints manufactured by the French company Ripolin.

The articles explore topics relating to the use of non-artists' enamel paints in the first half of the 20th century, including: intended and unintended meanings of artists' material choices; techniques of paint application; issues of preservation; the materials and technology of paint production; and the challenging and multifaceted scientific characterization of non-artists' paints. Following a comprehensive review of

the paint technology and chemistry of oil-based house paints from 1900 to 1960, the first issue is devoted entirely to new and extensive studies of the oeuvre of Pablo Picasso, while the second issue explores the works of many other pivotal artists of the 20th century, including Francis Picabia, Vasily Kandinsky, Sidney Nolan, Giacomo Balla, László Moholy-Nagy and David Alfaro Siqueiros.



The interdisciplinary investigations highlight the wide range of applications and experimental use of these materials by artists, creating interesting challenges for the researcher but also providing fertile ground for further characterization and better understanding of works produced with enamel paints. The authors and editors hope that these two publications will constitute the foundation for further, in-depth study of artists' uses of oil-based enamels.

#### FUTURE TALKS 011

Conservation and Technology of Modern Materials in Design

295 pages, paperback, price: € 29,80

Edited by: Tim Bechthold

Proceedings from the second FUTURE TALKS conference, organized by the Conservation Department of Die Neue Sammlung. The International Design Museum Munich, October 26-28, 2011.

With 29 conference papers this volume presents a comprehensive compilation of innovative practical

conservation treatments on plastics worldwide and highlights the state-of-the-art of scientific research, including continuative information on authors, suppliers and literature references.



With this volume an extra focus is laid on technological aspects related to the production of design objects, like rapid prototyping.

Contributions among others by institutions and museums such as MOMA New York, The International Design Museum Munich, Vitra Design Museum, Weil am Rhein, Rathgen Forschungslabor Berlin, Fraunhofer Institute Umsicht, Oberhausen, Triennale Design Museum Milan, the Cultural Heritage Agency (RCE), Amsterdam and many more.

Available at: Die Neue Sammlung. The International Design Museum Munich

[conservation@die-neue-sammlung.de](mailto:conservation@die-neue-sammlung.de)

#### Jay Krueger on Aqueous Bleaching of Color Field Paintings

Jay Krueger is head of painting conservation, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC

*Rachel Rivenc (RR):* Hi Jay! You've developed a method to wash acrylic painted canvases, can you describe the type of painting to which the treatment is adapted?

*Jay Krueger (JK):* Color field paintings represent a very specific type of modern American painting, first seen in the early 1950's in the work of Helen Frankenthaler, and soon thereafter, in paintings by Morris Louis, Kenneth Noland and others. Color field or stain paintings are typically comprised of thinned oil, Magna, or acrylic dispersion paints that are poured or brushed onto an unprimed cotton canvas. The paint soaks into the canvas, with the oil and Magna paints frequently saturating the entire structure of the fabric. Typically large expanses of unpainted canvas function

as an integral part of the design, so when the uniform field is altered by local stains or uneven discoloration, the visual integrity of the painting is compromised.

*Tom Learner (TL):* Can you give an overview of the treatment, and especially the advantages of working on the overall canvas as opposed to local?

JK: This is a method that was developed for removing stains from unprimed canvas in color field paintings that builds on knowledge and established practice in paper conservation. My wife, Holly Krueger, head of paper conservation at the Library of Congress and I first began exploring the potential for addressing isolated stains in color field paintings using aqueous light bleaching in the late 1980's. A small canvas by Kenneth Noland presented a number of stains in the unpainted canvas that were both associated with the wooden strainer and small foxing-like spots in the interior of the painting. Observing her tremendous success in removing similar stains in works of art on paper over many years we began to think about ways that this approach might be adapted to color field paintings. In paper conservation aqueous sun-bleaching typically involves immersing or floating the sheet of paper in water, but it can also take the form of blotter-washing where the wet sheet is simply placed in contact with a moistened blotter and this is closest to what we are doing with paintings. There are a few fundamental differences between paper and the woven structure of canvas, and there are many steps in preparing the canvas for the treatment and carrying out the sun-bleaching procedure, but once we determined ways to protect the paint media and stabilize the canvas during treatment we were able to move forward with the treatment.



*Jay and Holly Krueger fixing the canvas to a temporary stretcher*

In the presence of water, the sun activates a controlled oxidizing reaction, staining material gradually transfers to the blotter, and the sheet of paper, or canvas in our case, is thoroughly rinsed to

remove residual degraded materials that have been released by the procedure. The general discoloration that naturally develops in cotton with exposure to air and light is also reduced as the stains are diminished or eliminated, and the canvas returns to a uniform off-white that is pleasing to the eye and always somewhat darker than the original canvas color when judged against the areas of the canvas that were long protected by the corner folds. We have found that you never move beyond the off-white tone of cotton canvas, and that the potential for developing a stark white that can occur with chemical bleaching isn't an issue.

These are vulnerable canvases that are easily damaged initially by accidents or mishandling, and all too often further damaged by subsequent local treatments, however well intentioned. We strongly believe that local aqueous treatments should be avoided, with or without the use of a suction table, as tide lines at the wet-dry interface are inevitable. Everything we know from over 20 years of treating these canvases suggests that there will be color reversion if the solubilized materials that are not removed and that you will eventually see bright, over cleaned areas and darkened tide lines around the area that has been locally treated. These previously treated stains are generally much more difficult to remove than the original stain.

RR: The treatment was inspired by treatments applied to paper conservation, do you often look at other conservation fields for innovative solutions?

JK: In working with modern and contemporary art you have to be open to solutions that may lie outside your training, immediate experience, or expertise. Collaboration is essential, but so is being able to see what is being done in one situation and considering how that may be applicable to other challenging situations.

TL: What was it like the first time you attempted it, were you nervous, and are you still nervous now when you do it?

I think I prefer to remember the first treatment as being exciting, but yes, there were certain unknowns. We felt confident in our understanding of the object's inherent characteristics and the precautions we were taking, so it didn't seem like a completely unusual thing to be doing, but assessing the benefits and risks for any treatment is a common factor in conservation.

RR: What were the results like?

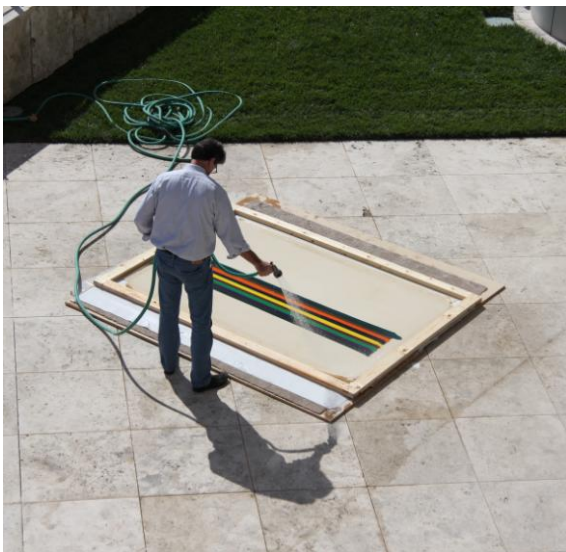
JK: The stains were completely eliminated, the canvas was returned to a uniform off-white tone, and the treatment deemed a complete success. The canvas



was seen several years after treatment and it still looked great.

TL: Is the sun indispensable to the treatment, and can it be performed under any type of climate?

JK: Conservators regularly use artificial lights for sun-bleaching works on paper, however the necessary exposure time is often longer. For paintings this would mean having the canvas wet much longer than the 2-3 hours we normally employ, and constructing a bank of lights sufficient to provide the necessary intensity and uniformly illuminate these often large paintings would be impractical. At our Northern hemisphere, mid-Atlantic latitude, the prime months for sun-bleaching are April through October.



Jay Krueger washing Morris Louis' 133

RR: I understand you've been doing it many years, can you give examples of paintings you've treated this way?

JK: We have sun-bleached well over twenty paintings, including canvases by Morris Louis, Kenneth Noland, Helen Frankenthaler, Clyfford Still, and other artists.

TL: Does it work for every type of stain?

JK: Identifying or characterizing stains can be very difficult, as the discoloration can occur months or years after the event. Stains with a greasy or oily component can be greatly diminished but often remain visible post-treatment. Stains that have been locally treated before are often difficult to remove completely, and this may have something to do with inadvertently setting the initial stain with incomplete rinsing.

RR: Do you have plans to disseminate this, maybe papers, articles, or even teaching workshops?

JK: We are writing a paper this year that aims to describe this approach to treatment as well as some of the initial research we have done with colleagues at the Getty Conservation Institute to quantify what is occurring to the paint and canvas during these treatments and as the treated canvases age. Our empirical observations give us confidence in the efficacy and safety of this approach to these complex problems, but our work with the GCI is critical in establishing a broader understanding of this treatment. Talks and workshops are also possibilities.

**Karen te Brake-Baldock  
on INCCA's past, present and future**

*Tom Learner (TL):* Hi Karen, can you give us an overview of what INCCA is, and what it strives to achieve?

*Karen te Brake-Baldock (KBB):* INCCA is a network of professionals and students involved with the conservation of contemporary art. The membership is diverse and includes conservators, curators, scientists, registrars, archivists, art historians and researchers. Members allow access to documents they have created such as artist interviews, condition reports, installation instructions etc. They also organize and participate in meetings, workshops and research projects to develop and share the knowledge needed for the conservation of contemporary art.

Caring for and presenting any type of cultural heritage requires a lot of knowledge. Obtaining, interpreting and sharing that knowledge is a large part of what museum professionals do. Care-takers of contemporary art have the added bonus of having access to an information source that that many can only dream of, namely a living artist (or the closest thing to it, his/her assistant or family.)

Contemporary artists use all imaginable materials and techniques in the production of their work. Gathering information on what these materials and working practices are, the significance they may possess, and how artists view issues such as degradation, transience and inter-activity, is essential for developing the best preservation strategies for these increasingly complex works of art.

Experience has shown that sharing information is essential for the continued existence of contemporary art. For this reason a group of international professionals took the initiative to set up a network to develop, share and preserve knowledge needed for the conservation of contemporary art.



*Rachel Rivenc (RR):* How long has INCCA existed, and how long have you been involved with it?

*KBB:* INCCA was developed during a European project between 1999 and 2002 so this year the network will turn 15. The founding project was supported by the European Commission's Raphael Programme and co-organized by Instituut Collectie Nederland (ICN), now part of the Dutch Cultural Heritage Agency (RCE), and the Tate in London. The project was managed by Tatja Scholte, art historian and senior researcher at RCE. During this time, the INCCA website and database were developed and a substantial amount of artists' information collected. Almost 100 hundred artists' interviews were conducted and from this experience a Guide to Good Practice for Artist Interviews was created.

I heard about INCCA in 2001 while studying for a Master in European Arts Management at the Utrecht School of the Arts. My thesis was focused on project management, specifically in the visual arts sector that I called 'internet-driven'; with an international project team and internet as an intrinsic part of both the way the project was organized and the project results. INCCA was one of the four cases I looked into. It is hard to imagine, but in 2001 sharing documents through the web was not the usual way of working, especially not for a group of conservators.



*Karen te Brake-Baldock*

Between 2002 and 2004, most of the founding members plus some new partners, wrote an application for a new European funded research project, this time on installation art. A new project would not only provide new knowledge for the field, but also an opportunity for the network to expand and become more established. At the time I was looking for a more permanent job and was pleasantly surprised to receive a call from Tatja asking if I was interested in assisting her in managing the project *Inside Installations. Preservation and Presentation of Installation Art*. I started working at ICN in June 2004 and over the next three years gradually took over the coordination tasks that had been carried out by Tatja.

Finding continuous support for the network has been an essential part of the success of INCCA. In March 2007 ICN's management (now RCE) agreed that INCCA was an important research tool for the conservation community and agreed to provide it stability by including it as one of the organizational activities. In practice this meant a commitment to funding of the upkeep of the websites as well as allowing a staff member to work as central coordinator.

*TL:* The membership has grown in an impressive way since the beginnings, can you give us your perspective on that, and on the evolution of INCCA in general? And how many countries are represented in the membership?

*KBB:* The network started with 23 people, from 11 organizations in 10 countries. It now has over 1200 members from 730 organizations in 65 countries. The majority of members come from western Europe and the United States, however we now do have members in all continents, including Australia, South America and Africa.

*RR:* Can you explain how the membership works? To be a member, one had to contribute to the INCCA database, but this requirement was eliminated, can you explain the reason for this change? Has it help increase the membership? Some people might still hold back from joining thinking they have to contribute, so it's worth reinforcing!

*KBB:* INCCA membership is open to any professional or student who is involved in the conservation of contemporary art. Membership is free, however members are encouraged to contribute records to the INCCA Database. Membership criteria:

- You are a professional with an interest in or are directly involved with the conservation of contemporary art

- You believe in INCCA's mission and governing values, which include openness and a commitment to knowledge exchange and interdisciplinary collaboration.

In the past it was required to submit at least 5 records to the database to become a member and to have a Letter of Commitment signed by a manager; or in the case of a freelancer or student an existing member to endorse you. In practice administering both these requirements was very time-consuming and they also slowed network growth. The whole idea behind INCCA is to be open and inclusive and these requirements were not helping the network to move forward. In 2012 the INCCA Steering Committee decided to revise the membership criteria and to write up statement of values which is sent out to all new members as a reminder of what the network stands for and what is expected of them. You can read the INCCA Statement for Values here:

[http://www.incca.org/files/pdf/diverse/incca\\_statement\\_of\\_values\\_for\\_members.pdf](http://www.incca.org/files/pdf/diverse/incca_statement_of_values_for_members.pdf)

*TL:* I'm sure INCCA has become a resource for a much broader community than its membership, through the website and the updates. Do you get any feedback on this?

*KBB:* Actually I haven't had any feedback on this. I can say though that more people follow INCCA than there are members. I have an email mailing list of almost 3000 people which includes the 1200 members. The other 1800 have made the effort to send an email asking to be on the mailing list. The INCCA LinkedIn group, which is basically used for spreading news, has around 1700 people signed up to it. The majority of INCCA members and followers are conservators or conservation students, around 80%.

*RR:* INCCA also facilitates collaborative projects, can you explain how it works and give some examples?

*KBB:* Working on research projects is a great way to generate new knowledge and to ensure that this knowledge is shared; using project budget to pay for meetings, symposia and to hire extra help to add records in the database for example.

Many INCCA members work on research projects, within their institutions and together with other professionals in the field. Over the years the INCCA office has received a number of requests for letters of recommendation to use to attract project subsidies or even to get permission to carry out research projects within their own organization. The INCCA Affiliated project service for INCCA members has been created not only to encourage them to share their project results via INCCA but also to help in getting their research projects started. INCCA affiliated projects can make use of several services of INCCA:

- The project will receive an official letter from the INCCA Central Coordinator announcing the label 'INCCA affiliated project'.

- Use of the INCCA logo on all project communication material.
- Project information will be posted on the INCCA website and receive extra space and attention at the website.
- Announcements concerning the project will be published in the INCCA Updates mailing and on the INCCA website.
- If necessary some advice/assistance in finding partners and organizing meetings.

Practices, Research, Access, Collaboration, Teaching In Conservation of Contemporary Art (acronym PRACTICs) is an example of large INCCA affiliated project. During PRACTICs, knowledge gained from previous international and regional projects was shared and complemented with case studies on the most urgent issues of contemporary art conservation: installation art, documentation, artists' participation, decision-making, research and education. 34 organizations were represented in this project. In addition, a sub-project on public access to contemporary art conservation (Access2CA) was carried out. The main project results were:

- International symposium Contemporary Art: Who Cares? (Amsterdam, June 2010)
  - The book *Inside Installations: Theory and Practice in the Care of Complex Artworks*. Editors, Tatja Scholte and Glenn Wharton.
  - Documentary film Installation Art: Who Cares?
  - Access2CA seminars Ljubljana (2009) and Porto (2011) plus diverse access projects and activities.
  - Creation of new INCCA groups: INCCA Central and Eastern Europe and the INCCA Education Network.
- For more information see: [www.incca.org/practices](http://www.incca.org/practices)

An example of a project sent in by an individual member was the research done into the internet artwork restoration project 'Agatha re-appears', which involved the re-formatting an interactive net based art work. For more information see: <http://www.incca.org/projects/65-projects-archive/82-netart-restoration-project>

It would be great to have more INCCA Affiliated Projects. All questions and proposals are welcome!

*TL:* Is there an INCCA "philosophy", or is INCCA a neutral platform to facilitate the communication between contemporary art professionals?

*KBB:* In 2012 the INCCA Steering Committee wrote up a Statement of Values for Members which include the INCCA governing values:

*Openness* - INCCA members are committed to disseminating relevant information and sharing their knowledge and research results.

*Active participation for the collective good* - INCCA relies on the generosity and enthusiasm of its members to contribute information and knowledge

*Interdisciplinary collaboration* - The preservation of modern and contemporary art is complex and covers many areas of professional expertise. Members are aware that no single profession or organisation can address all of the challenges alone and strive to collaborate with others outside of their professions.

*Recognise and involve stakeholders* - INCCA members share an understanding that artists, custodians, professionals and the public all have stakes in the conservation of modern and contemporary art. They strive to incorporate the interests of all stakeholders in their research and decision-making.

I guess by having governing values, the INCCA platform cannot be called 'neutral' however we are aware that there is not always a single answer to every question and we try to present as many ideas as possible. It is for this reason that we call methods shared 'good practice' not 'best practice'.

*RR:* Do you think that the profession, and its needs have evolved, since the creation of INCCA?

*KBB:* Definitely, yes. Contemporary art challenges traditional ideas in conservation. The image of the conservators locked away in some back room of the museum with a paint brush is long-gone. The conservator in the museum, and particularly the contemporary art conservator, has a much more prominent place in the museum organisation.

Museums are changing. We no longer go to museums just to learn about history or to see beautiful or intriguing things, we want an experience. Stories behind the making of art, about the artists and the materials they use, has always been fascinating. Talking about conservation is a great way of involving the public and getting them thinking about why we take all this trouble to save our cultural heritage. Many museums these days have a significant amount of information on their website about their conservation department and there are often exhibitions including conservation research results. Conservators are having to learn how to communicate about the work they do, not just to their peers, but also to the general public.

*TL:* What is the role of the regional groups, and do you oversee their activities? And the thematic groups?

*KBB:* As the network grows, groups of INCCA members are created. This way, members can work together on projects or share information more effectively. There are two types of INCCA group: regional and thematic. There are currently eight INCCA groups: 6 regional and

2 thematic. Regional groups: INCCA North America, INCCA Italia, INCCA Scandinavia, INCCA Central & Eastern Europe (INCCA CEE), INCCA-f (French language) and INCCA Iberoamerica (RICAC) (Spanish and Portuguese language). Thematic groups: INCCA Education Network and PhD and Postdoctoral Network. I am in contact with the group coordinators but am not directly involved with their activities. Groups vary in size, in the way they are organised and the type of goals they set for themselves depending on the needs in the field. The more established groups, INCCA-North America and INCCA-f focus on organizing meetings and workshops as a means of educating their members. INCCA Italia, for example, works closely with conservation schools to help create curricula.

*RR:* Can you tell us about IIC 2016, and INCCA's involvement in this?

*KBB:* The International Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (IIC) is an independent international organization supported by individual and institutional members. It serves as a forum among professionals with responsibility for the preservation of cultural heritage. Every two years, IIC mounts a major international congress on a topic of current interest. In 2016 the congress will be held in Los Angeles on the topic of contemporary art conservation. IIC have great experience in organizing large events and creating high quality peer reviewed pre-prints. The INCCA Steering Committee will be involved in the programming. We are very excited about this collaboration and look forward to creating an inspiring and enjoyable event that aims to cross-borders (international and disciplines). An event where we can take the time, not just to inform each other, but also to critically reflect on our practices.

*TL:* INCCA collaborated with MMCA for the interim meeting on Outdoor Sculpture at the Kröller-Müller museum last summer – do you see potential for further collaboration in the future?

*KBB:* Yes certainly. Meetings like this are very important, particularly for the chance for people to meet and exchange ideas. Helping to facilitate such meetings is definitely something that the network should continue to do.

*RR:* How do you see the future of INCCA?

*KBB:* The future is bright for INCCA. Behind the scenes we are developing a new website and database which will bring our online platforms up to date. The new website will not only look much better but I will be easier to navigate and find information and most importantly it will be easier for members to enter information. I am also very excited about the work that is being done by the regional groups. Each year the groups think up new events and projects, which

are essential for the development of the profession. We even have new group is in the make in the Asia-Pacific region. Of course the IIC congress is a wonderful event to look forward too, especially since both organising parties are eager to introduce new topics and to try new formats to encourage a truly fruitful exchange.

#### **Additional Resources:**

[www.incca.org](http://www.incca.org)

Contact: [incca@cultureelerfgoed.nl](mailto:incca@cultureelerfgoed.nl)

Linked In group:

<https://www.linkedin.com/groups?mostPopular=&gid=2584166>

INCCA North America <http://incca-na.org/>

Contact: <http://incca-na.org/contact/>

INCCA Italia <http://www.incca.org/incca-italia>

Contact: [incca.italia@gmail.com](mailto:incca.italia@gmail.com)

INCCA Scandinavia <http://www.incca.org/incca-scandinavia>

Contact: [louise.cone@gmail.com](mailto:louise.cone@gmail.com)

INCCA Central & Eastern Europe

<http://www.incca.org/incca-cee-contact>

Contact: [wona.szmelter@gmail.com](mailto:wona.szmelter@gmail.com) or

[monika.jadzinska@gmail.com](mailto:monika.jadzinska@gmail.com)

INCCA-f

<http://techniquesmixtes.hypotheses.org/incca-f>

Contact: [techniquesmixtes.tm@gmail.com](mailto:techniquesmixtes.tm@gmail.com)

INCCA Iberoamerica (RICAC) <http://www.ricac.net/>

Contact: [jorge.garcia@museoreinasofia.es](mailto:jorge.garcia@museoreinasofia.es)

INCCA Education <http://www.incca.org/incca-education>

Contact: [incca.education@gmail.com](mailto:incca.education@gmail.com)

PhD & Postdoctoral Network

Contact: [Vivian.vansaaze@maastrichtuniversity.nl](mailto:Vivian.vansaaze@maastrichtuniversity.nl) or

[ariane.noeldetilly@ubc.ca](mailto:ariane.noeldetilly@ubc.ca)

#### **Aims of MMCA (2011-2014)**

As a reminder, our aims, planned projects and research areas for this triennial (2011-2014) have been:

#### **Aims**

The ICOM-CC Working Group on **Modern Materials and Contemporary Art** aims to promote and facilitate the dissemination of research, discussion and thinking on the full range of conservation issues and implications for modern and contemporary art.

Specifically, the group aims to provide an effective platform for those professionals involved in this area of conservation to network and share information, and to ensure rapid circulation of details on relevant conferences, seminars, events and publications.

#### **Projects**

- To produce at least one newsletter every year, to describe current activities of WG members, including project updates, conference information, and conversations.
- To organize an interim meeting in June 2013 on the conservation issues of modern outdoor painted sculpture ( held at the Kröller-Müller Museum, the Netherlands).
- To improve our use of the ICOM-CC website for member information, dialogue exchange, follow-up from interim meetings and general networking.
- To generate the best possible WG program at the Melbourne 2014 Triennial Conference.
- To increase our membership number to over 300.

#### **Specific themes of research/investigations**

- Analysis and characterization of modern materials used in 20th/21st century cultural heritage, within the context of implications for their ageing and conservation
- Critical evaluation of treatments to modern/contemporary works of art, including less conventional approaches.
- Case studies on the working methods and processes of modern/contemporary artists, through interviews, analysis, examination, and documentation.
- Legal implications of conserving modern/contemporary works of art – in collaboration with the Legal Issues in Conservation WG – via, if possible, a joint session at the next ICOM-CC Triennial Conference.
- Methods for improving the documentation of modern/contemporary works of art.

#### **Membership of ICOM-CC and MMCA**

We now have almost 270 active members in MMCA, but there is still plenty of room for expansion! Many people assume they are MMCA members because they used to be on the group's mailing list. However, it has now been clarified by the Directory Board that *only* ICOM-CC or ICOM members can be *members* of any of its working groups.

For those of you who are already ICOM-CC members, all you need to do is register your ICOM-CC membership on-line at [www.icom-cc.org](http://www.icom-cc.org) and then choose MMCA as one of your working groups. If you are already registered online, then just find the "Join More Working Groups" button when you next log in,



and choose MMCA. If you are not yet registered, the best way of doing this now is to email Joan Reifsnyder ([secretariat@icom-cc.org](mailto:secretariat@icom-cc.org)) and request log-in details.

For those of you who are not members of ICOM-CC and wish to join, some of the benefits of joining are:

- The **ICOM card** which grants free (or reduced rate) entry to most museums around the world.
- Reduced registration fees at ICOM-CC Triennial and Interim Meetings
- Priority for paper/poster acceptance at the ICOM-CC Triennial Meetings
- Second level access to the ICOM-CC website, providing all-time access to documents such as newsletters, abstracts etc

Joining is slightly long-winded, but once done, renewal is very straightforward. First, you need to join ICOM itself. The cost of full ICOM membership varies from country to country, but is typically set at around €70 (Euros) / \$100 (USD) per annum. Once an ICOM member, there is no further cost to join ICOM-CC or its working groups. To go via this route, you first apply to the National Committee of your country of residence. Details are found here:

<http://icom.museum/nationals.html>. Once processed, you then join ICOM-CC by choosing Conservation as your International Committee. Details are found here: [http://icom.museum/join\\_int\\_committee.html](http://icom.museum/join_int_committee.html)

There is a cheaper, temporary alternative – and that is to join ICOM-CC directly as a "Friend of ICOM-CC" This costs €40/year - applications are made directly to ICOM-CC, you join working groups as part of the application process and you can pay using Paypal. But please note that with this option you do NOT get an ICOM card. It is also only allowed for one year, after which full membership is expected. See:

<http://www.icom-cc.org/196/become-a-friend/information/>

To find more about all ICOM-CC membership benefits, working groups and activities, please consult the ICOM-CC website (<http://www.icom-cc.org/>).

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