

Art Technological Source Research ATSR 6 Amsterdam: Interim Meeting Report



Foto: Kathrin Pilz

The Interim Meeting and Sixth Symposium of the ICOM-CC Working Group ATSR took place on June 16th and 17th, 2014 at the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. The symposium was made possible through the generous support of the Rijksmuseum and its contents was organised by ATSR.

The Rijksmuseum was a very appropriate setting for this ATSR symposium because it is one of the very few institutions worldwide that actively collects source materials. Together with the posters a selection of this was on display at the museum's Auditorium and could be viewed during the breaks.

The Rijksmuseum was for yet another reason a very special place to hold this symposium. In a way, this Sixth Symposium was a 'homecoming' for the group whose very first meeting took place ten years ago – in 2004, at the Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage at the other side of the Museum Square – under the theme *Approaching the Art of the Past: Sources & Reconstructions*. At that point, ATSR was more of an informal group of professionals from different backgrounds, who focussed their research on art technological sources. Two more meetings – 2006 in Madrid (*Art Technology: Sources and Methods*) and 2008 in Glasgow (*Sources and Serendipity: Testimonies of Artists' Practice*) – continued the success of the group. At the 2008 ICOM-CC Triennial Meeting in New Delhi ATSR became an official ICOM-CC Working Group, with the number of friends and members growing quickly. Since then, there were meetings in Vienna in 2010 (*Artist's Process: Technology and Interpretation*) and in Brussels in 2012, titled *Making and transforming art: changes in artists' materials and practice*. We are pleased to announce the upcoming publication of the latter's proceedings by Archetype (available from Sept. 15th 2014), thus continuing the tradition of a fruitful cooperation with this outstanding publisher who has produced four volumes of proceedings for ATSR so far. The Working Group's contributions to the ICOM-CC Triennial Meetings in 2008 and 2011 were published by ICOM-CC itself.

During the past ten years, the spectrum of ATSR has continuously expanded, both in terms of time periods and the types of sources being studied. Discussions about this development initiated the motto for this symposium, *Back to Basics*, responding to the impression that the Working Group needs to focus on its core competence, the interpretation of sources – both textual and visual – in order to redefine ATSR. The symposium's oral and poster presentations, as well as the ensuing discussions warranted an ample and critical approach to this.

During the four sessions of the symposium, some presentations covered very general, but essential issues such as the question of how exactly art technological sources can help us understand how artists created works of art (William Whitney). Sylvie Neven gave an overview of the various hypotheses regarding the precise aim of artists' recipe books and presented methodological suggestions, which may lead to a greater understanding of their nature and original functions. Cristiana Pasqualetti tapped into this theme and set out on who the authors and recipients of early modern manuscripts containing recipes for artists' materials might have been. Some authors concentrated on specific sources such as the famous *De Mayerne Manuscript* and its characteristics which can be interpreted both as manifestations of unity and heterogeneity (Cecile Paramentier). Sandro Baroni presented the so-called *Palatine Manuscript 981* of the Biblioteca Nazionale di Firenze, which for the major part dates back to late Antiquity. While Sylvie Neven had postulated "stop quoting Cennini!" Lara Broecke gave some insight into her ongoing project of re-transcribing and re-translating the original text by Cennini into English. Arie Wallert introduced a seventeenth-century textile dyer's notebook, and a visual source on a painter's workshop by the Flanders-born painter Stradanus was

interpreted by keynote speaker Jan Piet Filedt Kok. Other presentations discussed the manufacture of specific materials or particular methods as described in sources including working horn (Isabel Keller), sand casting (Tonny Beentjes), or producing pastel colours (Leila Sauvage and Cecile Gombaud) or lac dye (Rita Castro). Sources on 19th and 20th-century art materials were addressed by Klaas Jan van den Berg in his presentation about the Talens Archive, and by Heide Skowranek, Christoph Krekel and Heike Stege in their lecture on Eilido colours. Karoline Beltinger discussed archival sources on Swiss easel paintings, and Albrecht Pohlmann gave an overview of early sources for photochemical imaging processes. Corinna Gramatke offered an outlook on a project in its planning stage in which the Jesuits' contribution to written art technological sources during the 17th and 18th centuries will be studied, and Jilleen Nadolny gave a survey of the forgery of paintings as expressed in sources from 1300-1900.

All together 19 papers and 17 posters were presented by participants from The Netherlands, Belgium, Italy, Germany, Great Britain, France and Portugal. Along with about a hundred delegates from European countries and the US, they gave this symposium a very international turn-out.

In the panel discussion at the end of the symposium, Jan Piet Filedt Kok, Christoph Krekel, Jilleen Nadolny, Cristiana Pasqualetti and William Whitney expressed their thoughts about the position of art technological source research in relation to conservation science and technical art history, and also gave some insight into the situation and terminology common in their respective countries (the Netherlands, Germany, the UK, Italy, and France).

Alongside all inspiring professional exchange during the symposium there was plenty of opportunity to enjoy its social side: at the Working Group's informal meeting on the terrace of the *Blue Teehouse*, at the reception in the Ateliergebouw including a guided tour to the conservation studios of the Rijksmuseum or at the conference dinner at *Lab111*, traditionally held on the first day. One also didn't have to miss out on the cultural variety offered by Amsterdam: all delegates had free entrance to the recently renovated galleries of the Rijksmuseum throughout the entire meeting, the Stedelijk Museum and the Van Gogh Museum being within walking distance, and last but not least we were treated with a spontaneous musical performance by Sebastian Kirsch introducing his reconstruction of an historical Renaissance Viol.

This meeting could not have taken place without the involvement and enthusiasm of many. We would first of all like to thank Ad Stijnman for his diligent and very professional organisation! We would also like to express our gratitude to Robert van Langh, Idelette van Leeuwen, Apas Zwart and Sandra Plukker with further staff members from the Rijksmuseum and not to forget the student-volunteers for taking care of the many practical aspects of the organisation. Very warm thanks to the members of the scientific committee who had the difficult task of evaluating seventy abstracts submitted for this symposium: Arie Wallert, Jilleen Nadolny, Kathrin Pilz, Ad Stijnman, Geert-Jan Koot, Sigrid Eyb-Green and Stefanos Kroustallis.

We already received a lot of positive feedback from delegates and wish to thank all speakers, poster presenters, organisers and our host for a successful and inspiring symposium!



Group Picture after the Symposium in the Main Hall of the Rijksmuseum. Foto: Francesca Bewer

Outlook ICOM-CC Triennial Melbourne September 2014

From 15th - 19th of September, the 17th Triennial Conference of ICOM-CC will take place in Melbourne, Australia under the motto "Building Strong Culture through Conservation". ATSR will be represented with two presentations by Elisabeth Raveaud (*Study of a pre-primed canvas bundle from Binant color merchant*) and Maria Kokkori (*A complete study of early 20th century oil-based enamel paints: integrating industrial technical literature and analytical data.*) and two posters (Paula Dredge: *The history of brass, copper and aluminum metallic paints and their use by Australian artists from the late 19th century to mid twentieth century* and Joan M. Reifsnnyder: *Scagliola: Enrico Hugford and Vallombrosan Monastery Recipes*). Because there were few submissions of our group, we decided to hold a joint session with the ICOM-CC Working Group Paintings.

We will send a report of the conference as well as of the outcomes of the meeting between the ICOM-CC Directory Board and the Working Group Coordinators as a Newsletter later in September.

Vote for 2014-2017 Directory Board and Coordinators

Please also note that the voting for the 2014-2017 Directory Board and Coordinators will open on 1st September 2014 at 9:00 CEST. This is an online vote!

All ICOM-CC Voting Members WITH AN OPEN ICOM-CC web account and who have signed-up online to be a member of a Working Group/s will receive by e-mail a link enabling them to access the ballot for the candidate/s standing for Coordinator in each of their chosen Working Groups.

Go to: <http://www.icom-cc.org> to see who the candidates are and read their candidacy statements.

We do encourage you to participate!

Sigrid Eyb-Green and Kathrin Pilz