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WELCOME!

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Announcements, call for papers, conference reviews and book reviews are very welcome to be included in the Spring and Autumn newsletters. Please send in your projects to feature in the newsletter (1 picture and a 50–100 word description)

Annonces, appel à propositions, revues des conférences, et critiques de livres sont les bienvenus pour être inclus dans les bulletins.

Pueden enviarnos anuncios, peticiones de artículos, reseñas de conferencias y críticas de libros para su inclusión en los boletines.

**Contributions before 15 February 2013 can be included  
in the Spring 2013 Newsletter!**

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Are you a conservation student majoring in architectural conservation, sculpture conservation, or polychromy/architectural paint research and graduating in 2012? Please send in a short description of your research or conservation project as the Sculpture, Polychromy, and Architectural Decoration Working Group Newsletter would like to focus on conservation student projects in future issues.

ICOM-CC SCULPTURE, POLYCHROMY, AND ARCHITECTURAL DECORATION WORKING GROUP  
**ACTIVITIES 2011–2014**

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- \* Expand the database of members through the new website especially in countries and regions currently less represented.
- \* To improve our communication with conservation professionals working within our area of expertise worldwide.
- \* To hold a joint interim meeting between 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> of November 2012 at the Getty Institute, Los Angeles on the theme of conservation within historic house museums with the following Working Groups: Textile; Wood, Furniture, and Lacquer; and ICOM DEMHIST (International Committee for Historic House Museums).
- \* To hold a specialist interim meeting covering construction techniques and artistic traditions within the field of polychrome sculpture. This will be hosted at the Burrell Collection, Glasgow on the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> of April 2012.
- \* To hold further specialist meetings, focus groups or workshops in regional areas to promote the working group and its aims.
- \* To deliver at least one electronic email per year within the triennial period; to update the home page of the Working Group periodically; and to encourage the use of the on-line forum.

## **SPECIFIC THEMES OF RESEARCH AND INVESTIGATIONS**

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To deepen knowledge and understanding in specific thematic subjects, such as the use of varnish coatings on sculpture or the use of analytical non-destructive techniques on site, through workshops, meetings and the dissemination of ideas and material.

ICOM-CC/DEMIST JOINT CONFERENCE

**THE ARTIFACT, ITS CONTEXT, AND THEIR NARRATIVE.  
MULTIDISCIPLINARY CONSERVATION IN HISTORIC HOUSE MUSEUMS**

6–9 November 2012, hosted by The Getty Conservation Institute, Los Angeles (USA)

It is not too late! Registration is still possible for the joint conference **The Artifact, Its Context, and Their Narrative. Multidisciplinary Conservation in Historic House Museums**. This joint conference of ICOM–DEMIST and three ICOM–CC Working Groups, will be held at the Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles, 6–9 November, 2012.

The theme of the conference will focus on managing the inevitable deterioration of structure and materials in historic house museums, while balancing the need for public access with current standards of practice in conservation. Historic houses remain in constant use throughout their lifespan and their interiors consist of diverse materials often altering dramatically due to change imposed by society, their environment and function. The proper care for historic houses and their interiors draws from many conservation specializations as well as from many other fields. Therefore it is essential to approach each project in a holistic manner using a multidisciplinary collaborative approach involving all stakeholders.

Posters and papers selected for the upcoming symposium focus on the following key issues:

**The House Museum as a Significant Historic Artifact:** How to balance public access with current standards of practice in conservation. This theme relates to all issues encountered when the house itself is a significant historic artifact and how to balance public

access with current standards of practice in conservation.

**The Artifact Within Its Context:** The historic house museum as the setting for the presentation of a collection; meeting the conservation needs of individual objects in the context of an integrated collection and its setting. This topic concerns the historic house museum as a vessel in which a collection is presented. Focus will be given on balancing the individual conservation needs of solitary objects within the context of an integrated collection and its setting.

**Conservation and the “Narrative” of the Historic House:** How the conservation process and its discoveries can play a role in engaging and educating the public, both in the narrative presented on public tours and by demonstration of conservation techniques to the public. This theme will delve into how conservation and its discoveries can play a role in engaging and educating the public, both in the narrative presented on public tours and by demonstration of conservation techniques.

Proceedings of the symposium will be made available to delegates and members of ICOM–CC & ICOM–DEMIST.

Registration, conference programme, and more information on:  
<https://www.uscarchitecture.com/demhist>

ICOM-CC WORKING GROUP SCULPTURE, POLYCHROMY, AND ARCHITECTURAL DECORATION  
**CALL FOR PAPERS DL 31 DECEMBER 2012**  
**POLYCHROME SCULPTURE: DECORATIVE PRACTICE AND ARTISTIC TRADITION**

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28–29 May 2013, hosted by Tomar Polytechnic Institute, Tomar (Portugal)

This two day symposium will focus on artistic tradition within the field of polychrome sculpture relating to decorative practice. After two symposiums on construction techniques (Maastricht 2010 and Glasgow 2012), the main focus will now be on decorative practices, from painting materials, to varnishes or metal leaf applications, etc.

The meeting will be hosted by the Polytechnic Institute, Tomar (Portugal). Tomar is well known for the Convent of the Order of Christ (12th century), – originally a Templar stronghold – and one of Portugal’s most important historical and artistic monuments, classified as World Heritage by UNESCO in 1983. The Polytechnic Institute provides training for conservators in the form of a Master degree course in Conservation and Restoration.

The organizing committee and the ICOM-CC working group Sculpture, Polychromy, and Architectural Decoration invites papers and posters related to decorative practices within the field of polychrome sculpture and the conservation treatment of these objects. Several decorative techniques will be addressed such as painting techniques from different regions, gilding, estofado, use of incised and punched patterns, varnishes, lacquers, applications, etc.

The meeting will provide a forum for discussion between conservators, conservation scientists, researchers, educators and curators to discuss artistic practice within the field of polychrome sculpture. The symposium aims to bring together international experts on polychrome decorative practice and to provide an opportunity for the worldwide conservation community to exchange new research, experiences and expertise within this field.

Original papers are invited for submission to focus on case studies and advances in research and treatment of polychrome sculpture. Authors interested in presenting a paper or poster should submit an abstract (400 – 600 words) by 31st December, 2012 to:

[icomccspadtomar2013@gmail.com](mailto:icomccspadtomar2013@gmail.com)

Work should be original and not have been published previously. Contributions of work-in-progress are also welcome. Abstracts should be in English and include the contact information for the author(s) (affiliation, address, telephone, fax and e-mail). The abstracts will be reviewed by the Conference Organizing Committee, and authors will be informed by 31st January 2013. Full papers are to be delivered by 30th April 2013. It is the intention of the organisers to publish all accepted papers in English.

Further details regarding this conference will be posted on the home page of the ICOM-CC Working Group: Sculpture, Polychromy, and Architectural Decoration.

<http://www.icom-cc.org/38/working-groups/sculpture,-polychromy,-and-architectural-decoration/>

The Conference Organizing Committee:

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JOINT INTERIM CONFERENCE OF THREE ICOM-CC WORKING GROUPS

**CALL FOR PAPERS DL 28 FEBRUARY 2013**

**HERITAGE WOOD: RESEARCH & CONSERVATION IN THE 21st CENTURY**

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28 – 30 October 2013, hosted in collaboration with the National Museum in Warsaw and the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw (Poland)

The conference entitled “Heritage Wood: Research & Conservation in the 21st Century “ will focus on novel scientific methods and applied research into heritage wooden structures, as well as furniture, wooden sculpture, painted wood, gilded wood, varnished wood, lacquered wood, paintings on wooden supports, and all other heritage wooden objects. Themes will include:

Advances in scientific research applied to heritage wood for analysis and conservation.

The study and elucidation of mechanisms of wood damage and wood deterioration associated with environmental and physical conditions.

The interrelation between the wood and various finishing layers.

Novel conservation methods applied to unvarnished, varnished, polychrome, or gilded wood (sculptures, paintings on wooden supports, furnishings & furniture, architectural structures and decorations).

Case studies highlighting problems associated with heritage wood conservation, novel solutions and appropriate treatments.

Case studies emphasizing complex research of artworks on wooden supports linking technical

investigations with historical context and subsequent conservation treatment.

The meeting will provide a forum for discussion between conservation scientists, researchers, educators and practising conservators. The conference aims to bring together international experts on heritage wood research and to provide a great opportunity for the worldwide conservation community to exchange new research, experiences and expertise.

It is the intention of the organisers to publish all accepted papers in English, however oral presentations at the conference will be allowed in both official languages of the meeting, Polish and English, and simultaneous translation will be provided.

Call for Papers deadline: February 28, 2013

Original papers are invited for submission to focus on case studies and advances in heritage wood research. Authors interested in presenting a paper or poster should submit an abstract (400 – 600 words) by February 28, 2013, to:

[heritagewoodconservation2013@gmail.com](mailto:heritagewoodconservation2013@gmail.com)

Work should be original and not have been published previously.

Contributions of work-in-progress are also welcome. Abstracts should be in English or Polish and include the contact information for the author(s)

(affiliation, address, telephone, fax and e-mail). The abstracts will be reviewed by the Conference Organizing Committee and invited experts, and authors will be informed by April 30, 2013.

The Conference Organizing Committee:

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CONFERENCE REVIEW

IIC VIENNA CONGRESS: THE DECORATIVE: CONSERVATION AND THE APPLIED ARTS

by Kristin Fyrand, Conservator NKF-S, private architectural painting conservator Stockholm, Sweden and supported by the Bothéns Stiftelse

The IIC conference was held in the University area in the centre of Vienna. In conjunction with the conference, there was a small exhibition and trade fair with suppliers of conservation materials and equipment. This extensive five-day conference was opened by the Austrian minister of culture.

There were four days with lectures from nine in the morning till half past six in the afternoon and on Wednesday there were organised field trips and excursions. These tours gave the participants a deeper understanding of the Viennese culture and conservation of cultural heritage.

The 2012 Forbes Prize Lecture was given by Manfred Koller for outstanding work in the field of conservation in which he focused on issues of conservation history and practise in Austria and Vienna in particular.

The welcome reception, for the 320 participants of the conference, was held at the Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien (KHM). A truly magnificent building dating from 1891 which was built to house and provide public access to the enormous art collection of the royal Habsburg family. For the celebration of Gustav Klimt 150<sup>th</sup> birthday, the museum had built a podium, between the columns and arches in the main staircase. There visitors were offered the opportunity to look closely at the paintings that Klimt painted at the age of 28.

The whole Wednesday was devoted to field trips where we could choose between guided tours to works of Klimt and Otto Wagner, visit the conservation department of the Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien, the Austrian National Library, Vienna's Natural History

Museum, the anatomical wax collection of the Medical University, the Vienna Jewish cemetery, the Technical Museum, Design Museum MAK and the Austrian State Archive. We could also visit the conservator education program at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. In the afternoon we gathered at the Opera House where busses drove us to 'Stift Klosterneuburg', a monastery about an hour northwest of Vienna for an excursion and round table meeting. We were welcomed by the abbot of the monastery that was founded in the 1100s with a surrounding castle that was built in the 1700s but never really completed. Even today you can see parts of the unfinished interior with bricks and stones in an educational way showing the building's construction. The castle and the church have, in addition to a large collection of art, treasures and paintings, a huge baroque wine cellar in which currently a modern wine production is situated.



screenshot youtube video uploaded by Stift Klosterneuburg.

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AWuTo\\_2P9F8&feature=plcp](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AWuTo_2P9F8&feature=plcp)

After a tour with guides in different



groups we gathered for a discussion on the theme of 'Conservation and Modern Design Objects' with the title: "Not Your Grandmothers Chair". We participated in a roundtable discussion between conservators, curators and artists on the conservation of modern materials, design and contemporary art. One of the questions was whether we should or could make a difference between conservation problems for new and old objects. Another aspect was that the conservator should be very careful in terms of consultation with artists working with materials that are highly perishable. It turned out that more conservators had experienced that artists changed their projects and thus their artistic expressions after being consulted by conservators.



Discussions at the poster sessions  
photo: Helen Hughes

Both the organisation of the lectures and the excursions were very good, with just long enough sessions and plenty of time for coffee breaks where you could mingle with colleagues from all over the world. Almost every night there was a social arrangement, for example receptions in beautiful interiors after which we continued on our own in small groups to dine with fellow conservators from all corners of the world like, Japan, Belize, Jordan, etc. On Thursday there was time allocated for the presentation of the posters that were mounted in the corridors surrounding the auditorium. It was a nicely crowded place where all the poster authors could meet those

interested in the various subjects. Among the authors a large number of conservation students had been invited to present the projects they had worked on.

My personal impression of the conference is that nowadays it seems that there is increased interest in materials and a tendency to perform extensive analysis on them. There must be a lot of resources available that can be spent, both in terms of time and money. Analytical work has achieved a 'high status' within the conservation world and one is willing and pleased to share the results with colleagues by using graphics and chemical formulas.

The first lectures were presented under the theme "Object and collections under the lens" and where about analyses on the original finishes on metal coffins of the Habsburg family's Royal crypt, the preservation of decorated drinking glasses or 'Zwischengoldglas' from the Czech Republic, analyzes of Waldenburg Glass from 1600's in Dresden performing PIXE and Pige, analytical methods where one does not need to take samples from the objects and on glass from the 1500s used as ornaments and decoration on textiles. Later that day, we learned about 'reverse-painted' glass objects with a focus on the analysis of the binding media used throughout the centuries. These were sometimes found on the tin foils that were painted with transparent coats to give a special 'lustre' raising important issues about the consolidation of the paint that should not turn yellow in the future.

Under the theme 'Decorated Surfaces and Spaces' a lecture on the five years of cooperation of The Getty with the Egyptian authorities was presented. After careful documentation and diagnosis on the breakdown on murals in Tutankhamen's tomb a conservation proposal was produced. It turned out that brown spots on the murals were

microorganisms that are no longer were active. These could however not be removed without damaging the underlying paint. Other lectures reported on polychrome stone sculptures at the cathedral in Prague and a polychrome painted and gilded English parade shield made from wood in the 1400s.

An interesting lecture was about cabinets in oak and pine from the 1600s which were commissioned by Louis XIV and designed by Le Brun richly decorated with decorative elements of gilded bronze, ebony and inlaid stones called 'Pietre dure'. It gave us a glimpse into the previous preservation methods and a deep insight into today's preservation methods at the Italian Opificio delle Pietre Dure.

The decorative painted wooden interiors of the Umling-painters from Transylvania in the 1700s was another special lecture on the use of distemper paint. Most of the original colours had faded in the churches with uncontrolled climate conditions. Conservation methods as removing surface dirt with dry methods, removing watermarks with moist Japanese paper, sometimes varnishing some surfaces and the extent of retouching that was needed.

Another theme was 'Approaches to understanding and conserving decorative arts' with lectures on faded glory: gemstone stimulants and enhancements about a collection at the V&A in London about preservation methods and the use of analytical methods to make an inventory, two Baccarat crystal torchères that are close to the sea causing corrosion of the metal that holds the glass pieces together. Its preservation included complete disassembly, cleaning and surface treatment of metal and a lecture on porcelain about historic restorations

of mechanical damage in which the authors were convinced that preservation has a historic interest and that these should be preserved for the future.

The lecture on 'Management of Immovable Public Art' reported on public art in danger when buildings and locations that are currently owned by private parties, can be demolished or altered. Many of these works are not protected by legislation. Another interesting talk this afternoon was a lecture on a major conservation project in Worcestershire in England where murals were preserved while the visitors were able to get up on the scaffolding and see work at close range. It proved not to be easy conducting guided tours but the general public appreciated these 'conservation in action' projects very much.



The general public as well as conservation professionals appreciate being close up with conservation projects; in the Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien. Photo: Edwin Verweij

Thursday had as theme 'Understanding the decorative by means of technical analysis' with lectures on the enamel works from the Botkin collection, the analysis of silverware which testing instruments and that the irregular shape of objects often resulted in high degree of inaccuracy if not all parameters were taken into account. A lecture on the use of indigo carmine and its history, use and how to remove stains of bleeding indigo in alkaline

baths and a lecture on the preservation of textile materials like carpets from Iraq and England, clothes from the 1500s and embroidery with silver threads.

On the last day, with the theme 'Decorated surfaces and spaces: from country house to kitchen' with an innovative project where German conservators in the Ermlitz project preserved murals on canvas, using strong magnets when reassembling and a project from the UK with results of a survey on a number of Royal portraits. Oddly, they had found traces of inactive mould growth between paint layers. The next lecture gave an insight into a preservation of wallpaper made in France about 1829 and that was recently reinstated in-situ.

Two conservators from the Munch Museum in Oslo presented a preservation project that has been going on for years on Munch's sketches, the so-called Aula paintings were in great need of preservation treatment. Analyses and tests led them to develop a method in which an ultrasonic mister was used to dissolve the salts before working on the consolidation with sturgeon glue and funori. Two lectures followed, one on modern materials in the form of urushi-lacquered wood from the 1900s by Eileen Gray, so called "brick screens." These screens have been examined and it turned out that the artist approved repainting some of these with alkyd paint. Two restorers from the International Design Museum in Munich presented how one of Le Courbusiers kitchen, type 1, after dismantling on-situ in Marseille came to the museum where it was restored after all the materials were examined. A colour survey was performed to find the original colour schemes.

Under 'The Decorative: Understanding It and Using It' the final lecture of the

conference was by Sarah Staniforth on how the National Trust is working, making sure that houses and castles are 'as much as possible accessible' to the public. The balance between preserving, using and enjoying would sometimes lead to replacing carpets and even furniture with replicas that can withstand wear and tear of shoes and people touching these objects in order to create an 'experience' that otherwise not could be achieved. Risk assessment has become much more a topic than preventive conservation with strict environmental conditions for all objects on display in historic houses.

Most of the papers and posters of this IIC 2012 Vienna congress can be viewed or downloaded at the IIC website: <http://www.iiconservation.org/congress/2012vienna/programme>

The next IIC congress in 2014 will be held in Hong Kong.



The interior of the Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien. Photo: Edwin Verweij

CONFERENCE REVIEW

## POLYCHROME SCULPTURE: ARTISTIC TRADITION AND CONSTRUCTION TECHNIQUES

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by Clare Heard, International Fine Art Conservation Studios Ltd., Bristol (UK)

This year's Sculpture, Polychromy, and Architectural Decoration Working Group Interim Meeting was held at the Burrell Collection, Glasgow on the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> of April. The programme covered a wide range of conservation issues, discussing a variety of materials, methods and approaches related to structural techniques and specific traditions of polychrome works of art. A diverse geographical range was represented by both speakers and subjects alike, and a broad spread of construction methods and materials had been studied by the close of the conference.



The Burrell Collection, Glasgow  
Photo: <http://www.glasgowlife.org.uk/museums/our-museums/burrell-collection/Pages/home.aspx>

The conference opened on the Friday morning with a keynote address from Dr Ellen McAdam, Director of the Museums and Collections at Glasgow Life, and with whose kind permission, facilities at the Burrell Collection was made available to our group. Her introduction, discussing the importance of cultural access, education, and exchange of professional experiences was something that would become a recurrent theme over the two days. The opening paper of the programme was from Dr Stephanie de Roemer, Head Conservator at Glasgowlife Museums, who presented a

comprehensive overview of the complexities facing conservators when approaching, in particular, polychrome artefacts. Conservators often have the difficult responsibility of finding and communicating the appropriate compromise that will ensure the best long term outcome for a given piece. Stephanie's extremely clear evaluation of appraisal values proved a useful reminder to the audience of the basic principles that can sometimes be forgotten or taken for granted – decisions that become automatic in routine practice, but which deserve acute conscious consideration at each occasion.

The second paper, by Dr Peter Stiber, of the Opificio delle Pietre Dure, presented a comparison and subsequent discussion of the construction techniques used by Donatello and Brunelleschi in their wooden depictions of Christ Crucified. Despite their relatively unorthodox techniques, Peter demonstrated that both men clearly appreciated the principles and understood the working qualities of wood and had employed great skill in creating the crucifixes. Peter opened up for discussion an intriguing area of these great artists' work that is not often considered.

From the physical technical skills of two immense personalities, the second session of the day moved into scientific analysis and construction theory. Dr Lynn Lee from the Getty Conservation Institute introduced us to an example of use of scientific analytical techniques to date and locate works of art. Taking the example of a Genoese polychrome sculpture of the Christ Child, Lynn presented findings of structural analysis

by X-ray, and pigment analysis, which seemed to contraindicate previous catalogue descriptions and dating of the piece, and the various dates given to different layers of overpaints. This was a clear example of how conservators need to consider objects from multiple angles – aesthetic/stylistic, microscopic material analysis, construction techniques, and historical provenance, in order to provide as accurate and full a picture as possible of the identity of a work of art.

Following the scientific analytical investigation of a small single figure, the scale expanded to the massive, as Anne Ørnhoi, Norwegian Institute for Cultural Heritage Research, presented her investigation of construction techniques of medieval Norwegian polychrome sculpture, in relation to the recently studied crucifix at the church of Kvikne. The paper focussed once more on how important it is for conservators to investigate and understand construction techniques and the technical methods employed by the creators of a piece in order to place it within the appropriate historical context.

The lunch break on the first day gave delegates an opportunity to visit the textile conservation department at the Burrell Collection, which cares for the fine collection of clothing and decorative textiles held by the Glasgow museums. ICOM-CC SPAD is very grateful to Helen Hughes, head of textile conservation who kindly gave her time to show us around the studios and explain some of the current research and techniques being developed at the collection. Also during the early afternoon, there was a poster session, with the chance for delegates to see other research projects that could not be covered in the schedule of talks. The discussions with authors yielded rich results and many have led to the establishing of future exchange correspondence across continents.

Thank you to all those whose posters fuelled this exchange of ideas. The posters will be included with the main papers in the post-prints publication.

The first paper of the afternoon session was an interesting overview presented by Beate Fuecker, of the Germanisches National Museum, who introduced her findings on the use of sized cloth in the construction of polychrome sculpture. This is an area of construction technique not often investigated. The inclusion of textile within the integral structure of polychrome works varies widely in terms of function and appearance. Beate highlighted the distinct choices and selection made according to the end function of the work – and presented clear and articulate examples of how the nature and type of textile, and methods of preparation and application, could be employed with precision to achieve complex and highly developed creative effects.



The Winter Gardens, Glasgow  
Photo: <http://www.undiscoveredscotland.co.uk/glasgow/peoplespalace/index.html>

The first day of the conference was brought to a close with a talk from Maria Rodriguez, from the Technical Institute of València. Maria described the complexity of individual works of art and the importance of how having a thorough understanding an

individual work of art, adds value to a collection as a whole, and by wider association, an entire cultural heritage.

After a very satisfying first day, many of the delegates headed to a civic reception at the beautiful Winter Gardens. Hosted by the Baillie of the City, a warm Glasgow welcome was extended to all.

The morning of day two opened with a fascinating presentation by Agnès le Gac, from the University of Lisbon, who described the construction methods employed to create two coloured wax figurines. From wax figurines of 30cm height, to clay statues of 300cm height; the second presentation of the day, by André Remigio, Restaura de Escultura e Talha Dourada, looked at the block construction methods used to create a series of monumental clay sculptures, of the Baroque period, in Alcobaça. The significance of workshop production was again discussed, and paper laid out the approach taken in establishing the identification of the input, or otherwise, of individual sculptors within a workshop structure. Once again, the theme of the significance of analysis of construction technique, by professional conservators, to the understanding and correct placing of objects within art historical parameters was highlighted.

Remaining within the Portuguese Baroque, Ana Bidarra, from Aveiro University, took delegates to a little-evaluated area of polychromy – and back down in scale to the very small. Ana described the conservation of a very rare clay Nativity scene (présepio), a highly complex piece of composite construction. By the applying usual conservation analytical techniques to this 'naïve' or 'popular' type of sculptural work, greater appreciation of the technical skill and flexibility of the artists was formed. After describing the conservation of the Nativity scene, Ana showed how such pieces are to be valued as contributing to the wider

understanding of regional heritage, and how such little-known works offer huge potential for wider study.

The last paper of the morning session was from Emilio Ruiz de Arcaute, of Servicio de Restauracion, who presented his findings from research into the authorship of a group of reliquary busts, based on the construction methods used to create the wooden block supports. The paper demonstrated very succinctly how analysis and comparison of the most primary stages of construction, of what may ultimately become a highly decorative and complex piece, can provide incredibly valuable information with regard to authorship and origin. Emilio's results have contributed greatly to the art historical understanding of these stunning pieces.



The Burrell collection houses a glass conservation studio for care of their stained glass collection.

Photo: <http://www.glasgowlife.org.uk/museums/our-museums/burrell-collection/Pages/home.aspx>

As on the first day, delegates were again treated to a studio visit during the lunch break. In addition to objects and textiles conservation, the Burrell also houses a glass conservation studio, where Marie Stumpf, glass conservator at Glasgowlife, gave a short tour of the workshop and discussed some of the stained glass currently undergoing restoration.

The afternoon session began with a presentation from Kim Woods on polychromed alabaster – from the perspective of an art historian. The paper provided a refreshing and interesting reminder of how

conservators and art historians cover complimentary fields of work, and how each is of intrinsic value to the other. Polychromed alabaster has been relatively little studied by either conservators or art-historians, although perhaps rather more by the latter. The understanding of authorship and specific choice by artists of particular techniques is still to be realised, and Kim clearly demonstrated that conservators and art historians will need to work side-by-side to enable a definitive understanding of these works.

The second paper of the afternoon was given by Tone Marie Olstad, who told her personal story, following the conservation of a Norwegian altarpiece. Tone Marie's passion for the church and its altarpiece was clear, in a talk that documented her persistence and determination to unravel the minutiae of the construction techniques.

Elsa Murta, of the Portuguese Institute of Museums and Conservation, delivered the penultimate talk of the meeting, which looked at the identification of workshops and individuals, and different craftspeople, as found on 16<sup>th</sup>-century Flemish altarpieces. During research into the construction techniques used to create large scale works imported to Portugal from the Low Countries, clear traces and signature marks left by individual special craftsmen were identified. In an engaging talk, Elsa presented examples of varying quality and geographical and stylistic origin, which nevertheless were comparable in terms of personalisation by the craftsmen.

The closing paper of the 2012 Interim Meeting was given by Arnold Truyen, Stichting Restauratie Atelier Limburg,

who brought us back to a more recent period of history. His fascinating paper concerned an often much over-looked area of polychrome sculptural traditions – the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Arnold gave good justification for further research into construction techniques of this date, as there are many assumptions and prejudices among historians and conservators alike, and the paper dealt with the issue of establishing how literal were the interpretations of 19<sup>th</sup>-century craftsmen in their imitation of the medieval styles and traditions. His paper brought the conference full circle back to the issues raised by Stephanie de Roemer: looking forward, whatever the age of the polychromy, the same dilemmas and challenges will be facing conservators – the ethics of revelation, investigation and preservation that will be addressed by changing generations.

This meeting could not have been the success it was without the generosity and hard work of a few individuals to whom go our thanks. Firstly, to Dr Ellen McAdam, Director of Museums and Collections at Glasgowlife, who welcomed us to the city of Glasgow and to the Burrell Collection, and also to Stephanie de Roemer, Head of Conservation at Glasgowlife. Thanks to Muriel King and Angel Puck, at the same, who facilitated the use of the venue, and helped with the logistics of the meeting. To Helen Hughes and Marie Stumpf, many thanks again for the brilliant studio visits during the lunch breaks, and speaking of which, thank you to Stewart, who ensured we were all well catered for. And finally, a huge thank you to Kate Seymour, the driving force behind the Working Group, and to those members who gave talks – your contributions were greatly appreciated by all.

CURRENT PROJECT

## THE ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION PROGRAMMES AND ARCHITECTURAL CONSERVATION LABORATORY at THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

by Gesa Schwantes, Conservation Laboratory Officer, The University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong

The Architectural Conservation Programme (ACP) was established in 2000 as a self-funded postgraduate programme at the Faculty of Architecture at The University of Hong Kong (HKU). ACP offers a foundation programme leading to a Postgraduate Diploma in Conservation [PDip (Conservation)] or an advanced programme leading to a Master of Science in Conservation [MSc (Conservation)]. ACP has become internationally recognized as a leading academic programme for training professionals in conservation through its active research and educational collaborations. As a result of this success, as of 2012, ACP has expanded to include a new undergraduate curriculum leading to a Bachelor of Arts in Conservation [BA(Conservation)].

As a part of this expansion ACP is developing the Architectural Conservation Laboratory (ACLab). In the very near future, courses in material science will be integrated into the curriculum of both the undergraduate conservation programme and the postgraduate programme. Students will learn the basics of chemistry and instrumental analysis in order to understand what results can be achieved with which methods and how to apply them in the conservation process.

The ACLab has been envisioned as consisting of three components: teaching, research and professional service. The teaching component will commence in 2013 as part of the Year-2 BA(Conservation) curriculum. The research and professional service

components have been in operation since March 2012.



Sampling and investigation of paint finishes for the Central Police Station Compound in Central Hong Kong. Photo: ACLab July 2012

More specifically the ACLab provides advice and fabric analyses for conservation projects in Hong Kong, including, for example, on-site sampling, instrumental analysis (in collaboration with the Department of Chemistry and the Electron Microscope Unit at HKU) and the interpretation of the results.





The Central Police Station in the late 19th c. Photo published on: [http://www.devb.gov.hk/en/issues\\_in\\_focus/conserving\\_central/The\\_Central\\_Police\\_Station\\_Compound/index.html](http://www.devb.gov.hk/en/issues_in_focus/conserving_central/The_Central_Police_Station_Compound/index.html)

For its first project, the ACLab conducted an investigation of the paint finishes for the Central Police Station Compound Conservation and Revitalisation Project, a mayor project in the Central District of Hong Kong. The site comprises 16 historical buildings (dating from the 1850s to the 1920s), including three declared monuments. The ACLab collected more than 400 samples of paint finishes from the exteriors and interiors of the various buildings. The samples were processed to produce cross-sections in order to reveal, document and compare the decorative history of the buildings.



Investigation of paint finishes for the Central Police Station Compound in Central Hong Kong. Photo: ACLab July 2012

More information on the Architectural Conservation Programme can be found at: <http://acp.arch.hku.hk/> and more information on the ACLabs: <http://fac.arch.hku.hk/aclab/>. More about the BA (Conservation) <http://fac.arch.hku.hk/arch/baas/introduction/> and MSc (Conservation) <http://fac.arch.hku.hk/arch/msc-conservation/introduction/>

Architectural Conservation Programme  
THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG 香港大學  
faculty of architecture 建築學院 **ACP**

#### UPCOMING EVENTS

### CONFERENCES, MEETINGS, CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

An up-to-date overview of conferences and upcoming events can be found at the following websites:

<http://conservationevents.com/>

[http://www.iccom.org/db\\_events.php](http://www.iccom.org/db_events.php)

CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENT

## HISTORIC WALLPAPER SYMPOSIUM

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At The Royal Library, The Hague (The Netherlands), Friday 26 October 2012

On Friday 26 October the RKD is organizing a symposium on historic wallpapers in collaboration with The Foundation for Historic Wallpapers and Wallcoverings in The Netherlands (SHBW). The event will mark the twentieth anniversary of the SHBW, which holds an important collection of mainly old wallpapers. The SHBW has done a great deal to increase our awareness and understanding of historic wallpapers. However, there is still much we can learn from and about them.

Speakers from The Netherlands and elsewhere will discuss the beauty and rich history of period wallpapers emphasizing that they are an essential tool for researching the history of buildings. Consecutive layers of wallpaper can be read as the 'tree rings' of a building: not only do they provide information about its architectural history, they also tell us about the people that lived there. The sharp increase in knowledge resulting from recent research means that new developments are taking place.

This jubilee symposium is a must for anyone working in the field of cultural heritage preservation, from architectural and construction historians to interior decoration and colour historians, conservators, civil servants responsible for listed buildings, museum professionals and anyone else interested in historic wallpaper.

Speakers include Treve Rosoman (English Heritage) and Bernard Jacque (Musée du Papier Peint, Rixheim, France).

The day will end in the Museum Meermanno, which is home to two of the country's oldest wallpapers that can still be seen in situ. The final drinks party will also be held there.



Wallpaper printed by Reveillon, 1777, in the front room of Museum Meermanno, The Hague (NL)

Participation costs are €55 (students: €25)

Conference programme and general information can be found on:

<http://english.rkd.nl/archive/news/historic-wallpaper-symposium>

STUDY DAY ANNOUNCEMENT

## STUDY DAY ON POLYCHROME STUCCO

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at Chateau-ferme de Baya, Goesnes (Belgium), Tuesday 23 October 2012, 10 -17.

Morning at the château-ferme de Baya (Goesnes) : papers and visit on the theme of conservation- restauration of the exceptional 18<sup>th</sup>-century stucco decoration; papers amongst others by Christine Cession, independent conservator. The château-ferme de Baya was awarded the Prix Prince Alexandre de Merode 2008 for its restoration.

In the afternoon a study visit is planned to the Ateliers Menchior stucco et staff, founded in 1850.

Around 17.30 is end of the programme with a farewell drink at Liège

The themes of the study day are stucco, staff, lime, plaster, supports, polychromy, restoration, conservation

This study day is conceived to be done by car, considering the visits outside of

towns. However car sharing will be organised. Please indicate your situation on the registration form. Departure from the stations of Huy or Andenne; return via the station of Liège-Palais.

The registration fee covers organisational expenses, as well as entrance fees, lunch and drinks: €45 per member are to be paid into the account of LCS, IBAN : BE71 9799 8149 1269 / BIC ARSPBE22 (mentioning : « event on 23-10 » + name participants)

Organised by the Low Countries Sculpture Society

Society founded in 2002 for the study and preservation of sculpture from the Low Countries

POBox 1304 B-1000 Brussels 1

[www.lcsculpture.org](http://www.lcsculpture.org) • [info@lcsculpture.org](mailto:info@lcsculpture.org)

STUDY DAY ANNOUNCEMENT

**STUDY DAY ON RENAISSANCE ARCHITECTURE AND SCULPTURE**

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at the churches at Zuurbemde and Zoutleeuw (Belgium),  
Saturday 17 November 2012, 13–17.

Study visits of two exceptional Renaissance eucharistic towers by Cornelis Floris at the churches of Sint-Catharina at Zuurbemde (1555–57) and Sint-Leonardus at Zoutleeuw (1549–52).

The tower at Zoutleeuw was the subject of the Award for Conservation 2012 of The Low Countries Sculpture Society, awarded last March during our 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary event in Gent (Belgium). At the Study Day, amongst others Jacques Vereecke and Jan Verbeke, the conservators who received the Award, will guide and comment.

Around 16.30 the end of the programme is planned with a farewell drink

The themes of the Study Day are: architecture, sculpture, stone, polychromy, metals, fixation techniques, conservation, restoration

This study day is conceived to be done by car, considering the visits outside of towns. However car sharing will be organised. Please indicate your situation on the registration form. Departure and return via the station of Tienen.

The registration fee covers organisational expenses, as well as entrance fees and drinks: €10 per member are to be paid into the account of LCS, IBAN : BE71 9799 8149 1269 / BIC ARSPBE22 (mentioning : « event on 17–11 » + name participants)

Organised by the Low Countries Sculpture Society  
Society founded in 2002 for the study and preservation of sculpture from the Low Countries  
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PROJECT ANNOUNCEMENT

**LAS POZAS IS OPEN FOR RESTORATION**

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from September 2012, Xilitla (Mexico)

Las Pozas, a surrealist collection of buildings in the Mexican jungle created by British-born artist Edward James between the 1940s to 1980s, has long faced conservation problems. It was listed on the World Monuments Watch in 2010 to draw attention to this little-known but important landscape. Following the successful completion of conservation work on Edward James's cabin –including poems he wrote on the walls –the focus is now on a building called the Three Story House that Might Be Five and the development of more information for visitors on James and

his legacy. Work is planned to begin in September.



Edward James (1907–1984) was the son of an American railroad magnate and was born in England. At a very young age, in 1912, he inherited the West Dean House and Estate in Sussex (UK) on the death of his father. He was a passionate and early supporter of Surrealism, sponsored Salvador dali for the whole year of 1938 as well as supported other Surrealist initiatives. Over the years he acquired an extensive art collection. The West Dean Estate is now best known as the premises for the Edward James Foundation, and the West



Dean College Conservation Courses.

Las Pozas ('The Pools') was created by James high up in the mountains in the north of Mexico, in a subtropical rainforest just outside the town of Xilitla. Between 1949 and 1984 he had scores of surreal concrete structures built with names 'The House on Three Floors Which Will In Fact Have Five or Four or Six', 'The House with a Roof Like A Whale', and 'The Staircase to Heaven'. The many trails throughout the garden site are composed of steps, ramps, bridges and narrow, winding walkways that traverse the valleys. The enormous construction costs allegedly forced James to sell his Surrealist art collection at auction.

More information about the project, as well as fantastic photographs, can be found at <http://www.wmf.org/project/las-pozas>  
photographs from same website

#### BOOK ANNOUNCEMENT

### **AJAMI INTERIORS: FORGOTTEN JEWELS OF INTERIOR DESIGN**

by Anke Scharrahs, forthcoming publication from Archetype Ltd.

Archetype Publishers Ltd has announced the forthcoming publication **Ajami Interiors: Forgotten Jewels of Interior Design** by Anke Scharrahs, a German conservator specialised in the conservation of polychrome wood and more recently painted interiors in Syria.

#### Contents:

introduction : the architectural structure and elements of traditional Arab courtyard houses  
specific types of interior decoration – 'ajami wall panels and ceilings  
description of 'ajami rooms and their furnishing in historical literature  
current examples of traditional furnishing

the tradition of building ajami rooms. Where the term "ajami" comes from various types of ajami ceilings and panels  
architectural elements, variety of interior design and understanding of use  
about the historical painting technique of the ajamis  
aging and colour changes– how important it is to understand the original creation  
well preserved examples with original surface decoration  
restoration of these interiors – some selected examples showing how to bring these rooms back to life and to their old impressive beauty

ajami rooms in Western collections  
more information on:  
[http://www.archetype.co.uk/  
publication-details.php?id=131](http://www.archetype.co.uk/publication-details.php?id=131)

An interview with Scharrah's Syrian co-worker has been published in IIC News in Conservation (issue, year)

## WEBSITES AND RESOURCES

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### ARTISTS COLOURMEN DATABASE: online resource

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Paintings conservators at the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV), Australia, have compiled a database of Artists' Colourmen stamps, stencils, labels and marks found on artworks in the NGV Collection as a resource for study and interest.

The database can be viewed online at: <http://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/explore/conservation/artists-colourmen>

Companies manufacturing and supplying artist's materials, from the late Eighteenth Century onward, are known as Artists' Colourmen. They marked their products, canvases, stretchers, and boards, for instance, with individual and characteristic stamps, stencils,

labels and embossed marks. These often carry the company name and address, which can be used to indicate the source and general date of manufacture of the canvas, board or stretcher associated with an artwork.

This online resource has been made possible by the generous support of the Telematics Course Development Fund. We are also indebted to Jacob Simon for allowing us to reference the rich on-line archive of historical information on artist's colourmen provided by the National Portrait Gallery, London. More information: Helen Gill <helenthegill [at] gmail\_\_com>

### RADIO DOCUMENTARY ON COLOUR PERCEPTION: listen again radioshow

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Radiolab is a radioshow about curiosity. Where sound illuminates ideas, and the boundaries blur between science, philosophy, and human experience. The show can be heard around the USA on over 300 radiostations. Recently they broadcasted a show on colour:

To what extent is color a physical thing in the physical world, and to what extent is it created in our minds? We start with Sir Isaac Newton, who was so eager to solve this very mystery, he stuck a knife in his eye to pinpoint the answer. Then, we meet a sea creature that sees a rainbow way beyond anything humans can experience, and we track down a woman who we're pretty sure can see thousands (maybe even millions) more colors than the rest of us. And we end with an age-old question, that, it turns out, never even occurred to most humans until very recently: why is the sky blue? This show can be listened again via <http://www.radiolab.org/2012/may/21/>

ICOM-CC SCULPTURE, POLYCHROMY, AND ARCHITECTURAL DECORATION WORKING GROUP  
**MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION**

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The Working Group Sculpture, Polychromy, and Architectural Decoration is concerned with the conservation of painted three-dimensional objects of stone and wood as well as architectural paint surfaces in historic interiors. A major focus of the Working Group is the link between the object and the environment. Spread the word and encourage your colleagues, working partners or other enthusiasts to join the working group via <http://www.icom-cc.org/38/working-groups/sculpture,-polychromy,-and-architectural-decoration/>

ICOM-CC SCULPTURE, POLYCHROMY, AND ARCHITECTURAL DECORATION WORKING GROUP  
**THE WORKING GROUP ONLINE**

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Members are encouraged to join the Working Group on-line at [www.icom-cc.org](http://www.icom-cc.org) using the 'blue button' prominent on the Sculpture, Polychromy, and Architectural Decoration home page. There you will also find up-to-date information about ongoing events and the activities of the Working Group. We are also encouraging members, and non-members alike, to make use of the ICOM-CC Forum. Postings can be made to individual Working Groups or to all Forum members generally.

ICOM-CC SCULPTURE, POLYCHROMY, AND ARCHITECTURAL DECORATION WORKING GROUP  
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