

PAINTINGS: SCIENTIFIC STUDY, CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION

Triennium 2017-2020 NEWSLETTER September 2020

ISSN: 2708-6747

Table of Contents

Part 1. Looking Back at 2017-2020 Triennial Activity	2
Message from the Coordinator & Assistant Coordinators.....	2
Review of Interim Meeting.....	3
<i>Reflecting on theory, history, and ethics in the conservation of paintings: from sources to the wider social context, Caparica, 6-7 February 2020.</i>	3
Part 2. Looking Forward Beyond 2020	6
ICOM-CC 19 th Triennial Conference in Beijing.....	6
<i>List of Selected Papers</i>	6
<i>List of Selected Posters</i>	7

Part 1. Looking Back at 2017-2020 Triennial Activity

Message from the Coordinator & Assistant Coordinators



From Left: Elisabeth Ravaud, Petria Noble, Laura Rivers, Cecil Krarup Andersen and Jae Youn Chung.

Back in 2017, we carried out a survey to better understand the members' interest regarding interim meetings, which we were able to reflect in designing the programme. Based on the results collated by the survey we successfully hosted a joint interim meeting with Theory, History, and Ethics Group in February 2020.

This joint interim meeting brought scholars, theorists and practitioners together to reflect on theory, history and ethics in the conservation of paintings. It explored ways in which cultures of conservation of paintings have changed throughout the years, and how they continue to shift in light of recent social and theoretical advancements. Moreover, the conference sparked discussions on various ways cultures of conservation, conservators, and artworks co-constitute each other in practice and theory.

Since May 2019, we have focused on selecting papers and posters for the upcoming 19th ICOM-CC Triennial Conference in Beijing, which has been postponed to May 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The selected submissions are listed in this newsletter on pages 6 and 7. Registrations for the conference are still available.

We are currently planning a Paintings Working Group meeting via Zoom on September 28th (Central European Summer Time: 17:00) to reflect on the past three years. Most importantly, it will be a chance to say our good-byes virtually to Elisabeth Ravaud who has dedicated her time as the Coordinator for the past six years. We hope you can join us. We will send out the invitations soon.

It has been an absolute pleasure for all of us working for the Paintings Working Group for the past triennium. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or queries. Stay safe and healthy during these uncertain times. Thank you.

Review of Interim Meeting

Reflecting on theory, history, and ethics in the conservation of paintings: from sources to the wider social context, Caparica, Portugal, 6-7 February 2020.



Fig. 1 – Overview of the main conference auditorium, NOVA University of Lisbon during the panel discussion on “Integrated approaches to researching objects and histories”. Photo: © Kate Seymour.

The overlap of paintings conservation with theory, history, and ethics of the discipline was explored in the first joint interim meeting of the Paintings and Theory, History, and Ethics of Conservation Working Groups of the Committee for Conservation of the International Council of Museums, which took place at the NOVA University of Lisbon, on the 6th and 7th of February 2020 (Fig. 1).

The meeting explored the ways in which the culture of paintings conservation has changed throughout the years, and how it continues to evolve in light of recent theoretical advancements and social shifts. Ahead of ICOM-CC’s 19th Triennial Meeting, to be held in Beijing, in May 2021, it focused on various aspects of conservation practice, starting with how we get to know the artworks we conserve, and exploring how our ways of seeing are influenced by both the context of their creation and the contexts and conditions in which conservators operate.

The meeting was formulated around five key sessions, which were intertwined with panel discussions that focused on case-studies and short poster presentations. An inspiring keynote lecture by Leslie Carlyle (NOVA University Lisbon), who explored the long-standing divide between theory and practice of

conservation. Drawing on her broad and extensive experience in the field of conservation, Carlyle delivered an engaging argument for criticality in conservation practice, illustrated by examples of misinterpretation of both experimental results and models of understanding the multiple interactions that are part of painting systems.

The first day continued with four panel discussions, mostly focused on historical perspectives on the conservation of paintings. For more classical methods, oral sources were emphasised. These discussions incorporated ideas on the use of historical sources in the study of conservation practice, the importance of studying past treatments, and new perspectives that evolve out merging different methods in the study of the same object.



Fig. 2 – Visit to the Paintings Conservation Lab. The visit was hosted by Raquel Marques, a PhD Candidate in the Department of Conservation and Restoration, NOVA University Lisbon. Photo: © Kate Seymour.

The second day was structured around theoretical perspectives on the conservation of paintings. The first panel discussion of the day critically looked at some of the ways ethics could be incorporated in conservation practice, while the last panel discussion provided a diverse and thought-provoking communication about how social contexts impact conservation theory and practice. The day ended with technical visits to the painting conservation labs of the Department of Conservation and Restoration, and the glass-making studios of the research unit VICARTE, both at NOVA University Lisbon (Fig. 2). The visits were followed by a roundtable discussion on the affordances of theory to conservation ethics (Fig. 3). The roundtable raised very pertinent questions, namely, on the understanding of what ‘theory’ means. The interest in this topic amongst the conference participants

indicates the nature of research on theory should be further developed in upcoming events and other *fora*.



Fig. 3 – Group photograph of the conference participants who took part in the roundtable discussion that took place in the meeting room of the Department of Conservation and Restoration at NOVA University of Lisbon. Photo: © Joana Lia Ferreira.

Overall, the conference provided a secure and constructive space to discuss topics that sometimes can be hard to share. The conference was well attended by participants of different conservation specialisms. The interdisciplinarity of conservation was evident in the programme and was further propelled by the short presentations in the format of ‘provocations’ that started each of the main panel discussions of the conference. These were made by local conservators and scholars, working with a wide range of materials, from ceramic tiles and glass, to contemporary art, and polychrome sculpture. They brought their own perspectives to the conference, indicating, as well, how the themes explored in those two days resonated with their practice. In the end, it is visible how much the dilemmas and challenges faced by paintings conservators are related to those in other fields of this profession. In conclusion this joint interim meeting highlighted the importance of interdisciplinarity in conservation and that debating ideas across different fields of conservation is a path to follow in future conferences.

Coordinator, Elisabeth Ravaud

Part 2. Looking Forward Beyond 2020

ICOM-CC 19th Triennial Conference in Beijing



The dates of the conference have been postponed to May 17-21, 2021.

Thank you for your submissions of papers and posters. We have received an overwhelming number of excellent abstracts, which were in keeping with the theme: *Transcending Boundaries: Integrated Approaches to Conservation*. Please find below the list of selected papers and posters for our working group.

Registrations for the conference are still available at:
<https://www.icom-cc2020.org/conferenceregistration.aspx>

List of Selected Papers

	Title	Main Author
Papers	Study on the application of an automatic hyperspectral scanning system to investigate Chinese paintings	Lei Yong
	Jan Steen's eclectic use of green and blue pigments	Marya Albrecht
	"Copy and Paste": An integrated approach to a traditional field of Chinese painting	Yi-Hsia Hsiao
	Canvas-related microcracks in Danish 19th-century paintings	Cecil Krarup Andersen
	Revisiting cleaned acrylic emulsion painting surfaces ten years on: Observations and reflections	Bronwyn Ormsby
	Splashed across the page: Understanding Joshua Reynolds's paint media through analysis of drips in his pocket books	Nelly von Aderkas
	Investigating the transition period from colored to white preparatory layers in 18th-century French canvas paintings: A retrospective study	Johanna Salvant
	Max Pechstein's "Sommer in den Dünen": Joint research on the intended surface aesthetics	Fanny Weber

List of Selected Posters

	Title	Main Author
Posters	Unraveling complex cross-sections using FTIR imaging and TOF-SIMS analysis	Raquel Marques
	Extraction of Hyperspectral Information and Virtual Restoration of Immortal Origin of Jade Purity — the West Queen	Chen Qi
	Restoration of Ceiling and Wall Paintings in Asahi-no-ma (Room of Rising Sun) of the State Guest House Akasaka Palace	Ikuo Watanabe
	Beyond East and West: Technical study of Cheong Soo Pieng paintings	Diana Tay
	Study on the role of alum gelatin solution in Chinese ancient calligraphy & painting	Sheng li Fan
	Introduction to the Protection and Restoration of Ancestor Portraits in Guangdong Region in the Qing Dynasty	Zhou Likun