

‘OUR CULTURAL PAST – YOUR FUTURE!’

ICOM-CC 14TH TRIENNIAL MEETING The Hague 12 - 16 September 2005

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Congress marks increasing public awareness among conservators

Learning how to share more of the magic

Agrowing need to show the mysteries behind works of art to the public, and a clear acknowledgement of the central role conservators play on the cultural world stage. This was the dominant feeling during the 14th Triennial meeting of ICOM-CC in The Hague, where 900 restoration professionals from over 75 countries met to discuss and exchange new ideas and research results.

The central theme of the congress – the need to involve the public more in the conservation profession – proved to be stimulating food for thought. In the words of Simon Cane, chair of the Public Awareness Task

public restoration projects in several museums indicate that the general public is eager to follow the work of the conservator more closely. But, although hungry, this audience is not large. As Frans Grijzenhout, from the Netherlands

 **“The challenge of the next decennia is to draw in a greater part of the general public”**

Force: “Conservators need to make sure that they are there at the forefront, that the benefit of what they do can be seen. We are trained to repair, clean and restore – but we need to raise our gaze from the objects more.”

Cane’s words were echoed by many speakers in the Congress Centre in The Hague, amongst them director general of the Dutch Ministry of Culture, Judith van Kranendonk. According to her, in today’s multicultural society “an active knowledge of heritage can no longer be taken for granted. This means experiencing art and history becomes more important. Conservation professionals must actively convey the intimate story of their work.”

During the sessions, it also became apparent that the target of raising public interest can be achieved in different ways. In The Netherlands,

Institute for Cultural Heritage, stressed: “The challenge of the next decennia is to draw in a greater part of the general public.”

DIRECT INVOLVEMENT IN CONSERVATION PROJECTS

This challenge is certainly being addressed in developing countries, where it is has become clear that cultural heritage can only survive if local people become directly involved in conservation projects. “Here, we must get our fingers into the dirt,” said Amareswar Galla from Canberra University. “When UNESCO adopts a World Heritage Site in developing countries, it doesn’t ask the local people what it means to them. We should listen more carefully and be more engaged.”

On the other hand, some conservators fear the

growing cultural interest of the masses – as this may have its drawbacks. Henriëtte van der Linden, director of the Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage, said “the many feet trampling through a museum’s rooms and corridors might actually pose a threat to the preservation of the works exhibited. One of the subjects that need further research, is this visitor impact.”

Apart from discussing integrated risk analysis and preventive conservation, around 150 papers were presented at the conference, covering all disciplines of professional restoration. One of the subjects which stood out was the breakthrough in research carried out on ink corrosiveness and parchment preservation: new findings may save historic works by the likes of Bach, Rembrandt and Da Vinci.

Still, while giant steps continue to be made in developing new restoration techniques, the battle to win over the public has just begun. It became clear this week that to effectively conserve our cultural heritage, it is essential for conservators to convey the magic of their profession to the public.

“Personal relations and collaboration are easily established at the ICOM-CC congress,” chairman Jørgen Wadum remarked. So, to make our cultural past our future, the next step for the trade is to establish a personal bond with the public. Or, in the words of Mexican conservator Blanca Noval Vilar: “Conservation only makes sense if we develop a sense of belonging to the cultural heritage amongst our people.”



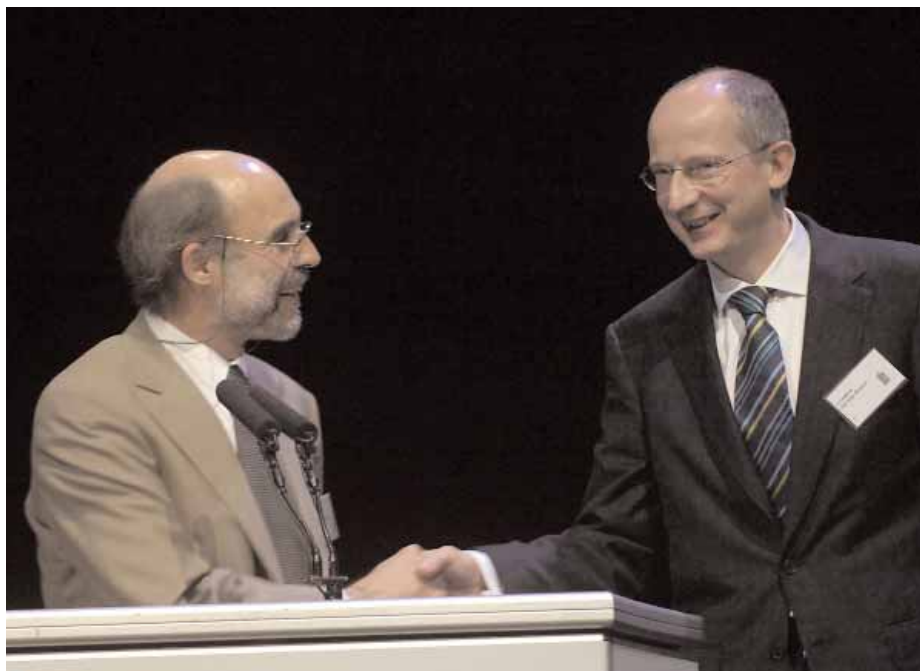
Jar with cover, Delft 1650-1669, MUSEUM VOOR MODERNE KUNST ARNHEM, on loan from the Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage, Rijswijk/Amsterdam

OUR PHILOSOPHY

IN THIS CONGRESS NEWSPAPER YOU WILL FIND 7 OBJECTS, THE SYMBOLS OF THIS CONGRESS. THEY ILLUSTRATE THE WIDE VARIETY OF OBJECTS AND MATERIALS THAT MAKE UP OUR CULTURAL HERITAGE. EACH OBJECT REPRESENTS THE DIVERSITY OF CHOICES THAT NEED TO BE MADE IN THE PROCESS OF RESEARCHING, CONSERVING AND RESTORING THEM FOR THE FUTURE.



Establishing personal relations and collaboration



JØRGEN WADUM, chairman of ICOM-CC, stressed the importance of personal bonds and exchange of knowledge between professionals in restoration around the globe.

“The Hague meeting will greatly assist ICOM-CC in its aims to promote investigation and analysis of culturally and historically significant works and further the goals of the conservation profession.” Wadum mentioned, in particular, the 22 ICOM-CC working groups, which will continue to play a central role during the conference. Here, said

JØRGEN WADUM, chairman of ICOM-CC (left), and congress chair JOHN LEIGHTON, director of the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam.

Wadum, “personal relationships and collaboration are easily established and information helpfully exchanged across borders, continents, languages and cultures.”

Over the past 20 years, 1200 papers with cutting-edge research and innovative techniques have been presented at the Triennial meetings, said Wadum, who is head conservator of the Statens Museum for Kunst in Copenhagen. This week another 150 papers will be added. Currently, as the largest of the international committees of ICOM, the Conservation Committee has over 1500 members worldwide. Wadum particularly welcomed two new membership groups: the Friends and Student Friends of ICOM-CC, as well as 25 grantees from Africa, Latin America, Asia and Europe. As to the theme of the conference, ‘Our Cultural Past – Your Future!’, Wadum underlined that it remains essential to involve the public to effectively conserve our cultural heritage.

Let the public look over the conservator's shoulder

It is vital for the future of curators and restorers to bring their work more into the public eye, said Judith van Kranendonk, director general of the Dutch Ministry of Culture.



JUDITH VAN KRANENDONK, director general of the Dutch Ministry of Culture: "There are many tales of intimacy about the conservators work."

Van Kranendonk stressed in her speech during the opening ceremony that in the present-day multicultural society, "an active knowledge of heritage can no longer be taken for granted". This means experiencing art and history is becoming more important – and restoration professionals must actively convey the story behind the work of art. "There are many tales of the intimacy involved in conservators' work," Van Kranendonk said. She mentioned Jørgen Wadum, who said he felt privileged to be able to restore Vermeer's 'Girl with a Pearl Earring'. Apart from emotions and excitement, the job of the restorers also requires a great deal of responsibility, Van Kranendonk said. This was demonstrated by the Barnett Newman affair. After Newman's painting 'Who's afraid of Red, Yellow and Blue' was damaged with a knife by a madman, the restoration seemed even more destructive. The conservator broke the code of ethics by rolling on a layer of paint which could never be removed.

"The public emotion and criticism which followed was a huge setback for the craft," said Van Kranendonk. In this context, the recent appointment of Anne van Grevenstein as professor in restoration ethics is an important step forward. "Restoration professionals must continue to involve the public in their craft. Here too, exchange in expertise is vital."



HENRIËTTE VAN DER LINDEN, director of the Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage.

An institute for art and crime

As a world centre for both art and international jurisprudence, The Hague would make a great place to combine the study of both, in an institute devoted to the changing face of heritage-related crime.



ELSE VAN DIJK-STAATS, deputy mayor of The Hague and alderman for Cultural Affairs.

"Our cultural heritage is one of the most precious cultural commodities, where the work of our forefathers is passed onto our children and children's children," said Else van Dijk-Staats, deputy mayor of The Hague, and

alderman for Cultural Affairs, welcoming the ICOM-CC delegates. She noted that the city was a good choice of venue for two main reasons. "The city is well-blessed with art and culture, beginning in the 17th-century Dutch Golden Age, when the governor Frederik Hendrik and his wife first established an art collection." Today, the city is richly endowed with museums. "Secondly, there are the international juridical institutions based in the city: the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court." Internationally-organized robbery and looting from museums have been increasingly in the spotlight during the trials of war criminals and in dealing with the international consequences of conflict. "The rapid growth of the last ten years has made The Hague an international juridical crossroads," said Van Dijk-Staats. She put the suggestion to UNESCO and other organizations about the possibility of creating a 'think tank' for the legal aspects of protection of culture, to look at issues like international trade in artefacts and war looting.



Stille: Conservators are on the front line of cultural adaptation

The struggle for control of the past

In a post cold-war world, ideology and class war appear to have been replaced by identity politics, in which the struggle for control of the past is central. Alexander Stille believes the problem of preserving cultural traditions is a "central part of the world drama".

According to some philosophers and physicists, time does not exist; there is no past, only the present. What we consider 'the past' are the remains of old monuments and artefacts that exist in the present, often in a very different form from their original conception. Yet acts – from the Taliban destruction of the

Stille's plenary talk, received as a hand-out when personal circumstances forced Stille to miss the congress.

Technology, according to Stille, is creating unprecedented opportunities for preserving and studying the past while, at the same time, destroying the past, wiping out traditional

Clay tablets from Mesopotamia are still in good shape and legible, while the computer data generated during the Apollo flights of the 60s and 70s is stored on computer tapes that may no longer be recoverable

Buddhas to the reaction to American troops in Saudi Arabia – make it clear that the preservation and destruction of cultural patrimony and identity is anything but a merely academic pursuit. This was the central theme of journalist, author and professor of International Journalism at Columbia University, Alexander

cultures, customs, belief systems and artistic practices that had accumulated over centuries or millennia. The Internet, for example, gives us instant access to infinite amounts of information – but there is also a risk of our becoming a society with little historical framework in which to set all the information.

The public influences the preservation of our heritage

Attracting as many visitors as possible is core business for most museums, but success in this area has its drawbacks. The many feet trampling through a museum's rooms and corridors might actually pose a threat to the preservation of the building and collection.

Henriëtte van der Linden, director of the Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage (ICN), referred to the Museum Amstelkring in Amsterdam, housed in a 17th-century canal house, to give just a minor example of the damage museum visitors could inflict on collections. The museum had to close one of its old wooden staircases out of fear it would suffer unacceptable damage (see the picture on page 9).

"The public influences the preservation of our heritage – often not consciously," Van der Linden explained. "Exhibiting involves risks but 'freezing' collections and making them inaccessible is not the solution." Van der Linden called on experts to start looking for ways to actively involve the public in conservation. "What role can a museum visitor play in conserving our cultural heritage?" she asked. "How do we go from public awareness to public involvement and participation?" She pointed out that her institute, ICN, can provide the technical and scientific know-how, enabling conservators to make sound decisions regarding their conservation approaches. For the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam, for instance, ICN conducted research into the potential damage to paintings caused by vibrations produced during loud pop music concerts that are regularly organized at a nearby city square. Van der Linden said this type of research is just one of the expressions of the increased need she noticed for "integrated preventive conservation and risk management".



JOHN ZVEREFF, ICOM secretary general (above) and JAN BUIJSE, chair Local Organizing Committee, ICOM-CC Congress 2005 (below).



Galla pleads for new approach in developing countries

“Listen better and get your fingers into the dirt”

We must fundamentally rethink how to deal with heritage conservation, especially in sustainable development areas, said Professor Amareswar Galla from Canberra University. Providing meaningful projects in developing countries and creating employment based on the strengths of local heritage values can also alleviate poverty.



During his lively and inspiring plenary address, Professor Galla took his listeners on “a little journey” through heritage projects in South Africa, India and Vietnam which he has been involved in over the past 11 years. He stressed Western cultural heritage institutions and professionals should consider more carefully how to involve local people in conservation projects. “When the Darjeeling Railway is adopted by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site, what does that mean to the local people? Nobody asks them. We should listen more carefully and be

AMARESWAR GALLA, director of the Sustainable Heritage Development Programs at the Australian National University, Canberra: “When the Darjeeling Railway is adopted by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site, what does that mean to the local people? Nobody asks them.”

more engaged. We must get our fingers into the dirt – although we conservators do not like to do this.” According to Galla, conservators should pay

more attention to ‘intangible heritage’ too, such as local living traditions. An example he mentioned was the town of Hoi An in Vietnam. Here, the 19th-century villas in the French quarter have been placed on the UNESCO site list. But instead of just looking at architecture (“we have to deal with our edifice obsession”), Western cultural institutions should focus on the population. “The local woodcrafters, the silk spinners, the fishermen – they are all not included in the World Heritage area.”

LOVE ON A STURDY BOAT

A good example of a heritage project where the local people, especially youngsters, are more closely involved, is the floating ecomuseum in Cua Van, a Vietnamese fishing village in Ha Long Bay. “Vietnam has the youngest population in the world, due to the American

Conservators should pay more attention to ‘intangible heritage’, such as local living traditions

War in the Sixties,” Galla pointed out. “Many youngsters are illiterate and have no grandparents. So how do we explain heritage to them? You have to train them to become curators and educators themselves.” The floating museum, which is unique in the world, will open in January 2006. It shows the traditional life of the local fishermen to local schoolchildren and foreign visitors. “People aren’t only interested in masterpieces, but in simple things too. How do they cook on the sea? Do they use salt water? One American asked me: how do they make love on a boat like this? I said: the boats are very sturdy. They don’t sink.”

Luiz Souza & Kuka Soares

Wider scope of ICOM-CC conference



LUIZ SOUZA, scholar of the Federal University of Minas Gerais, Brazil (left) and KUKA SOARES, of the Brazilian Cultural Ministry.

“What I notice here in The Hague is that the conference has a wide scope: it is not limited to restorers and conservators. Other professionals from the museum sector, such as curators and administrators, participate as well. I feel that this characteristic is a heritage of the ICOM-CC conference of three years ago in Rio de Janeiro,” said Luiz Souza, a scholar of the Federal University of Minas Gerais, Brazil, and one of the organisers of the event in 2002. Souza said the ICOM-CC conference in Rio had a long-lasting impact. Strengthening exchange and cooperation across continental borders has been one of the major outcomes. “It was very good for our self-esteem to notice that we, as a country in the Southern hemisphere, could contribute. We could build on our own knowledge and had something to offer to people from the developed countries.” Kuka Soares, of the Cultural Ministry/Fundação Casa de Rui Barbosa, added that it was also an eye opener to experience that, to some extent, experts in all parts of the world are dealing with the same problems.

René Boitelle

“Visitors appreciate exhibitions on the conservators’ work”



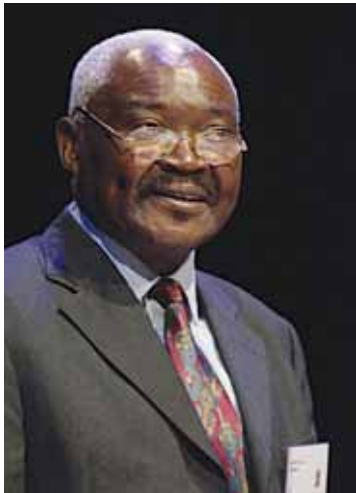
RENÉ BOITELLE, conservator in the Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam.

“Showing a wider audience what restoration entails is not only an obligation for publicly-funded institutions, it’s also fun,” said René Boitelle, one of Amsterdam’s Van Gogh Museum’s conservators. “We have a special section where the results of restoration efforts are on show. There is huge interest for this section among our visitors. There are always many people hanging out and their feedback is very positive.” Boitelle pointed out that exposing restoration efforts to the public is part of the museum’s policy. He also stressed he believes it is the museum’s obligation, as the keeper of one of The Netherlands’ most precious art treasures, to show the public how it treats and preserves its collection. In addition, many visitors appreciate information about specific results and new insights derived from restoration efforts. “People love to hear, for instance, that Van Gogh’s ‘Potato Eaters’ can’t be cleaned because he used extremely sensitive materials for this particular painting.”

Developments in African literature could be taken as an example

Setting up pilot cultural centres in developing countries

Mohamed Touré hopes that in the new millennium, Africa’s cultural heritage will no longer be exported but will be preserved – and cherished – on the continent. He has a plan to help accomplish this goal.



MOHAMED TOURÉ, writer and former director of the organisation for sustainable industrial development UNIDO: “Poverty is no excuse.”

For centuries, conservation of African cultural heritage was, for the most part, an activity taking place outside of Africa. During the years of colonialism, pieces of African art were

transferred to museums in Western capitals and, due to poverty, many African nations since then have not been able to establish a thriving museum sector. Efforts to increase public awareness of conservation in Africa, therefore, must start with creating awareness about the richness and value of Africa’s cultural heritage among Africans. Mohamed Touré, writer and former director of the organisation for sustainable industrial development UNIDO, made concrete

“It is my hope that the protection and conservation of cultural heritage will take place in the geographical region the works of art originate from”

suggestions as to how to meet this challenge. Inspired by the awakening of the African literary world in the mid-20th century, Touré, who publishes under the alias of Alioum Fantouré, proposed to establish cultural centres in African countries. He envisions pilot centres that would operate flexibly, and serve as clearing houses for artists and their audiences. The centres would stage temporary exhibitions, provide online access to art collections and be open to all members of the public.

ISLANDS OF SOLITUDE

This effort, Touré pointed out, should coincide with a project aimed at evaluating the current cultural problems, taking stock of national cultural riches, and seeking the commitment of governments to cultural heritage conservation. “Poverty is no excuse,” he stressed. “Their commitment is a moral duty of governments to their people.” Many developing countries already have museums, but these institutions are ‘islands of solitude’ and attract very few visitors. According to the Guinean author, setting up pilot museums could be a major step toward strengthening the cultural sector in developing countries. It would also be a step toward preservation. “It is my hope that in this new millennium, the protection and conservation of cultural heritage will take place in the geographical region the works of art originate from.”

Developments in African literature could be taken as an example. “40 years ago, schools and universities in Africa only taught European and colonial literature. Then, African writers began to respond to local aspirations and started to depict their own societies. And after independence, governments, with the help of organisations such as UNESCO, started distributing books at accessible prices. Little by little, as a result of these developments, a literary audience arose.”

Some Dutch Cases

To work in splendid isolation or in the public gaze

Restoration in public can be very successful

Restoration and conservation can take place in solitary bliss, but is this the best path to sharing the results? Other people should be allowed to behold the miracle, reckons Frans Grijzenhout.



FRANS GRIJZENHOUT, head of the Education Department of the Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage.

Throughout the ages, the ‘garden’ has served as an image of completeness, peace and recuperation. Secret gardens are popular themes in children’s literature, and a dream of many adults. “Many institutes for restoration throughout the world are located in pastoral settings, closed off from sight,” noted Frans Grijzenhout, head of the Education Department of the Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage. “They may be the best for concentration, but can be enticements to hermitage and isolation.”

■ **“Many institutes for restoration throughout the world are located in pastoral settings, closed off from sight”**

The other image is of the alchemist, again shut off from the world – a view reinforced by the speed of technical developments in a field which has become “more scientific and less artistic, again to the detriment of public understanding”. Curators and conservators are trying more and



‘THE SHEPHERDESS’ by Aelbert Cuyp, with a strip that was added to the top of the painting. The Dordrecht Museum asked members of the public whether the strip should be removed or not. The result of the voting was indecisive. After conducting scientific research, confirming that the strip had been added at a much later date, the museum decided to remove it.



Museum in Utrecht exhibits art and technical information separately

Art history as a detective story

Exposing a museum’s restoration and conservation activities to visitors requires an engaged and resourceful curator. Liesbeth Helmus explained how her museum tries to combine exhibiting the technical and educational aspects of restoration work with unhampered exposure of the art works themselves.

The Centraal Museum of the Dutch city of Utrecht has a long tradition in the field of innovative conservation. The museum’s curator of Paintings, Drawing & Sculpture, Liesbeth Helmus, said the institute was one of the first in



LIESBETH HELMUS, curator of Paintings, Drawing & Sculpture, Centraal Museum, Utrecht.

the world to apply infrared technology as part of research into the art historical background of paintings. The museum was also among the first to share the story about these techniques with the public, in an exhibition in 1977. As the museum quickly discovered, visitors are very interested in this kind of information.

“Restoration still has a magic aura, especially when it is able to reveal a drawing under the paint, as is the case with x-ray research.” The Centraal Museum developed a style of exhibiting educational and technical aspects of conservation that would also leave room for unhindered enjoyment of the works of art. At an exhibition in the late 1970s, which showed the results of research into several paintings of ‘Mary with the Christ Child’, the technical information was presented on tables in the exhibition room, away from the walls where the pictures were hanging. Curators of an exhibition on the Dutch painter Saenredam in 2000 put educational material in a separate museum room.

RESEARCH EXCITES MORE THAN ART

However, in some cases, scholarly information about research seems to excite museum visitors more than the art it was focused on. In 2002, Helmus was commissioned to research into how a painting, ‘The Burning of Troy’ (originally attributed to the 16th century Dutch painter Jan van Scorel, but later attributed to Lambert

more to impress their needs on the public and put the magician/chemist image behind them, said Grijzenhout, illustrating with recent Dutch initiatives that restoration in public (or semi-public), can be very successful.

PREACHING TO THE CONVERTED

The restoration of ‘The Goldfinch’ by Fabritius in the Mauritshuis in The Hague was closely followed – sometimes daily – by many, and resulted in far more visitors (75,000) than had been anticipated. ‘The Art of Keeping’ in the Rijksmuseum Twente, showed techniques of restoring paper and ceramic etc in public and even allowed the visitors to speak with the restorers. Deventer Historical Museum allowed the public to adopt an art work and be honoured on its website. And the Dordrecht Museum even went so far as to poll the public as to what restorative measures should be taken – whether to restore or remove a strip on Aelbert Cuyp’s ‘The Shepherdess’. Noting the increasing numbers of films, TV programs and websites about restoration being made as evidence that people are interested in the subject, new-found public enthusiasm is gratifying, but is it enough, he concluded. “Is it preaching to the converted, or even ignoring the fact that, even now, the majority of the public are not actually that interested? “This is the challenge of the next decennia.”

Lisa Pilosi

Glass and ceramics membership rules tightened



LISA PILOSI, conservator at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and coordinator of the Working Group Glass and Ceramics.

An important issue at this Triennial meeting is to further professionalize the ICOM organization. One example of this is the new membership rules in the Working Group Glass and Ceramics, which is coordinated by Lisa Pilosi.

“ICOM consists of different national committees, which all have their own rules for members,” said Pilosi. “But we have noticed some people in the working group are not truly members. They don’t pay their fees, but they enjoy privileges, such as publications and newsletters.” The biggest advantage of ICOM-CC membership is free entrance to virtually all museums all over the world. Pilosi considers this situation “unfair to the ones who pay their dues”. So, starting from October, only full members of ICOM-CC will be allowed complete website access. From January 2006, this will also apply to membership of the working groups. “I’m very happy with the way the membership matter is now being addressed,” said Pilosi. Those who find membership too expensive – the fee varies from country to country – can also become a Friend of ICOM-CC. Pilosi added that members from developing countries receive a further discount in their fees.

Theo de Mooij

Research with a gun



THEO DE MOOIJ, director of Jeol Netherlands.

“What I find extremely fascinating about the latest technological developments in my area is that the newest techniques not only do a lot more, a lot faster, they are also more simple to use than their predecessors,” said Theo de Mooij, director of Jeol Netherlands, a company specializing in analysing equipment, such as SEM-TEM, NMR and MASS. What used to be done in laboratories filled with glass tubes and distilling flasks, can now be dealt with in a matter of seconds in a clean, office-like instrument. Cutting-edge innovation, De Mooij pointed out, is taking place in the area of preparing samples before they are submitted for analysis. “We have developed an instrument which is able to make cross sections of samples without influencing its morphology and structure.” The instrument, called a Cross Section Polisher, uses an ‘Argon gun’ to make the finest possible cross section of a sample. The cross section is then put under the microscope for analysis. De Mooij said enlargement technology also continues to evolve to remarkable levels, making it possible to view samples as close as at the atomic level. “This enables restorers to assess – with absolute accuracy – what substances are present in a sample and make informed decisions regarding restoration work.”

WG Metals focuses on preventive conservation and better knowledge of the object

Four main themes

Many WGM members are involved in a metal protection project, specifically suited to the requirements of Mediterranean countries. Working with composite metal artefacts also brings scientists from different working groups together.



Testing of the Remote Monitoring Photo Capturing (RMPC) system, that allows to take pictures of metal coupons on a daily basis to follow the progression of the corrosion process.

During the last triennial period the Working Group Metals (WGM) decided to promote research projects on four themes. The first is research done on preventive conservation issues. Topics covered go from the in situ conservation of artefacts from subaquatic and terrestrial sites to the storage or exhibition of museum objects. One of the most exciting projects to fall under this theme is the Protection of Metals (Promet) project funded under the EU INCO-MPC1

Programme. Promet enables conservation professionals from the Mediterranean area to work on metal artefacts including silver, copper and iron-based ones, that suffer from severe weather conditions and lack of maintenance due to lack of funding. The countries involved in the project are Algeria, Czech Republic, Egypt, France, Greece, Italy, Jordan, Malta,

“Previously, we were working blindly with these techniques, without knowing whether or not it would work; today such approaches are unacceptable”

Morocco, Spain, Syria and Turkey. The project has two parts. One is the development of innovative portable non-destructive analytical tools (micro XRFspectrometer) and micro Laser Induced Breakdown Spectrometer to study artefacts in situ in order to avoid their transportation. The second part is about the development of innovative protection systems of coatings and corrosion inhibitors that would suit specifically the requirements of Mediterranean countries. Most of the work will be performed on artificially manufactured coupons that will simulate the behaviour of real artefacts and that are exposed to different museum environments. After one year of exposure in natural conditions, the coupons will be investigated and cleaned as if they were real artefacts, and the most effective protection systems will be applied and tested for another year. The innovation does not come only from the protection systems themselves but from the way the monitoring is performed. In Malta the Promet team is developing a Remote Monitoring Photo Capturing (RMPC) system that would allow them to take pictures of the coupons on a daily basis to follow the progression of the corrosion process.

NEUTRON RADIOGRAPHY REVEALS INTERVENTIONS

The second theme being promoted by the WGM is research on better knowledge of the object. The WGM is experimenting with new technologies which give access in a non-destructive way to information that was not available a few years ago. For example the use of neutron radiography seems to be very promising in complementing the traditional X radiography to reveal organic elements and past interventions. The application of synchrotron radiation to the study of microsamples gives the WGM the possibility to sample more on artefacts in order to get a better knowledge of corrosion products developing on metal artefacts.

Under the third theme, researchers are encouraged to bring to light a better understanding of conservation treatment. A lot of work has been performed in the last years on

electro-chemical techniques in order to better monitor the processes developed during the treatment of artefacts. The plasma technique is benefiting too from further research in order to perfectly control the reactions taking place during the cleaning and stabilisation of artefacts. It is clear that conservation professionals need to understand the effect of any conservation treatment applied on cultural heritage artefacts. “Previously, we were working blindly with these techniques without knowing whether or not it would work and hoping for the best,” said Christian Degriigny, co-ordinator of the WGM. “Today such approaches are unacceptable and we have the knowledge and the means to perform much safer interventions.” The fourth and final theme being promoted is the conservation of composite artefacts such as those composed of metals and textiles, or metals and wood, usually marine artefacts. This theme is an essential one since it exposes the WGM to other materials and it favours collaboration with other ICOM working groups.



CHRISTIAN DEGRIGNY during one of the sessions in The Hague.

WG Scientific Research wants to attract scientists from other fields

Chemical microscope

A ‘chemical microscope’ to examine paint samples that are made up of several layers; direct temperature resolved mass spectrometry, that is now being applied to the study of works of art – these are some of the analytical techniques recently discussed by the Users’ Group for Mass Spectrometry and Chromatography (MaSC), operating under the umbrella of the WG Scientific Research.

The Users’ Group for Mass Spectrometry and Chromatography (MaSC) was established in March 2003 at the workshop on ‘Binding Media Identification in Art Objects’. The workshop focused particularly on gas chromatography/mass spectrometry (GCMS) and was funded by the EU Programme LABSTECH. The aim of MaSC is to facilitate an exchange of information among conservation scientists on sampling strategies and protocols, preparation of samples, chromatographic and mass spectrometric analysis, and data treatment and interpretation of results. MaSC recently held its second workshop on 7 and 8 September, which provided the

opportunity for members to learn about new methods, and an exchange of research findings. The workshop focused on two new analytical techniques. The first technique, direct temperature resolved mass spectrometry (DTMS), has been around for at least ten years, but it is only recently that conservation scientists have been applying it to the study of works of art. The second technique, secondary ion mass spectrometry (SIMS), enables the

“Such databases already exist, but this database will have information that is directly applicable to our particular research”

conservation scientist to obtain spatial information on material such as binding media and organic additives. This can be very useful, for example in paint samples made up of a number of layers. Rather than separate the layers mechanically, as is done traditionally, the SIMS ‘chemical microscope’ can examine individual layers in an intact cross section sample. A meeting of MaSC was held following the

workshop on 9 and 10 September. Participants presented a series of lectures discussing research on artworks and archaeological artefacts, as well as forensic science.

DATABASE OF MASS SPECTRA

The new users’ group currently operates under the umbrella of the ICOM-CC Scientific Research Working Group (SRWG), and aims to organise a meeting every one or two years.

Whenever possible, these meetings will be arranged to coincide with interim and triennial meetings of ICOM-CC or similar organisations. The group is hoping to attract scientists working in other fields such as archaeometry, as they have much common ground. Following the successful model of the Infrared and Raman Users Group (IRUG), MaSC is setting up a database of mass spectra of materials found in artistic and cultural objects.

“Such databases already exist,” said Klaas Jan van den Berg, joint co-ordinator of the group, “but this database will have information that is directly applicable to our particular research.” The group has also set up a website and is applying for legal status as not-for-profit group.



Sideboard 1928, H.G. Wouda, Museum Het Catharinagasthuis Gouda, on loan from the Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage, Rijswijk/Amsterdam

Preparedness for emergency situations is inadequate

A more holistic, multi-disciplinary approach

Museums can face all kinds of disasters – from an earthquake to a leaky roof. Several speakers highlighted different aspects of disaster risk and recovery, whilst all having in common a call for greater, wider communication and longer, more holistic, multi-disciplinary approaches.



NEVRA ERTÜRK: “96% of Turkey is in a quake zone.”

ICOM secretary general John Zvereff opened the forum on museums and emergency situations noting that, although it was only the second such ICOM meeting on this topic, the subject was likely to be a permanent fixture – with conservators becoming part of a wider, multi-disciplinary approach to tackling disaster situations. Indian architect, planner and conservation consultant, Rohit Jigyasu, made the case for an

awareness (there is a need for education and training), ineffective public policy and inadequate resources. We are also ‘hazard-centric’, focused on dramatic events like earthquakes. Yet there are also ‘slow’ risks too: a leaky roof, a termite infestation. A holistic view demands that we look at risks to collections, buildings, visitors and staff, the immediate setting, the social and economic context, and the intangible aspects – especially

“The frequency of disasters seems to be increasing. They are not only natural but also man-made, the consequences of war and terrorism”

integrated approach to disaster management in museums, as in the Museum Emergency Programme (MEP). “Disasters are happening all the time,” he said. “New Orleans, the Chiang Mai floods in Thailand, the Tsunami. And their frequency seems to be increasing. They are not only natural but also man-made – the consequences of war and terrorism.” The main challenges, he said, were lack of

in a developing world, where there are many ‘living museums’ and therefore a different perception of risk.

EXPERTS ON FAULT ZONES

Nevra Ertürk, a research assistant at the Yildiz Technical University’s Museum Studies Graduate Program in Turkey, has written extensively on earthquakes, which, “though

unavoidable, we can prepare for”. She pointed out that “96% of Turkey is in a quake zone, so we have all become experts on fault zones.” Ertürk presented her World Bank-funded project which looks at the non-structural elements of disasters (lighting, air-conditioning and other non load-bearing aspects), specific to the needs of 40 public and private museums in Istanbul. Common risks include broken glass, and freestanding objects falling over. Additionally, lighting may fall from a ceiling, showcases may break and ceilings may collapse. Mitigation methods included fastening moving showcases, putting sand or lead weights in objects, using anchors and bracing, and boxing or compartmentalising objects. These recommendations have already been implemented in the Topkapi Palace and Ancient Orient Museum in Istanbul; several other museums are preparing, and encouraging others, to do the same. Additionally, the government and municipalities have started a program – the Disaster Preparedness Education Program to provide support to all Turkish museums.

IDEAL STORAGE MECHANISM FOR COLLECTIONS

Agnes Brokerhof of the Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage opened with a scenario from ‘the 24th century’, the era of ‘Star Trek – The Next Generation’, when humans replicators are able to create objects at will – be it a cup of coffee or a Van Gogh ‘Sunflower’. Brokerhof specifically mentioned the episode when Data (an android), is kidnapped by an art collector. “It prompts questions like: why collect objects when we can reproduce anything? It is to do with the uniqueness of the original; about authenticity. It’s not about the materials used, but the value within those materials.” “We can see cracks, and micro-cracks and electron micro-cracks – all of which lead us to believe that change is bad,” said Brokerhof. “So we set up guidelines and procedures to reduce and minimize change, or to restore the effects of change. But how much value is lost by change – such as micro-cracks in the varnish – compared to the destruction of a quake? There is a conflict between the micro- and macro-worlds. We need to cross the next frontier, from preventive conservation to collection risk management.”

Hanna Pennock
Sharing new insights on art’s air safety



HANNA PENNOCK, museum inspector for the Dutch government.

Hanna Pennock is a museum inspector for the Dutch government. She examines whether museums properly manage security and preservation of their collections. Pennock is also a board member of ICOM’s International Committee for Museum Security (ICMS). She is always on the look-out for trends in research, hoping to gain insights that might improve a museum’s risk management practices. “I’ve heard interesting cases at this congress. British research, for instance, has shown that it is not safer – contrary to common belief – to store a painting parallel to the flight direction during air transport. It might just as well be placed perpendicular to flight direction. This may look like a trivial detail. But these kind of revelations are important. They free up time and energy to deal with the really critical security issues.” She added that international exchange is extremely useful, for exactly this reason. Pennock is currently involved in a Dutch project aimed at gathering real-life examples of security breaches and ‘near misses’. The cases will be stored in a national ‘incident database’. “Our aim is to learn from mistakes, as well as from successes.”

Members share experiences of emergency situations

The best plans can be overwhelmed

Disasters, both man-made and natural, seem to be on the increase – and no country is immune. How do you prepare for this? The need to share experience is a pressing one.

“Disasters are very democratic,” noted John Leighton, who moderated the discussion on museums and emergency situations, together with ICOM programme specialist Christina Menegazzi. “They affect us all. But good preparation can reduce their impact. My question is: what can you do on the issue of risk management?”

A conservator from the Getty Museum said that they toured their galleries once a year and went through various safety protocols, i.e. made sure there was an emergency toolbox in each room. “It’s a painful, but necessary, process.” The head of an African museum commented that there is more information in the press than ever before. “But once the event has left the media spotlight, interest in heritage is lost. We’d like a reconstruction phase that puts more focus on our work, and more long-term efforts.” Els van der Plas, from the Prince Claus Fund, mentioned the setting up, in 2003, of the Dutch



Discussion with the public, moderated by John Leighton.



CHRISTINA MENEGAZZI during the discussion. Behind her, from left to right: Rohit Jigyasu, John Zvereff, Nevra Ertürk and Agnes Brokerhof.

Cultural Emergency Response to look at how to help libraries, archives and museums etc around the world. So far, it had been active in Baghdad, Palestine and Aceh. “New Orleans had many disaster relief plans – and none of them worked,” said David Gratton from Canada. “The best plans and preparations can be overwhelmed.” Diane van Breeden, from the Library of Congress and Smithsonian Institution, said this was a very timely topic for the US. “We have disaster plans on the Net at the Smithsonian. At the Library of Congress, I was hired to deal with planning for a terrorist attack. We followed UN guidelines and also prepared seven scenarios –

but, inevitably, the thing you don’t plan for is the thing that happens.” “Hurricane Katrina is the first national approach, due to the size of the disaster. We have weekly conference calls – with 20-plus conservators and government representatives – as an example of what we can do. And doing this has shown how little we know, and how much we need advice.”



R70-56, J.J. Schoonhoven, 1970, The Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage, Rijswijk/Amsterdam

Varied opinions on public engagement in conservation

The public is first, the money is second

Does engaging the public always work to the advantage of conservators? And when the audience does get closer, will this interfere with conservation work and will it affect the budget? During the plenary session introduced by Nicholas Stanley-Price – which focused on museums and public engagement in conservation – it became clear that opinions on public involvement can vary considerably among conservators.



Mexican researcher and conservator Blanca Noval Vilar emphasized in her address that it is not the objects themselves, but their meaning to the people, which are crucial in keeping our cultural heritage intact. “The subjects should be approached from the anthropological angle,” she said. “People need to be able to identify with both the movable and immovable heritage – through meetings, discussions and active participation.”

FEROZA VERBERNE during her presentation. Behind the table, from left to right: Blanca Noval Vilar, Simon Warrack, Nicholas Stanley-Price and Simon Cane.

Rijksmuseum Twenthe had staged a large exhibition on conservation. “We decided to give conservation a permanent place in the

“Conservators are being used more and more for fundraising events where the public is brought in”

Another approach to attract the public to museums on a regular basis was presented during the session by Feroza Verberne, picture conservator at the Rijksmuseum Twenthe in the Dutch town of Enschede. In her discourse, entitled ‘Communicating Conservation’, she described how, between 2002 and 2004, the

programme of our museum, and called it ‘De Kunst van het Bewaren’ (The Art of Conservation). We wanted to target a broad general public, work ethically, and create interactive elements and educational projects which were related to various objects.”

One example of this was that schoolchildren learned how to unpack and handle art, and were trained to use and read x-rays. “Looking back, it’s clear that the project was labour intensive and required immense communication skills from the conservators,” said Verberne. “But it was also a great success.” Verberne said the key to the positive response to ‘De Kunst van het Bewaren’ was due to three factors. “Firstly, the project was the museum’s sole responsibility. Secondly, a foundation was created for public engagement. And thirdly, we were in a permanent dialogue with all the different institutions involved.”

FEELING LIKE A MONKEY

During the ensuing debate on public engagement, one French participant remarked that conservators needed training in communication in order to learn how to engage with an audience. “There are some conservators who view the public as sort of an enemy. They say: we don’t want to be monkeys you can look at.”

While some participants reacted by emphasizing the need for conservation students to be trained in the art of listening, others voiced worries about the necessary communication training conservators would have to follow. Who will pay for this, especially in a time when most museum budgets are not getting any bigger?

Simon Cane, coordinator of the ICOM-CC Task Force on Public Engagement, reacted by saying there are opportunities to find solutions for this. “There are many levels of engagement, but listening to the audience is essential.” Cane cited an example of one British museum conservator he knew, who was unwilling to show a certain record to a person. “I thought that was wrong. They are taxpayers and are entitled to have access to cultural heritage.” Another British participant remarked she was afraid the public would interfere too much with her work if they were able to enter her workplace. “Conservators are being used more and more for fundraising events where the public is brought in. How can this be regulated?” she asked. Moderator John Leighton had a brief but clear answer to this: “The public is first, the money is second.”

Larry Cruz

An abundance of practical information



LARRY CRUZ, conservator at the National Historical Institute in Manila, the Philippines.

“One of the major conservation issues my organisation is dealing with,” said Larry Cruz, conservator at the National Historical Institute in Manila, “is the mishandling of objects by visitors. Philippine people can be quite unruly at times. They ignore signs at national landmarks restricting where they’re supposed to walk or what they’re allowed to touch. In addition, staff overseeing these sites often lack the knowledge required to ensure proper maintenance.”

Cruz’s institute is responsible for the promotion and preservation of the Philippines’ historical heritage, and consists of national shrines, statues, flags, colonial textile collections, and ancestral houses. For Cruz, the ICOM-CC conference is an opportunity to help solve practical conservation issues. “A major asset of this conference is the abundance of technical information on conservation,” he said. “A discussion on how to deal with white blooming on leather objects, for instance, has been very valuable for me.”

The Philippine conservator, a chemical engineer by profession, said he hoped for more opportunities to network and meet fellow conservators in his own region. “We would, of course, welcome the ICOM-CC conference taking place in Asia. It would boost exchange within the region.”

Simon Warrack restored a religious statue at Angkor Wat

Ta Reach – sticking together a community

Restoring works of art which have a special meaning for a community necessitates certain responsibilities and can have a huge impact on people. British stone conservator, Simon Warrack, noticed this in Cambodia, where he worked on the restoration of Ta Reach, an important religious statue at Angkor Wat. “We weren’t just sticking together stone, we were sticking together a community.”



During his ten years at Angkor Wat, one of the most intense projects he worked on was the restoration of Ta Reach, Warrack told a fascinated audience. The 11th-century temple is the largest religious building in the world, and at the heart of Cambodian identity. “All Cambodians want to go there at least once in their life,” Warrack said. “I don’t know of any other country which has her cultural heritage on the national flag.”

“He asked us to use local sandstone for the restoration – because it was possessed by the same spirits”

Ta Reach holds a special meaning for the Cambodians. “All visitors to Angkor Wat stop at the statue and leave either small or large donations – for us conservators too.” The statue is important for the local animistic religion, one

The head of Ta Reach, which was missing for years. On the day it arrived back, villagers at Angkor Wat had found out and held an impromptu religious ceremony – which lasted hours.



which believes in the spirits of ancestors. “Because of its religious significance, we decided it was necessary to speak to the local

religious leader in the nearest village before we started restoring it,” Warrack said. “He was surprised to see us, but happy to offer advice. He asked us to use local sandstone for the restoration – because it was possessed by the same spirits. This was just what we had already planned to do.”

For the restoration of Ta Reach, Warrack also asked local mine-clearers to check for any metal within the statue. Then, after its eight arms had been restored, one last thing needed to be done: put the head back on. “It had disappeared years ago but was eventually found at the Royal Palace in Phnom Penh. The government feared it would

be stolen again, so it was arranged that it would be transported in secret, without anyone knowing.”

Still, on the day the head arrived, villagers at Angkor Wat had found out and held an impromptu religious ceremony – which lasted hours. Only then, was Warrack allowed to put the head on the statue and complete his work.



Coconut cup, South Netherlands 2nd half of 16th century, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam

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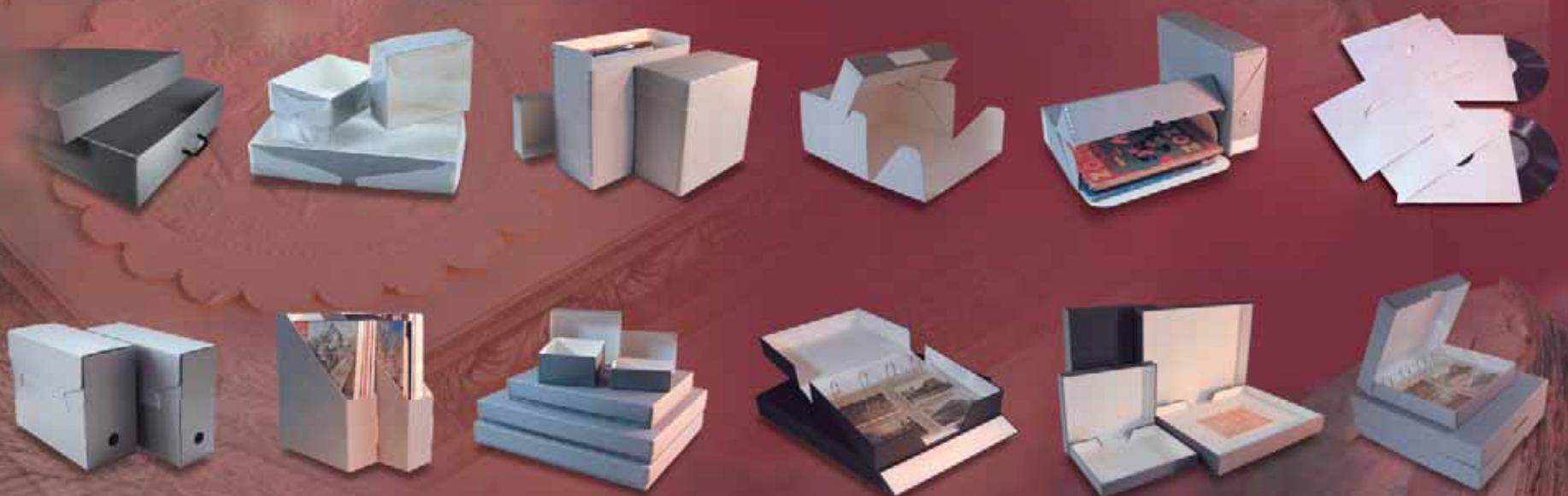


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WG Preventive Conservation provides guidelines on preventive conservation

Collections not items

Hot topics in risk management of collections are safety, security and emergency preparedness. New courses are also being set up to face these challenges which differ from place to place.

The Working Group Preventive Conservation (WGPC), established just nine years ago, has been focusing increasingly on integrated preventive conservation of entire collections, whereby various schools of knowledge and different types of procedures are pitted together in order to determine the most efficient way to preserve the entire museum collection. This new holistic approach can be described as risk management of the entire collection. Last June, the ICCROM and CCI, in co-operation with the Canadian Museum of Nature and the Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage (ICN), held a three week course in risk management of museum collections. It is hoped that this three-week course for cultural heritage professionals will be the first of many, and will help change the emphasis worldwide, from preventive conservation with a focus on individual agents of deterioration, to reducing risks to entire collections. During the course, curators consider whether to buy a new artefact for their museum, spend the money primarily on research or on conservation, or invest in an exhibition which would generate more money. “Risk management becomes an integrated part of collection management,” said Agnes Brokerhof, of the ICN.

FIXATION ON ‘SAFE’ NUMBERS
The WGPC is aiming to provide guidelines for preventive conservation, especially museum lighting, climate control and air quality. This

“Societies determine the value of the collections that we keep. For that they need good access to it, or they will never value it”

should help collection keepers understand local conditions and decide on an acceptable level of damage. Initiatives are underway to move away from universally applied magic numbers that suggest low risks, but that may in fact pose a high risk. “There is much demand for guidelines,” said Brokerhof, “but we especially want curators to get away from their fixation on ‘safe’ numbers



Visitor impact: threehundred and fifty years wear and tear of the 17th century staircase at the Museum Amstelkring in Amsterdam (photo ICN).

and have them think about what is best for their particular collection, rather than blindly follow guideline advice or a successful management approach applied by a colleague.” “There are no magical numbers which can be blindly adhered to,” she emphasised. Brokerhof is referring to threats such as how much light

exposure can an artefact endure, how much humidity, heat etc., as not only is each collection different, but each location is different. Other threats to take into consideration would be what happens to an artefact during transport, what is the natural humidity level and climate of the museum’s location, what are threats posed by local pests and insects, and even natural disasters.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PROGRAMME
A new international programme, the Museum Emergency Preparedness Programme (MEP), established amongst others by ICOM, The Getty Foundation and ICCROM, looks at the risk posed by natural disasters. It is a risk which cannot be prevented or controlled in any way, but a museum can at least have a quick, adequate response, and take precautions not only by building earthquake-proof buildings, but also at showcase level.

“We want curators to think about what is best for their particular collection, rather than blindly follow a successful approach applied by a colleague”

The book ‘Cultural Heritage Disaster Preparedness and Response’, which came out this year, gives an overview of how different countries deal with their disasters and prepare to reduce the impact of the disaster as much as possible.

ICN QUANTIFIES AND PRIORITISES RISKS
In their recent study of risk assessment at the Museum Amstelkring in Amsterdam, completed a year ago, the ICN advised that the museum invest in a new roof as the likelihood of water leakage posed the greatest threat to the museum. The roof was promptly renewed and the ICN is now rounding up its second risk assessment investigation. The Amstelkring is a small museum and one of the few in the Netherlands to see a steady increase in visitor numbers. The ICN is now looking into whether a new extension next to the current building would reduce the risk that the large number of visitors pose to the building and the museum’s collection. Such a new extension would provide space for temporary exhibitions and educational activities, as well as suitable services for the visitors, such as sufficient washrooms, a shop, reception area and restaurant. “Societies determine the value of the collections that we keep,” said Brokerhof, “for that the public needs good access to the collection because if they never see it, they will never value it. This is where preventive conservation meets collection value and becomes collection risk management.”

Christian Degrigny

Important to encourage cross-pollination



CHRISTIAN DEGRIGNY, head of Diagnostic Science Lab, Heritage Malta.

A conservation scientist working in the field for 15 years, Christian Degrigny is passionate about interaction and transfer of knowledge. “It is important that there is more cross-pollination. We have to encourage interaction between the curator and the scientist,” he said. He himself has his roots in both science and education. As the head apparent of the Working Group Metals (he is the only candidate for the post), he feels he will be in an ideal position to pursue this aim. It is now three years ago that he started to breath new life into the group. “There was little networking between people.” New tools and a new approach promoting the idea of collaboration were needed. Now there are 28 people from different countries coordinating collection and distribution of information, a three-monthly research bulletin and a triennial meta conference. With new guidelines limiting working groups to ICOM members, the number of members will drop dramatically, so encouraging active people becomes even more important. When he is officially head, one of his first tasks will be to choose five assistants to work with him, to help him achieve his vision. “Currently, this is not so common, but I hope Metals can take on the role of mother hen to the other groups and encourage dialogue and networking.”



SUZANNE MAARSCHALKERWEERD, director of the new organisation Restauratoren Nederland.

Suzanne Maarschalkerweerd

“Conservators need to show themselves more”

On 1 July 2005, a special baby was born in Amsterdam: Restauratoren Nederland (RN), an association representing 500 Dutch restoration professionals. RN is the result of a merger between four different associations, one of which is VeRes, one of the organisers of the 14th ICOM-CC Congress in The Hague. “The conference comes at just the right time for us,” said Suzanne Maarschalkerweerd, director of RN. The mission of RN is very much in harmony with the theme of the ICOM-CC Congress, the new director indicates. “Restorers need to show the public who they are and what they do. As yet, this professional group have barely been involved in Dutch heritage conservation. So, for us, the motto of the conference is perfect.” Apart from joining forces in RN, Dutch restorers have taken another step to further professionalize their trade. While the conference took place in The Hague, the first academic course in conservation and restoration started at the University of Amsterdam. From next year,

students will be able to follow a five-year Masters degree. The academic training serves a clear purpose. “In the Netherlands, everyone can call themselves a restorer, which can be misleading to the public,” said Maarschalkerweerd. “Simply being an experienced artisan cannot be a standard for quality. We know that restorers of paintings are mostly patching up bad restorations which were done earlier.” However, setting new academic standards for the profession does not mean ‘old-style’ craftsmen will be left out, Maarschalkerweerd emphasized. “We need them for their expertise and experience, as an example to the students. So, we have decided to set up a transitional period of five years, wherein craftsmen will have the chance to acquire the necessary standards in both theory and quality.” Crucial for the future of restoration is that the public knows what the work implies. “The restorer is at the end of the line, working on the artefact with his own hands. A curator looks at

the outside, at the aesthetic element. The conservator works on the object itself, going deep into the material. It’s a highly responsible job.”



Harikete, Suriname c. 1927, KIT/Tropen-museum, Amsterdam

G.R.A.S. Project, Amsterdam

Educational programmes for youngsters

Four of Amsterdam’s major museums – which could all be visited during the excursions on Wednesday – are collaborating together in the G.R.A.S. Project. Aimed at teenagers, the programmes stimulate them to think about conservation.



The G.R.A.S. Project develops educational programmes aimed at teenagers in the lower years of secondary education – precisely because these youngsters seldom visit a museum. The museums taking part are the Van Gogh Museum, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam Historical Museum and Stedelijk Museum. The project, set up between 2001-2004, is being funded by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sciences, and the Amsterdam Municipality. The project’s approach is to give special attention to the individual pupil. For a mere 25 Euro, a group of ten students can visit one of the four participating museums, where they will get a tour (conducted by a special G.R.A.S. Project teacher), along with interactive learning material.

Students participating in the programme ‘Haken & Ogen’ (Hooks & Eyes), which stimulates them to think about conservation. The picture was taken in the Amsterdam Historical Museum.

In one of the programmes, ‘Haken & Ogen’ (Hooks & Eyes), students are challenged to look at the technology behind museum objects: in what way are they constructed, and what is necessary to research, repair or reconstruct them? One of the participating museums, the Rijksmuseum, is one of the most famous in the world. With almost one million items, the museum houses one of The Netherlands’

largest collections of art and history. The most well-known of these is its collection of 17th-century Dutch masters, which includes 20 paintings by Rembrandt, and other impressive works from this period by Johannes Vermeer, Frans Hals and Jan Steen. Another participating museum, the Stedelijk, which opened its doors in 1895, houses works from the German and Dutch Expressionist period, as well as a number of paintings and sculptures of ‘classical modern’ art, photographs, applied art, and industrial and graphic design. Modern art owned by the museum includes works by Mondriaan, Van Doesburg, Rietveld, Moore, Saura, Tajiri, Zadikine, Matisse, Rauschenberg, Ryman, Malevich, Bacon, Hirst, Warhol and Mikhailov. At present, the museum is closed for renovation and isn’t due to reopen until 2008. However, it has a temporary location, Stedelijk Museum CS, with regularly-changing exhibitions.



Congress participants visiting the Rijksmuseum.

Laurianne Robinet
“Open your ears – listen and don’t just talk”



LAURIANNE ROBINET, researcher, working on her PhD at the School of Engineering, Centre for Materials, Edinburgh and the University of Pierre Marie Curie, Paris.

Currently embarking on the last year of her PhD, Laurianne Robinet is very enthusiastic about the congress, “the number of people and countries represented, the quality of the lectures and talks, the cross-fertilization.” What she really values, however, is the chance to share experiences and ideas. Although glass corrosion is a small field, she’s meeting fellow colleagues she didn’t know prior to the congress. “Problems have always existed, but not the science or knowledge to find solutions. I am a scientist, constantly looking for new ideas, but we have to ask ourselves – what does a conservator want? What can a scientist do to help? Sometimes we forget this, doing things that are not relevant.” The greatest benefit of the congress is in getting the bigger picture. The problem of access to – or loss of – culture and heritage was something that had not occurred to her. These problems aren’t isolated but linked together. “People should listen and not just talk – it’s important to open our ears.”

Dordrechts Museum

Portraits of De Witt brothers restored

Two brothers, Johan and Cornelis de Witt, were killed by an angry mob in 1672. Portraits of them, by 17th-century painter Jan de Baen, also became a target for destruction. They were, however, saved and have recently been restored.

The restoration of a series of four portraits of Johan (1625-1672) and Cornelis (1623-1672) de Witt and their parents, by De Baen, and belonging to the Dordrechts Museum, has been successfully completed – including their original, gold-plated wooden frames. De Baen was born in Haarlem in 1633 and died in The

Hague in 1702. This was the first major restoration of his series in over 100 years. The four frames and paintings were restored by different people. The portraits are on display in an exhibition entitled “De Witt Brothers. Power and Weakness in the Golden Century.” It was organised by the Dordrecht City Archives and is being held at the Dordrechts Museum until 15 January 2006. The history of the portraits of Johan and Cornelis de Witt is as turbulent as the life of the brothers themselves, who met with such a violent end. Following their death, the angry



Detail of Cornelis’ portrait.



The portrait of Cornelis de Witt during the restoration.



Work on Johan de Witt’s portrait.

mob searched De Baen’s house, looking for the portraits – but were unable to find them. However, another portrait of Cornelis de Witt – also by De Baen – which was hanging in Dordrecht’s town hall, was torn to shreds. The exhibition required specific research and restoration to be carried out before the portraits could be displayed. The paintings, which are among the most important done of the De Witts, had apparently been hanging in the home of Johanna de Witt, the brothers’ older sister. They were very dirty and the frames partially repainted in black. However, after careful cleaning and removal of the black paint, the portraits have now been restored to their original state.

National Museum of Ethnology, Leiden

Respect for the folds in bark cloth



Beaten tree bark was regularly used as a material for making clothes in various parts of Indonesia and Oceania. To this day, the cloth still plays a prominent role in the culture of the Maisin people and selling it has become an important source of income for them. Conservation and restoration require specific skills.

The National Museum of Ethnology, located in the university town of Leiden, is home to many unique items from all over the globe. It is a portal to other cultures, peoples and times. In the early 18th century – under the reign of King William I (1772-1843) – scientists were sent to remote parts of the world specifically to collect rare and unusual artefacts for study and display at the museum. In 1816, scientists embarked on acquiring a collection of objects from China, followed in 1826 and 1832 by acquiring a

Presentation of bark cloth in the exhibition.

collection of objects from Japan. Today the museum's collection boasts artefacts from Korea, Lapland, Greenland, India, Indonesia, West Africa, Tibet, Siberia, and the Indians of North, Central and South America, to mention a few. The museum is now famous all over the world for its well-documented collections, and works closely with the National Geographic Society. The museum is currently holding an exhibition on the bark clothing of the Maisin people in Papua New Guinea. Dutch anthropologist Anna-Karina Hermkens lived with the Maisin in Papua New Guinea in 2001 and 2002, during which time she carried out research into the making

and use of bark cloth, or "tapa". There are about 3000 Maisin who live along the coastal areas of Papua New Guinea. During her stay there, Hermkens collected bark cloth and, on her return to The Netherlands, decided to put it on display in the museum's collection.

COMMERCIAL VALUE

Although beaten tree bark was once regularly used as a material for making clothes in various parts of Indonesia and Oceania, since the 1950s, bark cloth has no longer been used for this purpose. However, cloth does still play a prominent role in the culture of the Maisin. The process involves making the inner bark of a tree wet, beating it flat, and then folding it. This is repeated several times until the material is soft and suitable for making clothes. It is then decorated using black and red dyes. Since the 1970s, the sale of bark cloth has been an intrinsic source of income for the Maisin. The commercial value of the cloth depends on the decorations. Another recent development has been that other ethnic groups in Papua New Guinea have been buying the Maisin tapa and using it for their own traditional wear. Conserving and restoring tree bark in a museum requires specific skills. While textile conservators normally use, what are at times, elaborate methods to unfold the material and remove the creases, conserving the bark cloth requires a fundamental understanding of both the use of the particular garment and decorations on it, as well as a knowledge of the Maisin traditions and culture. This is because



Restoration of bark cloth.

the creases and folds in their clothing are done in such a way as to show the use and status of the garment, and in this case actually help preserve the material longer. It is therefore essential that the conservator respects these folds, rather than try to undo them. The exhibition, which will be held until 27 November, has a special presentation showing how the conservation of bark cloth is carried out.



Congress participants visiting the depot of the National Museum of Ethnology.

Rotterdam boasts a photo museum and a national film archive

Dutch photography & cinematography

The harbour city of Rotterdam is also an important cultural centre within The Netherlands, especially when it comes to movies, films, their making and their history. The city also boasts an impressive photo database, accessible to both the public and professionals.

The Netherlands Photo Museum is the national centre of knowledge and learning in photography. The museum treats photography as a medium with social and artistic functions. That is the reason why the photography has a broad working space that stretches from

contemporary and historical photography, professional and amateur photography to photography as part of an image culture. The museum manages the collections which include over four million negatives and photographs of around 80 Dutch photographers, representing an integral part of more than 100 years of Dutch photography. Among them are Aart Klein, Cas Oorthuys and Ed van der Elsken. The museum also operates a professional photo conservation and restoration studio, while offering knowledge, insight and experience on numerous aspects of photography, both to the interested public and to professionals. It was founded when the Netherlands Photo

Institute, the Netherlands Photo Archives and the National Photo Conservation Studios merged in 2003. It now organises exhibitions, workshops, projects and lectures, as well as initiating research. The museum wants to signal latest developments in photography, reflect more on the medium, map the history of photography to a greater extent, and increase the knowledge of management and conservation, applying this knowledge to Photo Collection Netherlands. It is currently in the process of building a digital museum on the internet.

VALUABLE LEARNING PROCESS

One of the projects the conservation department will present during the excursion is the conservation of the so-called Gandara album, which has been a burden to the studio, but also a valuable learning process. The album arrived for the first time in 1993, when the studio had just been established. Two major problems occurred during the conservation process: the images could not be lifted from the pages, and the remounting of the albumen prints caused a lot of tension problems. After employing the help of a trainee for six months,

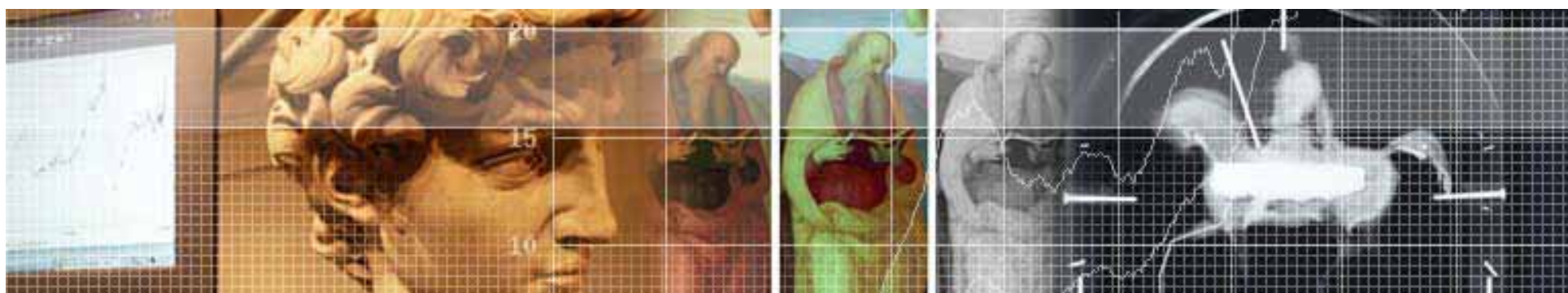
followed by an additional year of attempts, the studio finally managed to make some progress. And the repasting of the prints became an independent study into the mounting techniques. The Rotterdam Municipality also own an impressive archive of 17km of files and has an important historical library, as well as a large collection of maps, images, photos, film, video and sound material. Both the public and professionals are able to visit its restoration studio, where they can see the work currently being carried out and get an insight into a recent conservation project on stereopositives.



Film inspection table in the Municipality Archive in Rotterdam. Both the public and professionals are able to visit the restoration studio.



Spirits bottle, Japan 1660-1679, Museum voor Moderne Kunst Arnhem, on loan from the Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage, Rijswijk/Amsterdam



Eu - ARTECH

Access, Research, and Technology for the conservation of European Cultural Heritage

Eu-ARTECH is a consortium of thirteen internationally distinguished European Institutions in the field of conservation of works of art and Cultural Heritage. The research institutions are all involved in cooperative interdisciplinary work with conservators, archaeologists and art historians.

The objective of Eu-ARTECH is to work towards a lasting interoperability between the participating institutions, establishing cooperation and exchange of knowledge with other infrastructures in the field, with a view to building a common European research area.

The program of the five-year Eu-ARTECH project includes the following activities:

1. Networking
2. Access
3. Joint Research Activities

For information and contact details, please visit the mini-stand at the trade fair during the ICOM-CC meeting

Networking

The Networking activity aims to promote exchange of knowledge, disseminate **good practices in conservation** and define common work-parameters to improve the comparability of results and quality of research.

The activity has two components:

N1-Sharing knowledge and resources, with the aim of disseminating good analytical procedures, promoting the adoption of standards and defining common research areas.

N2-Methods and materials in conservation, with the aim of exchanging information on materials and methods used in conservation and promoting the definition of recommended procedures.

A central part of N2 is the **survey** on 'Cleaning and Consolidation methods and materials', which has the aim of collecting information on recent conservation treatments and common problems of conservation practice.

Cleaning of stone, paintings and metals, **Consolidation** of stone and mural paintings, treatment of **Biodeterioration** of stone, easel paintings and mural paintings are being surveyed.

Restorers and conservators are invited to contribute by completing some simple forms on the subjects listed above, according to their professional experience. The forms can be downloaded from the website or paper copies can be sent on request.

The data will be evaluated anonymously. The survey results, and a separate list of the names and affiliations of the compilers, will be published.

To take part in the survey, please visit the project website or contact: euartech_cnr@yahoo.com

Access

Eu-ARTECH offers two Transnational Access programmes aimed at promoting the use of advanced analytical facilities by the European community of researchers, conservators and curators in the field of studies and conservation of works of art.

AGLAE Located in the Palais du Louvre (Paris, CNRS-C2RMF), the AGLAE accelerator for **ion beam analysis** can be used for non-destructive elemental composition studies of high sensitivity and precision (**PIXE, PIGE, RBS**), in a unique environment of art-historians, restorers and scientists with great expertise in the materials and conservation of works of art.



MOLAB A unique **collection of portable analytical equipment**, or 'mobile laboratory' provided by a group of institutions in Perugia and Florence, together with competence in the methods and materials of works of art. MOLAB is available for **in-situ non-destructive analysis** of the materials and conservation of works of art, and can travel to museums, restoration studios, churches, historic buildings, and archaeological sites. It includes IR scanning reflectography, micro-profilometry, XRF, FTIR, Raman, UV-VIS spectroscopy, NMR relaxometry.

Requests for **access to AGLAE and MOLAB facilities** from European users can be made by completing a **simple proposal form**. The users of selected proposals obtain free access to the requested facility, including scientific and technical support and, for AGLAE, travel and subsistence grants. For MOLAB, the "mobile laboratory" travels to the user's place of work, fully supported by the EC.

The proposals are considered every six months.

NEXT DEADLINE: December 1st, 2005

The proposal form can be downloaded from the website

Joint research activities

There are two joint research activities, which have the aim of developing and assessing new analytical and conservation methods, thereby improving the quality of the facilities offered to the scientific community through the Access section of the project:

JRA1: Development and evaluation of new treatments for the conservation-restoration of outdoor stone and bronze monuments;

JRA2: New methods in diagnostics: Imaging and spectroscopy.

<http://www.eu-artech.org>



Università
degli Studi
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Laboratorio
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Scientific
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Gallery of London



CNR - Istituto per
la Conservazione
e Valorizzazione
dei Beni Culturali



Institut Royal du
Patrimoine Artistique -
Koninklijk Instituut voor
het Kunstpatrimonium



Opificio delle
Pietre Dure
e Laboratori
di Restauro



CNR -
Istituto
Nazionale
di Ottica
Applicata



Centre National
de la Recherche
Scientifique



Ormylia
Art
Diagnosis
Center



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Studiorum -
Università
di Bologna



BAYERISCHES LANDESAMT
FÜR DENKMALPFLEGE

Exciting new textiles uncovered in Italian harbour and Austrian salt mine

Unique textile finds

In Genoa and Hallstatt excavations have turned up unexpected finds of a variety of textiles. Archaeologists, conservators and other scientists are using the latest technologies to identify and preserve them. Meanwhile the EU invests heavily in tapestry preservation



Detail of a prehistoric textile fragment (800-400 BC) from the salt mine of Hallstatt, Austria. © NHM Vienna.

Conservation of textiles is a process complicated by the fact that the type of textile, be it linen, cotton, silk, polyester or other material, ages differently and reacts differently to preservation methods. For preservation of all textiles, it is essential to know how it was originally made, and where necessary, to repair it or to improve the condition it was found in,

X-radiography machines are very useful for studying textiles which are found all crumpled up, as this machine can scan every nook and cranny of the material while keeping it crumpled up

before preservation can even take place. For example, oftentimes materials are found all crumpled up, have been ruined by folding creases, or are dirty and simply need to be washed.

Modern technology such as X-radiography machines are proving very useful for studying textiles which are found all crumpled up, as this machine can scan every nook and cranny of the material while keeping it in the same crumpled up

state it was found in. It can then be determined how best to uncrumple, clean and preserve it. Recently, the Working Group Textiles (WGT) has been doing much chemical experimentation. Among them are: the use of chemical supercritical fluids, mainly carbon-dioxide, for cleaning the textiles and for improving cleaning methods; using high performance liquid chromatography to

analyse synthetic dyes; and inductively coupled plasma massspectrometry which was used to study textile fragments found in King Midas' tomb in Turkey, dating back to 800 BC.

103 SILK FRAGMENTS
In the 1995 archaeological excavations at the ancient harbour of Genoa, 103 different silk textile fragments (tabby, velvet, embroidery and knitting) were unexpectedly found. These interesting textiles,

dating from the 16th or 17th century, were of uneven shapes and sizes, and may therefore have been a tailor's waste. The textiles were found in good condition, which was perhaps due to the harbour's clay composition that, compacting itself, created no air bubbles. Furthermore, salt water and sewage were present and may have acted as bacteriostats. Work on these textiles, to identify, clean, and preserve them, was carried out by Dr. Paolo Bensi, chemist, Seconda Università di Napoli, and his colleagues in Genoa, Dr. Marzia Cataldi Gallo, Dr. Piera Melli, archaeologist, and Claudia Santamaria, textile restorer.

ANCIENT TEXTILES IN SALT MINE
Another interesting find were the textiles in the ancient salt mines of Hallstatt, Austria, dating as far back as 800-400 BC. "It is fascinating," said Mary Ballard, researcher at the Smithsonian Institute and WGT co-ordinator, "that due to the impregnation by salt and the special conditions of the mine organic materials and textiles (leather, fur and wood), survived 2500 years."

The Hallstatt period textiles are fine quality wool in a variety of weave structures: tabby, basket weave, diagonal twill, herringbone, zigzag, and lozenge twill, half-basket, rep ribbons and tablet weave. Checks, stripes, and chequered designs, like houndstooth patterns, were found. Tablet weavings had triangles or meanders in multicolour designs.

A team of scientists, archaeologists, curators, and conservators comprising Regina Hofmann-de Keijzer, Maarten R. van Bommel, Ineke Joosten, Hans Reschreiter, Karina Grömer, Helga Mautendorfer, Anna Hartl and Michaela Morelli, have studied these textiles to find out more about their condition and how best to preserve them. They are also looking into whether they were locally made or imported, and why they were left in the mines.

For the conservation of tapestries, the European Union has funded a huge multifaceted preservation project. Conservation scientists David Howell and Kathryn Hallett concentrated on the silk in the tapestries, as silk is found in many tapestries. All that is needed is a fragment of the silk; one tiny piece of thread will suffice. The silk fragment is subjected to size exclusion chromatography, which gives a very good indication of how weak the tapestry has become.



Maartje Witlox Understanding Van Gogh by boiling goatskin



MAARTJE WITLOX, research associate with the Hart Project (De Mayerne Programme).

Since 2002, Dutch researcher Maartje Witlox has been reconstructing recipes for oil painting from the 17th to the 19th century. Drawing from handbooks and manuscripts, Witlox and her colleague Leslie Carlyle have entered 1500 recipes into an electronic data base at the Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage.

Witlox specialises in ground recipes. One of the artists she is researching is Vincent van Gogh. To reconstruct the ground material he used for his paintings, Witlox and Carlyle travelled deep into the Dutch countryside. They pressed linseeds from a bio-dynamic farmer and even boiled tanned goatskin. "You have to start at the beginning to get the picture," Witlox said. "The glue in the ground Van Gogh used was extracted from animal skins. So you have to find one which is tanned like it was done traditionally." The database recipes have created more insight into materials used for grounds, Witlox explained. "If a restorer encounters material in a ground which is unknown to him, the database will help. It's interesting for everyone who wants to find out about the materials which were available to artists in a certain period: for both art historians and researchers in natural sciences."



WG Paintings has new findings about chemical composite and reactions of old pigments

Pigment revelations

While time is a crucial factor in reaching new findings, it also reveals the artist's painting method in older paintings as they age. For modern paintings, an artist can work with conservators on best preservation practices.

New light has been shed on the historic pigment Malachite, a green pigment used in older paintings. Over the years spherical malachite, a particular form, had been observed in some paint samples but it was not known whether this was a natural or a cheaper synthetic pigment. The result of recent research by G. Heydenreich, M. Spring, M. Stillhammerova, and C.M. Pina, has shown that this spherical form is not a synthetic product, but in fact occurs naturally by water slowly dripping down onto copper ores. "Heydenreich and his colleagues took the time to do this painstaking research and discover this hitherto unknown fact about malachite," said Anne Rinuy, co-ordinator of the Paintings

Working Group. "It takes a very long time to do this kind of research and most researchers just don't have the time and don't do it, so it's good to have young people working on their PhD thesis on the subject of older paintings, who can spend the time needed on them." Another pigment revelation appears in the research done by Petria Noble, Annelies van Loon and Jaap Boon. As paintings age the viewer can often see more than was originally intended by the artist. Their research has looked at this phenomenon and they have shown that it involves the interaction of the lead white pigment with its surrounding oil medium to form soaps. Their structure is significantly different to the original lead white and oil mixture resulting in a more transparent layer. Sometimes this allows the under drawing or artist's changes to be seen more easily as the painting ages, sometimes it can lead to a tonal darkening.

MODERN WORKS
Not all work done by the Working Group Paintings (WGP) is with old paintings. The work undertaken by Tim Green looks at resolving a conservation problem when a work includes collage elements. The artist, Richard Hamilton, who completed the painting in the 1960's has liased closely with the conservator and curator to work out how the balance in the colours and tones of the painting can be returned. The agreed way forward involved applying a removable collage element made out of cigarette paper.



The Working Group Paintings during one of the sessions in The Hague.



WG WOAM faces new challenges in preserving waterlogged ships

Long-term marine hazards

Conservation of the Vasa Ship, removed from the seabed off the coast of Stockholm in 1961, brings about unexpected sulphur problems. Scientists are also discussing new ways of preservation: re-burying a ship in friendlier waters elsewhere.



Delmhorst hand set and Radiometer (CDM3) conductivity meter showing how conductivity can be measured in samples of waterlogged archaeological wood. The use of conductivity and compression strength help to assess the state of preservation.

Since its inception 30 years ago, the Working Group Wet Organic Archaeological Materials (WOAM), has been working on techniques in impregnation and various drying methods, to prevent shrinkage of waterlogged archaeological wooden ships, weaponry, tools and utensils. More recently, however the WOAM conservators have been faced with new challenges, namely that of sulphur and iron extraction from the wood, as well as in situ preservation. One of the most innovative projects currently being carried out within the WOAM group, is that of the Vasa ship, which sunk off the coast of Stockholm in 1628, during its virgin sail. The ship was removed from the seabed in 1961 and was conserved by sprinkling the

impregnating agent polyethyleneglycol into the wood, to prevent the wood from shrinking and collapsing. It took 30 years of sprinkling and impregnating before the Vasa was deemed ready for exhibiting. In 1990 it was put in a beautiful public exposition in the Vasa Museum in Stockholm.

In the Summer of 2000 however, due to the high humidity, sulphur was discovered on the surface of the ship's wood. Further examination showed that the wood was thoroughly impregnated with sulphur. This was a serious matter, as sulphur rapidly degrades wood, and had to be dealt with immediately. The only problem was that no-one knew how to deal with this issue as it had never come up before. Although there had been similar threats posed by sulphur to other waterlogged ships before the Vasa, they were not of the same magnitude. The large amount of sulphur had apparently entered the Vasa because of the ship's seabed location,

Marine conservators determine whether a ship is already well preserved in situ, or is threatened by its environment, by making chemical analyses of the seabed and surrounding waters, as well as of the wood itself. If the ship is found to be threatened, rather than preserve it on land (in a museum), it can be excavated, researched and then buried underwater in a different place, where the conditions are more conducive to preservation. One such in situ preservation project is that of the James Matthew vessel which sank in 1843 off the west coast of Australia. Australian seas are home to a large collection of

Waterlogged ships can be excavated, researched and then buried underwater in a different place, where the conditions are more conducive to preservation

which was exactly where Stockholm's sewage was disposed of. Furthermore, it transpired that the exhibition actually exasperated the sulphur problem, as it used large nails, which were put into the ship's wood to hold it in place. The iron in the nails acted as a catalyst to the production of sulphur. A pioneering group of scientists from Sweden and other European countries are now looking into ways of measuring the amount of sulphur in the wood and then removing the sulphur without damaging the ship. A report on their research and results will be published at the next WOAM interim meeting in 2007. Meanwhile, to support the funding of the Vasa preservation project, one can buy Swedish knäckebröd!

sunken ships, and Australian coasts are home to many harbours. Through the building and use of these harbours, the water currents and shifting seabeds can be affected as far as several kilometres away, where these ships lie. Marine scientists in Australia are now doing great pioneering work in chemical and biological research of the seabed, focusing on problems caused by water currents and shifting sands. This will help determine whether the many vessels off the Australian shores and in other archaeological wet sites all around the world can be preserved in situ, or whether some are candidates for preservation in friendlier waters elsewhere. The team of scientists from Australia, Denmark, England, Ireland, The Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden, is lead by Vicky Richards of the Western Australian Museum.

IN SITU PRESERVATION
Another new and exciting, yet somewhat mind-boggling, development, is in situ preservation. This has come about because of the high cost of excavating and also the difficulty in finding a museum willing to exhibit the ship.



WG Graphic Documents: Research on corrosiveness of iron gall ink makes headway

Ink, paper and parchments under the loop

European scientists get funding under the EU's 'City of Tomorrow and Cultural Heritage Programme' to study ink corrosiveness and parchment preservation. Their findings may save historic works by the likes of Strauss, Rembrandt and Da Vinci.

The InkCor project recently carried out by Janar Kolar and her team of European scientists, studies corrosiveness of iron gall ink, which consists of metals and tannins. This project falls under the fifth framework programme of the European Commission, entitled 'The City of Tomorrow and Cultural Heritage'.

The project looks at ways to measure the corrosiveness of the iron gall ink, in terms of acid hydrolysis and oxidation of the paper cellulose, and studies methods to slow down its corrosive action to the paper. The Kolar team used two techniques to analyse the metal component of the ink. The first was scanning electron microscopy, which was coupled to an energy dispersive x-ray fluorescence detector. It enabled them to study the presence of metallic ink components on minute paper samples. The second technique was particle induced x-ray emission. Kolar and her colleagues had access to this instrument in Slovenia and were happy to use it as it meant they could analyse the



The Working Group Graphic Documents during one of the sessions in The Hague. On the left: the translators at work.

artefact without having to remove a sample from it. Their research clearly demonstrated that the combination of iron and copper in ink produces a synergistic effect on the oxidative degradation of the paper's cellulose. This research could mean old works of music by Bach and Strauss to name but two, and drawings by great artists, such as Rembrandt and Leonardo da Vinci, may be better preserved in the future.

DAMAGE OF PARCHMENTS
Another innovative project which falls under the EU's 'The City of Tomorrow and Cultural Heritage' Programme, was the research carried out from 2001-2004 by René Larsen's team of European scientists, which looked at improved damage assessment of parchments (IDAP). The Larsen team's main objective was to look for a possible correlation between, on the one hand simple assessment tests, and on the other hand, sophisticated analyses to measure the state of degradation of parchment. In Copenhagen the team developed a new technique called 'micro hot table shrinkage temperature measurement', whereby a few microscopic fibres of parchment are removed, wetted by being placed in de-ionised water, and then heated. This reveals the shrinkage temperature of the parchment. The more degraded it is, the lower the shrinkage temperature. This unique new method will help conservators determine whether or not to preserve parchment using the traditional wetting method. Interestingly, the team has also made its database accessible online.



This drawing by Rembrandt, 'Return of the Prodigal Son', clearly shows signs of ink corrosiveness. It is part of the collection of the Teylers Museum in Haarlem, which currently hosts an exhibition on the InkCor project (until September 25) and is one of the partners in the research project, together with the Dutch National Archive, the Louvre, Paris and the Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage.

Triennial Lecture by Tim Whalen

Public interest in the conservation profession is growing

Cultural heritage work is much more in the public eye than some conservators realize. It is time to acknowledge the strides which have been made over the past decades to increase public awareness of the conservation field, said Tim Whalen, director of the Getty Conservation Institute in Los Angeles.



TIM WHALEN, director of the Getty Conservation Institute in Los Angeles.

In his lecture on Friday, Tim Whalen was to address the main theme of the conference: making the conservation and restoration professions more transparent to the public. This is a very complex issue, he stressed in a telephone interview a week prior to the conference, as the understanding of the role of cultural heritage varies from country to country. In order to engage the public more it is necessary to develop different local strategies first and define more specifically who the public

the value of what we do.” Whalen mentioned several conservation projects which have caught the public eye in recent years. One important ICCROM project in Africa is PREMA (Prevention for Museums in Africa), which was started in the 1980s. Museum collections in sub-Saharan Africa were at risk because of a lack of facilities, skills and resources. A comprehensive program was started, including the training of African staff in Rome. This was covered extensively by

The growing public interest in conservation work is proven by the public outcry over cultural sites in Iraq

actually is. “Is it the common person at the supermarket or the ball game? Who are we addressing?” Whalen acknowledged part of the developments in the conservation profession have taken place out of the public’s view. He quoted professor Matero from the University of Pennsylvania, who recently said: “Conservation has always been about theoretical and practical matters and their relationship to the larger social and global issues. But we don’t do a very good job at communicating that.” However, Whalen believes many conservators are succeeding to draw attention to their work in various ways. “As a field we have become very good at working out in the world, sharing our tools and expertise, and ultimately demonstrating to a broad, but select, audience

European and African media. Ten years later, PREMA had developed into an active network of 400 museum professional in 46 African countries.

SUCCESSFUL COLLABORATION

Another example of successful collaboration between different conservation organisations and the media, but in a shorter time span, is Iraq. Following the looting and destruction of museums and archaeological sites during the war, the Getty Conservation Institute and the World Monument Fund started a project in cooperation with the Iraq ministry of Culture in 2004. The initiative is aimed at setting up databases with precise information on 10.000 archaeological sites in Iraq, in order to identify and address conservation priorities. Also,

training for development of tools and professional capabilities has been set up. A third example Whalen mentioned is EU-ARTECH, the consortium of 13 European research institutions. Here, the goal is to develop permanent cooperation between the participants, focusing on networking, access and joint research. This project has already led to remarkable discoveries, such as the drawing under the surface of ‘The Virgin of the Rocks’ by Leonardo da Vinci, which is exhibited in the National Gallery in London.

“Clearly,” Whalen said. “A lot is already being done in the world.” The growing public interest in conservation work is proven by the public outcry over cultural sites in Iraq and the financial support for private and public conservation institutions. According to Whalen, conservators could focus more on the positive results they are achieving. “While there is much more work to be done and a huge public to embrace, I think perhaps we can indeed claim that the glass is half-full, after all – and not half-empty.”



Tracing of Leonardo da Vinci’s unused underdrawing for ‘The Virgin of the Rocks’, superimposed on ‘The Virgin of the Rocks’. The underdrawing was discovered using infrared reflectography to find two distinct underdrawings beneath the surface. Though one drawing corresponds with the final version of the painting, another shows a completely different picture of a kneeling figure. In order to obtain the clearest possible image of the hidden design, the National Gallery contacted an expert team in Florence through the European Union EU-ARTECH project. The team from INOA (Istituto Nazionale di Ottica Applicata) and the OPD (Opificio delle Pietre Dure) brought to London a high-resolution digital infrared scanner which forms part of the EU-ARTECH project’s mobile laboratory. Intensive collaborative study yielded spectacular images of Leonardo’s concealed drawing beneath the paint layers.

Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), The Virgin of the Rocks, About 1492-1508, Oil on wood, 189.5 / 120 cm, Bought, 1880, © The National Gallery, London.



SIMON CANE, head of Collection Care of the Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery (UK), and chair of the ICOM-CC Public Awareness Task Force.

Simon Cane
“We need to raise our gaze from the objects”

There is room for improvement in conservators’ understanding of how they can engage with the public, said Simon Cane, chair of the ICOM-CC Public Awareness Task Force. “We are trained to repair, clean and restore objects, but we need to raise our gaze from the objects more. In the present political and cultural climate, it’s important that we show, as a profession, that we have a role to play.” He believes this hasn’t always been done brilliantly in the past. The role of the conservator has always been hidden in a back room, he said. “We need to make sure we are there up front, that the benefit can be seen, both to the organization and to society as a whole.”

“We live in a much more culturally-aware society: there are many more demands on culture, more visitors coming to historic sites, more tourism in every country, so there’s a greater impact on the cultural heritage. We have the paradox where we want diversity, but on the other hand we want equality, and conservators have a role to play in helping society deal with that paradox.” Cane’s experience is that the public are generally very interested. “There’s often a ‘detective story’ aspect, and people like this idea. Conservators often find things out about objects that weren’t previously known – because we look at things very closely – so we can reveal hidden stories and hidden mysteries.”



Girl with a pearl earring, J. Vermeer, c. 1665, Royal Cabinet of Paintings Mauritshuis, The Hague

COLOPHON

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LOC Project Team

The Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage (ICN) has established a project team for the coordination of the congress. This team consists of:
Wim Jacobs, Project Manager
Eelke Boswijk, Project Adviser
Floor Kok, Project Coordinator
Marina Raymakers, Communications Coordinator
Peter van Lieshout, Financial Coordinator

LOC Steering Committee

Jan Buijse, Chair ICOM-Netherlands
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Inge Camfferman, City of The Hague
Wim Jacobs, Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage (ICN)
Alberto de Tagle, Head of Research, ICN
Netherlands Museum Association (NMV)

Congress Support

Congress and Study Centre VNG
PO Box 30345, 2500 GK, Den Haag
The Netherlands
Website: www.cs-vng.nl

Information

Congress ICOM-CC 2005
Attn. *Mrs Floortje Kok*
PO Box 76709, 1070 KA, Amsterdam
The Netherlands
Tel: +31 (0)20 305 45 20
Email: icom-cc2005@icn.nl
Website: www.icom-cc2005.org

Press information

Marina Raymakers
Email: marina.raymakers@icn.nl

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The project team for the coordination of the congress. From left to right: Floor Kok, Wim Jacobs, Eelke Boswijk and Marina Raymakers. Not in the picture: Peter van Lieshout.



Welcome reception in the Gemeentemuseum, The Hague.



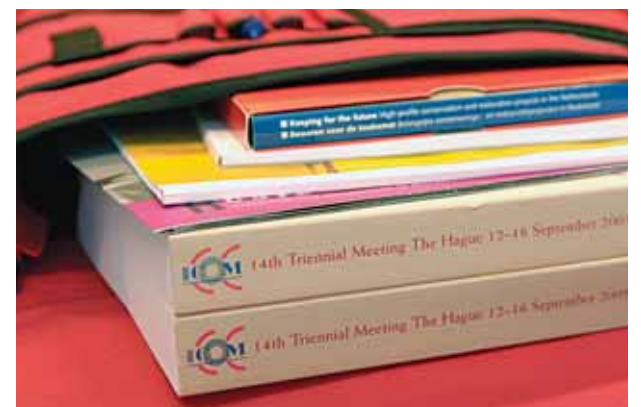
John Zvereff, secretary general of ICOM (left), and Albert Scheffers during the welcome reception in the Gemeentemuseum, The Hague.



Jan Wouters talking to Simon Cane.



Welcome reception in the Gemeentemuseum, The Hague.



From left to right: Joyce H. Stoner, Norman Tennant and Hannah Szczepanaowska.



Trade Fair.

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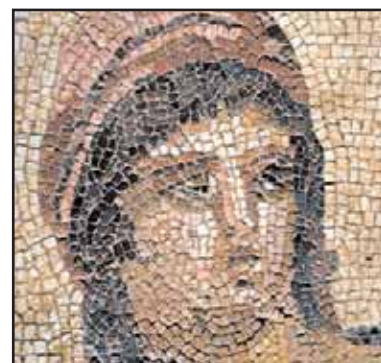
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The Getty Conservation Institute



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COST Strategic Workshop

COST and Cultural Heritage: Crossing Borders

Florence, 20-22 October 2005

Palazzo Vecchio, Salone dei Dugento
Galleria degli Uffizi, Biblioteca Magliabechiana

Aims of the Workshop

Cultural Heritage lies at the heart of both, the diversity and the identity between regions in the evolving EU, and its appreciation is thus essential for enhancing the integration process. Therefore, the long term preservation of Europe's cultural heritage is a duty and a challenge, for ethical and political reasons, as well as for the health of the EU economy.

Crossing borders is an essential part of research for safeguarding cultural heritage. Interdisciplinary approaches need to bring together highly specialised experts, developing new technologies with the end users who are in charge of historic objects and ancient sites.

Aims. Therefore, this COST workshop has been conceived with the following objectives: to increase awareness of the need for protection of cultural heritage, to promote conservation research on a European level, to encourage networking between different international organisations, to present the results of COST Actions and to explore potential synergies for the future.

Join us! The organisers invite experts from different fields and stakeholders on different levels to attend: curators, conservators and heritage managers in charge of collections or archaeological sites; scientists, engineers and architects experienced in interdisciplinary research for cultural heritage; politicians and decision makers involved in cultural issues.

Registration. You are kindly requested to register at:
<http://www.echn.net/cost-hig/florence2005>

For direct contact: Luigi Piccardi, e-mail: COST@geo.unifi.it
The registration fee is 100 EURO, including lunch for two days and social events. Gala dinner tickets for accompanying persons are available at 50 EURO.

What is COST?

COST is an intergovernmental framework for European Cooperation in Science and Technology. COST is supported by the EU Sixth Framework Programme, and its scientific secretariat is provided by the European Science Foundation (ESF), through the COST Office based in Brussels.

COST's objective is to add value to research investment by coordinating, integrating and synthesising results from ongoing nationally-funded research within and between COST member countries. COST does not fund the research itself, although synthesising research is a valuable scientific exercise in its own right. COST funds coordination, management, workshops, meetings, exchange visits and training schools through its COST Actions which normally have a duration of 4-5 years.

COST stimulates European research by bringing researchers together in Actions (networks) to exchange knowledge, synergise working groups, conduct comparative studies and jointly synthesise findings. Actions are proposed by active scientists (rather than being designed in a "top-down" manner), and, by involving both young and more experienced scientists, COST helps to create international networks for the future.

COST Actions aim to deliver scientific syntheses and analyses of best available practice to aid problem identification, risk assessment and policy development.

COST Office
149, avenue Louise
1050 Brussels, Belgium
Tel: +32 (0)2 533 3800 Fax: +32 (0)2 533 3890
Website: <http://cost.cordis.lu>

COST Heritage Interest Group
Piotr Swiatek, pswiatek@cost.esf.org



COST is supported by the EU Framework Programme



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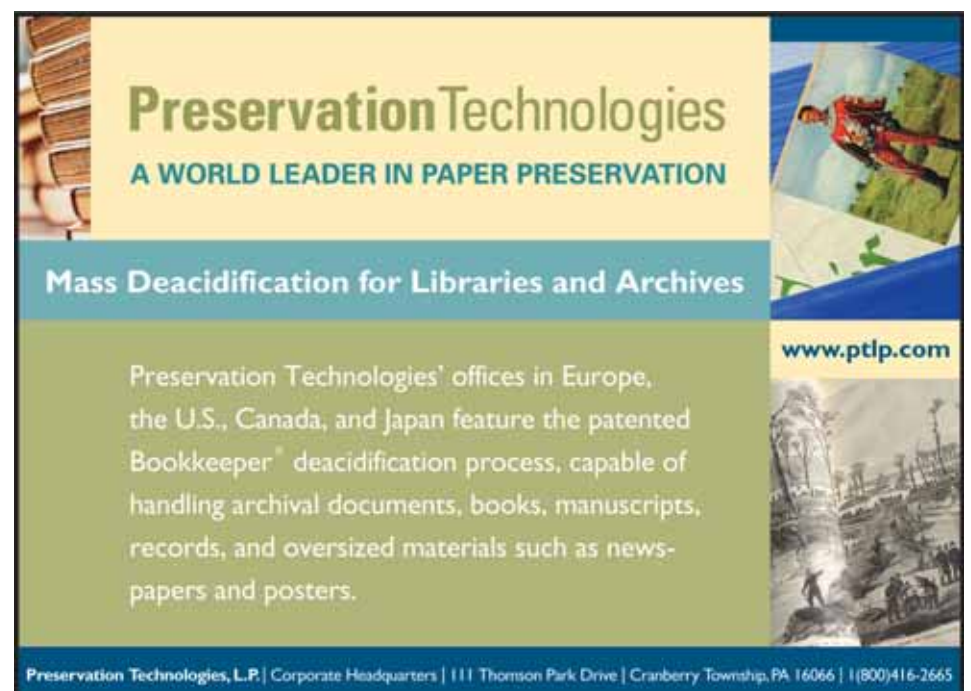
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In this, as in all areas of potential risk and recovery, we are constantly broadening our knowledge and developing new approaches. We work closely with our clients to craft precise solutions to their individual needs.



The Panton Chair
(1958-1967) by
Verner Panton, one
of the pieces selected
by Kathrin Keßler
for conservation
research at the Vitra
Design Museum
conservation studio.

Paulus Potter 'Paarden in landschap' (fragment), ets, 15,9 x 23,9 cm, 1652, collectie F. van Lanschot Bankiers



De hartstocht van Van Lanschot Ars Mundi

Een gepassioneerd adviseur, zo mag u Van Lanschot Ars Mundi gerust noemen. Vooral als het gaat om het verzekeren van een bijzondere verzameling werken van bijvoorbeeld de Hollandse School of een zeldzame collectie grand cru's. Dat doen we volstrekt onafhankelijk en vanuit een grote persoonlijke betrokkenheid. Daarbij zorgen we voor de meest complete dekking, zelfs het automatisch bijverzekeren van nieuwe aanwinsten wordt voor u geregeld. We hebben het dan ook over onze Kunst en Verzameling Verzekering, een – al zeggen we het zelf – uniek kunststukje op zich. Wilt u hier meer over weten, bel dan (070) 313 19 66 of kijk op www.vanlanschot-arsmundi.com.

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London: Archetype Publications with the participation of ICN Amsterdam.
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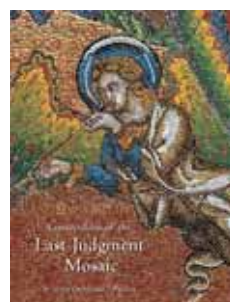
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