

# **Joint**

## **TECHNICAL ART HISTORY and NICAS COLLOQUIUM**

The Technical Art History Colloquium is organised by Sven Dupré (Utrecht University and University of Amsterdam, PI ERC ARTECHNE), Arjan de Koomen (University of Amsterdam, Coordinator MA Technical Art History), Abbie Vandivere (University of Amsterdam, Coordinator MA Technical Art History & Paintings Conservator, Mauritshuis, The Hague), Erma Hermens (University of Amsterdam and Rijksmuseum) and Ann-Sophie Lehmann (University of Groningen). Monthly meetings take place on Thursdays.

The NICAS Colloquium is a bi-weekly lunch meeting, organized by Katrien Keune (Rijksmuseum, University of Amsterdam) and Ella Hendriks (University of Amsterdam), providing a platform to stay informed about the latest developments and results and to exchange information and expertise between the fields of science, conservation and art history.

**Date and time: 22 February, 2018 - 15:30 – 16:30**

**Location: Atelier Building (Hobbemastraat 22), Amsterdam – Conference Room B**

**Admission free – The colloquium will be followed by drinks**

## **Presentations**

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### **Jenny Boulboulé**

#### *The Mayerne Manuscript: text - object - method*

This presentation focuses on MS Sloane 2052, better known as the ‘Mayerne Manuscript’, that has gained fame as an indispensable handbook for the study of Netherlandish painting. I discuss the making of the *Mayerne Manuscript* from its original compilation (1620-1640) to its publication in print in the long nineteenth century up to its current use for teaching and reconstruction research in conservation studies and technical art history, and its recent digitisation. While the recipes and technical instructions contained in the *Mayerne Manuscript* have a long reception history, the manuscript has rarely been studied as an early modern *artefact* or as part of early modern material knowledge cultures. I portray the *Mayerne Manuscript* as a historical *object* with its own rich cultural biography. Moreover, I make a case for art technological source research and material-technical approaches as integral part of interdisciplinary research in art history, material culture studies, and history and philosophy of science.

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### **Erma Hermens**

#### *Imaging, Identification and Interpretation of Glass in Paint*

Painters from medieval times onwards used tricks to improve optical and handling properties of their paints. Historical treatises and manuals on painting techniques provide some insights into these methods. The extensive presence of ground colourless and sometimes coloured glassy particles in paint layers belongs to the more elusive painters’ ‘secrets’. From Murano to the Netherlands, Simplicia cabinets and apothecaries’ pricelists, there are many testimonies for this trick-of-the-trade. Yet, although ground glass is ubiquitous in paint layers of 15th to 17th-century European paintings, its role in practical, conceptual, and aesthetic sense is little researched and contextualised. The painter’s choice to add ground glass, either colourless or coloured, evokes questions concerning the optical impact, transparency and mimesis, and functionality, as well as crossovers with the glass and ceramics industries, which will be the focus of a NICAS Seed Money project.

## Speakers' bios

*Jenny Boulboulé* is postdoctoral researcher in the *ERC Artechne Project*, Utrecht University & guest researcher at Conservation & Restauration, University of Amsterdam. She was lecturer in History & postdoc in *The Making and Knowing Project*, Columbia University (2014-2016). Jenny has a longstanding interest in the manual and entangled practices of writing, making and knowing. Her first book project *In touch with life*, investigates hands-on practices in life sciences and contemporary arts with philosophical, ethnographical and historical methods focussing on early modern anatomy, life science laboratories and cleanrooms. The title of her current book project is: *The Making of the Mayerne Manuscript*.

*Erma Hermens* is Technical Art History (TAH) Researcher at the Rijksmuseum, and holds the Rijksmuseum Chair in Studio Practice and Technical Art History at the University of Amsterdam. She was senior lecturer at the University of Glasgow, where she developed a MA-track in TAH. She was visiting professor at Renmin University, Beijing, and the Autonomous New University of Mexico (UNAM), and Columbia University, NYC, in the Making and Knowing Project for which she is on the advisory board. She is a partner in the Marie Curie Skłodowska Innovative Training Network 'New Approaches in the Conservation of Contemporary Art' (NACCA, 2015-2019). She is on the advisory board of the ArtTechne project. Her research interests are focused on the act of making in all its facets. She works largely with interdisciplinary teams, combining (art) historical and contextual research with scientific analytical data.

**Next TAH colloquium: 8 March, 2018, The Hague**



*The Technical Art History Colloquia are a cooperation of the ARTECHNE Project (Utrecht University and University of Amsterdam), the Netherlands Institute for Conservation, Art and Science (NICAS) the University of Amsterdam and the Mauritshuis. The ARTECHNE project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (grant agreement No 648718).*