

THE MAKING OF ART EXPERTISE

CHANGING PRACTICES OF ART HISTORY & CONSERVATION, 1850 – 1950



Organisation: Sven Dupré, Jenny Boulboulé, Jill Briggeman, Esther van Duijn and Mariana Pinto
Institutions: Utrecht University, University of Amsterdam, NICAS and Rijksmuseum
Date: 8, 9 and 10 May 2019
Locations: UCK, Utrecht and Rijksmuseum Ateliergebouw, Amsterdam
Contact: j.briggeman@uu.nl

INTRODUCTION

This conference focuses on the development of a science-based conservation practice and the emergence of art history as a 'science of art' (or *Kunstwissenschaft*) in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (1850-1950). New approaches were developed to address technological aspects of ancient artefacts and Renaissance art works based on philological and chemical research that complemented and challenged traditions of connoisseurship. Grounding the technical analyses of art works within scholarship of historical source texts and scientific analyses went hand in hand with attempts to claim a position for art history within the emerging disciplinary landscape of university taught sciences (*Wissenschaften*). In addition, new editorial series and journals appeared that were devoted to past and present technologies in the arts or to art technological source research (e.g. *Technische Mitteilungen*, *Wiener Quellenschriften*). Assessments were conducted by committees whose members represented diverse and changing fields of expertise, including artists, chemists, collectors, museum professionals and administrators, while collaborations between conservators and chemists also helped in the decision-making process for the conservation treatments of deteriorated objects. The establishment of museum laboratories in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries had an influence in the professionalization of conservation as a discipline. How was knowledge in conservation transmitted? How did developments in science and technology impact teaching in art history and conservation? And which scientific methods were used for the study and teaching of art history? This conference investigates emerging cultures of expertise in the period between 1850 and 1950 and the collaborations and conflicts between conservators, chemists and art historians, to understand who was considered an expert in the arts, and for which reasons. It sheds new light onto the disciplinary formation of art history and the professionalization of conservation.



RIJKS MUSEUM



This 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) and the Rijksmuseum. Image: © Nationaal Archief, Van de Poll Collection (1946).

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

Wednesday 8 May

Marnixzaal, Utrechts Centrum voor de Kunsten (UCK), Dom Square 4, Utrecht

Route: <https://goo.gl/maps/zhWSVVktJaE2>

09:00 – 09:30 *Arrival, registration and coffee/tea*
09:30 – 09:45 *Welcome by Sven Dupré and Jenny Boulboulé*

Session I - Science & Conservation (Chair: Sven Dupré, Utrecht University and University of Amsterdam)

09:45 – 10:15 **Marco Cardinali, University of Genoa:**
'Rome 1930-1939. Art History, Science and Conservation from the Conference on the Scientific Analysis of Artworks to the Founding of the Istituto Centrale del Restauro'.

10:15 – 10:45 **Geert Vanpaemel, KU Leuven:**
'Art Criticism from a Laboratory? Bold Beliefs and Contested Claims'.

10:45 – 11:15 *Coffee break*

11:15 – 11:45 **Uta Kornmeier, Leibniz-Zentrum für Literatur- und Kulturforschung, Berlin:**
'Seeing through the Old Masters. Radiography as Art Expertise'.

11:45 – 12:15 **Kathrin Kinseher, Akademie der Bildenden Künste, Munich:**
'"We Cannot Splash Light onto the Palette": The 1893 Munich Congress and the Public Demand for Research of Painting Materials'.

12:15 – 12:45 **Jacob Simon, The National Portrait Gallery, London:**
'The Influence of Scientists on Picture Conservation and Artists' Materials in London, 1885-1935'.

12:45 – 14:00 *Lunch break (at own initiative and expense, on location for speakers and organizers)*

Session II - Museums (Chair: Jenny Boulboulé, Utrecht University)

14:00 – 14:30 **Mariana Pinto, Utrecht University:**
'Conservation and Science in The National Gallery London in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century'.

14:30 – 15:00 **Thierry Ford, The National Museum of Art, Oslo:**
'Varnishing Munch. Revisiting Munch's Painted Surfaces at the National Museum of Art, Norway'.

15:00 – 15:30 *Coffee break*

15:30 – 16:00 **Morwenna Blewett, Worcester College and Ashmolean Museum, Oxford University:**
'From Broad Street to Beaumont Street at the Crossroads of a New Century: Conservation and Collections Care at the "Old" and "New" Ashmolean Museums'.

16:00 – 16:30 **Esther van Duijn, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam:**
'200 Years of Conservation History of the Paintings Collection of the Rijksmuseum: An Overview'.

16.30 – 17.00 *Coffee break*

17:00 – 18:00

Keynote lecture I

Noémie Étienne, University of Bern:

‘Conservation, Connoisseurship & Conflict: The Politics and Materiality of Expertise’.

Thursday 9 May

Conference Room B, Ateliergebouw Rijksmuseum, Hobbemastraat 22, Amsterdam

Route: <https://goo.gl/maps/PfVvRU8QmcG2>

09:30 – 10:00

Arrival, registration and coffee/tea

Session III - Conservation Histories (Chair: Esther van Duijn, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam)

10:00 – 10:30

Esther van Duijn, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam:

‘200 Years of Conservation History of the Paintings Collection of the Rijksmuseum: Some Words on Sources and Methodology’.

10:30 – 11:00

Maartje Stols-Witlox, University of Amsterdam:

‘Restoration Recipes in the Nineteenth Century: a Role for the Amateur in Caring for Paintings?’

11:00 – 11.30

Coffee break

11:30 – 12:00

Emilie Froment, University of Amsterdam:

‘Reconstructing Nineteenth-Century Wax-Resin Linings’.

12:00 – 12:30

Birgit Reissland, The Netherlands Cultural Heritage Agency:

‘The Forgotten St. Gall Conference of 1898 and its Failed Impact on Paper Conservation as an Academic Discipline’.

12:30 – 13:00

Suzan Meijer, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam:

‘The History of Textile Conservation in the Rijksmuseum’.

13:00 – 14:00

Lunch break (at own initiative and expense, on location for speakers and organizers)

Parallel thematic sessions

14:00 – 15:30

Option 1 – Esther van Duijn, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam:

Participants can visit the paintings conservation studio of the Rijksmuseum to look at examples of the different sources that can be used for the study of conservation history.

Option 2 – Birgit Reissland, The Netherlands Cultural Heritage Agency:

Participants can take a closer look at examples of twenty-century paper conservation treatments and examples of degradation phenomena that fueled the debates at the St. Gall conference.

Option 3 – Emilie Froment, University of Amsterdam:

Participants can examine a series of samples presenting reconstructions of various ground types before and after wax-resin impregnation.

Option 4 – Paul van Duin, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam:

This visit will focus on research into the behavior of wooden panels in furniture and paintings.

15:30 – 17.00

Optional: Grand tour of the conservation laboratories in the Ateliergebouw.

Friday 10 May

Torenzaal, Utrechts Centrum voor de Kunsten (UCK), Dom Square 4, Utrecht

Route: <https://goo.gl/maps/zhWSVVktJaE2>

09:00 – 09:30 *Arrival, registration and coffee/tea*

Session IV - Education (Chair: Mariana Pinto, Utrecht University)

- 09:30 – 10:00 **Francesca Bewer, Harvard Art Museums:**
'Conservation in the Making: Teaching and Training at the Fogg Museum'.
- 10:00 – 10:30 **Marco Ciatti, Opificio delle Pietre Dure, Florence:**
'Conservation and Conservators in Italy: An Historical Review'.
- 10:30 – 11:00 **Anne van Dam, Utrecht University:**
'How and Why Are We to Teach Art History? Debating the Sites and Aims of Academic German Art History at the End of the Nineteenth Century'.
- 11:00 – 11:30 *Coffee break*
- 11:30 – 12:00 **Andreas Burmester, Doerner Institut, Munich:**
'Heading for a Dead End: Walter Gräff, Alexander Eibner and Max Doerner'.
- 12:00 – 12:30 **Michael vd Goltz, Hochschule für angewandte Wissenschaft und Kunst, Hildesheim:**
'Ways, Aims, Visions, Disillusionments - Education in the Field of Art and Conservation in Germany 1850–1950'.
- 12:30 – 13:30 *Lunch break (at own initiative and expense, on location for speakers and organizers)*
- 13:30 – 14:30 **Keynote lecture II**
Cathleen Hoeniger, Queen's University, Kingston:
'Invention as a Necessity: The Salvage of Italian Frescoes during World War Two'.

Session V - Discipline Formation & Cultures of Expertise (Chair: Hanna Hölling, University College London)

- 14:30 – 15:00 **Caitlin O'Grady, University College London:**
'Mending, Sticking and Repairing: The Role of Expertise at the Intersection of Conservation and Archaeology in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries'.
- 15:00 – 15:30 **Maria Teresa Costa, Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, Berlin:**
'The Disciplinary Formation of Art History Through the Lens of its First International Conferences'.
- 15:30 – 16:00 *Coffee break*
- 16:00 – 16:30 **Ella Hendriks, University of Amsterdam:**
'From Concierge to First Class Technical Assistant: The Climb of the Restorer J.C. Traas and his Work on the Van Gogh Collection'.
- 16:30 – 17:00 **Hélène Dubois, Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage (KIK-IRPA), Brussels:**
'The Enlightened Interdisciplinarity of the Conservation and Research Campaign of the Ghent Altarpiece in 1950-1951'.
- 17:00 – 17:30 *Concluding remarks by Hanna Hölling, Farewell*