

Reflecting on Reconstructions

The Role of Sources and Performative Methods in Art Technological Studies

Proceedings of the eighth symposium of the ICOM-CC working group on Art Technological Source Research, held at the Cologne Institute of Conservation Sciences, University of Applied Sciences, Cologne, 26–27 September 2019

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Foreword

After two years of pandemic it seems like a fairy tale from a distant past that in September 2019 ninety people met in Cologne for a stimulating and lively conference. The 8th symposium of the ICOM-CC working group on Art Technological Source Research (ATSR), held on 26–27 September 2019 at the TH Köln (University of Applied Sciences Cologne) was organised by the Cologne Institute of Conservation Sciences (CICS). Established in 1986, the CICS offers an academic programme for conservation and restoration in five specialisms: painting and polychrome sculpture, wall painting and stone, wood and modern material objects, books and graphic document, textiles and archeological fibres. Since its inception, art technological sources have been considered as an essential part of teaching and research. In 2004 the first online database of art technological sources was made freely available by the CICS. The institute also collects original sources and artists' materials, mainly from the 19th to the 21st centuries. Members of the institute have participated in editing projects on art technological sources and in the development of the ICOM-CC ATSR working group.

The symposia of the ATSR working group have always been inspiring meeting points for an interdisciplinary exchange on art technological sources, their art historical impact, and their relationship to conservation and technical art history. The topics of the conferences covered a wide spectrum of current scholarship. While planning the theme for the 8th meeting, it became obvious that since the first symposium in 2004 on *Sources and Reconstruction* there have been interesting developments in the methodology of reconstruction and re-enactment. New questions have been posed, new disciplines have become involved. Therefore it seemed feasible to focus once again on this topic and its current state-of-the-art.

Eighteen speakers or teams from different research fields, including conservators, art historians, technical art historians, archaeologists and conservation scientists, provided valuable insight into their recent research projects.

Two methodological presentations on subjectivity in reconstruction (Indra Kneepkens) and the potentials and limitations of reconstructions (Ad Stijnman, not in this volume) opened the conference. Re-enactment methods developed in experimental archaeology were

used for the interpretation of a Byzantine art technological source on goldsmiths' techniques (Sayuri de Zilva and Josef Engelmann). Another paper discussed the interplay of real and virtual reconstruction of Rembrandt's drawing technique (Frank Ligterink and Birgit Reissland, not in this volume). Art technological source research and re-enactment as a means to understand working processes was also the topic of papers dealing with Baroque *stuccatori* in the Ticino (Giacinta Jean), the production of trade union banners (Daniel Sánchez), the Portuguese mouldmaker Manuel Branco (Agnès Le Gac, not in this volume), or Picasso's making of a paper collage (Joyce Townsend). In addition to providing understanding of the artistic process, source research and reconstructions also gave vital information for the conservation treatment of a work by Moholy-Nagy (Friederike Waentig). Historical restoration methods and their impact on the appearance of paintings today were discussed in relation to recipes for the cleaning of easel paintings (Joana Devesa). Three presentations focussed on pigment production and its reconstruction based on source research, including the medieval *folium* dye (Paula Nabais), Quercitron lakes of the 19th century (Eva Eis, not in this volume), and Winsor & Newton's bitumen-containing oil paints (Raquel Marques, whose presentation is here split into two papers). Two more papers dealt with 19th and 20th-century colourmen, Winsor & Newton's watercolours for the painting of magic lantern slides (Ângela Santos) and Royal Talens' business activities in the 1920s and 1930s (Rika Pause). Finally, different approaches to including art technological source research and reconstruction in the training of conservators at Amsterdam University (Herman den Otter), the Hochschule der Künste Bern (Anne Krauter and Franca Mader) and the Academy of Fine Arts in Dresden (Monika Kammer) were presented.

Short poster presentations called attention to the 19 posters which presented research on sources and reconstructions from the Middle Ages through to the 20th century. Topics included medieval recipes for staining (Mark Clarke) and for green copper pigments (Paula Nabais), sources on stencilling (Theresa Neuhoff), and colour containers (Claudine Brunon). Other posters dealt with Netherlandish painting techniques of the 17th century to depict foliage (Iris Schaefer), how to include butterfly imprints in oil paintings (V.E. Mandrij), or how to reconstruct artistic intention in landscape paintings (Charlotte Hoffmann). Rembrandt's drawing materials were discussed (Birgit Reissland) as well as black stone and charcoal in 16th-century underdrawings (Helena Melo). The field of pigment research was represented by the reconstruction of smalt recipes (Paul van Laar) and of aniline black (Marc Holly) and by an overview of a collection of Romanian dyeing recipes

(Irina Petroviciu). Borromée's painting treatise was the starting point for the reconstruction of a 19th-century French wall painting medium (Claire Bételu). A painting on cardboard reconstructed in the context of conservation-decision making was another poster topic (Jazzy de Groot). Source research on celluloid production in Portugal was presented as a basis for conservation treatment (Artur Neves). Analytical problems concerning the detection of materials mentioned in recipes were discussed (Stephanie Dietz) as well as the role of early lightfastness standards as object sources for painting materials (Rika Pause). Other object sources are the samples of synthetic dyes in the collection of the Hochschule Niederrhein (Marc Holly). A poster on paint reconstructions focussed on the challenges of finding the right experimental arrangement (Karina Foppele).

In summary, the symposium offered a rich spectrum of different aspects of the interrelation between art technological source research and reconstruction as discussed in current scholarship. We thank all the speakers for their excellent papers and the audience for the lively discussions.

As a rule, the ATSR working group has published the papers of its interim meetings in print. For the first time and at the request of ICOM-CC, these "postprints" will not be printed on paper but published only as an online "book" on the newly-established ICOM-CC publications platform. There have been a number of delays, some of them due to the change from print to online publication, others due to the pandemic. The rather long preliminary process led to the decision to abstain from the inclusion of the posters. However, two authors elaborated their posters into papers (Marc Holly and Claire Bételu). Unfortunately, a few of the speakers could not submit their papers for various reasons. We hope that the papers published here will inspire future research into art technological sources.

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Anne Haack Christensen, Maartje Stols-Witlox

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