

ICOM-CC Working Group Triennial Programme 2017 - 2020

Art Technological Source Research Working Group – ATSR Newsletter – October 2018

Letter of Doris Oltrogge, Anne Haack-Christensen, Kathrin Pilz, Melina Smirniou & Maartje Stols-Witlox

Dear friends and colleagues,

As some of you know the term of Sigrid Eyb-Green as Coordinator of the Art Technological Source Research Working Group ended in 2017 and no coordinator was found in time for voting before the Copenhagen ICOM-CC Triennial Conference. After some discussions within the group I was asked to do the job and was approved by the ICOM-CC Board as new Coordinator in April 2018. I am very glad that Kathrin Pilz was willing to continue as Assistant Coordinator and Melina Smirniou, Anne Haack Christensen and Maartje Stols-Witlox also accepted to join as Assistant Coordinators. In May 2018 the nominated Assistant Coordinators were also approved by the Board of ICOM-CC, so we have our team in place for this triennium. We are now planning the next Interim Meeting of the Working Group, which will be held in Cologne in 2019, and a session or joint session of the group for the ICOM-CC Triennial Conference in Beijing in 2020.

Before we shortly introduce ourselves, we would like to express our warmest thanks to Sigrid Eyb-Green who has lead the group for six years and organised, together with the respective hosts, two successful interim meetings in Amsterdam and Stuttgart. I am also very grateful for her assistance in my initial phase as coordinator. We would also like to thank the former Assistant Coordinator, Jilleen Nadolny for her help and advice during the difficult phase of finding a new coordination team.

Introducing the Art Technological Source Research Working Group team:

Coordinator

Doris Oltrogge: I obtained my PhD as an art historian at the University of Bonn in 1987. I worked first as a researcher in a project on the techniques of medieval book illumination at the University of Göttingen. Since 1992 I am researching and teaching at the Cologne Institute of Conservation Sciences (CICS) at the Technische Hochschule (formerly Fachhochschule) Köln (Cologne). Since the beginning of my academic career, one main focus of my studies is on art technological sources and art technology (especially of book illumination). I have been one of the members of the small group which met years ago at the Netherlands Cultural Heritage Agency / Rijksdienst voor Cultureel Erfgoed (then ICN) in Amsterdam to think about ways how art technological source research could be encouraged which finally resulted in joining ICOM-CC as a Working Group. In 2004 I started the Cologne Database for Painting Materials, the first searchable online database (url see below) for art technological recipes (mainly from late medieval / early modern Germany).

Assistant Coordinators

Anne Haack Christensen: I graduated as a paintings conservator from the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, School of Conservation in 2008 and I have been working as a paintings conservator at Statens Museum for Kunst (SMK) in Copenhagen since then. In 2017 I obtained my PhD on the Colour Chamber of King Christian IV. I am currently coordinating the international research network MoCMA (Mobility Creates Masters) focused on the study of the impact of coloured ground layers on the techniques of painting in the period 1550-1700. From 2019 I will initiate the research project *The impact of mobility on the production of paintings in Denmark 1550-1700. A study of the introduction and use of coloured grounds*. My main areas of research are technical art history, material studies, trade routes, historical treatises and material terminology.

Kathrin Pilz: I have a degree in the conservation and restoration of paintings from the Cologne University of Applied Sciences (2007). I was involved in the HART-Project making historically accurate reconstructions of oil paints (2004/05) in Amsterdam, where I also had the chance to attend the very first Art Technological Source Research meeting in 2004. After graduating from Cologne, I returned to Amsterdam, to explore the 19th century German source *Technische Mitteilungen für Malerei* for the Netherlands Cultural Heritage Agency (2007/08). Since 2007, I have worked as a paintings conservator and researcher at the Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam, specialising in paintings by Van Gogh from his late French period.

Melina Smirniou: I am a Senior Lecturer at the School of History & Heritage, University of Lincoln (UK), and programme leader of the MA in Conservation of Cultural Heritage. I have co-directed and founded Conservators Without Borders and served as a member of the Board of Trustees of the non-profit organisation Heritage Without Borders. I am a managing editor of the *Journal of Conservation and Museum Studies*. My research interests include technical analysis of vitreous materials from a wide range of chronological periods and regions. I received my doctorate in archaeological science and a Master's degree in conservation from the Institute of Archaeology at University College London (UCL).

Maartje Stols-Witlox: I studied art history at Leiden University and paintings conservation at the Stichting Restauratie Atelier Limburg (SRAL) in Maastricht, The Netherlands. I am currently assistant professor of paintings conservation at the University of Amsterdam's programme for Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Heritage. I also carry out research at this university with an emphasis on historical source research, reconstructions of historical painting materials and conservation methods, and on reconstruction methodology development. My PhD research (2014) investigated historical recipes for preparatory layers for oil paintings in North West Europe, 1550-1900, and led to the publication *A Perfect Ground* (London: Archetype). I am currently editing (with co-editors Sven Dupré, Anna Harris, Patricia Lulof and Julia Kursell) a book on Reconstruction, Replication and Re-enactment in Humanities research (Amsterdam University Press), a publication that will discuss methodologies for performative practices in archaeology, art/conservation, musicology, history of science and anthropology. I was Assistant Coordinator of Art Technological Source Research Working Group in the past (2005-2008) at the time of the symposium held in Amsterdam.

ICOM-CC Triennial Conference Copenhagen

During the Art Technological Source Research session of the 18th ICOM-CC Triennial Conference in Copenhagen, five lectures were presented which gave a good overview on the spectrum of the group's mission and research focus. Lara Broecke opened the session, giving insight into her on-going project of re-transcribing and re-translating the Bolognese Manuscript.

Two lectures discussed formulations of specific 20th-century paints: Maria Kokkori presented her research on manufacture and use of metallic paints, further developing the subject of a lecture she presented at the 2016 Interim Meeting of the group in November, where she focussed on artists' writings and documentary sources on metallic paints, and Alan Phenix presented his study of formulations of titanium dioxide-based oil paints on the archives of two artist's colourmen.

Birgit Reissland shared new findings of her on-going research on late 19th-century ink manufacturing. She demonstrated how the thorough study of a wide variety of written sources, including manuals and advertisements, can complement the analysis and interpretation of material sources, in this case a collection of 90 original ink bottles. Staying in the 19th century, Tatiana Vitorino gave some insight into the production of cochineal lake pigments from Winsor and Newton, combining archival research with reconstructions.

The Working Group business meeting was held after the lectures. Besides the issue of trying to find a new coordinator for the group, already discussed above, a possible future Interim Meeting at the Hamilton Kerr Institute in 2018 on the subject of "migration" was suggested. However, as no coordinator was found to stand for election at the Copenhagen Triennial Conference, it was not possible to plan any further events of the group, and the meeting at the Hamilton Kerr Institute will not be linked to the Art Technological Source Research Working Group.

Sigrid Eyb-Green

Interim Meeting in Cologne 2019

The next Art Technological Source Research Working Group interim meeting will be hosted by the Cologne Institute of Conservation Science (CICS) in September 2019. Its focus will be on art technological sources in relation to reconstruction and re-enactment. The meeting will investigate the technical contents and the contexts of art technological sources and explore their epistemic pertinence. A call for papers will follow soon.

Projects and developments in the field of art technological source research

Coloured grounds in Dutch golden age painting

At the University of Amsterdam a new project will commence in January 2019. This project, called *Down to the Ground, a historical, visual and scientific analysis of coloured grounds in Netherlandish paintings, 1550-1650*, will investigate the spread and impact of coloured grounds on painting technique and visual effects, as well as the influence of advances in Early Modern optics and colour theory on their development.

In *Down to the Ground*, art historians, conservators and scientists investigate the impact of coloured grounds through three interwoven subprojects (2 PhDs and 1 post-doc). Subproject 1 focuses on the spread of coloured grounds, subproject 2 on the role of ground colour in the painting process, subproject 3 develops innovative non-invasive depth-resolved spectral imaging instrumentation (DRSI) to support research into visual and optical characteristics and colour changes. Interdisciplinary methodology workshops organised at key moments in the research programme will focus on the development and evaluation of technical art history methodology. This project is sponsored by the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO), and will run for 5 years. More information: Maartje Stols-Witlox, project leader (m.j.n.stols-witlox@uva.nl)

MoCMA – Mobility Creates Masters

MoCMA is an international research network running for two years, until July 2019, with the aim of strengthening the exchange of theoretical and object related research into paintings from the 16th and 17th centuries. Furthermore the network aims to share knowledge, experience and results amongst the participating institutions while investigating materials, the background for, and the impact of the coloured ground layers in paintings across Europe from the Early Modern Period. Within this there is a special focus on the preconditions available to painters in Scandinavia, based on the mobility and circulation of artists/artisans and their materials across geographical borders. The MoCMA network is financed by the Independent Research Fund Denmark and coordinated by CATS at the National gallery of Copenhagen. The network consists of four universities and five museums spread across Europe, who assemble during three network seminars and conclude with a large international conference in May/June 2019 (to be further announced). Learn more about MoCMA here: <https://www.cats-cons.dk/projects/current/mocma-mobility-creates-masters/>

WELTBUNT – Die Welt wird bunt

A current research project funded by the German Ministry for Education and Research (BMBF) investigates the history of early synthetic dyes in Germany and their impact on fashion and society (1860 – 1918). One starting point is the huge collection of early synthetic dyes at the Hochschule Niederrhein, Krefeld. Besides the scientific analysis of this treasure of historic reference another focus is on sample books as art technological sources, their contents and the samples. Partners of the joint project (2017 – 2020) are the Hochschule Niederrhein (Prof Jürgen Schram), the Cologne Institute for Conservation Sciences (Prof. Robert Fuchs, Dr. Doris Oltrogge), the Museum Schloss Rheydt, Mönchengladbach (Dr. Karlheinz Wiegmann) and the Deutsches Textilmuseum Krefeld (Dr. Annette Schieck).

Artechne database on artisanal techniques

The Colour ConText recipe database is currently being developed further within the ARtechne project – Technique in the Arts 1500-1950 (ERC consolidator project, project leader Prof.dr. Sven Dupré, Utrecht University/University of Amsterdam). It contains fully searchable digitized sources on artisanal techniques such as recipes, books of secrets and artist handbooks from the period 1500-1900 in Latin, Dutch, German, English, French, Italian and Spanish. Because all sources are geotagged, it is possible to visualize geographical and historical spreading of the sources that come up in any given search in the geographical map and timeline. (<https://artechne.wp.hum.uu.nl/>)

Cologne Database (Kunsttechnologische Rezepte des Mittelalters und der frühen Neuzeit

Still available is the Cologne Database for Painting Materials, started 2004 as first searchable online database for art technological recipes (mainly from late medieval / early modern Germany). Although mainly integrated also in the Artechne database (via Colour ConText) it offers some other possibilities like German translations or technical comments: <http://db.cics.th-koeln.de/start.fau?&>

Inside Bruegel

In conjunction with the newly opened Bruegel exhibition in the Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien (2 October 2018– 13 January 2019) a new web application provides free access to high-resolution, zoomable images of 12 paintings by Pieter Bruegel the Elder. The site also includes x-radiography and infrared reflectography: www.insidebruegel.net/

Calendar

- 7 / 8 November 2018
Brno, Moravská Zemská Knihovna (Moravian Library Brno, Czech Republic) O přípravě barev, pigmentů a zlacení
Symposium on a 15th-century recipe book on book illumination and pigments
- 15 / 16 November 2018
Cambridge, Hamilton Kerr Institute, Murray Edwards College
Conference: Migrants: art, artists, materials and ideas crossing borders: art, artists, materials and ideas crossing borders will reflect on the role of migration as embodied in works of art, material culture and their conservation.
<https://www.hki.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/events/migrantsconf>
- 8 / 9 November 2018
Amsterdam, The Netherlands, Rijksmuseum
Symposium Rembrandt Conservation Histories
<https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/rembrandt-conservation-histories>
- 8/10 May 2019
Utrecht, The Netherlands, venue TBA
ARTECHNE Conference 2019: 'The Making of Art Expertise: Changing Practices of Art History & Conservation, 1850 – 1950'. A symposium devoted to changing practices of art history and conservation, and the interactions with related areas in the humanities and natural sciences.
(<https://artechne.wp.hum.uu.nl/artechne-conference-2019-the-making-of-art-expertise-changing-practices-of-art-history-conservation-1850-1950>)

Doris Oltrogge

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