# Modern Materials and Contemporary Art

*Triennium 2008-2011 NEWSLETTER 3*

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Modern Materials and Contemporary Art is the official newsletter of the ICOM-CC Working Group Modern Materials and Contemporary Art.

*July 2011*
From your Coordinator

It is hard to believe that I am already welcoming you to the 2011 Newsletter from the Modern Materials and Contemporary Art (MMCA) working group of ICOM-CC. This is our third and final Newsletter in this triennial period, and is being distributed slightly later than intended, in order that more information on the Triennial conference in Lisbon can be included, including full listings of the MMCA session papers.

This past year has been another one of high activity, and with 230 members signed up at www.icom-cc.org we have sailed past our aim of growing our membership to 150. We successfully coordinated with the “Training and Education in Conservation” working group of ICOM-CC to organize a joint Interim meeting on Training Needs for the Conservation of Contemporary Art (more about that later). And now we look forward to one of the strongest MMCA showings at an ICOM-CC Triennial in September, not only in the MMCA session itself, but with two joint sessions (planned with the Documentation and Paintings working groups), and relevant papers in other working groups. We are working hard to avoid as many of those annoying clashes as possible, and the two joint sessions should minimize the sprinting across the conference center to reach another room.

Just a reminder that a number of functions are open to you on the MMCA website, including on-line forums, latest news, a whole string of downloads, the ICOM-CC calendar of events, and all contact information you need: http://www.icom-cc.org/32/modern-materials-and-contemporary-art/

Finally, I would like to thank the two MMCA assistant coordinators, Tatja Scholte and Rachel Rivenc, for all their hard work this past triennial. Tatja was at the center of organizing the Interim meeting in Maastricht last year, and Rachel has designed and coordinated our Newsletters. I also want to thank all of you who contributed content to this Newsletter, and – in particular - Yvonne Shashoua and Reinhard Bek for agreeing to be interviewed for our “in discussion with” feature.

Please do feel free to contact Rachel (rivenc@getty.edu) or me (tlearner@getty.edu) about any issue to do with MMCA, including feedback on the information contained in this Newsletter. And – as always, your help in encouraging others to join the group will be much appreciated.

I look forward to seeing many of you in Lisbon in September at the 2011 Triennial conference.

Tom Learner

Program : MMCA session at Triennial conference

The ICOM-CC Triennial 16th Conference will take place in Lisbon from Monday 19th September to Friday 23rd September, 2011. The theme this time is Cultural Heritage/Cultural Identity – The Role of Conservation, and all information on the conference can be found at www.icom-cc2011.org.

Even though the exact timing of each Working Group session is still being discussed by the Directory Board, I am able to inform you about the papers and posters that will be presented in the MMCA session. In addition to those papers accepted into the MMCA session, we identified a number of papers in other working groups that were of great relevance to the conservation issues of modern and contemporary art. And I am happy to announce that we will be joining forces with the Documentation and Paintings working groups to create two Joint Sessions, and this will bring the total number of MMCA papers being presented to twenty five. They are all listed below.

I should also remind you that we will also be electing the MMCA Coordinator for the next triennial during our business meeting.

This will be the largest showing of MMCA activity at any Triennial conference, and we are currently one of the largest working group in terms of paper numbers and membership – a terrific achievement for MMCA considering we used to one of the very smallest.

A full listing of all papers/posters in every working group can be downloaded from the ICOM-CC website, at http://www.icom-cc.org/54/document/list-of-contributions/?id=984.

**MMCA Papers**

A Pandora’s box? The Aluminium Boxes of Lourdes Castro and the conservation of contemporary art: Sara Babo*, Emanuela Sara Fragoso, Rui Silva, Isabel Corte-Real and Maria João Melo

Restoration or reconstruction? Towards a conservation approach for ‘Arte Povera’ installations, based on the art process and the artist’s intent: Lydia Beerken* and Sandra Weerdenburg

Strategies for the conservation of cellulose acetate artworks – a case study of two plastic books: Ana Cudell*, Rita Veiga, Thea van Oosten, Anna Laganá, Henk van Keulen, and Inês Venade

The Shadows by Lourdes Castro: a conservation study of PMMA in the 21st century: Joana Lia Ferreira*, Maria João Melo, Maria Jesus Ávila and Ana Maria Ramos
Back to transparency, back to life. Research into the restoration of broken transparent unsaturated polyester and poly(methyl methacrylate) works of art: Anna Laganá* and Thea van Oosten

The LA Look from start to finish: materials, processes and conservation of works by the Finish Fetish artists: Rachel Rivenc*, Emma Richardson and Tom Learner.

Wiping away the dirt - a safe option for plastics? Yvonne Shashoua*, Kathrine Segel, Thea van Oosten, Anna Lagana, Marleen Wagenaar, Brenda Keneghan, Gilles Barabant, Clementine Bollard and Sara Kuperhol

The treatment of a polyurethane rigid foam floor piece by Ger van Elk: a study in the conservation of plastics: Evelyne Snijders, Sandra Weerdenburg* and Rebecca Timmermans


Liquefying oil paint: contemporary paintings in danger? Jenny Schulz

Soot removal from acrylic emulsion paint test panels: a study of dry and non-contact cleaning: Jia-sun Tsang* and Sara Babo

 Joint MMCA session with Documentation working group

Developing a computer based management system for monitoring change to Inside Australia (Antony Gormley, 2003): Anne Cummins, Andrew Thorn and David Graves

Monitoring Spiral Jetty: aerial balloon photography: Rand Eppich*, Francesca Esmay, Tom Learner and Aurora Tang

Bright ideas: exploring ways to document Dan Flavin’s fluorescent light: Francesca Esmay*, Tom Learner, Alan Phenix, and Jim Druzik

Contemporary art – market versus conservation: the drafting of an authenticity certificate for the cultural, commercial and legal classification of contemporary art: Marina Pugliese, Barbara Ferriani*, Dario Jucker and Emma Hedley

Conservation of Instalação 191093, parte 1: documenting material and intangible features: António Rocha*, Rita Macedo, Ana Ramos, Sara Fragoso and Isabel Corte-Real


VOCs from plastic objects in museums: Agnès Lattuati-Derieux, Céline Égasse, Sylvie Thao-Heu and Bertrand Lavêdrine

POPART: an international research project on the preservation of polymer artifacts in museums: Bertrand Lavêdrine

The White Paintings of Julião Sarmento: issues in characterization, degradation and treatment: Maria João Melo*, Ana Pereira, Tom Learner, Stephan Schäfer and Peter Eaton

Martin Kippenberger’s Installation Der Weissen Bilder (1991); creation, curation, conservation: Rebecca Hellen

Characterisation of surface whitening in 20th century European paintings at Dudmaston Hall, United Kingdom: Laura Hinde, Klaas Jan van den Berg, Suzan de Groot and Aviva Burnstock

A preliminary study into the swelling behavior of artists’ acrylic emulsion paint films: Elii Kampasakali, Bronwyn Ormsby*, Alan Phenix, Michael Schilling and Tom Learner

MMCA Posters

Penetrável Magic Square No 5, De Luxe: complexities and challenges involved in the conservation of a contemporary artwork: Amanda Cristina Alves Cordeiro, Conceição Linda de França, Kleunannya de Melo Barboza and Luiz António Cruz Souza


VOCs from plastic objects in museums: Agnès Lattuati-Derieux, Céline Égasse, Sylvie Thao-Heu and Bertrand Lavêdrine

POPART: an international research project on the preservation of polymer artifacts in museums: Bertrand Lavêdrine

The White Paintings of Julião Sarmento: issues in characterization, degradation and treatment: Maria João Melo*, Ana Pereira, Tom Learner, Stephan Schäfer and Peter Eaton
Monumental and on the move: Amanda Pagliarino

‘Weeping sculptures’: research into the degradation and conservation of works of art from the Stage Evidence Series by Loris Cecchini: Marta Palmeira, Anna Lagana and Thea van Oosten

Preparing for the conservation treatment of foam roses from a Bulgarian headdress: Testing the Consolidation of Polyurethane-ether Foam: Clare Ward*, Marei Hacke and Nicole Rode

Conference Reviews

Report on the Joint Interim meeting of MMCA with the ‘Education & Training in Conservation’ (E&T) working group of ICOM-CC
Bonnefantenmuseum, Maastricht, the Netherlands, June 12-13, 2010.

Entitled “Training needs for the Conservation of Modern and Contemporary Art” the primary aim of this two-day Interim meeting was to consider and discuss how the existing conservation training programs are responding to the range of new knowledge and skills that are frequently required for the conservation of modern and contemporary works of art. The essential questions that were posed were: Which of these new needs are best tackled at the training level? What steps are training programs already taking to incorporate modern / contemporary art into their curricula? And, what are the most appropriate steps forward?

The first day consisted of a number of presentations and panel discussions, looking at subjects such as the new needs of the profession, and thoughts on how the current training programs are adapting to (or planning to adapt to) these needs. Speakers/panellists included: Lydia Beerkens (SRAL, Maastricht and private conservator), Anna Comiotto (Bern University of Applied Sciences), Julie Gilman (University of Ghent), René Hoppenbrouwers (SRAL), Gerta Kaltenbruner (Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna), Pip Laurenson (Tate, London), Michele Marincola (Institute of Fine Arts, New York University), Christian Scheidemann (Contemporary Conservation Ltd, New York), Jill Sterrett (San Francisco Museum of Modern Art), Sanneke Stigter (University of Amsterdam) and Fenna Yola Tykwer (Stuttgart State Academy of Art and Design).

On day two, a series of break-out sessions was organized to discuss specific ways in which the conservation field might advance on some of the training and education issues that had been identified on day one. Questions asked were to list the “top 5”:

- Needs of the conservation profession for contemporary art that could/should be addressed at the training level
- Workshops dealing with aspect of contemporary art conservation that could be created to supplement the curricula of existing training programs
- Ways in which existing training programs could advance the contemporary conservation art field collectively
- Ideas that could be pitched to external funding bodies that would have an impact on education and training of modern and contemporary art

A report giving an overview of the discussions held at this meeting is available on the MMCA pages of the ICOM-CC website: http://www.icom-cc.org/54/document/training-needs-for-the-conservation-of-modern-and-contemporary-art--interim-meeting-report/?id=960. It is not a full transcript, but a detailed description of the points raised and debated. The Education & Training in Conservation and Modern Materials & Contemporary Art working groups of ICOM-CC hope that this report will initiate further and sustained dialogue between the training programs and within the profession at large.

Access2CA: Access to Contemporary Art Conservation (part II) seminar
Museu de Serralves, Porto, Portugal, March 10, 2011

On March 10th 2011 the Museu de Serralves (Porto) hosted an international symposium on the subject of access to contemporary art conservation. Organised by University of Porto and the Cultural Heritage Agency (the
In recent times, the public has demonstrated a great interest for behind-the-scene stories of how art is made and restored, and exhibitions on conservation of old masters are nowadays fairly frequent. A similar look into the working practice of the conservator of modern and contemporary art is however not so commonplace yet.

The Access2CA project was created to explore this topic. Two seminars and a series of discussions were organized and a number of Access2CA projects were carried out to guide museum visitors through interesting questions of conservation and presentation in order to increase the public appreciation of contemporary art.

Ferrara, Italy, March 1-4, 2011

In March 2011, a meeting on Science for Contemporary Art was organized in Ferrara, Italy by the Italian Association of Archaeometry (AIAr). The term “archaeometry” is often associated with the measurement of ancient objects rather than with modern and contemporary art.

However, AIAr takes a much broader view of its definition, and - as reported in its statute - is devoted to scientific methodologies aimed at the knowledge and conservation of all objects of art, irrespective of their historical or geographical origin. In support of this claim, this year AIAr decided to dedicate its biennial topical meeting entirely to the scientific studies of works of contemporary art, as well as extending the participation to foreign scientists.

About 100 people attended the meeting, which was opened by Thea van Oosten (Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands) with a lecture entitled “Plastics in Modern and Contemporary Art: New materials and New Approaches”. Afterwards, during the afternoon of the first day, papers were given on a number of large-scale projects that are currently running on various aspects of modern materials and/or contemporary art. For example, Maria Perla Colombini (University of Pisa) presented the COPAC (Preventive Conservation of Contemporary Art) regional research project that will be financed by Tuscany Region, while Costanza Cucci (IFAC-CNR, Firenze) discussed the European Project “POPART” (Preservation of plastic artefacts in museum collections), which is currently funded under the 7th European Framework Program.

The rest of the program was grouped into four main categories: Contemporary Architecture; Scientific investigations of new types of art; Materials and Artistic Techniques; and Monitoring, Preservation and Restoration. Particular attention was given to non-invasive methodologies and the study of new materials including the enormous range of modern dyes and pigments, as well as polymeric materials. Other topics of interest were nanotechnologies and the role of the environment in the degradation of synthetic materials.

The complete program of the meeting can be downloaded from the web site: http://www.fe.infn.it/aiar2011/programma-en.php

Mauro Bacci
TechFocus I: Caring for Video Art, Solomon R Guggenheim Museum, New York, September 1-2, 2010

Supported by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Electronic Media Group (EMG) of the American Institute for Conservation started a series of workshops on technical issues in the preservation and presentation of electronic art. The series acknowledges the 10th anniversary of the groundbreaking TechArchaeology symposium held at SFMOMA. The inaugural two-day workshop, TechFocus I: Caring for Video Art, took place September 1-2, 2010 at the Guggenheim Museum in New York, in conjunction with the exhibition “Haunted: Contemporary Video, Photography and Performance.”

TechFocus I: Caring for Video Art offered a detailed analysis of the technical and aesthetic characteristics of video art, presented by an international panel of experts. Presentations addressed a historical overview of video art from curatorial and technical perspectives, as well as conservation issues. The program’s second day was devoted to a “School of Seeing,” in which a wide array of video technologies were demonstrated, allowing participants to see in a systematic way the effects that different display technologies have on image quality, as well as the visual consequences of various technical and physical defects.

TechFocus I: Caring for Video Art drew 140 participants and laid the groundwork for a continuing series. A special JAIC issue will publish selected talks of the conference TechFocus I: Caring for Video Art and will be available in 2012.

For summaries and images of the content of TechFocus I please follow this link: http://cool.conservation-us.org/coolaic/sg/emg/techfocus1/index.html

The workshop’s structure will be emulated in future iterations of the TechFocus series. TechFocus II is already in the planning phase and will cover the topic of the conservation of film and slide-based art. Further information will be made available as soon as the tentative date and location is confirmed. Future TechFocus workshops are planned to cover the following topics: kinetic art, light art, interactive installations, born-digital computer-based and web-based art.

The EMG is also working on a periodical publication. The first issue will be based on the electronic media session at AIC’s 37th and 38th Annual Meeting. This will be the first international periodical publication focusing on electronic media art conservation.

Christine Frohnert

Project Updates from MMCA members

POPART - Preservation of polymer artefacts in museum collections

This long-term project has been running since October 2008. Funded by the European commission, it is devoted to the preservation of polymer artefacts in museums, and has involved 12 partners from 8 countries, gathering a wide range of expertise. It is currently in its final year, and will close in April 2012 with a conference in Paris (see later). The project aimed to identify the principal risks associated with the exhibition, cleaning, consolidation and storage of plastic artefacts, and subsequently to develop a strategy to improve the preservation and maintenance of three-dimensional plastic objects in museum collections. The four key research areas which were investigated along the project: the survey of plastic collection, the analysis, the degradation and the conservation treatments.

Identifying the type of material from which an object is made is often a prerequisite to decisions about its conservation. The POPART project has set up a reference material database, and minimally invasive analytical techniques such as Py-GC/MS, were applied and tested via an inter-laboratory Round-Robin evaluation. The project has also developed a user friendly application for identification of plastics using NIR spectrometry - the quality of the statistical model being tested on a set of 274 materials, previously identified using FTIR. The data reproducibility and efficiency of the different methods for characterizing plastics and some blind test as well were all compared. The practical outcome of this study is not only a collection of analytical databases shared by the research partners, but also a methodology for plastic artefact characterization.

The different surveys conducted in museums within the project enabled the identification and documentation of typical deterioration patterns in plastic objects. A survey form has been produced in different languages; it aims to document deterioration systematically and consistently, thereby allowing more direct comparison between the
collections surveyed. Non-invasive spectroscopic analysis of degradation residues or volatiles by a group of selected objects has been carried-out, showing, for instance, that SPME, can provide very meaningful data for polymer characterization and degradation. Degradation of a few polymer families, in particular polyurethanes (PUR), was systematically investigated by FTIR, Py-GC/MS, DSC, TGA and chemiluminescence in order to better assess the degradation pathways. Finally a part of the activities devoted to conservation brought a methodology for testing cleaning methods of plastic objects as well as a new innovative promising method for consolidating and protecting PUR-EST foam artefacts.

As a final part of the project, a conference will take place in Paris in March 2012, and will present and discuss the main achievements of the POPART project (see below under Upcoming Conferences). For more information about the project and conference, please go to http://popart.mnhn.fr/

The Ripolin Project – Progress report

The Ripolin project, an international, interdisciplinary investigation into artists’ uses of early 20th C oleoresinous enamel paints, led by the Art Institute of Chicago (AIC), has reached a number of important milestones.

A large reference collection of early 20th century paint swatches and paint cans from Ripolin and other manufacturers, as well as contemporary artists’ oil paints (approx. 2000 samples), has been fully characterized and a multi-step analytical protocol has been established to identify the distinguishing characteristics of Ripolin paints.

Several papers summarizing the most recent scientific results (including analysis with various gas-chromatography/mass spectrometric techniques, and pyrolysis) and case studies were presented at the Symposium “From Can to Canvas: early uses of house paints by Picasso and his contemporaries in the first half of the 20th century” (Marseille and Antibes, May 25-27, 2011) - http://www.fromcantocanvas.fr/home-en.html A special issue of the Journal of the American Institute for Conservation (JAIC) will gather outstanding papers on the Symposium topics. In addition, a paper on “Interdisciplinary investigation of early house paints: Picasso, Picabia and their “Ripolin” paintings” by K. Muir et al. will be presented at ICOM-CC in Lisbon in September.

In the past two years researchers from AIC and the Centre Interrégional de Conservation et de Restauration du Patrimoine (CICRP), France, have collaborated with the Musée Picasso, Antibes to perform an in-depth re-evaluation of its important corpus of Picasso works, comprising 23 paintings and 44 works on paper, executed primarily in enamel paints by Picasso in the Fall of 1946 and 1947. In early September 2010 the MOLAB team joined the non-invasive analysis effort, thanks to the transnational access service offered with support of the European Community (7th FP, CHARISMA project n. 228330). In-situ instrumentation used included Fiber optic mid-Fourier Transform Infrared (FT-IR), Near Infrared (NIR) spectroscopy, Fiber-optic Visible (Vis)-NIR, Ultraviolet (UV)-Vis fluorescence spectroscopy and X-ray Fluorescence spectrometry.

The results of this work are gathered in the book “Picasso Express” (see below), together with the first thematic art-historical overview of Picasso’s use of Ripolin in the first half of the 20th century, and a detailed account of the history of its manufacture.

Modern and Contemporary Art Research at the Getty Conservation Institute, some recent updates

The Getty Conservation Institute’s Modern and Contemporary Art Research initiative aims to advance the conservation profession’s knowledge and practice for modern and contemporary art by addressing some of its most pressing needs. The initiative includes a broad range of activities and approaches, including scientific research.
Pacific Standard Time is a very large initiative across Southern California, called "Plastics, Resins and Synthetic Paints." Our study is part of a larger research project on sculptors who were turning to a wide variety of industrial materials and fabrication processes in Los Angeles in the 1960s and 1970s, in particular the materials and processes active in the region. Over the last twelve months, we have been working on a major study into the stability and behavior of many modern materials (for example, modern paints and plastics), the dissemination of information via workshops and publications, and the promotion of dialogue among professionals through meetings and conferences.

In December 2010, the Getty Conservation Institute organized a three-day meeting in Brazil to discuss the current state and future requirements of research into the conservation of modern and contemporary art in Latin America. The gathering was the second in the GCI’s Conservation Issues of Modern and Contemporary Art (CIMCA) series, and follows a successful meeting held at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in June 2008 – http://www.getty.edu/conservation/science/modpaints/modpaints_cimca.html.

CIMCA2 was organized with the School of Fine Arts, Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais in Belo Horizonte, and the contemporary art organization Instituto Inhotim [www.inhotim.org.br] in near-by Brumadinho. The thirty invited participants came from a range of conservation and related backgrounds from several countries across Latin America, including Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Cuba, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay, along with representatives from Spain, the Netherlands and the United States who are active in the region. Discussion at CIMCA2 focused on the need for better networks, improved pooling of resources, and the building of better partnerships across the region. The need for a series of workshops and/or focused conferences on various aspects of contemporary art conservation was also stressed, as well as the desire to have a number of key publications on the subject translated into Spanish and Portuguese. A full report will be posted soon on the GCI’s website.

Another area of research that has seen a lot of activity over the last twelve months has been a major study into the materials and fabrication processes of artists active in Los Angeles in the 1960s and 1970s, in particular sculptors who were turning to a wide variety of industrial plastics, resins and synthetic paints. Our study is part of a very large initiative across Southern California, called Pacific Standard Time http://www.pacificstandardtime.org/, which will coordinate exhibitions, projects and performances from the 1945-1980 period.

Pacific Standard Time will also feature the GCI-organized exhibition, From Start to Finish: De Wain Valentine’s Gray Column, (www.getty.edu/conservation/science/about/pst_gci.html) which examines the materials and processes used in the creation of this extraordinary work by Valentine: a twelve feet high and eight feet large, thirty-five-hundred-pound slab of cast polyester resin. In the 1960s, commercially available polyester resins could only be poured in very small volumes at a time; De Wain Valentine, determined to create artworks of much larger proportions, worked with a polymer chemist to develop, through much trial and errors, a resin that would enable his vision. Gray Column is his largest creation with the resin he developed. The exhibition also focuses on the pristine surfaces of Valentine’s pieces, and discusses the challenges and dilemmas presented by their conservation. It opens at the Getty Center in September 2011.

De Wain Valentine polishing Gray Column in 1976

An important aspect of the GCI’s Modern Paints Project has been to ensure its research findings are feeding effectively into conservation practice. As part of this, the GCI recently completed the second workshop on the cleaning of acrylic paints - Cleaning of Acrylic Painted Surfaces (CAPS) - as part of the GCI’s Science Series Workshops organized by our Education departments, held at MoMA in New York (www.getty.edu/conservation/education/sci_series/caps.html)

The research into cleaning of acrylic paints has been supplemented by occasional case studies, and to accomplish this, a series of case studies were undertaken. In July and August 2010, a large acrylic emulsion painting by Doug Wheeler Untitled (1964), was treated in the GCI’s science labs by conservator Chris Stavroudis and Jennifer Hickey, a graduate student from the Conservation Center of the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University training program, and supported with analysis from GCI scientists. The predominantly white painting was extremely dirty, and the artist had considered respraying the entire painting in an attempt to recreate its surface. As Wheeler commented during a visit to the GCI labs: “I want my work to feel like you’re seeing particles of color in the air very subtly.” A variety of different aqueous cleaning systems were tested and examined, and the types of cleaning formulations that performed best in trial tests carried out on acrylic emulsion paint mockups appeared to be well suited to cleaning of the Wheeler painting – see http://blogs.getty.edu/iris/?s=wheeler. Wheeler agreed that the cleaned surface “worked” and decided against the respraying. The painting will be shown in Phenomenal: California Light and Space at the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego, opening in October 2011, as part of the Pacific Standard Time initiative.
**Books and DVDs**

**Book: Inside Installations. Theory and Practice in the Care of Complex Artworks**

Anything is possible in installation art. The typically short lifespan of the materials and techniques used and the intended experience can be endless, often to the despair of the custodian of the work. The processes involved in preserving this complex form of art; reinstalling it, finding ways to recreate the experience over and again, as well as the decision-making that underlies these processes, form the backbone of this book.

What did the artist originally intend and how has that concept been realized in the past? How can one preserve and document the installation? What relation exists between the components and the space, and what is the spectator’s part in the work? Questions of this kind are examined in connection with a number of case studies. At the same time, the book reports on the results of an extensive research project, Inside Installations (2004-2007), carried out by an international group of custodians active in the conservation of contemporary art.

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Order via [www.aup.nl](http://www.aup.nl) or your (online) bookstore.

**Book: Picasso Express**

Pablo Picasso is renowned for pushing the boundaries of conventional art and for his innovative experimentation with materials, including Ripolin®, a line of matte and glossy enamel paints - "Ripolin Express" being one of those manufactured by the eponymous French company. Ripolin paints gained enormous popularity in France and Europe starting from the beginning of the 20th century and had a profound impact on artists.

Produced by the Musée Picasso, Antibes (France) this book delves deeply into Picasso’s use of enamel paints, which has long been known in the literature and cited on gallery labels, but has rarely been scientifically demonstrated in individual works. With evidence from documentary sources as well as new, extensive scientific analysis of the works in the Antibes collection, created during the artist’s prolific 1946 residence in the Chateau Grimaldi, this book presents a comprehensive study of Ripolin and how it can be distinguished among the paints chosen by artists in the first half of the 20th century. An in-depth art-historical overview of Picasso’s use of this unconventional medium before 1950 sets the stage for the discussion. The book also explores in detail the surface of the paintings and illustrates the fascinating new creative solutions inspired by enamel paint in Antibes, providing the material vocabulary to articulate the evolution of the artist at this critical time of renewal. Extensive background information on the history of the Ripolin manufactory and the technology of its renowned products is also presented.

With contributions from Jean-Louis Andral, Francesca Casadio, Alain Colombini, Benoît Dagron, Gwénaëlle Gautier, Danièle Giraudy, Emilie Hubert, Marilyn McCully, Kim Muir, and Michael Raeburn, this book integrates the voices of art historians, scientists and conservators. It offers an original and highly detailed vision on the different aspects of Picasso’s experience and practice in Antibes, shedding ultimate light on the legend that has grown around the artist’s use of Ripolin.

In French with English translation, €25. To order the book, please contact the bookstore at Musée Picasso, Antibes: by sending an e-mail to Francoise Chanaud francoise.chanaud@ville-antibes.fr or by phone +33 4 92 90 54 33.
DVD: Installation Art: Who Cares?

The most significant deliverable of the Access2CA project was the documentary film *Installation Art: Who Cares?* It goes without saying that access projects in museums are a great way to inform museum public on the issues conservators face; however, they are often location and artwork specific. PRACTICs co-organisers decided it would be useful to create a film that could be used by all museums and also by educators in the field.

The maintenance and conservation of contemporary visual art is a new challenge for museums and conservators. More and more artists have taken leave of the painter's brush and are moving on to new media, such as video. Or they are making installations of transient materials like polystyrene, wax and scotch tape. Can these works be saved for the art lovers of the future?

The film offers a glimpse behind the scenes of the European museum. It investigates three cases that shed an interesting light on the practices and issues that the conservator of modern and contemporary art deal with. The three cases are:

- *Notion Motion*, Olafur Eliasson (2005), Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, donation H+F Patronage 2005
- *Exchange Fields*, Bill Seaman (2000), Museum Ostwall collection, Dortmund
- *This is Propaganda*, Tino Sehgal (2002), Tate, London

To view the film, go to: [http://www.vimeo.com/24535819](http://www.vimeo.com/24535819)

Conference Announcements

**FUTURE TALKS 011**

October 26-28, 2011, Munich, Germany

The Conservation Department of Die Neue Sammlung – The International Design Museum Munich – is pleased to announce the 2nd international FUTURE TALKS conference: ‘FUTURE TALKS 011: Technology and Conservation of Modern Materials in Design’ to be held at the Pinakothek der Moderne in Munich, October 26-28, 2011.

After the very well received launch event FUTURE TALKS 009 in October 2009, with more than 200 participants from 15 countries, FUTURE TALKS have become an exciting platform for discussions and the exchange of knowledge and experience of professionals, related to the conservation of modern materials in design collections. The follow-up conference FUTURE TALKS 011 highlights the state-of-the-art of scientific research and focuses on technological aspects and active treatments in the conservation of modern materials, a topic which is unfortunately too often neglected. During the three day conference 27 experts from all over the world will present their experiences and knowledges in this field. The excellent response to our FUTURE TALKS 011 Call for Papers illustrates the ongoing interest in this topic. That is why the FUTURE TALKS are growing…

There will also be a social event and opportunities to visit local laboratories on Saturday October 29. We very much appreciate the participation of students, scientists, conservators and curators. The conference and the associated publication will be in English. The long awaited publication FT 009 will be available at the conference.

For more info, see [www.die-neue-sammlung.de/event/](http://www.die-neue-sammlung.de/event/) Or contact Tim Bechthold [Bechthold@die-neue-sammlung.de](mailto:Bechthold@die-neue-sammlung.de)

Book online at: [www.die-neue-sammlung.de/event/](http://www.die-neue-sammlung.de/event/) Bookings are now being accepted. Numbers for the conference are limited and early registration is advised.
Registration and payment must be received by Die Neue Sammlung no later than October 1, 2011. Please note there is a higher fee if you register after July 31, 2011. Regular fees: Before July 31: € 200.00 (early bird); After July 31: € 250.00. Student fees: Before July 31: € 80.00 (early bird); After July 31: € 120.00. Evening reception (October 27): € 40.00 (includes an open buffet and free drinks)

POPART conference
March 7-9, 2012, Paris, France

Since their rapid development during the first half of the 20th century, plastics have infiltrated every aspect of modern daily life. Unfortunately, many plastics have a short lifetime and degrade via irreversible chemical reactions that result in dramatic changes in appearance and significance to museum artefacts. This symposium aims to present knowledge gained from the European commission funded project POPART over 4 years (http://popart.mnhn.fr/). The symposium will address the fields of identification, assessment of degradation and care of plastics artefacts. The programme consists of plenary lectures during the mornings (9 am -1 pm) and workshops or visits in the afternoons. These workshops will be based on the techniques and Know-How developed during the project, and include the following topics: cleaning of plastics; polymer identification; surveying collections; polymer analysis by PyGCMS. There will also be a poster session where new research, conservation treatments or case studies can be presented by symposium participants. If you want to submit a poster, please, send an abstract to Alban Fournier (contact email given below), and a model will be provided if your poster is selected.

For more information on the conference, please go to http://popart.mnhn.fr/spip.php?article150 or contact Alban Fournier at: afournier@mnhn.fr

To register online, please visit http://dr03.azur-colloque.cnrs.fr/index.php

We are anticipating a very high turn-out for this conference and will be enforcing a “first come, first served” policy for registration, so recommend that anyone interested in attending registers as soon as possible in order to guarantee their seat.

Fees before 31/10/2011: 150 € (50 € for students) including a conference book
Fees after 31/10/2011: 200 € (150 € for students) including a conference book
Workshops fees: 50 €
Venue: Auditorium Colbert, 2 rue de Vivienne, 75001 Paris, France
Language: English

In Discussion with...

Reinhard Bek,
Tinguely Museum, Basel, Switzerland

Rachel Rivenc (RR): How long did you work for the Museum Tinguely? What were your main achievements as well as your main challenges there?

Reinhard Bek (RB): My main achievement at the Museum Tinguely has also been my main challenge. Every artwork has its own distinct identity which impacts my approach towards conservation. Finding the balance between the artist’s intention and concern for the artworks material is both a challenge and an opportunity to gain insight into the effectiveness of preservation decisions. Many decisions that I end up making are not only based on traditional approaches that give the priority to original materials, but depend also on the environment in relation to the artist’s intention.

Tom Learner (TL): What was your training in, and how did it prepare you (or not!) for dealing with kinetic art? How did you complement your training?

RB: My first professional apprenticeship was in shipbuilding in a shipyard in Hamburg, Germany. There I worked with many different types of materials, handling and crafting them sometimes in an improvisational manner to make large-scale parts. However, what has been most helpful from that early apprenticeship were the relationships I developed with the craftsmen in and around the yard. Learning how to effectively communicate needs, negotiate business and work collaboratively has been an essential skill! Later, I trained as a conservator at the University of Applied Sciences in Berlin, Germany. There I began working with kinetic artworks through internships in Hamburg and Wolfsburg. During my internships, I
discovered that few kinetic sculptures were receiving the attention they deserved.

RR: Are Tinguely pieces difficult to document?

RB: The difficulty in documenting Tinguely works is due mostly to their inherent complexity. My approach is to first establish a general idea of the artwork. Talking only about the materials and surface condition is too limited. One must start with an understanding of the essence of the work, which includes the materials, sounds, movements, maybe even a scent. All these different aspects create the overall identity of the work. The inventory of technical specifications including replaceable items and materials comes next. And last but not least the detailed condition of the work in its distinct parts as well as in its entirety.

RR: Have you turned to any novel methods of documentation for them?

RB: One of our long-term projects was to film all the kinetic works professionally with specific emphasis on details of the surfaces as well as patterns of movement. Now we are trying to build a more precise database that includes technical specifications as well as multiple ways to document the condition of the work. I have begun research on new methods of documentation of movement using a computer based three-dimensional method that recognizes movement in space over time. We have not yet implemented this method for documentation of the collection but I could imagine one day it might be very successful.

RR: Do you consider it a narrow specialism, working on Tinguely’s kinetic art, or do you think your knowledge and expertise is applicable to other areas of contemporary art?

RB: I think an understanding of kinetic art is applicable to other areas in which technological knowledge or dealing with conceptual ideas is required. We have to weigh the options and document the results. I work with electricians, motor specialists and some technology fanatics, who are into historical radios, motors and special historical technical issues. However, as a conservator I have to weigh the pros and cons of various solutions and decide together with the curator which options will serve best the needs of the museum and the art. The result of this process may be the retirement of an artwork’s functionality, but preserving the materials, or the reconstruction of the artworks functionality, which may lead to the full preservation of the artwork with its material, sensations but with some parts being replaced.

TL: You spent a period of time at MoMA a few years back – can you describe what you did during that time?

RB: I surveyed the kinetic artworks in MoMA’s collection to provide the curatorial staff with a better understanding of the condition challenges posed by the experimental materials and methods used by artists. During my review of the collection I treated some of the objects. One example was a work by Edoardo Landi, which was heavily damaged due to leaking glycerin contained inside the artwork. Another work by Julio Le Parc required re-fabricating missing parts and making improvements to the fire protection because of the incandescent lamps housed inside the work. I also treated a Joseph Beuys piece, which had a problem with a glued piece of lead on a glass panel, covered in hare’s blood. It required performing tests with lead glued on glass and of consolidation of blood on lead. So I worked on a very broad variety of materials and situations.

TL: Does kinetic art challenge the traditional set of ethical conservation guidelines, and in what way?

RB: I don’t think kinetic art challenges conservation ethics anymore than other mediums. Because of the functional character of the works, as long as the artworks are working, there will always be a conflict between the preservation of the artwork’s material and the preservation of the artwork’s function. This is true for any artwork serving a function like video installations, sound installations etc.

RR: Do you need highly technical competences to do your job or do you collaborate with technicians and/or engineers for the more technical parts?

RB: It is important to have some fundamental technical skill, more than just screwing a bulb into a socket. However, being as highly skilled like a television repairman or a motor specialist is not necessary. What is most important is communication skills, a strong understanding of conservation ethics, a clear idea of artist’s intent and a feeling for materials.

RR: In general terms, when would you consider replacing a part of a kinetic piece, as opposed to repairing it?

RB: I generally tend to replace parts when the part has a history of replacement and when an exact replica is readily available. This is true for most light bulbs (although in the future incandescent bulbs will no longer be easily replaced), for belts and some parts of machinery. As these parts become obsolete, this approach will change.
This method of replacement can be thought of as a second stage of the work’s life. If the main objective is to maintain an artwork’s function, we will continue to repair and reproduce parts with greater frequency and as long as the integrity of the work can be considered unchanged. Once we are unable to uphold an artwork’s integrity and its function is compromised, the work will shift into its third stage. This is defined as the point after which the repair of parts due to wear and tear or general failure doesn’t work anymore. At that time, we will begin to discuss whether to update the artwork with alternate elements that can perform a similar function but compromise the integrity of the artwork or retire the work completely. This would mean the work is considered as a relic and will be conserved in the manner of static sculpture.

TL: At the Contemporary Art: Who Cares? symposium, you made some observations about shifting values in Tinguely’s work from his early work to his late work, which results in pieces being conserved in different ways; could you expand on that a little?

RB: This is true. The very early works by Tinguely in the museum are considered to be artifacts mainly for two reasons. First, many of these works were fabricated in an experimental way and are therefore inherently very fragile. Second, many of the parts Tinguely used, like motors for example, were ubiquitous. All of these early motors are historic and we give regard to their historic value rather than to their function. That means they do not run while on exhibit and are being conserved according to the traditional set of ethical conservation guidelines, with emphasis on materials. Later works are generally treated with emphasis on the function. They still run because replacement parts are available or the parts can be repaired. Additionally, while still working improvisationally, Tinguely’s workshop also introduced more effective construction techniques in his later and larger works, to ensure a longer lifetime. However, there will be a time when we must decide whether to update a work in order to keep it running or conserve it. My preference is towards conservation whenever I feel an addition to the artwork sets its historic value out of balance.

TL: You recently got married, had a baby and are considering moving to New York…. three major changes! How has that been and what are your plans in the near future?

RB: My wife works as a registrar at the Museum of Modern Art for the Department of Media and Performance Art. Our daughter Rebekka was born this year, just as my son Janic finishes high school in Berlin. We are still considering where we will make our permanent home because we are both quite specialized in our fields and this means one of us will have to leave our current job and work freelance. The obvious benefit is that the one who steps away may get to spend more time with our daughter!

Yvonne Shashoua
National Museum of Denmark, Copenhagen

Tom Learner (TL): Tell us a bit about your background – how did you get involved in conservation science and the study of modern materials?

Yvonne Shashoua (YS): When I graduated as an industrial chemist in London, I worked as a paint technologist for a few years, cooking the resins to go into automotive and electrochemical paints. It was a very macho world: the job involved a lot of visits to car plants and paint tanks in protective clothing. I had always wanted to work in a museum and was delighted to join the British Museum’s Conservation Science Group in 1988. There was a great training programme for new scientists where one spent a week in each conservation studio. I quickly discovered that I couldn’t make invisible repairs in glass or consolidate ceramics and developed a huge respect for the skills of conservators.

I used my experience of polymers to do research into the stabilities of conservation materials for ceramics, stone, textiles, metals and rubbers. I learned the usefulness of FTIR spectroscopy and SEM to evaluate conservation treatments on paper. The conference ‘Saving the Twentieth Century: The Conservation of Modern Materials’ organized by CCI in 1991 marked the start of my interest in the degradation and conservation of plastics in museums. When Anita Guye, at that time a conservation scientist at the National Museums of Scotland, founded the Plastics Historical Research Scientists Group, I joined and quickly met Thea van Oosten, Brenda Keneghan, Colin Williamson and Sue Mossman. I was excited about being a part of a completely new field where there was much to learn and where I felt I could contribute from my industrial background. In addition to chemists, the group included collectors and plastics historians who brought their enthusiasm for plastics and their objects to meetings. That group later became absorbed by the ICOM-MMCA WG.

In 1998, I was offered a PhD scholarship at the National Museum of Denmark to investigate the degradation and conservation of plasticized PVC. While working on my
YS: I am a Senior Researcher, and the only scientist working with synthetic materials at the National Museum. I suggest research projects, make project plans, carry them out and publish the results and share the results with my colleagues both within the Museum and outside. Because there are few courses in degradation and conservation of plastics and rubbers, I teach workshops approximately 4 weeks each year. Sharing my knowledge and experience with the public, collectors, curators, conservation professionals and scientists outside conservation is a very important and enjoyable part of my work. One aspect of my job which has changed greatly the last five years is its funding. There is increasing pressure on research scientists to spend more time applying for financial support for salaries and equipment.

TL: What is it about plastics that interest you so much? Are there certain objects that fascinate you more?

YS: Plastics are fantastic chameleons and can mimic any other material from glass to gold. The short timescale of plastics interests me too. Today's plastics take hours rather than days to prepare, whereas the first cellulose nitrate took 3 weeks, and take from weeks to years to break down. Working in the cultural heritage world, I am ashamed to admit that I am not an art aficionado but appreciate plastic for its material properties. One artist who uses these properties beautifully is Gerd Rohling in his project ‘Water and Wine’ in which plastics look like delicate, ancient, crizzled glass (http://www.gerd-rohling.de/weindat/wein4.html).

RR: You managed to get an exhibition on the aging and conservation of plastics in the Nationalmuseet. Tell us about that and how it has been received by the public?

YS: The National Museum’s staff may organize an exhibition for up to a month in the foyer of the Museum if they wish to show the public something of historical or scientific importance or if there has been a new discovery. In April 2011, we hosted a meeting for partners involved in the EU 7th Framework project POPART (Preservation of Plastic ARTefacts in museums) and I took the opportunity to show the public and my colleagues the type of challenges that collecting plastics present to museums and the need for projects such as POPART. One of the exhibits was Polly, a doll designed for the project to represent a plastic object. Polly comprises 11 different plastics including a polyester water bottle, nylon skirt and polystyrene head and is being exposed to different ageing environments by the POPART partners.

The National Museum's guests and security staff loved Polly because she has orange, acrylic hair and a red silicone tongue and does not look like a traditional museum object. Many guests were initially attracted to look around the exhibition by Polly and then stayed to read about early and degrading plastics.

TL: What do you consider to be your main achievements from your many years of researching the conservation of plastics?

YS: I am proud of my book Conservation of Plastics-materiels science, degradation and preservation, published in 2008 by Butterworth-Heinemann. It is the first book to compile the extensive knowledge generated by industry, designers, environmental and conservation professionals into a single publication and communicate it to both neophytes and experts. Conservation of Plastics was reviewed by Brenda Keneghan as a book 'which has immense potential to become a standard handbook for the understanding of plastics degradation and their conservation for future generations’. It has been adopted as a course textbook by four schools of conservation in the USA and has sold around 1800 copies.

I am also proud that I was invited to hold four workshops for the public in making plastics, identification, degradation and repairing plastics at the Roskilde Music Festival, the second largest music festival in Europe, in June this year. I didn’t get to share a stage with Iron Maiden, but a stand with young artists working with plastics who also taught the public. The opportunity to share such a specialized and complex subject with the public was fantastic and I learned a lot.

RR: You have taught many workshops on plastics? Have you seen many changes in the people who attend; their level of experience, for example, or the types of collections that they work on?

YS: I teach regularly in Denmark, Sweden, Finland and the USA and can see both an increasing understanding of the challenges that modern materials present and a growing hunger for ‘approved’ cleaning, coating and adhering techniques. This need for advanced knowledge is counterbalanced by the remaining confusion by many conservators over the different types of plastics in collections and their breakdown factors. For example, there is no added value in storing polyurethane ester foam in oxygen-free enclosures because it degrades by hydrolysis. To make such a decision it is thus very important to first be able to identify the material precisely.

TL: What are currently for you the main needs for the conservation of plastics?

YS: Active conservation treatments including adhering, cleaning and consolidating plastics are still poorly developed compared to preventive conservation treatments. POPART, the European collaborative project which is currently in progress, will result in improved...
cleaning and consolidating techniques for some plastics, but there is still much to research. The degradation pathways in real time and under ambient conditions of some plastics commonly found in museums are still poorly researched, e.g. polyethylene and polyesters. There is a pressing need for more effective adsorbents for cellulose nitrate and acetate. Activated carbon and zeolites are used to slow deterioration of movie films and objects but there has been little research into their effectiveness. The pharmaceutical and fuel industries use specific adsorbents for purifying their products. It would be interesting to investigate their application to conservation.

RR: You were recently awarded a guest scholarship at the Getty Conservation Institute for 2012. What do you have planned for that time?

YS: I have long wished to research the effectiveness of adsorbents to slow the rate of degradation of plastics, particularly cellulose nitrate and acetate. Having worked alone at the National Museum on plastics for some years, I am really excited about the opportunity to brainstorm and collaborate with others who have considerable experience of adsorbents and the analytical equipment to investigate the situation more thoroughly than has been possible for me.

TL: What do you see as the main role for MMCA over the next few years?

YS: MMCA has grown both in membership and number of activities the last few years. It is now actively involved in the vitally important areas of education and ethics of modern art conservation. There are still few professional training courses available both in Europe and USA and if conservation research and practice is to develop and not just repeat itself, access to the basic knowledge about the properties and degradation of modern materials is essential. The museum world has long been divided between art and objects with art being the better cousin. Modern materials can be found in both contemporary art and Lego bricks and both show the same breakdown patterns. It is important that MMCA focus more on the material than the type of object it is found in, I feel, so that more conservation professionals can learn from each other.

TL: And finally... You seem to take your running shoes wherever you visit – do you ever travel without them?!

YS: No, I don’t! I find running a good way to check out the area around a conference center and it is very social. When I moved to Denmark, I didn’t know anyone or the language. I met people by joining a running club. I also think it is a good counterbalance to scientific research which can be slow at times, frustrating and usually sedentary. New ideas often come when I am doing something else, such as running.

**Working Group program, 2008-2011**

As a reminder, our aims, organisational goals, planned activities and research areas for this triennium (2008-2011) are as follows:

**Aims**
The ICOM-CC Working Group on Modern Materials and Contemporary Art aims to promote and facilitate the dissemination of research, discussion and thinking on the full range of conservation issues and implications for modern and contemporary art. Specifically, the group aims to provide an effective platform for those professionals involved in this area of conservation to network and share information, and to ensure rapid circulation of details on relevant conferences, seminars, events and publications.

**Organisational goals for the 2008-2011 triennium**

- ✓ To increase our membership to over 150.
- ✓ To organize an interim meeting in the summer of 2010 in conjunction with the Training and Education working group to discuss the needs of training and education for the conservation of modern and contemporary art. It is intended to hold this meeting in June 2010 in Maastricht (to run straight after the Modern Art: Who Cares? II conference in Amsterdam).
- ✓ To establish best use of the new website for member information, dialogue exchange and networking.

**Activities and research areas highlighted during the 2008-2011 triennium:**

- ✓ Analysis, characterisation and conservation of modern materials used in works of art, especially plastics.
- ✓ Case studies of artists working methods and processes, including aging processes and conservation implications.
- ✓ Documentation of contemporary art. Possibly seek a joint session on this with the Documentation WG at the ICOM-CC conference in 2011.
- ✓ Conservation issues of outdoor / public works of art.
- ✓ Preventive conservation studies: storage and display.

**Membership of ICOM-CC and MMCA**

We now have 220 active members in MMCA, but there is still plenty of room for expansion. Many people assume they are MMCA members because they used to be on the group’s mailing list. However, it has now been clarified by the Directory Board that only ICOM-CC or ICOM members can be members of any of its working groups.

For those of you who are already ICOM-CC members, all you need to do is register your ICOM-CC membership on-
line at www.icom-cc.org and then choose MMCA as one of your working groups. If you are already registered online, then just find the “Join More Working Groups” button when you next log in, and choose MMCA. If you are not yet registered, the best way of doing this now is to email Joan Reifsnyder (secretariat@icom-cc.org) and request log-in details.

For those of you who are not members of ICOM-CC and wish to join, some of the benefits of joining are:
✓ Reduced registration fees at ICOM-CC Triennial and Interim Meetings (and hence it is a particularly GOOD time to be joining ICOM-CC).
✓ Priority for paper/poster acceptance at the ICOM-CC Triennial Meetings
✓ Second level access to the ICOM-CC website, providing all-time access to documents such as newsletters, abstracts etc.
✓ For full members of ICOM (see below) you get the ICOM card which grants free (or reduced rate) entry to most museums around the world.

Essentially there are 2 options for joining ICOM-CC:

1. The cheapest, quickest and simplest way is to join ICOM-CC directly as a “Friend of ICOM-CC” This costs €40/year - applications are made directly to ICOM-CC; you join working groups as part of the application process and you can pay using Paypal. But please note that with this option you do NOT get an ICOM card See: http://www.icom-cc.org/196/become-a-friend/information/

2. The more expensive, and far more complicated way (but you DO get the ICOM card) is to join ICOM itself. The cost of full ICOM membership varies from country to country, but is typically set at around €70 (Euros) / $100 (USD) per annum. Once an ICOM member, there is no further cost to join ICOM-CC or its working groups. To go via this route, you first apply to the National Committee of your country of residence. Details are found here: http://icom.museum/nationals.html. Once processed, you then join ICOM-CC by choosing Conservation as your International Committee. Details are found here: http://icom.museum/join_int_committee.html

To find more about all ICOM-CC membership benefits, working groups and activities, please consult the ICOM-CC website (http://www.icom-cc.org/).