

## **ICOM CC Working Group Graphic Documents Newsletter 2, 2021**

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In our second newsletter this year, we will give an overview of the 19th ICOM-CC Virtual Triennial Conference, which was held from the 17th to the 21st of May 2021 in Beijing and virtually, especially for colleagues who were not able to join. In addition, we would like to bring your attention to our next virtual Working Group Interim Meeting, due to take place in February 2022.

### **Report on the 19th ICOM-CC Virtual Triennial Conference 2021 17th to 21st of May 2021 in Beijing, China**

Due to the global pandemic, the Beijing Triennial Conference was firstly postponed from September 2020 to May 2021, and in the end broadcasted virtually. Despite the fact that it was not possible for conservators to personally visit Beijing and meet face to face, more than 1400 participants from 67 countries attended this great international event. Around the theme "Transcending Boundaries: Integrated Approaches to Conservation", attendees were able to access 159 papers and 99 posters from the 21 Working Groups, which showcased the latest research outcomes in conservation from a variety of perspectives. All sessions were presented in parallel via 4 channels, on a dedicated online platform. Thanks to remarkable planning, the participants could switch from one channel to the other during and after the conference to hear and replay the talks they were interested in.

The Graphic Documents Working Group presented 10 papers on the 18th of May, as well as 5 posters. Several contributions related to conservation in China or Chinese materials: Yuhui Liu (Institute of Conservation and Restoration (IBR), Bavarian State Library, Munich, Germany) shared her study on evaluating of the conservation quality of a Chinese kozo paper combining field research at the corresponding paper mill with laboratory experiments on raw materials and paper samples. Paul Hsieh (Institute for Preservation and Conservation of Chinese Ancient Books, Fudan University, Shanghai, China) gave a speech on the latest advances in mending Chinese paper and books, by integrating the western method of repairing lacunae on a suction table with Chinese traditional materials – fresh bamboo pulp. Yujia Luo (Institute for Sustainable Heritage, University College London, London, UK)

showcased her research focusing on the analysis and identification of the material properties of several Tibetan manuscripts – fibers, paper supports, ink, pigments etc.

Other contributions from our working group came from a great variety of specialist fields. Eve Menei (Independent papyrus conservator, Paris, France) presented on the conservation of the oldest inscribed papyri known to date, from excavation to exhibition, while Marinita Stiglitz (Conservation and Collection Care, Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, Oxford, UK) shared the art-technological experiments and conservation treatment of the Akbar's luxury manuscript of the Baharistan of Jami. Zofia Wyszomirska-Noga (The Parliamentary Archives, London, UK) introduced a special collection from the Royal Institution relating to Michael Faraday and his work, and described the conservation of these specific objects with iron-filing on surface. Andrea Renate Pataki-Hundt (Technical University Cologne (TH Köln), Cologne, Germany) and her colleagues reassessed the ageing properties of Klucel hydroxypropylcellulose dissolved in water and organic solvents.

Other presenters tackled new strategies and innovative approaches to collection care and preventive conservation in institutions: Jo-Fan Huang's (M+ Museum, Hong Kong S.A.R.) study explored interdisciplinary approaches to collection care within the M+ Museum in Hong Kong, including handling, exhibition preparation and public events. Paul Lankester (English Heritage, London, UK) presented on the testing of storage materials used in paper-based archives, their performance during natural ageing and their impact on paper-based collections. Paul Garside (The British Library, London, UK) and his team reevaluated the transport and handling policies at the British Library by measuring the physical forces undergone by objects during a typical range of library activities.

Of course several talks from other working groups, such as the Scientific Research and Preventive Conservation groups, also caught our interest. To name but a few amongst the myriad of fascinating topics: the study of indigenous materials in Indian palm-leaf manuscripts; environmental conditions and their impact on the discoloration of historical iron gall ink on paper; the application of hyperspectral imaging technology in research on Chinese paintings and calligraphy; the history of restoration techniques and principles on Japanese and Chinese paintings; the development of new display cases and approaches to loans and exhibitions; advances in the conservation education system and mid-career training.

The playback function on the virtual platform of the conference allowed all participants to replay presentation videos and Q&A sessions for a month after the end of the conference. This allowed for attendees who missed talks due to the overlapping schedule to catch up at their leisure. In addition, all conference papers and poster abstracts will be available on the ICOM-CC website as of the 1<sup>st</sup> of October 2021: [www.icom-cc-publications-online.org](http://www.icom-cc-publications-online.org)

Another highlight of the event was an hour long panel talk around the topic "current challenges in conservation", which took place on the third day of the conference on Wednesday the 19th of May. The discussion placed emphasis on the new challenges perhaps also new opportunities brought upon the field of conservation by

the global pandemic, climate change or the rapid evolution of digitization and technology. Several subjects were tackled, such as the collaboration between institutions, the re-evaluation of conservation practices, the enhancement of conservation through the use of digital technology or digital storage and its impact on CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. During the Q&A session, the audience actively and enthusiastically contributed to the dialogue.

The conference also included 10 virtual technical visits, for example of the Palace Museum, the National Center for Archaeology and the China National Silk Museum. A video was pre-recorded for each visit with subtitles in both Chinese and English.

### **Preview of the Working Group Interim Meeting:**

#### **Sustainability and Diversity in Conservation Practice and Recent Advances in Preventive Conservation**

We are glad to announce our next Working Group Interim Meeting, which will take place from the 10th to 12th of February 2022. In response to health and environmental priorities during the ongoing global pandemic, we decided to hold this event virtually. Contributions related to the main topics – sustainability, diversity and preventive conservation – are sincerely welcomed. We also hope to give emerging conservators a voice. Students and recent graduates will be given the opportunity to share and discuss their work and ideas with the conservation community. The deadline for submissions is the 10th October 2021. For more information, please visit: [https://www.th-koeln.de/mam/downloads/deutsch/hochschule/fakultaeten/kulturwissenschaften/call\\_for\\_papers\\_wg\\_graphicdocuments\\_02\\_2022.pdf](https://www.th-koeln.de/mam/downloads/deutsch/hochschule/fakultaeten/kulturwissenschaften/call_for_papers_wg_graphicdocuments_02_2022.pdf)

For the final day of the meeting, we are planning short webinars and hopefully virtual conservation studio tours. Caitlin Southwick, Founder and Executive Director of Ki Culture, has already kindly agreed to be one of our keynote speakers and to hold a webinar together with her colleague regarding sustainability in the field of paper and book conservation. Ki Culture is a global organization dedicated to creating a sustainable future through the cultural heritage sector. Caitlin has worked in the conservation field and in museums around the world, including the Vatican Museums, the Getty Conservation Institute, and on Easter Island. She was a professional member of the American Institute of Conservation's Sustainability Committee and is the Secretary of the Working Group on Sustainability for ICOM. It is a great pleasure to have her on board! More information about our other keynote speakers as well as webinars will be updated as soon as they are confirmed.