

ICOM CC Working Group Graphic Documents Newsletter 1, March 2021

Editors:

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The ICOM-CC **Graphic Materials Working Group** is pleased to welcome Marlen Börngen, Emilie Cloos, Julio M. del Hoyo-Meléndez, Valentine Dubard, and Yuhui Liu as our Assistant Coordinators (ACO) for the 2020-2023 term. The team of ACOs will work alongside the Coordinator of the Working Group, Andrea Pataki-Hundt, to make sure the goals set for this term are achieved.

During the 2020-2023 term, the ACOs will explore many subjects related to graphic documents and book conservation but special emphasis will be given to diversity and sustainability in the heritage field. The Working Group will also endeavor to give center stage to emerging conservators. We look forward to working with all our Graphic Documents members and showcase the great variety of work they do throughout the world.

Meet the new Assistant Coordinators of the ICOM-CC Graphic Documents Working Group:





Marlen Börngen – Germany

I am thrilled to take on the role of Assistant Coordinator for the 2020-2023 period and be able to work with such an enthusiastic and professional team. I started my career in paper conservation with a bookbinding apprenticeship in Göttingen and after the mandatory one-year pre-programme internship in Hamburg, I studied paper conservation at the Staatliche Akademie der Bildenden Künste in Stuttgart. My first position after graduation was at the Restaurierungszentrum Düsseldorf.

I am currently employed at the TH Köln, Cologne Institute of Conservation Sciences, CICS, at the book and paper conservation programme as Academic Associate. Here I am able to work with emerging conservators, and teach not only the basics in paper conservation, but also motivate them to stay curious in their whole career as a paper conservator. I am an ICOM member since my time as a student and I find that ICOM CC working groups are a perfect platform to bring different generations of conservators together to exchange their practical experiences and more. In the last years, I noticed that this new generation of conservators is more aware of the necessity and the importance of sustainability and diversity in conservation. As more seasoned conservators, we need to give these young conservators a platform to express themselves. And we can certainly learn a lot from them, be it how to deal with social media or approach a conservation topic with an open mind and think outside the box. I am currently at the beginning of my doctoral thesis in collaboration with the Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures at the University Hamburg. This is the starting point of a new and exciting phase in my life. I was lucky enough to receive a scholarship from the TH Köln for the next three years, which gives me the freedom to start researching about In-field profiling for examination of manuscripts and the imparting of basic practical skills with the support of new media. I am looking forward to working with the graduate school in Hamburg and their numerous international connections and I hope I can use my experience to support the work of the Graphic Documents Working Group.



Emilie Cloos – Belgium (currently in the UK)

Although I have always known I wanted to work in the arts sector, I came to conservation through a bit of a winding road. I started studying graphic design at 18 and quickly realised that although I had technical skills I lacked the creativity to be an artist or designer. I switched to a BA in Art History and Archaeology in Brussels, my hometown, and moved on to an MA in Modern and Contemporary Art at Christie's Education London. I dipped my toes in gallery work but still felt like I was not quite there. I finally landed on conservation, thinking that if I could not make art myself I might work on other people's, and did an MA in Art on Paper Conservation at Camberwell College of Arts in London. I graduated in 2014.

I have been in my current post, loans and exhibitions conservator at The National Archives UK, for the past four years. I love that it encompasses many of my interests and is not purely bench-based. I get to be a registrar, a conservator and a researcher all in one, meet many other museum people and sometimes travel. I have a special interest in microfadometry, and how to balance access and preservation when it comes to light management.

I have the privilege to work in a diverse department with colleagues that have such a wide range of knowledge and skills. This is what I would like to say to emerging conservators: there are no stupid questions, our field is vast and ever changing so one cannot know it all. It is ok to admit that you do not know something and to ask – conservation is a profession based on conversations, on knowledge-sharing and continuous learning. I also think that we learn a lot from trial and error and should not be shy about discussing what did not work so well.

I am a member of two UK-based professional networks, ICON and the UK Registrars Group, and am very much looking forward to being involved in such an international group as ICOM-CC. The National Archives are an institutional member of ICOM but I have joined as an individual member on the 1st of January 2021 in order to take a more active role within the Graphic Documents Working Group for the next term. I have also recently started a distance-learning certificate in Art Law so I am thrilled to be part of ICOM as a whole and follow all the great work they do for cultural heritage worldwide.



Julio M. del Hoyo-Meléndez – Puerto Rico
(currently in Poland)

I am the head of the Laboratory of Analysis and Non-Destructive Investigation of Heritage Objects of the National Museum in Krakow, Poland. I joined this laboratory as a research scientist in 2011. Our laboratory conducts technical studies and research on cultural heritage objects from a collection of approximately 800 000 objects housed at the National Museum in Krakow. We provide support to 11 conservation studios that employ approximately 60 staff members. The result is a fruitful collaboration between conservators and conservation scientists responsible for carrying out research, conservation treatments, and technical studies on objects from the Museum's collection. I have a PhD in science and conservation of cultural heritage from the Department of Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Heritage of the Polytechnic University of Valencia, Spain. During my PhD years I had the privilege of working as a graduate intern at the Getty Conservation Institute in Los Angeles and as a Research Fellow at the Smithsonian Museum Conservation Institute in Suitland, Maryland. I obtained a bachelor's degree in chemistry from the University of Puerto Rico and a master's degree in Chemistry from the University of Houston. My interest in conservation began while pursuing my master's degree as I had the opportunity of working part time in a paintings conservation studio in Houston, Texas. This opportunity allowed me to acquire hands-on experience in conservation and understand the complexity of the profession and the manual dexterity challenges faced by conservation professionals dealing with treatment of paintings. I am the editor-in-chief of the Journal of the American Institute for Conservation since November 2014 and also an associate editor for Studies in Conservation. I have been a member of ICOM since 2015 and the organization has been a very important platform for exchange of ideas and information with colleagues from around the world and establishing a solid research network. My advice for emerging conservation scientists is try to complement your scientific career with experience in museum and/or private conservation studios. At the early career stage, I also recommend to gain experience with different types of cultural heritage objects with the aim of defining your interests, selecting a specific type of material for specialization, and developing future lines of research.



Valentine Dubard - France

I have been working as a paper conservator at the Arts Decorative Museum in Paris since September 2019. I chose to leave my job as head of the conservation studio of the Prints and Drawings Department of the Louvre Museum, where I stayed for 8 years, for the still rather unknown and wonderful Arts Decorative Museum collections. Everything has to be done: from the design of new reserves to the search for solutions to preserve the drawings while respecting the particular identity of the Museum's collections.

Before being hired at the Louvre Museum, in September 2011, I worked as a freelancer for public institutions and private collections. I also spent 4 years in Tokyo, Japan, where I trained in Japanese specifications in the field of conservation and visited many paper mills.

Since 2011, I have been a legal expert at the Paris Court. I participate in several conservation commissions for museums and on the board of directors of several associations.

I have been teaching at the National Institute for Patrimony since 2012 and this year I am in charge of the graphic arts conservation section.

I decided to make conservation a profession before I turned 18 and I prepared for the National Institute for Patrimony competition as soon as I passed my baccalaureate. I was looking for a job related to works of art and requiring multiple skills.

I have been a member of ICOM for many years. I became an assistant on the ICOM-CC committee to help organize the conference in Paris in 2016. I want to highlight restorers and conservation work and advocate the integration of conservators into museum teams.

Conservation is a great field in which questions arise every day. It is necessary to keep an open and curious mind and to create a sense of community in order to be able to ask colleagues for help and advice. ICOM-CC is a community to which I am happy to belong.



Yuhui Liu – China (currently in Germany)

It is such a pleasure that I am offered this opportunity to work as an Associate Coordinator for the Graphic Documents Working Group during the 2020-2023 Triennium. I started my career in art conservation focusing on organic materials at the Peking University in Beijing, China, after which I decided to specialize in paper conservation and finished a one-year internship at the Institute of Conservation and Restoration (IBR), Bavarian State Library in Munich, Germany. This one-year experience significantly widened my perspective and strongly raised my passion on working as a paper conservator. I then started my master's degree program at the Technical University of Munich in 2016, meanwhile I stayed in touch with my Chinese colleagues and completed several field trips in China and Japan. After graduating, I was appointed to my current position as a paper and book conservator at the Institute of Conservation and Restoration (IBR), Bavarian State Library in Munich.

As a member of ICOM since 2017, my first experience of being “active” was attending the ICOM-CC Graphic Documents Interim Meeting in early 2019 in Basel. This opportunity not only was my first time to participate in an international meeting as a speaker, but also a superb occasion for different generations of conservators to take part in the discussion, share expertise, and expand our network. In the meantime, ICOM-CC launches the coming Triennial Conference 2021 in Beijing, which aims to overstep boundaries and brings conservation professionals from East and West together. This concept motivates me as well to contribute towards creating deeper connections with colleagues outside the western conservation community as we can exchange our knowledge on traditional and modern techniques, materials, practices and philosophies.

There are two words I would like to share with emerging conservators, from which I have particularly benefited over the past few years: passion and courage. There is absolutely no reason to be awkward or afraid of asking question and expressing personal opinions. Our conservation community is rather small and closely connected compared to other professions. In the era of globalization, I wish young generations could actively seize the opportunities to establish contact, communicate with colleagues from every corner of the world, and gain experience in different cultural areas.