

Sculpture, Polychromy, and Architectural Decorations Working Group Newsletter No. 1 August 2020

Dear Sculpture, Polychromy and Architectural
Decorations Working Group Member,

Over the last 6 years, I have not managed to
compile a single newsletter for this Working
Group!

This is by no means a reflection of a lack of
newsworthy activities and interests of this
Working Group - rather the opposite;
conferences, seminars, workshops, projects,
publications and discussions relating to
Sculpture, Polychromy and Architectural
Decorations have been plenty.

Simultaneously, and seemingly beyond or
outside our individual and shared professional
working environments, natural disasters,
conflict, economic instabilities and climate
change have and are affecting and
endangering our cultural heritage, but also the
safety and well-being of ourselves, our loved
ones and the communities we are part of.

The current Health crisis presented by the
coronavirus SARS-CoV-2, being an
unprecedented event in our living memory,
ushering in times of great uncertainty.

Discussing suitable adhesives to correctly re-
adhere small fragments to a sculptural
medieval image or obtaining data from
scientific analysis to establish qualitative
information of pigments and binders present
may appear somewhat less urgent, relevant
and significant in the bigger context of the
World.

Yet, it is these actions of our human curiosity
and instinct to care, that define and motivate
conservation as a practice of practical
problem solving and collaboration towards the
preservation of our shared cultural heritage.
Observing, recording and documentation of
this heritage, the means of preservation; not

only of the physical manifestation itself- but as
evidence for its existence, how it came to be,
why it came to be, what it meant, signified,
expressed and the 'agents of deterioration'
that led to its ruination, abandonment,
destruction or decay.

In other words the actions we take now to
record, document and conserve layers of
paint, materials, tool marks and construction
techniques of sculptural components, 3-
dimensional structures and architectural
decorations are the actions towards
sustaining cultural heritage into the future.
Keeping in touch, sharing our experience with
each other, and supporting one another, I
view as the purpose of ICOM, ICOM-CC and
of this Working Group and what we do has
never been more relevant and urgent than
now.

In the last triennium (2017-2020) our Working
Group has continued to grow in membership
numbers. We have a strong online presence
on social media with our ICOM-CC Sculpture,
Polychromy and Architectural Decorations
Facebook page having now exceeded 1500
followers.

Much of this Facebook group has been
managed by myself and one of our current
Assistant Coordinators, Ana Bidarra. We had
some guest posts from some of our members
but also from other ICOM-CC Working Group
members demonstrating the cross disciplinary
nature of conservation and specialisms of our
working group. If you haven't come across our
Facebook page yet, check it out, follow us and
participate:

<https://www.facebook.com/sculpturepolychromyandarchitecturaldecorations/>



In May 2019, we held our Working Group
interim meeting at the Tomar Polytechnic

Institute, Tomar, Portugal, on the subject of 'Conserving the Ephemeral: Light'.



Presentations and posters provided a broad and inspiring program for the two-day event and the post prints are currently in the editorial process to be published and made available by the end of this year. Further details will be announced and shared via the ICOM-CC webpage, e-mail updates and Facebook group.

Looking ahead to the (now rescheduled) ICOM-CC Triennial Conference in Beijing, Assistant Coordinators Ana Bidarra, Stefanie Litjens, Emmanuelle Mercier and myself reviewed submitted abstracts and after peer review, eight abstracts were chosen to be developed into papers and for oral presentation.

This is always a difficult process, the limitations posed by time and logistics of the Triennial Conferences in regard to parallel sessions of the 21 working groups, can only accommodate a limited number of presentations. Selection criteria are also different to academic publications, as the Working Group's Triennial Programme will be taken into account, the conference theme of the Triennial Conference and the host's cultural environment.

I believe that the eight papers selected provide our Working Group with an exciting program for our Working Group sessions at the Triennial Conference in Beijing alongside selected poster contributions and will inspire and stimulate most interesting discussions, exchange of ideas, networking and future collaborations.

I am writing this in early August 2020, and despite the great uncertainties I hope that many Sculpture, Polychromy, and Architectural Decorations Working Group members will be able to participate in the Triennial Conference, now scheduled for May 17 – 21, 2021.

The ICOM-CC Directory Board and Working Group Coordinators recently held a Zoom meeting to discuss plans for the current and next triennial periods.

The current triennium will end in September 2020 when the new one will begin. Outgoing Coordinators will end their terms in September this year, but will work with incoming Coordinators on planning and moderating the Working Group sessions at the Triennial Conference next May 2021. The Directory Board is encouraging Coordinators to host video planning meetings for Working Group members.

Assistant coordinator Ana Bidarra and myself are currently organising the online meeting for our Working Group's planning meeting for **Saturday the 29th August 2020**.

Further details and invitation to join as a member of this working group will be forwarded via the Emailing list in the coming weeks, so please look out and check your mail (including Spam folders) for this invite and join in!

The planning meeting is one of various opportunities for you to share your ideas, comments, concerns and suggestions for and with the working group. Even though 'face-to-face' meetings are irreplaceable for communication, I am very excited to explore the online meeting platforms as an additional tool that facilitates meaningful communication across borders and time zones. It will allow many of us to participate, where travel costs and time away from work may have prevented participation in ICOM, ICOM-CC and our Working Group activities.

It is new to all of us and in that capacity an exciting moment to be part of exploring and developing new methods of collaboration, networking, and communication.

Stephanie de Roemer

Conservator Sculpture/ Installation Art
Sculpture, Polychromy, and Architectural
Decorations Working Group Coordinator
August 2020

Stephanie.deRoemer@glasgowlife.org.uk
+44 (0) 141 276 9338

New Coordinator for the Sculpture, Polychromy and Architectural Decorations working group



With the conclusion of the triennial period 2017-2020, I have served as Working Group coordinator for two successive triennia and will step down from this role.

It has been six inspiring and wonderful years, meeting many of you at our interim meetings (Madrid 2015, Potsdam 2016, Tomar 2019) and triennial conferences (Melbourne 2014, Copenhagen 2017).

Despite, what appears to be a long time, I still feel that often, I have only just managed to address the 'tip of the iceberg' so to speak, and have been acutely aware of many members of our Working Group having remained less prominent and visible throughout the previous six years of publications, presentations and attendances at our interim meetings and triennial conferences.

From personal experience I appreciate the realities many practicing conservators face and the challenges that make it difficult to attend and or contribute to the working program, publications and events.

These realities have a distorting impact on the true depth of our Working Group member's skills, knowledge, expertise, feats and dedication to the preservation of our cultural heritage.

With the current emergence of technology in facilitating online meetings and events, I see a real opportunity to at least make a beginning to rebalance this imbalance. It is not there to replace or substitute the personal direct communications and encounters of our peers,

colleagues and friends, but an additional channel, I urge you to become engaged with in evolving our Working Group's communication, and participation in the planning, organisation and shaping of its future direction.

I also encourage you to support Ana Bidarra in her candidacy for the role of Working Group Coordinator for Sculpture, Polychromy and Architectural Decorations by making use of your voice and placing your vote for the Working Group's coordinator elections beginning 31st August and ending 15th September 2020.



Read Ana's statement and those of other candidates for the various ICOM-CC working groups here:

<http://www.icom-cc.org/353/candidates-for-directory-board-and-for-working-group-coordinators-2020-2023/candidates-for-icom-cc-working-group-coordinators-2020-2023/#.Xyq2l4i6MdV>

Our planning meeting on the **29th of August 2020**, will be an opportunity to meet Ana and myself, and to raise any queries, comments and suggestions you may have.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude and Thank-you to you for making this working group such a rich resource for learning and development in this field of conservation and like to thank following individuals for their assistance, help, patience and time devoted to the publications, the interim meetings, editorial contributions, conference planning and assistance and all other administrative tasks of this working group over the past six years:

Ana Bidarra,
Emmanuelle Mercier,
Stefanie Litjens,
Kaja Kollandsrud,
Helen Hughes,
Edwin Verweij,
Federico Lubrani,
Rocio Bruquetas,
Ana Carrasson,
and Jack Soutanian.

Conserving the ephemeral: Light
Interim meeting of the ICOM-CC working
group Sculpture, Polychromy and
Architectural Decorations

9th and 10th May 2019, Tomar, Portugal



The interim meeting was held at the Instituto Politecnico de Tomar, in Portugal, over two days on the subject of light as artist media. Twenty-two paper presentations ranging from philosophical and theoretical enquiries and definitions of 'light' from medieval to contemporary art making were presented alongside case studies concerning conservation investigation, treatment challenges and solutions focused on the preservation of the element light as part to and of the artwork.

Case studies concerned individual sculptures (medieval to contemporary), installation art (medieval altars and contemporary), and interiors-architectural spatial entities. 97 participants from France, UK, Belgium, Portugal, Italy, the Netherlands, USA, Mexico, Brazil and Norway attended the meeting representing early career conservation professionals, students and senior conservators in addition to architects and curators.

Throughout the conference discussions continued in the coffee and tea breaks with poster presentations and technical visits to the workshops and studios of the Institute by the staff.

There is no doubt that the event facilitated opportunities for networking, new ideas, research interest and collaboration for the future.

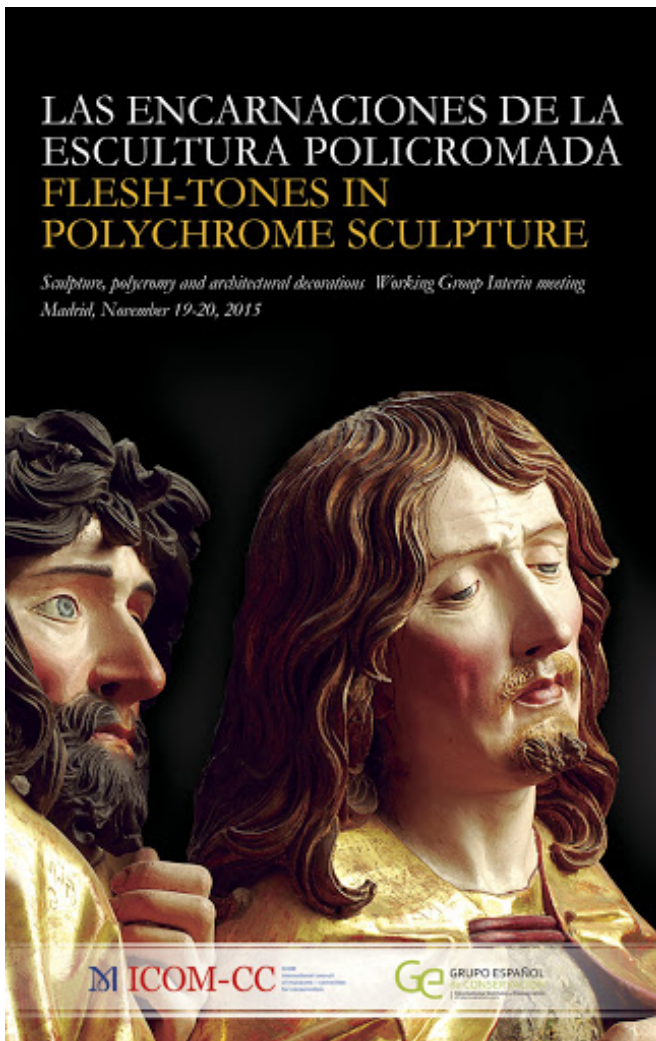


Technical visit



Convento de Cristo (visit Social program)

Publications



Publication '**Painting the Flesh**', ICOM-CC Sculpture, Polychromy and Architectural Decorations interim meeting, Madrid, November 2015 (ISBN 978-92-9012-435-1)

The publication 'Painting the Flesh', post prints from the conference is available in hard copy and in electronic format since 2018: <http://www.icom-cc.org/54/document/flesh-tones-in-polychrome-sculpture--sculpture-polychromy-and-architectural-decorations-interim-2015/?id=1588#.W6uxzWhKjIU>

Contributions are published in English and Spanish as presented in Madrid, with paper abstracts translated into both English and Spanish.

Post prints for the colloque on '**Historic and Modern Assemblages**' held in Potsdam in April 2016 by the ICOM-CC working groups for Wood, Furniture and Lacquer and Sculpture, Polychromy and Architectural Decorations are intended to be published. For information on progress contact the Coordinator for the ICOM-CC Wood, Furniture and Lacquer working group.

As mentioned above, the publication of the post prints for the conference '**Conserving the Ephemeral: Light**', Tomar, May 2019 is aimed to become available at the end of this year (2020).