

MODERN ART: WHO CARES?

an international
symposium
on the conservation
of modern art

8-10 September 1997

LATEST NEWS

This is a first impression of the seminars on 9 September 1997. The reports were made immediately after the seminars by the secretaries, to whom we owe our thanks! In the summer of 1998 a publication on *Modern Art: Who Cares?* will appear, including a more extensive report of the seminars.

You can send your reactions to this report to Dionne Sillé, Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage, postbox 76709, 1070 KA Amsterdam.

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I
Curricula for the training of conservators of modern art and the exchange of teaching materials

Introductions:

Mikkel Scharff, head of department, Det Kongelige Danske Kunstakademi / Konservatorenskolen, Copenhagen

Anne van Grevenstein, director, The Limburg Conservation Institute, Maastricht
Chairman:

Ulrich Schiessl, Professor, Hochschule für Bildende Künste, Dresden

Minutes Secretary:

Tonnie Bakkenist, scientist, The Limburg Conservation Institute, Maastricht

Introduction.

Modern art in its many aspects presents the conservator with problems that differ from more traditional works of art. Often the conservator has to deal with untraditional materials and latest material combinations. Frequently, the character of the materials is non-durable or even self-destructive. Furthermore, part of the work of art can be immaterial, in the sense of representing an idea or including different sensations.

Report and conclusions of the session.

The problem stated above has been a matter for discussion for more than twenty years now - as was pointed out by U. Schiessl referring to the conference in Düsseldorf in 1977 - but conservators of modern art are often not sufficiently trained to deal with this.

The conservator of modern art must be able to grasp the complexity of the work of art within its art-historical, art-theoretical and aesthetic context and be able to choose the best method of treating the piece. The question was raised whether a specific training is needed for this kind of conservator or whether the training should be grafted on relevant existing programmes. It was clear that the complexity of the problems cannot be dealt with in a short course after or alongside a 'traditional' education.

It was agreed that the first step is integration of specific modules into existing education programmes. This is currently being done and will be pursued in 1998 by the Limburg Conservation Institute in Maastricht (The Netherlands) and the School for Conservation in Copenhagen (Denmark). These two programmes have been presented as an introduction to this seminar by Anne van Grevenstein and Mikkel Scharff. Hand-outs were provided at the seminar.

It would be helpful if other institutions could also provide information about education in the conservation of modern art, either via Internet or conservation publications.

Teaching institutions should be encouraged to develop teaching materials, including the latest developments in modern art, for example electronic media.

It was stressed that interdisciplinarity is very important for all conservation disciplines but particularly for modern art, and must be reflected in the curricula of the training of conservators of modern art.

Enhancement of student exchange, teachers, teaching materials and teaching experience is stressed, implying solid collaboration between institutions.

The specialised knowledge and experience in the conservation approach to modern art gained over the last 20 years in the conservation departments of major institutions should be included in the teaching programme.

2

Electronic media: rethinking the role of the conservator

Introductions:

Derek Pullen and **Pip Laurenson**, conservators, Tate Gallery, London

Barbara Otterbeck, conservator, Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg
Chairman:

Saskia Bos, director, Stichting De Appel, Amsterdam

Minutes Secretary:

Pippa Balch, freelance conservator, London

Two key conclusions

There is a need for increased collaboration with industry in the conservation of electronic media. This would help to provide solutions for some of the problems associated with the display and storage of the artworks. It would, however, be less useful for the development of long-term conservation solutions, since the industry does not have any interest in the preservation of information or equipment.

In many museums it seems that artworks using electronic media are not given the same status as other forms of art in the collection. This should be rectified, making resources more readily available for their long-term care and display.

Introductions were presented by Derek Pullen and Barbara Otterbeck which prompted several different topics of discussion. Derek Pullen described how the Tate Gallery now actively collects video art as a mainstream art form, and how systems for the conservation of electronic media have been developed there in recent years. There must be a commitment and a sense of the responsibility of ownership before solutions for long-term care can be found. Within the museum an awareness of the consequences of acquiring artworks using electronic media is necessary.

Barbara Otterbeck reflected on the history of the use of video technology in art, and on her role as conservator at the Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg, a new museum with a keen interest in video art. In particular she highlighted the problems of changing technology in the conservation of electronic media, and the extra demands that the care and display of such works imposes on museum staff.

From the discussions that followed it was clear that the conservator has a broad role in the care of electronic media. There has to be a high level of technical awareness to set up systems for acquisition and maintenance. There often has to be dialogue with the artist to determine how the work should be displayed and maintained in the future (for instance to check that he/she is happy with the quality of a master copy). It may also be necessary to coordinate and educate staff in the museum for the running of the installation. The importance of collaboration is a theme that has run through the whole of this symposium and indeed it was found to be vital in this area, both within the museum and with industry.

More specifically, different preservation options for electronic media were discussed, and it was clear that the systems favoured depended on particular situations and the

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availability of resources. For instance, the provision of cold storage for magnetic tapes was generally agreed to slow down the deterioration process, but does not prevent the possibility that the corresponding play-back equipment could become obsolete during the time that tapes are stored. This is why the Tate Gallery favours a system of making new clones of digital master copies every five years or so, keeping up to date with new technology, but this may not be an appropriate solution in another organisation.

Electronics maintenance was seen as the key issue for the future. Research currently underway into the deterioration of magnetic tape and the effectiveness of different storage options was seen as vital, especially since there is currently very little reliable data on such subjects. The electronics industry cannot be relied upon for support in the long term.

The seminar was a rare chance for conservators and curators dealing with electronic media to meet for discussion. Particularly since the subject is a relatively new one, there is a willingness to learn and an openness to share information, which will surely help conservators and curators find solutions for the problems facing them.

3

Ethics and the theory of the conservation of contemporary art

Introductions:

Claire van Damme, professor of modern and contemporary art, University of Ghent
Hiltrud Schinzel, freelance conservator and guest lecturer, University of Ghent
Chairman:

Peter van Mensch, senior lecturer, Theoretical museology and museum ethics, Reinwardt Academie, Amsterdam
Minutes Secretary:

Nicole Ex, art historian, lecturer conservation ethics, Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage, Amsterdam

Conclusions

We have to accept change. Trying to stop time is an intervention in itself and will therefore transform the object. Probably the acceptance of decay is greater in Europe than in America. America fosters the idea that avant-garde art should be forever young.

The general code of ethics is a guideline not only for traditional art but for modern art as well. The integrity of the work of art should always be taken into account because future generations have the right to have a past of their own.

The influence of the artist on the restoration process should be limited. One of the

main problems of consulting the artist is that his/her own perception of the work and his/her original intention might change over time. The artist should not therefore be involved in the process of decision-making and can only be of help as an advisor.

Restorer and artist can co-operate in the process in the sense that the restorer advises the artist about the technical consequences of the use of certain materials. This is a kind of preventive conservation which takes place before the object is bought by a museum.

The statement: 'Live with the copies and say they are the originals' was, at least until now, regarded as unethical. When you make a copy you have to say so. A copy, though, can be of great help to the conservator. The copy can be, for example, a better Kelly than the restored original.

'It depends on...' was of course a recurrent statement in the discussion. Every object has its own problems and no solution will ever be relevant in all cases. Although you have to deliberate as much as possible, never do it as much as Oblomov. There comes a point where you have to make decisions.

4

Conservation of modern art, the situation in Eastern Europe

Introductions:

Iwona Szmelter, conservator and professor, Academy of Fine Arts, Faculty of Conservation and Restoration of Objects of Art, Warsaw

Jadwiga Lukaszewicz, Monika Orłowska, Pawel Karaszewicz

Chairman:

Jaap Mosk, scientific editor, Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage, Amsterdam
Minutes Secretary:

Steph Scholten, policy advisor, Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage, Amsterdam

The speakers gave brief summaries of recent conservation research projects in which they have been involved. Iwona Szmelter presented all the participants with a copy of *The Restorers Bulletin* [Vol. 8, No. 2 (29) 1997], a full colour magazine produced by Polish conservators. This issue is entirely devoted to the problems of modern art conservation and contains extensive articles on the research projects presented in the introductions. It might be an idea to include Iwona Szmelter's article "A Phenomenon of Modern Art and its Conservation".

From the presentations and the discussions that followed several conclusions can be drawn. First of all that the conservation problems confronting conservators in for-

mer Eastern Europe do not differ a great deal from the those experienced in the West. It was felt that models, methods and protocols that have and will be developed in the framework of modern art research projects, should and will be universally applicable. It is a waste of energy and time to try to invent new models. Also: use existing structures and institutions, such as ICOM, ICCROM etcetera.

Of course the resources of most institutions and private individuals in Eastern Europe are limited. Many people have to hold down two jobs to make a living, leaving them little time to invest in projects that offer no financial reward. For institutions it means that sometimes they cannot afford to invest in certain equipment and materials. Professionals (in Poland) are aware that they are up to date with current information. Whether this is also the case in other countries is difficult to judge. Due to the present transition process in most of these countries, change is rapid. New structures have not yet been established, while the existing ones have not yet been fully discarded. There is -in general- very limited support for investments in the conservation of contemporary art in Eastern Europe.

This makes it difficult to establish a network of conservation professionals, something that is considered priority number one. Such a network should of course be a part of a larger international network. The best way to set up such a network is by using existing (personal and/or professional) contacts. In the end there should be a number of key people in each country who can serve as contacts for the dissemination of information. The Internet provides an efficient platform for the exchange of information. Access to computers is not considered a major problem. Many older people working in the fields of conservation unfortunately do not speak a second language. This complicates the international exchange of information.

Several countries have a long tradition in conservation. This has sometimes led to the development of different conservation methods. These should be confronted with Western alternatives, discussed, evaluated etcetera. Professionals should therefore meet on a regular basis, preferably with concrete case studies at hand. Conservators in Eastern Europe are used to making their own products, instead of buying them ready made. Now that the markets have opened up, this will probably change. However, professionals have to be convinced of the quality of these products. Some materials have not been used widely in the East, e.g. acrylic paint. Knowledge is therefore limited and should be worked on.

A lot of damage is caused by transport and inadequate storage facilities. Participants expressed their interest in the Dutch Deltaplan model that puts preventive/passive conservation forward as the most efficient means of conservation. Active conservation/restoration is of no use if objects are going to be kept under poor conditions.

5

The packing and transport of modern art with specific reference to installations
 Introductions:

Hester Stöbe, conservator, Museum für Moderne Kunst / Stiftung Ludwig, Vienna
Wies Raanhuis, freelance conservator, Zaandam

Stephen Hackney, conservation scientist, Tate Gallery, London
 Chairman:

Cornelia Peres, conservator, Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam
 Minutes Secretary:

René Boitelle, conservator, Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam

Modern artworks and installations are unique, vulnerable and very often complex objects which are also difficult to handle. Their construction is not easily understood. All participants in this seminar agreed that packing systems should be designed especially for every individual piece. Standardization of packing systems seems impossible. Measures should be taken according to the characteristics and the condition of each work of art, once every risk involved in its handling and transportation has been carefully assessed. Doing too much can be as bad as doing too little. It was stressed that there is a need to design a packing system for each installation, in which it could be both transported and stored. This minimizes the handling of the object when not on display. Of course, one should consider whether every type of material used in the object can be stored in the crate. The packing should be designed to require as little handling of the object as possible.

The documentation of the packed installation should include detailed information, such as written reports, sketches, photographs, interviews with the artist and a video recording indicating the unpacking and preparative procedures for exhibition. In the case of kinetic art, digital photographs should be accompanied by a tape recording of the sound included in the installation. One proposal was that a copy of this documentation should always be kept with its packing.

Transporting the object within the museum, installing it and taking it down can be dangerous moments, the risks involved difficult to predict. In order to carry out these pro-

cedures properly, the conservator responsible should be present at all times and instruct and advise members of staff.

Every institution involved in looking after works of art should maintain the level of professionalism of all those involved. It should be possible, for example, for technicians or engineers to specialize in designing specific packing systems, according to the requirements of conservators. Everyone working in conservation should have access to this expertise.

Good packing systems can be very expensive because of their elaborate construction and materials. If an object or installation is acquired by a museum, not only the costs for its acquisition, but also the costs for handling, packing and maintenance should automatically be taken into account. Insurance companies are becoming increasingly aware that damages can be avoided by taking proper precautions when it comes to the type of packing required by a given object.

6

Setting up an international network for the exchange of information on the materials and methods used by artists and the possibility of creating an expert system for application in conservation

Introduction:

Britta Schinzel, professor of computer science, University of Freiburg

Chairman:

Ijsbrand Hummelen, conservator / coordinator conservation research, Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage, Amsterdam

Minutes Secretary:

Jetty Faber, scientific assistant, Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage, Amsterdam

General statement:

Communication and improved access to information is essential for the maintenance of high standards in the preservation of contemporary art.

Points of Information:

- artists' use of materials
- sources of materials
- conservation methods
- treatment of materials
- information about artists

What we can do in the short term to establish an electronic network:

- Collect the expertise and E-mail addresses of all participants in the symposium and seminar in a database
- Set up a website with a moderated discussion group

- Draw up guidelines for discussion on contents
- Encourage the use of key words in the contributions of the participants
- Collect sites, addresses, information already available (collection of website addresses, E-mail addresses and postal addresses can be sent to modart@xs4all.nl)

In the long term:

- Build a thesaurus on modern art as part of the Art and Architecture Thesaurus (The Getty Institute is interested)
- Make a feasibility study of a knowledge based system for supporting conservational decisions in modern art
- Organize virtual conferences on special themes so as to obtain knowledge for the system.

7

Registration and re-installation of installations
 Introductions:

Cecilia Illa Malvehy, conservator, Fundació 'La Caixa', Barcelona

Carol Stringari, conservator, Solomon Guggenheim Museum, New York

Roland Groenenboom, curator, Centre for Contemporary Art Witte de With, Rotterdam

Chairman:

Riet de Leeuw, policy advisor, Cultural Heritage Directorate, Ministry of Education, Culture & Science

Minutes Secretary:

Ariadne Urlus, co-operator, Witte de With, Rotterdam

The introductions and statements by the three speakers in this seminar concentrated on a number of topics, including the role of the artist, the function of documentation, the responsibilities of curators and restorers, and the material aspects of installations. It became clear that re-installing, although related to restoring/conserving, not one and the same. Moreover, every case should be judged individually.

Re-installations of works by Beuys, Thek, Merz, and Munoz were used as examples. Maintaining a work in the original or best possible condition is sometimes contradictory to the wish and demand to exhibit a work and the way it is best exhibited.

The seminar involved asking different levels of questions: the question whether to re-install, and, if so, how. Many installations involve ephemeral materials and are meant to be temporary, are site-specific, or hard to 're-make' or re-install. It became clear that, on every level, problems come with the territory.

Who is the most legitimate decision-maker? If the artist is alive, he or she should be. If not, documenting the best possible way to deal with all aspects involved in the work is

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a possible answer. Not only the work itself should be documented, but also the way in which it was conceived, the creative process involved.

Roland Groenenboom started with Paul Thek's *The Wonderful World that Almost Was*, the first retrospective of American artist Paul Thek.

The exhibition highlighted specific problems confronted by a curator or conservator in the decision to re-install or recreate an installation, and also in practical and/or material matters.

Groenenboom stated that re-installing should be about giving the right impression of what the installation was originally about. In Thek's case the importance of the work lies in the chosen temporality, and not in the 'left overs' (RG). Groenenboom decided to represent Thek's environments with documentation: photographic blow-ups, original documents, videos with original material and a monography.

This vision differs from the vision expressed by Harald Szeeman. Szeeman believes in the curator as a medium: 'Reconstruct as much as possible, but in touch with the artist and the soul of the work'.

If you do decide to re-install, the material status, or object status of the installation is another issue that raised diverging visions. It became clear that some of the participants regard the original parts, the original materials of the installation as the main point of departure in re-installing.

The replacing of parts of the work, or the materiality of the work in general, became a major topic in seminar 7. The decision to let the work go and replace it with documentation was rather daring for some of the group.

The idea that the installation changes over time, with every re-installation, could mean that a situation arises in which interpretation upon interpretation becomes the reality. The original work should be the point of departure.

According to Groenenboom, the artist, if he or she is still alive, is the most legitimate decision-maker when it comes to re-installing and should always be consulted.

Carol Stringari stresses the diversity of 'installations'; every work has its own characteristics, and raises other re-installing difficulties.

She addressed the questions of how to document a creative process. Simultaneous documentation of the first time a work is installed is very important. It can help to avoid misinterpretations. She also considers information extremely important; even within one institution, information is not always

available due to all kinds of practical and organisational matters. She stresses sharing information: also between departments. Information should be made accessible and intelligible.

Cecilia Illa Malvehy highlighted some cases through which it became clear that there should be a balance between the conservator and the artists. Illa Malvehy stated that when the exterior of a work of art is not affected by conservation treatments, it is not necessary to consult the artist.

Directors should be aware of specific problems that arise when purchasing installations, such as the costs involved, storage and the fragility of the material etcetera.

Documentation and communication

In order to be really informed (essential when investigating the possibilities of re-installing) not only should the installation itself be documented, but also the 'creative process'. The question is how?

The knowledge already available should be shared and distributed, within the institutions, between 'exhibition makers' and 'keepers', but also between institutions, in an (inter)national network of knowledge/expertise.

The original installation and the intentions of the artists are the guidelines for re-installing. This also means that the final decision could be not to re-install at all ...

Some ideas for communication came up: using exhibition catalogues as a source of information on materials, or the gathering of information in an institute, or on the Internet.

Education was considered of major importance. This involves ensuring that curators, conservators, art historians and registrars are acquainted with notions such as temporality, fragility, working in process, site specificity, actions etcetera.

These points should be incorporated in the curricula of art schools and universities.

8

Problems in the conservation of contemporary photography

Introductions:

Hans de Herder, director, National Photographic Conservation Studios, Rotterdam

Mogens Koch, lecturer, Det Kongelige Danske Kunstakademi / Konservatorskolen, Copenhagen
Chairman:

Mattie Boom, curator photography, Rijksmuseum / Print Room, Amsterdam
Minutes Secretary:

Susan Breen, conservator, Foundation Kollektief Restauratie Atelier, Amsterdam

Introduction: The aim of this seminar was to address and discuss the main problems encountered in the conservation of contemporary photography. The participants were from a range of backgrounds, including paper conservators, scientists and curators. An initial discussion with individual participants indicated that the main concerns and topics of debate should revolve around the problems of assessing, storing and exhibiting the objects. These are everyday issues encountered by museum conservators and curators. It was hoped that the ensuing introductions and discussion would answer many of these questions.

Main statements, discussion points and concerns

* Over its relatively short history, the art of photography has developed from a means of documentation into a form of artistic expression (culminating in the multi-media art forms of the last few decades). As the need for artistic expression grew, so the desire for technical perfection decreased. Manipulating the media and disregarding the 'constrictive' technical rules, the artist has turned contemporary photography into a conservator's nightmare.

*When artists experiment with their materials and do not use them in accordance with the manufacturer's specifications, you cannot expect any degree of permanence. This development among artists has coincided with a general tendency within the industry to manufacture products of a more and more inferior quality. Because of the processing conditions and the surrounding environment, photography has become a very vulnerable medium and is prone to rapid deterioration.

*To reduce deterioration, photographs can be stored in specific conditions; these guidelines are set down by manufacturers. A regular assessment of the object should also be carried out; it is recommended that collection management policy should include a density monitoring of selected areas on photographic objects. Changes in the object can then be detected before serious damage occurs. Limited exhibition time is also recommended (for example, displaying an object for only one month every 3 years).

*When treating objects, a proper identification of the material is imperative. Objects composed of a variety of materials will have a more limited treatment proposal and stabilization may be the only possible action. The emphasis throughout the seminar appeared to be on stabilization rather than interventive treatment.

*The conservation of objects should be a collaborative effort among curator, artist (if

alive) and conservator. In many cases it is unclear what the artist's intention is and what the results of poor technique will be. This can only be found out through discussion and early documentation. If an artist intends his/her work to deteriorate, what right have we to intervene? Does the museum/owner have equal rights? These questions will be open to discussion for many years to come!

*Another point to consider is whether or not we are allowed to intervene. Artists' rights to intellectual property in the EU range from 50-70 years after the artist's death. Copyright laws should always be considered, especially when proposing an interventive treatment. As a precaution, it was recommended that when purchasing an object, the buyer could also purchase the rights to stabilize the object (making it clear that this is to stabilize and not restore).

*Concern was also expressed concerning how paper conservators are expected to be responsible for the care of photographs. Photography is such a separate entity that conservators should be trained as specialists in this area alone.

Conclusions

The opening question of the seminar asked if it was possible to preserve modern art when it involved photography in a state of deterioration. The final answer seemed to be 'yes'. This did not mean that the objects should be conserved and restored, but rather that optimum care must be taken in their storage and handling. The main emphasis in the conservation of modern photography seemed to be on stabilizing the objects, and thereby prolonging their lifespan for as long as possible.

And finally?

Is history repeating itself? During the first mailing of this symposium, photography was not represented. We had to claim a workshop in order to present photography as a modern art form. Even today, is photography still not taken seriously as a valid means of artistic expression?

9

Plastics: identification, degradation and conservation

Introductions:

Thea van Oosten, conservation scientist, Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage, Amsterdam

Brenda Keneghan, conservation scientist, Victoria & Albert Museum, London
Chairman:

Pieter van Broekhuizen, head of consultancy and research centre on chemistry, occupational health and environment, University of Amsterdam

Minutes Secretary:

Karin Coopmann, project co-operator
Foundation for the Conservation of Modern Art, Amsterdam

One of the biggest problems with plastic or partly plastic objects of art is the identification of the kind of plastic used.

Documentation in museum archives about the kind of polymer used in an artwork is usually not specific enough, or just not correct, or missing.

One result is that the people working in the museums with these objects do not know how to treat, store and conserve them properly.

Another problem concerns the names used to point out certain kinds of plastic. In general trade names are used, however, while the composition of certain types of plastic can change over time, the trade name often stays the same for a long period.

Then there is the related problem of the description of the degradation of the material: One person will say there is a scratch on an object, while someone else may call it a crack.

During the seminar it became clear that conservators and scientists do not share the same views on this matter. The conservators do not wish to know precisely what kind of plastic is used in every piece they are responsible for. They want to know when it is important for them to know the exact kind of plastic and when a general description of the material will suffice. The scientists, however, feel unable to answer this question, since they think it is always important to know exactly which polymer you are dealing with.

As a result of these and many more problems we would like suggest the following as a future project:

The foundation of an international working group with the task of setting up a programme for the training of conservators of modern art and other people involved in objects of art in which plastics have been used. This programme can then be distributed among members in several countries, who can use it to set up their own training courses on the identification, degradation and conservation of polymers.

This programme should include the following items:

- an identification table especially designed to be used by non-chemists
- a list of trade names combined with years of production and applications. Many of these lists are available from the polymer industry, but we need to make this information available to conservators.
- guidelines for the exhibition and storage of

plastic objects of art. One of the guidelines for storage should include the labelling of the material.

- a list of terms to describe the degradation of the art object in different languages.
- a box with all kinds of plastic samples which can be used as reference material.

What would also be very useful in the future is a list composed by conservators describing the failures (and successes) they have had in conserving works of art made wholly or partly of plastic.

10

The conservation of monochrome paintings
Introductions:

Liesbeth Abraham, conservator,
Foundation Kollektief Restauratie Atelier,
Amsterdam

Louise Wijnberg, conservator, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam
Chairman:

Jorgen Wadum, conservator / head of conservation department, Mauritshuis, Den Haag

Minutes Secretary:

Marie Louise Sauerberg, conservator,
Foundation Kollektief Restauratie Atelier,
Amsterdam

When asked for their reasons to join the seminar on the conservation of monochrome paintings, it was apparent that most of the group had been working with these paintings and found them a real challenge within the field of conservation. They saw this seminar as an opportunity to exchange their knowledge with counterparts from other organisations.

In her introduction Louise Wijnberg emphasised the term 'monochrome', and what we consider monochrome paintings. She focused on the special qualities of these paintings, of the importance of artist's handwriting in creating the perfect surface as the bearer of meaning, and posed the question whether we can use the qualities of the paintings as actual guidelines for our treatment. The aim of restoration is to return the work as closely as possible to its original form. This is often impossible due to natural ageing. She stressed the fine line that separates the acceptable from the unacceptable when it comes to damage.

Liesbeth Abraham talked about other special features of monochromes, such as their fragility and vulnerability to accidents. She spoke of the integrity of the surface and of the experience of the surface - often meant to be captivating and sensual. A number of practical examples of damage were presented, outlining the constraints imposed on the possibilities for treatment by the very nature of the monochromes. In the discussion the necessity for preventive conservation was central, and many aspects were dis-

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cussed, such as lighting, handling, perhaps even special guidelines connected to one painting, and presentation. Another issue discussed was that of acceptance. It was mentioned that a general layer of grime or discolouration seemed more acceptable than scratches and other more local forms of damage, most likely because of a more romantic attitude towards general patina, than mechanical damages. The difference in the first and second generations relating to monochromes was emphasised. To the second generation the monochromes are already history: We will simply have to be more accepting, as it was put. In our search for perfection, ethical and aesthetic, there is still much more research to be done. Several areas were mentioned: inpaint media (matt/glossy), cleaning materials and methods, physical repair materials and equipment. But above all, the need and importance was expressed of exchanging knowledge on all levels of practical treatment. Every case is unique, and we often struggle in our search for satisfactory solutions, where there sometimes is none. There is so much valuable knowledge that has never been published, including that of the so-called treatment taboos. Setting up a network for communicating this information was suggested, and we recommend those interested to contact IJsbrand Hummelen, the chairman of the research field Modern Art in Painting | working group, ICOM-CC.

11

The conservation of kinetic art

Introductions:

Artur Ketnath, conservator, Neues Museum Weserburg, Bremen

Kees Aben, conservator, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam
Chairman:

Agnes Ballestrem, deputy director / head research and consulting, Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage, Amsterdam
Minutes Secretary:

Irene Glanzer, conservator, Foundation Kollektief Restauratie Atelier, Amsterdam

Conclusions

The participants in the seminar on the conservation of kinetic art agree:

- 1) That the artistic significance of the individual object lies in the combined effect/action of construction and materials, motion and sound, each being an integral part of the whole.
- 2) that these objects are particularly vulnerable to mechanical damage (shock, bending and wear).
- 3) that prevention of damage (preventive conservation) is of utmost importance - in storage, during transportation as well as during exhibition.
- 4) that a thorough documentation of the

artistic effect/significance as early as possible may be the only chance for adequate and responsible maintenance and, if necessary, conservation and restoration.

5) that an interdisciplinary approach to solving problems of maintenance and conservation is essential; that there must be an awareness of a joint responsibility in this matter. All those who can contribute knowledge, information, insight and experience must be approached and involved, including curators and art critics, conservators, electricians, conservation scientists and mechanics.

6) the participants agree to establish a network amongst themselves and others concerned with the preservation of kinetic art, to exchange information and to keep each other informed about problems and developments.

The introductions made by Arthur Ketnath and Kees Aben referred to their experience in conserving kinetic art. Arthur Ketnath chose several works of the artist Gerhard von Graevenitz to outline principles and problems in the conservation of moving objects; Kees Aben did so by discussing a work of Jean Tinguely. He also showed a video of this sculpture in motion. This was followed by a discussion.

As the work of Tinguely contains all the problems concerning the maintenance and conservation of kinetic art in a very illustrative way, it was mostly his work that was discussed. It was pointed out that most of his machines were not conceived as self-destructive in an art-historical sense.

The main points of interest and concern, which came up repeatedly in the discussion were:

- 1) the importance of maintaining or rediscovering the movement and sound of the object as an integral part of it. Linked to that is the dilemma that the object in motion - in its full meaning - will be worn out earlier or even self-destruct. The extent of the object exhibited in full motion must be kept restricted.
 - 2) awareness that the mechanics in such an object do not only 'make the object function', but are also aesthetically an integral part of the object.
 - 3) the question of replacing parts, worn out by the process of moving. The discussion was rather about how to choose replacements than whether or not to replace the parts necessary for making the object move. No general conclusion about the replacement of parts could be drawn in such a short discussion.
- Another issue broached during the discussion was whether an exchanged part should be clearly marked as such. The participants did agree that the spectator should be aware

of the conservation, but ideas concerning the extent of documentation in the exhibition space differed.

The importance of documentation was widely discussed:

- to be able to rediscover the movement of a piece in the future, conservators should document the object in an appropriate way, which means the movement and sound should be professionally recorded. Professional in the sense that specialists should do this work and that they pay special attention to record the mechanics involved in the piece.

Artists should principally be involved in research concerning the originality and conservation of their works, but attention should be paid to the fact that they often change the approach to their own work over time. There was agreement on the fact that as a conservator in a museum of modern art, one sometimes even has to ignore the artist's wishes, since in the past repairs performed by artists have not always proved successful. It was stressed that conservators are trained and paid to take responsibility for difficult and delicate decisions, that they are trained to document the date that was decided on.

The participants were in agreement about the importance of appropriate storage and transport of these often very fragile objects. Different experience and the problems in detail were outlined, but no clear conclusion reached.

Following the formal discussion, the debate continued. Since the participants did agree that an exchange of information is necessary, it is hoped that the discussion will go on.

12

The influence of the material durability of a work of art on the purchasing policies of museums of modern art

Introduction:

Frederik Leen, curator, Koninklijke Musea voor Schone Kunsten van België, Brussels
Chairman:

Frans Grijzenhout, head of training, Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage, Amsterdam

Minutes Secretary:

Arjen Kok, scientific assistant, Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage, Amsterdam

In his introduction Frederik Leen tackled the problem of whether a museum should collect artworks with limited material endurance. Leen stated that a museum should not collect objects that, simply due to their material nature, do not belong in a collection of objects with a minimum lifespan of a few hundred years. Leen believes that a public museum acquisition policy should exclude all works of art that do not respond to the

criterion of reasonable material stability. The traditional museum might be completely unsuited for the collecting of contemporary art. It may be better to leave this to private collectors, who, in general, have more funds and are able to concentrate on a specific type of object, including the specific facilities needed for that purpose.

The discussion concentrated on the contrast between the concept of modern art, with all its aspects of non-durability - or, indeed, anti-durability - versus the concept of the traditional museum as an institution for preserving the cultural heritage for eternity (which, according to Frederik Leen, in Belgium appears to be limited to a period of 173 years). The mandate of the museum of contemporary art changes. Museums brought contemporary art and artists within their walls in the sixties and seventies. Now we expect these museums to conserve objects that weren't meant to be conserved. For the sake of modern art, museums should reflect on their own position. In this respect Leen questioned the somewhat ambiguous position adopted by Jean-Christophe Ammann during this morning's discussion. If Simone Martini's wall paintings in Sienna had been treated the same way as Baumgarten's in Frankfurt, i.e. removing and repainting it every 20 years or so, would we consider them to be original?

Before acquiring a work of modern art the curator, the conservator and if possible the artist should be consulted. Each of them can give specific information on the work of art: its art-historical significance, the material stability and forecast on its longevity, the materials and techniques used. In decision-making, however, there are no standard criteria. It would therefore be helpful if museums that use a list of criteria and parameters would make them available to others. The influence of the artist on decisions concerning the conservation of the artwork should be limited. The museum has the responsibility and must take the final decisions. It is worth noting that the owner's rights in this respect are not or hardly defined, in contrast to the artist's rights.

We can assume that conservation techniques will advance rapidly. So we must be hesitant in throwing away works of art that seem to be beyond repair. Besides, if we really want to have certain artists represented in our collections, we will have to accept the maintenance problem.

13

Accidental damage to contemporary art caused by a lack of respect and care or vandalism; some case-studies in France

Introductions:

Géraldine Guillaume, conservator,

Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris
Chairman:

Joachim Goppelt, freelance conservator, Vienna

Minutes Secretary:

Ruth Hoppe, conservator, Foundation Kollektief Restauratie Atelier, Amsterdam

I. Introduction

Ms Guillaume's observed in her introduction that accidental damage or vandalism of modern art objects is often caused by a misunderstanding or rejection on the part of a general public that is traditionally educated. She pointed out that the term 'vandalism' should be defined more clearly and that the motivations behind these aggressive acts are not yet fully understood, often even being ignored as such. She raised the issues of what could be done to insure better protection of artworks and how the public could be made more aware of the problem. She finished her introduction by showing slides of examples of accidental damage and acts of vandalism that have occurred in the Centre Georges Pompidou over the past years.

II. Specification of the term 'vandalism' and sources of accidental damage

According to the driving force behind the different forms of damage, they can be grouped as follows:

- accidental: (fingerprints, scratches, knocking off fragile elements of the object)
- aggressive: (chewing gum and cigarette damage, cuts, pen marks)
- sociological or psychological: (graffiti, drawings with sexual connotations)
- creative: (e.g. 'improving' the object in the spirit of the artist)

From looking at the damage, one can distinguish different sources of motivation for touching, damaging or destroying an object:

- curiosity and/or carelessness
- ignorance and/or lack of respect for the artwork
- rejection of the piece

This indicates that a general distinction has to be made between cases of accidental damage on the one hand, and acts of 'real' vandalism on the other, that is a wilful act of damage or destruction of an artwork. The participants generally agreed that there is not much one can do about 'real' vandalism, and that efforts should be concentrated on preventing accidental damage to an object.

IV. How can accidental damage and acts of vandalism be prevented?

Two main approaches were suggested:

1. Protection of the objects

There are several protection systems in use:

- guards and regular controls by museum staff

- mechanical systems: (barriers, steps, vitrines, glazing etc.)
- electronic systems: (video cameras, IR curtains, alarm systems etc.)

When asked, most of the participants confirmed the use of one or a combination of the systems described above. The presence of guards was considered to be crucial because of the direct personal contact with the public. Mechanical protection only was generally regarded as insufficient. Electronic systems seem to work well but are often very expensive.

2. Education

This concerns the guards and the public. Better training of the guards could involve precise instructions about possible sources of damage during an exhibition, pointing out particularly vulnerable or attractive objects etc., and should be carried out in co-operation with conservators.

The education of the public should be aimed at creating a deeper understanding of modern art as well as better information about the consequences of physical contact with the object. Another suggestion was to give the public the opportunity to comment and give reactions to the objects displayed.

V. Conclusion

More information and education of the public should be encouraged. An interdisciplinary working group could work out ideas, suggestions and guidelines for museums as to how this could be achieved. A general need for cheap but effective electronic protection systems was expressed. A research group consisting of conservators, security experts, technicians, insurance experts etcetera should be set up to develop such a system.

14

Documentation and registration of artists' materials and techniques

Introductions:

Cornelia Weyer, director,

Restaurierungszentrum, Düsseldorf

Gunnar Heydenreich, conservator,

Restaurierungszentrum, Düsseldorf

Pieter Keune, director, Foundation for Artists' Materials, Amsterdam

Chairman:

Agnes Brokerhof, conservation scientist, Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage, Amsterdam

Minutes Secretary:

Marja Peek, co-ordinator Information Center, Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage, Amsterdam

The seminar started with three introductions. Cornelia Weyer and Gunnar Heydenreich presented the results of two questionnaires on documentation and regis-

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tration of contemporary artists' materials and techniques.

The aim was to inventory the quantity and quality of existing information in German speaking countries as well as the possibilities of access to that information. One questionnaire was sent to 36 museums, restoration studios and art academies and another to manufacturers.

The conclusions were:

1. There is a definite need for information on materials and techniques in contemporary art.
2. Interest in exchange of data is considerable even though serious reservations remain concerning the computerization of delicate information.
3. Access for a broad public is not in the interest of most owners or restorers, but a network open to professionals seems a good idea to almost all those present.
4. The manufacturers keep information on raw materials for only a relatively short period (maximum 10 years).
5. Recipes are kept longer and most manufacturers offer their co-operation and limited access to information if confronted with a special request.
6. Two manufacturers show an interest in sharing data for conservation purposes.

In the third introduction Pieter Keune stressed that when collecting data on materials and techniques one has to consider three things:

1. The reliability of data. Data given by artists and manufacturers can be unintentionally incorrect or incomplete.
2. The usefulness of the data. The questions should be formulated in such a way that specific answers are required.
3. The varying disciplines of the users of the data and the way in which the data will be used. Different disciplines require different information.

From the group discussion the following statements were distilled:

1. Interviews with artists are a valuable source of information on material and techniques. The best moment to carry out an interview is at the time of the purchase of the artwork.
2. To make certain that useful information is collected we need to define what information is required and for whom.
3. Different people ask different questions. To encourage an efficient exchange of information a common checklist for interviews should be developed. Interviews should be made by two people, preferably with a different professional background. A good relation with the artist should be established to ensure that the information is as accurate as possible and that this information be disseminated amongst conservation professionals.

4. Access to information on materials and techniques should be gained through a two-level entry: 1) general access to information on existing sources 2) restricted access to detailed information within these sources.

5. Artists, conservators and curators should be more aware of the properties and interactions of materials and techniques.

15

Working with artists in order to preserve original intent

Introductions:

Carol Mancusi-Ungaro, conservator, The Menil Collection, Houston

Shelley Sturman, head of object conservation, National Gallery of Art, Washington

Erich Ganzert-Castrillo, conservator, Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt

Discussion group 1

Chairman:

Janwillem Schrofer, director, Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten, Amsterdam

Minutes Secretary:

Erma Hermens, conservator / art historian, Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage, Amsterdam

In her introduction Carol Mancusi-Ungaro stressed the fact that the choice of materials is closely connected with visual effects, witness Marc Rothko's chapel paintings. However in interviews with his assistants, family, dealers etcetera this specific technique was not addressed. In conservation literature little attention is given to the preservation of this visual, aesthetic aspect. She compares this to the Sistine Chapel ceiling. Many of Michelangelo's contemporaries describe it, however none of them comments on the quality of colour. It was exactly this quality of colour that led to a controversy following the recent restoration of the ceiling.

She went on to emphasize the importance of interviews with artists. Sturman agreed and gave many examples of successful co-operation between the artist and the conservator. It is obvious that artists have very different attitudes towards the preservation of their work. Sometimes they are not interested in the permanence of the materials used: 'Your job is to preserve it, my job to create it'. Sometimes they give very precise instructions for the preservation of their work. We have to decide whether we have an obligation to the artist or to the artwork. Ganzert-Castrillo's introduction focuses on the organisation of his archive of artist's materials.

Discussion summary and conclusions

*The discussion opened with a statement from Voebe de Gruyter (artist): 'You like to

preserve things, I like them to fade away, to be temporary'. However, she would document the artwork, but, she emphasizes, the documentation is not part of the artwork and never should be considered as such. During the ensuing discussion two things became clear. First the intent of the artist, in this case the fading away of the artwork, does not always fit in with the aims of the conservator who wants to preserve the artwork. The curator may be aware of the artist's intent but at the same time might wish to preserve the artwork for its documentary value.

Secondly the importance was highlighted of gathering as much information as possible, direct from the artist (through interviews, their writings and their documentation), or indirectly, from curators, art historians, people who know/knew the artist etcetera. It was however stressed that information provided by the artist should be looked at critically. There could be doubts about his or her 'honesty' or they might simply not remember exactly which materials they used.

In this context information from scientific research such as analysis of the materials by the conservator/conservation scientist and information given by the art historian are equally important.

*The role of the museum is a complex one. 'A museum of modern art is a paradox', Marianne Brouwer stated. In general one could say that a museum seeks continuation. However, sometimes difficult choices have to be made when considering the preservation of modern and contemporary artworks. The wishes of the artist naturally influence the decision-making process but many dilemmas remain. The dilemma, for example, between an interest in the materialisation and in the concept of an artwork; between the facts -that is exact knowledge of the materials used - and the meaning of these materials; between respect for the artist's intent and the mission of the owner.

When buying vulnerable artworks museums should be aware of the conservation problems they might raise in the (near) future. Some museums have strict guidelines on the durability of the artworks they purchase. The participants however feel that a museum should not consider the permanence of the materials used as this might influence artists in their choice of materials.

* A continuous dialogue between artists, conservators, art historians and conservation scientists is extremely important if the aim is to remain as true as possible to the artist's intent while conserving modern artworks.

Discussion group 2

Chairman:

Janwillem Schrofer, director, Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten, Amsterdam

Minutes Secretary:

Erma Hermens, conservator / art historian, Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage, Amsterdam

Main conclusions:

1. Interviews with artists serve as valuable documentation for problems of conservation.
2. The artist's opinion should be used as a guide, but in the end the owner of an art work makes the final decision. It is therefore not always necessary to follow the artist's advice. Irreversibility, for instance, is a clear point to draw the line.
3. It is not recommended to put make interviews with artists available to the wider public since the information they contain is open to abuse, for example by using it out of context. It should, however, be possible to find ways within conservation circles to share the information we have.

Summary

Interviews with artists have proven useful and therefore it is important to conduct them. In the US one is legally obliged to contact the artist if he/she is alive, even about a slight change in the appearance of a work. But, at the Tate Gallery for example, the artist's advice is not always followed if it is considered inappropriate in the museum's opinion.

The artist present, Henk Peeters, is asked by the chair whether a conservator should take his advice. He replies that when he is asked about what to do with pieces that have deteriorated he always advises the museum to throw them away. He hates this approach of originality: 'It's so religious, it has nothing to do with my work'. To Peeters the story, the history of a work is important, not the reconstruction.

The group reacts however, that we need the visuality as well.

When it comes to the kind of questions you should asked, one participant comments that general questions do not exist because in the end it is all a matter of judgement and we have to make that judgement. On the other hand, if the questions are too specific it is always the wrong question. It seems advisable to set up an interview in a rather free form, so as to leave the artist as much space as possible to express his or her views.

On the subject of who should conduct the interviews there is a comment that most of the time the interviews are done by the curator, occasionally with a conservator present. However, it is stressed that a conservator has different questions to ask, based on another form of documentation. Another key issue is the difference between repainting a painting and replacing an object,

i.e. a part of the work. Repainting is irreversible, whereas the remains of a decayed and replaced object can be saved. If an artist advises an irreversible method a conservator can decide not to follow his/her advice. One participant remarks that conservation decisions are always shrouded in apologies. The work of art remains your primary source of information in the end.

16

The interdisciplinary approach in the Project Conservation of Modern Art: case-study on the conservation of 'Campi arati e canali di irrigazione' by Pino Pascali

Introductions:

Lydia Beerkens, conservator, Foundation for the Conservation of Modern Art, Amsterdam

Rik van Wegen, curator, Bonnefantenmuseum, Maastricht

Chairman:

Alan Phenix, conservation scientist, Mol Art, Amsterdam

Minutes Secretary:

Caroline van der Elst, conservator, Foundation Kollektief Restauratie Atelier, Amsterdam

The seminar opened with short presentations from Rik van Wegen and Lydia Beerkens on the Pascali case study, which discussed the problems presented by the object and the application of the decision-making model and an interdisciplinary approach to the resolution of these practical and ethical difficulties. The discussion afterwards had two levels: first the group discussed the concept of 'material authenticity' in relation to the Pascali, with specific reference to the issue of the replication or not of the metal trays. In general, consensus was almost reached that replication was a valid approach in order to recover key aspects of perceived original intent. There was a lengthy discussion on the possibility of modern art objects having a finite life in artistic terms and of the point at which transition from art object to archaeological or archive relic might occur. The complexity of the issue was reflected in the diversity of opinion that came out of the discussion of the Pascali. The importance of having the broadest possible perspective on the likely artistic intent; and the significance and meaning of objects, parts of objects or component materials was emphasised. The discussion then moved to the general issue of interdisciplinarity in the conservation of modern art and the discussion of the two statements. Questions raised included decision-making and final responsibility for conservation action. It was recommended that those with responsibility for carrying out the decisions should be involved early on in the decision-making process, especially from the discussion of 'discrepancy' onwards.

Brief attention was given to the respective roles of conservator, curator and director in decision-making. The role of conservator as 'advisor' or 'advocate' was suggested, although there was a feeling that a more flexible definition of responsibilities was preferable. It is possible at least to define where responsibility in conservation decision-making does not exist. An attempt to discuss whether multi-disciplinarity led to greater consensus in decision-making in the conservation of modern art was not conclusive. Discussion turned to what is meant by 'interdisciplinarity' and why - as opposed to multi-disciplinarity - this approach is better suited to solving conservation problems in the field of modern art. Characteristics of the former approach considered to be important were:

- interaction
- giving weight and authority to decisions
- maximising knowledge input
- compensating for poorly constructed frames of reference that often apply with modern art objects
- crucially, to get the broadest perspective of the broad implications of conservation decisions, especially aspects that might be lost in rationalising material constraints with artistic meaning.

In the decision-making model, input into the 'consideration' phase are considered crucial: it was agreed that this is the phase of the process where different aspects of a work - material, visual, conceptual - are set against each other. The solution is a compromise between meaning and condition.

As a consequence of the discussions, revisions to the opening statements were proposed and assimilated for the purpose of the group's concluding statements. A third, general statement came out of closing discussions on the relationship of material and meaning in modern artworks and a connection with the concept of interdisciplinarity.

Concluding statements

1. An interdisciplinary approach is of crucial importance for optimal conservation of contemporary artworks. The problems of deterioration exceed the limits of individual disciplines and cannot be solved within a single discipline. An interdisciplinary approach from the various parties involved (curators, conservators, scientists) where each of these formulates viewpoints, questions and answers clearly to each other is essential to the process of problem-solving. The participants recognised the importance to the interdisciplinary problem-solving group of being closely integrated with the structure of responsibility within the museum concerned.

2. While it is appropriate that ideas, opinions

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and points of view of those associated and/or familiar with the artist's creative process are taken into account, decisions should be made on the widest possible basis, recognising the fundamental principles of conservation. The final decision on the conservation/restoration of an artwork and the responsibility for that conservation lies with the owner (here: the museum, of course acting within the normal ethical and legal requirements as a good custodian of the collection).

3. The notions of 'integrity' and 'authenticity' have several, possibly conflicting, aspects. A critical opposition that can occur is that natural change in the object (material integrity) may act against conceptual and/or visual authenticity. It is asserted that the interdisciplinary approach - in which intermediate questions and answers result from interactions between the disciplines concerned - is the most effective in heightening awareness of the wider implications of decisions with respect to the possible opposition of the above-mentioned aspects of authenticity/integrity.

17

Legal aspects of conservation

Introductions:

Jan Kabel, professor media law, Institute for Information Law, University of Amsterdam

Caroline Forder, lecturer in law, University of Maastricht
Chairman:

Jan Maarten Boll, member State Council, The Hague, president Rembrandt Society, National Art Protection Fund, Utrecht
Minutes Secretary:

Annemarie Beunen, art historian / lawyer, University of Leiden

Prof. Jan Kabel: Introduction to Copyright Law.

An artist owns copyright in relation to his or her artwork. This means that he/she has the power to forbid reproduction, adaptation or modification of this work. Conservation could result in all these activities and therefore copyright law should be considered. Although copyright can be transferred, this is hardly ever done where works of art are concerned. Copyright law stipulates that permission is needed from the artist (or his/her heirs) to make a copy for conservation purposes. Whereas in practice no case law exists concerning restoration, in theory problems may arise because copyright is an individual right of the artist which can come into conflict with the public (and the restorer's) interest in the preservation of works of art. In Europe copyright lasts until 70 years after the artist's death. The artist's right to object to modification and mutilation of a work of art is part of his/her so-

called moral rights. The waiving of these rights is bound to strict conditions and in some countries they cannot be waived at all. Selling the work of art does not affect the artist's moral rights either. If a law suit is made the judge will consider the following circumstances in judging whether restoration amounts to an infringement of the artist's moral rights:

- will significant modification be made to the artwork?
- will the work be presented in that modified state?
- does it concern an important work of art?
- could the reputation of the artist be damaged?

Other legal problems relating to restoration discussed by Jan Kabel:

- Is there a legal obligation to restore a work of art or prevent its decay? No, copyright law contains no such obligation.
- Can the artist make demands concerning the results of the restoration? No, but he/she can invoke a moral right to object to modification and mutilation of his/her work.
- Does the artist enjoy the right to be informed and consulted in respect to restoration? Yes, this is based on case law.
- Does a copy of the work of art made for conservation purposes infringe upon the copyright of the artist? Yes, this requires the permission of the artist or that of his/her heirs.

American copyright law contains a special provision on conservation in the Visual Artists Rights Act which states that restoration and conservation activities do not amount to an infringement of the artist's moral rights. It follows that an artist cannot object to these activities - as opposed to the situation in Europe. Jan Kabel advocates this American provision which excludes moral right conflicts. For purposes of preservation he also thinks it wise to limit the artist's right to forbid making copies of a given artwork.

II. Dr Caroline Forder: Introduction to Contractual Aspects

Caroline Forder stresses the need for a written contract between the person commissioning restoration and the restorer. This should include provisions concerning:

- delegation of the restoration work and liability matters.
- specification of the techniques, methods and materials to be used. For example, the contract from the Stedelijk Museum drafted for the restoration of Barnett Newman's painting lacked a description of the work to be done on the front of the painting.

The restorer has the very important duty to inform and consult the person commission-

ing the restoration. This duty contains two elements:

1. The restorer has to keep the client informed of his/her activities in carrying out the work. This information has to come at the right time so that if the restorer becomes aware of new circumstances the client can react to these and a decision can be made. Here the time factor is vital.
2. Following restoration the restorer has to supply his client with full documentation concerning what has been done to the object and why.

Caroline Forder stresses that a code of ethics should always be part of the restoration contract:

- by express incorporation.
- implicitly. This is the case when the client knows the restorer is a member of an organisation which uses a code of ethics. If the client is not informed about this, the judge might take the code of ethics into account if a conflict should arise.

Provisions in general conditions used by restorers could conflict with the law and Caroline Forder warns against this. (This conclusion was made in research carried out on general conditions used by the Dutch restorers association VeRes).

In the discussion several topics were dealt with concerning both copyright law and contract law. The various moral rights of the artist were discussed (e.g. the right to repent does not mean a right to repaint). The importance of the artist's right to be informed and consulted on the conservation of his work was emphasized. Indeed, this right is in the interest of both the artist and the owner of the work. The overall conclusion of this legal seminar is that we know too little about the legal aspects of conservation and therefore a lot of case law is necessary. Another possibility is the introduction of more specific legislation on the subject of conservation, preferably on an international basis.