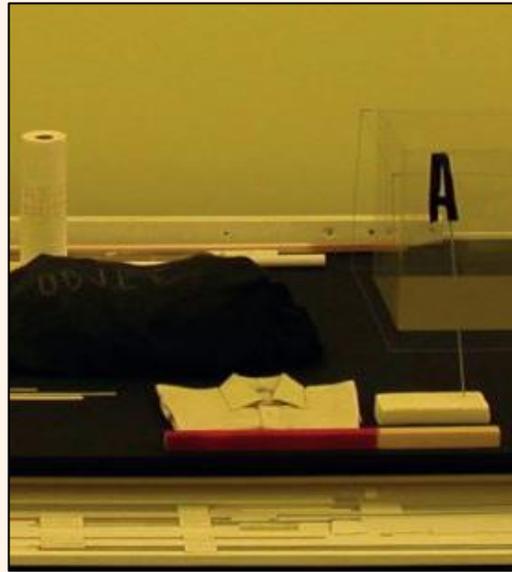


TECHNICAL ART HISTORY COLLOQUIUM: RECONSTRUCTION/RE-PERFORMANCE AS RESEARCH METHOD



L1) Frans Francken II (attributed to), *Crucifixion*, dated between 1581-1642, Museum Leuven (MM, no. 13), Detail showing the intricate pattern created by mordant gilding technique.

L2) Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS Fr. 640, fol. 66r, "Dorer mouleure de tableaux d'or mat" (Gilding painting mounts with or mat).

L3) @Making and Knowing, Spring 2016: Njeri Ndungu mordant gilding technique reconstruction.

R) Book cover, Vivian van Saaze, *Installation Art and the Museum. Presentation and Conservation of Changing Artworks* (Amsterdam: AUP, 2013: Cover illustration: ensemble autour de MUR (1998) by Joëlle Tuerlinckx. Collection Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst (S.M.A.K.), Ghent, Belgium.

The Technical Art History Colloquium is organised by Sven Dupré (Utrecht University and University of Amsterdam, PI ERC ARTECHNE), Arjan de Koomen (University of Amsterdam, Coordinator MA Technical Art History), and Abbie Vandivere (University of Amsterdam, Coordinator MA Technical Art History & Paintings Conservator, Mauritshuis, The Hague). Monthly meetings take place on Thursdays, usually in Utrecht and Amsterdam. In the tenth edition of the Technical Art History Colloquium, Jenny Boulboulé (Utrecht University) and Vivian van Saaze (Maastricht University) will give presentations about reconstruction/re-performance as research method. Reconstructions and re-performances are much-used methods in the conservation of art objects and performance-based artworks. They can contribute to developing adequate procedures to clean and conserve artefacts that have been produced with materials and technologies from past periods, but they can also be understood as a form of research that provides important information on the making processes of objects and the work-defining properties of performances. This colloquium aims to explore the value of reconstruction and re-performance as research methods by analyzing concrete examples from early modern art and contemporary art. The format of the colloquium is open, but there will always be substantial time for audience discussion.

Date and time: 23 March, 2017 - 15:00 – 17:00

Location: Drift 21, Utrecht - Sweelinckzaal 0.05

Admission free

Reconstruction as a critical close-reading method for the study of early modern art and writing technologies

Dr. Jenny Boulboulé, Postdoctoral Researcher with the ERC ARTECHNE Project at the Department of History and Art History, University Utrecht

Conservators and technical art historians often make reconstructions, using historical techniques and media, to learn more about material-technical aspects of extant artworks in museum collections. To make reconstructions, they consult contemporary textual sources containing art technological information, such as printed technical treatises, manuscripts and recipe collections. Yet reconstruction methods have only rarely been used to study the textual sources themselves, and the writing and paper technologies they embody. This lecture focusses on reconstruction as a research method for the study of early modern art and writing technologies. I discuss a particularly instructive recipe reconstruction that we conducted with the 'Making & Knowing Project' team, a major research-driven pedagogical initiative in Digital Humanities based at Columbia University, New York. The project combines lab seminars devoted to hands-on reconstructions with paleography workshops to produce an online-accessible English translation of a sixteenth-century French recipe collection. My example shows that the study of material and textual practices can, in fact, be mutually informing. In reconstructing a technology for gilded Moresque ornamentations of painting frames, we learned that material reconstructions can also foster perceptive reading modes and work as effective close-reading methods for the transcription, translation and textual analysis of early modern recipe collections and their transformation into critical online editions. Material reconstructions, I argue, can not only be used to address conservation issues of early modern artworks, but also to complement methods in history of arts and sciences for the study of art technological text production. Moreover, they can help to develop online research tools for conservators, (technical) art historians, book historians, and historians of science alike.

Museum practices of re-performance and reenactment in contemporary art conservation

Dr. Vivian van Saaze, Assistant Professor at the Department of Literature and Art at the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences of Maastricht University and Managing Director of the Maastricht Centre for Arts and Culture, Conservation and Heritage (MACCH)

This presentation addresses particular challenges arising from the emerging practice of acquisition and re-staging performance-based artworks in a museum context. Through the discussion of several case-studies, I will demonstrate how re-performance or reenactment is not only an act of conservation, but also a form of research. Furthermore, I will argue that reenactment and the study of reenactment processes foster not only a better understanding of the work of art, but can also illuminate behind-the-scenes museum activities. Indeed, the ways in which art *works* cannot be understood separately from the institutional practices in which artworks circulate and through which they come into being. Especially in the case of contemporary and dynamic art forms such as installation art and performance, no clear lines can be drawn between artworks and their institutional environments, as they continuously co-shape and co-constitute each other. What then is the value of re-performance and reenactment for research purposes and how can we situate these practices in light of existing technical art history? (For an introduction into the challenges of conserving contemporary art, please see also the documentary 'Installation Art: Who Cares?' (2011): <https://vimeo.com/24535819>)

Next TAH colloquia: - 13 April 2017: 'Materials & Materiality in Art History' (Utrecht)
- 18 May 2017: 'The Making of Glass' (Amsterdam)