



# THE CONSERVATOR'S REFLECTION

*IIC Student & Emerging Conservator Conference 2019*

## **The Conservator's Reflection**

12th – 14th September 2019

Cologne Institute of Conservation Sciences, TH Köln



# Preface

Together with the Local Organising Committee and our partners at the Cologne Institute for Conservation Science (CICS), we are delighted to be here with you in Cologne for IIC's 5th Student and Emerging Conservator Conference. Our S&ECC conferences started in 2011 and are aimed at helping recent graduates and those still studying conservation to develop their future in the profession and to gain valuable career information and advice from IIC Fellows and senior members in the field who have already trodden that path. The conferences, with studio visits, interactive presentations, panel discussions and social events, offer invaluable networking opportunities as well as digital engagement through our community platform and social media channels, #SECC2019, promoting a truly global level of participation.

We are quite aware of all that you have to offer IIC's global conservation community and we recognise the talent of students and emerging professionals. You as students and new professionals bring energy and passion to the field of conservation and cultural heritage globally as well as providing fresh perspectives that help to push the profession forward. Through IIC's growing international network of Fellows and members, we are very much looking forward to helping you take the next step in your career journey and supporting your future in conservation.

Sarah Stannage

IIC Executive Director

After being part of the IIC Student and Emerging Conservator Conferences in Warsaw (2015) and in Bern (2017), we were delighted to collaborate with IIC in organising the Cologne chapter. As part of the organising committee since the beginning, we have seen this project grow and are excited and motivated to welcome amazing speakers, chairs, but principally very many participants from all over the world – including those watching online.

During the last conferences, we were able to experience many interesting discussions about our field, while networking and getting to know emerging conservators with similar inquiries and perceptions to ours. Today, many of those questions remain to be discussed – for which in this year's conference we decided to analyse our role as professionals, together with our speaker panel.

We hope to make this conference as interesting, fruitful and exciting as the ones we have experienced in the past. During this conference, we hope you will find some answers or new questions to explore and resolve in the future, but also have fun with your fellow professionals.

Thank you very much for coming and Welcome to the IIC-S&ECC 2019!

Mariana Escamilla and Charlotte Hoffmann

Head Organisers – Local Organising Committee

# Thursday, 12 September 2019

08:00 – 08:45	Registration & Coffee
09:00 – 09:30	Welcome Remarks
10:00 – 12:00	Museum Workshop Visits
12:00 – 13:30	Lunch (City) and Coffee Break (CICS)
13:30 – 14:20	Opening Ceremony Klaus Becker, TH Köln Adrian Heritage, CICS Anne Harmssen, VDR Mariana Escamilla, LOC-CICS
14:30 – 17:00	<b>Session I: Conservator Meets Conservator</b> <b>Chair: Gunnar Heydenreich, CICS</b>  Erma Hermens Gwendolyn Boevé-Jones Julian Bickersteth Thomas Gdanitz
17:00 – 18:00	Coffee Break
18:00 – 19:00	CICS Workshop Visits
19:00 – 23:00	Dinner at CICS

# Friday, 13 September 2019

09:00 – 10:00

Coffee and Breakfast

10:15 – 12:45

**Session II: Conservator Meets Institution**

**Chair: Ester Ferreira, CICS**

Iris Schaefer

Sarah Staniforth

Joanna Phillips

Vanessa Schmitt

13:00 – 14:00

Coffee Break and Lunch

14:00 – 16:30

**Session III: Conservator Meets the General Public**

**Chair: Amber Kerr**

Petria Noble

Hilkka Hiiop

Ralph-Uwe Johann

Isa von Lenthe

16:30 – 17:00

Closing Remarks

Charlotte Hoffmann, LOC-CICS

Graham Voce, IIC

17:00 – 17:30

Group Picture

18:00 – 23:00

Evening Reception

# Saturday, 14 September 2019

12:00 – 14:00

City Tour

# Session I: Conservator Meets Conservator

The first session will lay the foundation for all further discussions – Before we debate our perceived image within institutions and the general public, we need to ask ourselves how we want to define our profession.

This first session aims to explore what common ground or discrepancies we find in discussing the individual perceptions of our own profession, the conservation profession. It begins with our personal motivation to become a conservator and is then shaped by our professional goals and experiences. This introspective topic lays the ground for further exchanges on our self-perception as a profession.

Although there already are guidelines, such as those from ECCO and ENCoRE, recommending key competencies of a conservation professional, the structure and contents of the conservation education vary between individual training institutions and also between countries. Therefore, it is hard to find a consistent idea of the competences that any degree or level of experience in conservation should reflect. Here, we aim to explore these core competences and the most important soft skills required by a conservator.

The borders between the conservation profession and adjoining fields are often blurred. It is unclear what should

be ‘owned’ by a conservator and when to seek advice from other professionals.

What does the market demand and how do these demands match with our own professional goals? Do we think of ourselves as specialists or all-rounders?

By looking at different career paths, we hope to encourage emerging conservators to get engaged with the development of our profession, and therefore, to enhance and shape their careers. How can participation in charities and other organisations, volunteering and outreach influence our professional development? Moreover, what steps can be taken after getting a degree and what strategies to use to reach professional goals. We will also discuss practical tips for networking, making job applications and publications.

To give different angles, the speakers should share their personal opinions and experiences regarding the above questions and points that arise from these.

## Chair

***Gunnar Heydenreich, Professor, Cologne  
Institute of Conservation Sciences, TH Köln***



Gunnar Heydenreich is Professor for Conservation of Modern and Contemporary Art at the Cologne Institute of Conservation Sciences, Technische Hochschule Köln. He studied paintings conservation at the Hochschule für Bildende Künste in Dresden and he gained a Ph.D. from the Courtauld Institute of Art, London. From 1995 to 2009 he was head of paintings and contemporary art conservation at the Restaurierungszentrum in Düsseldorf.

He was a founding member of the International Network for the Conservation of Contemporary Art (INCCA) and co-organiser and participant of several European research projects on the conservation and presentation of contemporary art: Inside Installations, PRACTICs, NeCCAR, and NACCA. He is head of the Cranach Digital Archive ([lucascranach.org](http://lucascranach.org)) at the Kunstpalast in Düsseldorf.



## Speaker Biographies

*Erma Hermens, Professor, University of Amsterdam / Rijksmuseum*



Erma Hermens is the Rijksmuseum Professor in Studio Practice and Technical Art History at the University of Amsterdam and a senior researcher in technical art history at the Rijksmuseum, where she works with interdisciplinary teams, liaising between curators, conservators and scientists, combining art historical and contextual research of objects with scientific analytical data.

Although specializing in painting techniques from the Renaissance up to the modern period, she works across disciplines with a focus on the workshop, the choreography of making, artist's materials and techniques, tacit and embodied knowledge, science and experimentation, artisanal knowledge exchange and collaboration.

Present projects (funded by the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research, NWO, and/or Netherlands Institute for Conservation, Art and Science, NICAS), IMPACT4Art: CT-scanning for Art: from Images to Patterns (NWO/NICAS); Imaging, Identification and interpretation of Glass in Paint (NICAS); Down to the Ground: Coloured grounds in Netherlandish 16th and 17th-century painting (NWO).

**Gwendolyn Boevé-Jones, Director Studio  
Redivivus / Dividi Foundation**



Gwendolyn Boevé-Jones is the founder and director of Studio Redivivus and the Dividi Foundation – a centre for technical imaging and investigation of paintings, located in The Hague, The Netherlands.

Conservation and restoration of paintings are the central activities of Redivivus. Its client base consists of various museums, among which Museum Boijmans, the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, the Haags Historisch Museum, Qatar Museum Authority, as well as several larger corporate and private collections.

Technical Investigations have focused on 'metal soaps' and other degradation phenomena in the works of Salvador Dali, Francis Picabia and Karel Appel. Research into techniques and materials of Jean-Baptiste Vanmour, Max Beckmann, Charley Toorop, and Kees van Dongen have also been conducted.

Gwendolyn obtained two Master's degrees from the Institute of Fine Arts, NYU and has been working in the Netherlands since 1991. She has been a member of the Advisory Board of the University of Amsterdam Paintings Conservation Training since its inception.

***Julian Bickersteth, President International Institute  
for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works  
/ CEO International Conservation Services***



Julian Bickersteth is the President of IIC. Julian worked as a teacher (and almost as a banker) before training and working as a furniture conservator in the UK. He moved to Australia in 1984 to work at the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney before establishing International Conservation Services (ICS) in 1988.

He continues to be CEO of ICS, which currently employs almost 40 staff. Julian has always been actively involved in the conservation profession both in Australia and internationally, valuing the great benefits that have come with such. He is also involved broadly in the museum profession, being on the board of two house museums, president of a fine and decorative arts society, a former president of the ICOMOS Polar Heritage Committee, and owning a museum technology company.

***Thomas Gdanitz, MA- Student, Fachhochschule  
Potsdam / Freelance Stone Conservator***



After finishing a voluntary year in cultural heritage preservation, Thomas Gdanitz, who was born in Berlin, Germany, spent three years learning the profession of stonemasonry at a company specialized in monument preservation. In 2013, he began his studies in stone conservation at the University of Applied Science Potsdam, graduating with a B.A. in 2017. The focus of his thesis was on the conservation of historic rammed concrete. He is currently finishing his Master thesis which aims at creating a concept of treatment for two historicist Prussian aediculae.

He also works as a freelance stone conservator in Germany and in international projects. Next year he and a colleague will be setting up a company for stone conservation together.

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# Session II: Conservator Meets Institution

The second session aims to examine the conservator's position at an institutional level and how related professions perceive us. This perception might be different from those aired in the first session.

We would like to have an open discourse about the qualities demanded by institutions and private companies, and which competences are valuable in helping our impact and involvement in the higher roles within institutions, i.e. training in management, leadership, business skills and human resources.

Most conservators, whether freelancers or employees, will work for or in co-operation with institutions, as well as with staff who are not conservation professionals. Consequently, interdisciplinary communication and positioning oneself in these existing structures is crucial.

The image and impact of a conservator may vary in different environments. There might also be different experiences in working in private practice and working as an employee of a museum or other institution. It is important to determine where we want to see ourselves in the future and what we want to achieve in our career.

Depending on the institution, conservators will have different

appointed tasks and areas of authority, which might not necessarily conform with our own opinions or expectations of what a conservation professional should do. There is no general compliance of a conservator's job within institutions, for which it can be hard to define the limits, intersections, and responsibilities between the departments and specialists.

Based on this, we would like to discuss ways to promote our profession and its influence in general and also to share experiences of how senior-level positions have been achieved and how to motivate students and emerging conservators in achieving their goals.

The goal of this session is to raise awareness on the importance of positively positioning our profession within institutions and corporate employers, our opportunities to do that, and to encourage young professionals to shape and drive their careers accordingly.

## Chair

***Ester Simoes Ferreira, Professor, Cologne  
Institute of Conservation Sciences, TH Köln***



Ester S.B. Ferreira is a chemist (Química aplicada, FCT-UNL Lisbon 1996) and the Professor of Applied Natural Sciences at the Cologne Institute for Conservation Sciences (CICS) since 2016. In between she obtained a MSc in Conservation Science at the Demontfort University in Leicester, completed her PhD at the University of Edinburgh in collaboration with the National Museums of Scotland and was a postdoc fellow at the FOM Institute for Atomic and Molecular Physics (AMOLF) in the Netherlands in the Painting studies group.

From 2006 to 2016 she led the analytical research laboratory at the Swiss Institute for Art Research in Zürich.



## Speaker Biographies

***Iris Schaefer, Head of Department of  
Technology and Conservation, Wallraf-  
Richartz-Museum & Fondation Corboud***



Iris Schaefer is Head of the Department of Technology and Conservation at the Wallraf-Richartz-Museum & Fondation Corboud in Cologne. She holds a Diploma in the conservation of paintings and painted wooden sculpture at Cologne University of Applied Science. In 2002 she took the initiative for a serial examination of Impressionist and Post-impressionist paintings, followed by a joint project (2005–2008) with the Cologne Institute for Conservation Sciences, being rewarded in 2010 with the IIC Keck Award (<http://www.museenkoeln.de/impressionismus>).

From 2009 to 2013 she was involved in a research project on the technology of late medieval Cologne paintings in cooperation with the Alte Pinakothek and the Doerner Institute in Munich. She is a Fellow of the International Institute for Conservation (IIC).

***Sarah Staniforth, President Emeritus, International  
Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works***



Sarah Staniforth is President Emeritus of IIC following six years as President from 2013–2019. Sarah is a Trustee of English Heritage, the Science Museum Group, the Hunterian Museum at the Royal College of Surgeons, the Pilgrim Trust and the Landmark Trust, Professor-in-Practice at Durham University and a member of the Westminster Abbey Fabric Commission. She is a Fellow of IIC, the Society of Antiquaries and the Royal Society of Arts.

Sarah held a number of roles at the National Trust from 1985–2014 including Museums and Collections Director, Historic Properties Director and Head Conservator. She worked in the Scientific Department of the National Gallery from 1980–1985.

Sarah was educated at Oxford University where she studied Chemistry, and the Courtauld Institute of Art, London where she received a Diploma in Easel Paintings Conservation.

*Joanna Phillips, Director,  
Restaurierungszentrum Düsseldorf*



Joanna Phillips is the Director of the Conservation Center in Düsseldorf where she leads an interdisciplinary team of conservators who are charged with the care and research of the city's art and cultural heritage collections. Prior to her appointment in 2019, Joanna acted as the Senior Conservator of Time-based Media at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York, where she founded the media conservation division in 2008.

Prior to the Guggenheim, Phillips specialized in the conservation of contemporary art at the Swiss Institute for Art Research in Zurich and as a researcher in the Swiss media conservation initiative ActiveArchives. Phillips holds an MA in paintings conservation from the Dresden Academy of Fine Arts.

***Vanessa Schmitt, MA-Student, Cologne Institute  
of Conservation Sciences, TH Köln***



Vanessa Schmitt is a research assistant at the department of Textiles and Archeological Fibres in the Cologne Institute of Conservation Sciences. For her bachelor thesis, she examined the conservation and documentation of a Bolivian ponchito provided by the Weltkulturen Museum in Frankfurt am Main. Within her master's programme of textile conservation she conducts research on felt as material in contemporary arts in cooperation with the Kunstmuseum in Bonn. The studies include the examination and conservation of Rosemarie Trockel's work "Atheismus" (2007) and the examination of Robert Morris' feltpiece "untitled" (1967). She is in her fourth year of studies and gained work experience in internships and as a freelancer in institutions and private studios.

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# Session III: Conservator Meets the General Public

The third session will be about the image of the Conservator in the public eye and how we can present ourselves and advertise our profession.

The term “outreach” is defined as “an effort to bring services or information to people where they live or spend time”. While always in the back of our minds, outreach is not always at the top of our conservation concerns. However, it is a point to be reinforced - even if only to gain legal acknowledgement and protection for the conservation profession.

Through movies, newspapers, television and increasingly on social media, our profession is presented in different lights. Conservators are often shown as skilled artists, passionate art and heritage lovers, cunning forgers, or amateurs and hobbyists – and less as scientists, art historians or postgraduate-level professionals.

In the last years, the image of the conservator has been eclipsed by two concepts: on the one hand, various cases of unprofessional conservation treatments gone viral. On the other hand, miraculous ‘before and after’ transformations of works of art, attempted by self-proclaimed professionals, who present treatments and methods that do not necessarily correspond with the work ethics of many conservators. While these cases have dramatically increased the visibility of our profession, they

also reinforce a rather distorted, non-professional or romanticized image of our work, which reflects the fact that the job title of ‘conservator’ or ‘conservation professional’ is not legally protected in most countries.

Besides asking about the general awareness of other professions for these issues, we might also ask ourselves to what extent this misrepresentation impairs – or enhances – our field. Is it necessary to distance oneself from clichés and distorted representation to gain further recognition of our profession in the general public, or does the saying “any publicity is good publicity” apply to our field – and so can we also profit from it? If we want to be outreach ambassadors for the profession, it would be interesting to see if it is possible to find a consensus about the ideal representation of our profession with all its facets.

## Chair

### ***Amber Kerr, Chief Conservator, Lunder Conservation Center, Smithsonian American Art Museum***



Amber Kerr serves as Chief Conservator and Senior Paintings Conservator at the Lunder Conservation Center; a facility with floor to ceiling glass walls so the public may observe the conservation staff of the Smithsonian American Art Museum.

She received her Master of Science from the Winterthur/University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation and is a dedicated advocate for raising professional and public awareness in conservation, preservation, and technical art history.

Ms. Kerr is a Professional Associate in the AIC, and a recognized Fellow with the IIC, where she serves as Vice President, Director of Communications and Co-Chair for the IIC Dialogue Series.



## Speaker Biographies

### *Petria Noble, Head of Paintings Conservation, Rijksmuseum*



Petria Noble is senior paintings conservator and Head of Paintings Conservation at the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, a position she has held since 2014. Prior to this she worked for 18 years as a paintings conservator at the Mauritshuis in The Hague.

As an expert in the material aspects of 17th-century Dutch paintings she has (co)-published widely in conservation and scientific journals. She is a strong advocate for scientific investigations of paintings as a key to understanding artists' materials, condition and the development of science-based conservation treatments. Her recent research activities include the application of non-invasive imaging techniques for the study of late Rembrandt paintings. Between 2016 and 2018 she was responsible for the conservation treatment of the newly acquired Rembrandt portraits of Marten Soolmans (Rijksmuseum) and Oopjen Coppit (Musée du Louvre). Her current research focus is the technical investigation of Rembrandt's 'Night Watch' from 1642 in the Rijksmuseum.

## *Hilkka Hiiop, Professor, Estonian Academy of Art*



Hilkka Hiiop (PhD) is Professor at the Estonian Academy of Art, Department of Cultural Heritage and Conservation.

She was trained as an art historian at Tartu University and got her MA degree in conservation from the Estonian Academy of Art. In 2012 she finalized her PhD research on the conservation management of contemporary art.

Additional professional experience in conservation includes an internship at the Gemäldegalerie in Berlin (1999), in Amsterdam (1999–2002), at the ICR (Istituto Centrale per il Restauro) in Rome (2003). 2003–2009 she was working as a conservator of mural paintings in Rome.

She has supervised a number of conservation and technical investigation projects in Estonia, curated exhibitions, and conducted scientific research on conservation and technical art history.

***Ralph-Uwe Johann, Managing Director, Deffner & Johann***



Ralph-Uwe Johann is managing director and owner of Deffner & Johann GmbH, based in Germany. The company is a leading supplier of materials, tools and equipment for conservation and preservation professionals in over 50 countries with a tradition dating back to 1880.

Ralph-Uwe Johann has held management positions in global tech-firms in Germany and the US before returning to Schweinfurt in 2008 and succeeding in 5th generation in the family business.

For many years Ralph-Uwe Johann has awarded scholarships to students of conservation and restoration advocating and enabling international learning and sharing best practice.

Johann holds a diploma in Business Administration with majors in Marketing, Information Technology and Systems Theory from the University Regensburg, Germany and the European Business Management School, Swansea, UK. He is a trained Six Sigma Black Belt and has given lectures on leadership and HR management.

*Isa von Lenthe, Fellow, Stichting Restauratie Atelier Limburg*



Isa von Lenthe completed her master's degree in conservation and restoration of paintings and sculptures at the University of Applied Sciences in Bern, Switzerland. Before, she did a two-year internship in two private restoration studios in Florence, Italy and graduated from the Goering Institute in Munich, Germany with a bachelor equivalent.

Isa is currently doing a fellowship at the Stichting Restauratie Atelier Limburg (SRAL) in Maastricht, where she is working on various projects. In 2017 Isa helped to organise the IIC-SECC in Bern and since February 2018 she is the coordinator of the IIC Instagram account.

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# [young] conservators

## Dear Conference Participants,

We are a group of Conservation students based in Germany, who aim to draw attention and promote the job of conservators to the general public by presenting a good image of our profession. *We are delighted to support this years IIC - Student and Emerging Conservator Conference by bringing the questions that are asked online during the live streaming into the discussion and bring together your online input.*

As emerging professionals, we felt committed to represent our profession to a broader community. That is why we founded the Young Conservators volunteer group. We are active on social media platforms, where we regularly post insights of our everyday work life.

Conservators are a relatively small group of professionals, which is why we think

that only by working together and joining forces we might be able to shift the perception of our profession in the minds of the general public, as well as politically and (maybe) payroll wise. Come and join us internationally on our accounts and share it with friends:

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/YoungConservators/>

**Instagram:** [https://www.instagram.com/young\\_conservators/](https://www.instagram.com/young_conservators/)

**Twitter:** <https://twitter.com/YConservators>

Follow us, participate during the conference online and ask questions! #Young\_Conservators, #SECC19 and #IICSECC2019

Your Young Conservators Team,  
Astrid, Charlotte, Johanna, Mariana,  
Nora, Sarah and Ronja



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## Local Organising Committee:

Anika Bilinski

Mariana Escamilla

Charlotte Hoffmann

Leonie Korte

Juliane Lückel

Malin Möhrke

Hannah Pesch

Nadine Schönhütte

Naja-Anissa Staats

Charlotte Stahmann

## Special Thanks to:

Graham Voce

Ester Ferreira

Gunnar Heydenreich

Mikkel Scharff

Jo Kirby Atkinson

Manfred Rosellen

Edgar Workurka

Isa von Lenthe

Kate Smith

Adrian Heritage

Regina Urbanek

Vahida Catic

Bojana Bobar

Verein der Freunde und Förderer des Instituts für Restaurierungs- und Konservierungswissenschaft der TH Köln

Moritz Geissmann

Ronja Fröhlich

Vanessa Schwaderlapp

Raphael Capaul

Sarah Vortel

Marielena Buonaiuto

Claire Egenolf

**As well as all CICS Volunteers!**

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# Technology Arts Sciences TH Köln

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