

## **Art and Material: The division of labour in the creative process**

Interdisciplinary symposium in Zurich

Thursday / Friday, 14 / 15 November 2019

A partnership between the Swiss Institute for Art Research (SIK-ISEA) and Bern University of the Arts (HKB)

### **Idea and organisation**

SIK-ISEA

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HKB

Prof. Stefan Wülfert, head of the Conservation & Restoration division and HKB vice-president

Prof. Anne Krauter, art history lecturer in the Conservation & Restoration division / research fellow on the project "Materiality in Art and Culture"

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**Friday, 15 November 2019**

## **Section II.2: Classical Forms of Coproduction**

### **Status Reconsidered: Intervention and communication in the prints of J. M. W. Turner**

Anna Katharina Thaler, MA

Doctoral student and research assistant with the Graduiertenkolleg "Changing Frames" at Universität Konstanz / Staatliche Akademie der Bildenden Künste, Stuttgart

### **Abstract**

Engravers could be admitted to the Royal Academy of Arts in London as associate members but were not allowed full membership until 1855. Despite their skills they were regarded as "mere transcribers of other men's work, not original artists".<sup>1</sup> Engravers were clearly the active, executive agency that disseminated the work of other artists, whose reputation would be enhanced by the prints. Joseph Mallord William Turner repeatedly employed the same engravers for his printed oeuvre of more than

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<sup>1</sup> Basil Hunnisett, *Steel-Engraved Book Illustration in England*, London 1980, p. 56.

850 motifs. He seems to have trained the engravers to reflect his own ambitions and oversaw their work, which required not only a command of techniques such as mezzotint and etching, but also a shift in material from copper to (around 1820) steel.

Turner's work displays a number of different approaches and work processes. The long-term project *Liber Studiorum* is founded on specially conceived monochrome drawings that were then transposed into prints. Turner actively intervened several times in the elaboration and transposition of the motif. Whereas Turner himself was responsible for the outlines, the engraver took charge of the tonal gradations in mezzotint and aquatint, submitting intermediate proofs, known as "touched proofs", to which Turner would add his comments. Further interventions occurred after the first prints were published, with Turner reworking the image or touching up the plate. For many of his book illustrations Turner produced preliminary polychrome watercolours which the engraver autonomously transposed onto steel plates as etchings. Turner only optimised the configuration of these motifs in the form of comments and sketches on the touched proofs. The technical implementation was left to the engraver.

The uses of the prints varied. The *Liber Studiorum*, for example, was Turner's personal project, in which he primarily explored his attitude to landscape painting. The book illustrations, by contrast, served other functions. Scholarly treatment of the proof and its status as something between an original print and a preparatory drawing raise questions about the collaborative work process.

### **The speaker**

Completed the foundation course in design at F+F Schule für Kunst und Design in Zurich. Graduated in art history together with literature and media studies at the University of Konstanz. Master of Arts in 2018 with a thesis on J. M. W. Turner's prints. Worked while studying as a tutor, student trainee and assistant in museums around Lake Constance. Since October 2018 doctoral student and research assistant with the research training group "Changing Frames: Art History and Art Technology in Exchange" at the University of Konstanz and the State Academy of Fine Arts in Stuttgart.

### **From material "refinement" to immaterial "spiritualisation": Art and material in Werkbund discourse, 1907–1914**

Adriana Kapsreiter, Dr. des.

Research assistant, Bauhaus-Archiv / Museum für Gestaltung, Berlin

### **Abstract**

In the early 20th century, prompted by industrial expansion, the question about the division of labour between design and implementation was particularly explosive in the decorative arts, given that serial production was being supplied by an army of poorly trained, underpaid draftsmen, exacerbating Germany's reputation for shoddy goods with overloaded, badly copied ornamentation.

One institution that gained notoriety in resisting such shoddy goods was the Deutscher Werkbund, or German Association of Craftsmen, which was founded in Munich in 1907 for the explicit purpose of "refining commercial labour". As an association of artists and industrialists, among them a long list of famous names such as Peter Behrens, Henry van de Velde, Hermann Muthesius and Walter Gropius, the Werkbund entered the history books and set its stamp on following generations, including the Bauhaus. However, for all its fame and influence on future art history, one especially fascinating aspect of the Werkbund has so far remained in the shadows: the multi-faceted discourse which took

place there around the conditions of industrial labour, its specific characteristics, what distinguished it from work in the craft sector, and what consequences this had for artistic design. The Werkbund addressed many issues of artistic work in the machine age from different angles, both artistic and industrial, including the division of labour in industrial production and questions around the nature and use of different materials.

Alongside this focus on materials in Werkbund discourse, however, my doctoral research generated another finding of particular note, which is that in the seven years of pre-war discourse a shift in paradigm occurred. In the early years from 1907 to 1909, the Werkbund developed a highly detailed, multi-faceted discourse about the material conditions of production, even touching upon the social question and various business matters, undertaking pertinent philosophical analyses of technology and examining the factory as the actual site of labour, to which it devoted an exhibition. However, from 1910 onwards the material conditions of production and the voices of industry suddenly took backstage and the emphasis was no longer on “refinement” but on “spiritualisation”, with a new focus on the nobility of the immaterial and on artistic form.

In my paper I shall discuss this paradigm shift, its significance for the Werkbund and for the *zeitgeist*, and the implications for artistic production in the modern era. It is the first time that I will be presenting these new findings on the Werkbund, a field of research often seen as overgrazed, because they fit well under the heading “art and material” and above all cast light on the situation at the dawn of the Machine Age.

### **The speaker**

Adriana Kapsreiter, b. 1985 in Pfarrkirchen / Lower Bavaria, studied art history and philosophy in Vienna and Berlin. After early research on concepts of the body in early Christian sepulchral sculpture, she has been researching since 2011 into work architecture, the Werkbund, the history of industrial building and the early work of Walter Gropius. In 2018 she obtained her doctorate with a mark of ‘summa cum laude’ at the TU Berlin with a dissertation entitled “From ‘Refinement’ to ‘Spiritualisation’: Industrial work and ‘modern’ factories in the discourse of the Deutscher Werkbund (1907–1914)”. Since 2017 she has worked in the art education department at the Bauhaus-Archiv / Museum für Gestaltung in Berlin. Since 2019 she has also been a research assistant with the project, funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG), on “Alma Mahler and Walter Gropius: The correspondence from 1910 to 1915” at the Bauhaus-Archiv in Berlin.

Her dissertation will appear in spring 2020 in the series “Neue Bauhausbücher – neue Zählung” published by the Bauhaus-Archiv at Gebrüder Mann Verlag.

### **Artistic Authenticity and Division of Labour: Artist’s tapestry in modern and contemporary art**

Sabine Bartelsheim, Prof. Dr. phil.

Professor of Art History, Hochschule der bildenden Künste (HBK), Essen

### **Abstract**

“Goya’s ideas could not be expressed in tapestry, and they were at odds with the purpose of these wall hangings. He could envisage a work of art only as an entirely personal tool of expression, and so the interrelationship between artisan and artist so crucial to the sophisticated manufacture of tapestries remained alien to him.” Fred Licht

In the late 1970s the art historian Fred Licht still saw Goya's cartoons as heralding the end of tapestry art. The redefinition of art as a "personal tool of expression" deriving its significance entirely from the subjectivity of the artist was, in his view, incompatible with the productive division of labour and the decorative appeal of the medium. And yet from the late 19th century down to the present the tapestry has undergone one renaissance after another, and only recently in 2014 the "return of the tapestry paradigm" (Regine Prange) was declared. Among the many reasons given for this phenomenon are the globalisation of the arts (Cornelia Lauf), the tapestry's role "as a metaphor for the digital image" (Prange) and the thriving art market with its luxury-seeking purchasing classes. One other explanation, however, is that the delegation of implementation in the 20th century has now become the "status quo" (Lauf), and consequently ideas of "authenticity" have changed.

The paper starts by seeking to account, with the aid of a few examples, for the development of the "artist tapestry" since industrialisation and to shine a light on the division between design and implementation in their shifting social and technical, media-related dimensions. Compared with the classical tapestry, for instance, the modern tapestry often results from a very personal collaboration between the artist and the weaver (Kirchner / Gujer, Roth / Wiener). In more recent times, however, growing mechanisation has once more curtailed the role of subjective interpretation by the implementing agent.

Until the 1960s, moreover, women were often involved on the implementation side, as weavers but also as patrons. In France Marie Cuttoli published an edition of tapestries by Picasso, Matisse, Miró, Leger, Dufy and others in the 1930s. In the 1960s artist tapestry in the United States found a committed backer in Gloria F. Ross, the sister of Helen Frankenthaler. However, female artists have also contributed much to the medium as designers: the tapestries by the women who wove at the Bauhaus, as Virginia Gardner Troy has described, introduced "structural design" to the artist tapestry for the first time.

Following an outline of this development, we shall then explore how ideas of "authenticity" connect to the social and media-related conditions behind artist tapestry. These reflections will draw on the philosophical examination of "artistic authenticity" by Regina Wenninger. Wenninger distinguishes between artistic and personal authenticity, defining them as commitments to different points of reference: one's own artistic self, the historical context and art in general. This begs the question of how far this definition can apply to production based on a division of labour.

### **The speaker**

Studied art history, German and education at the universities of Trier, Münster and Bonn. Obtained her doctorate in 1999 at the University of Cologne with a study on "Living Plants in 20th-Century Art". Then worked as a research assistant at the Kunsthalle in Kiel and as an assistant curator at the Haus am Waldsee, Berlin. 2007–2013 research and project assistant at the Bergische Universität in Wuppertal; since 2014 Professor of Art History at the Hochschule der bildenden Künste (HBK), Essen.

Specialises in art and art theory of the 19th to 21st centuries, including: border areas between art, design and everyday culture, painting and technical visual media, theory and history of art exhibitions, images of nature in contemporary art.

## **Popular vehicles for images: Positioning digital tapestry in the 21st century**

Anne Röhl, Dr. des.

Research assistant, Chair of Art History, Universität Siegen

### **Abstract**

The division of labour in tapestry-making followed a familiar pattern into the 20th century: the design and implementation were usually not by the same person. This changed in the 1960s: In order, for example, to meet Jean Lurçat's criteria for "Nouvelle Tapisserie", submissions to the first Lausanne Tapestry Biennial in 1962 had to be woven from a cartoon made by the artist that had the same original dimensions as the tapestry. In the 2000s a novel approach to production gained popularity: specialised companies like Magnolia Editions and Flanders Tapestries used image files from over a hundred artists around the world to produce tapestries and it seemed that no major art fair could get by without one of Pae White's huge, elaborately detailed wall hangings.

The paper will trace the responses of art critics and the art market to computer-woven tapestries designed for implementation on a Jacquard loom. There will be a particular focus on how the division of labour between artists, artisans and the computer-assisted loom affects the work process and the manual work previously manifested in the weaving. One hypothesis, which can be illustrated by the Kiki Smith tapestries woven by Flanders Tapestries, is that the production shift from traditional manual work to digital and machine-based processes foregrounds the hand of the artist in the design process.

### **The speaker**

After studying art, art history and English at the universities of Siegen and Southampton, Anne Röhl obtained her doctorate at the Institute of Art History at the University of Zurich (2018). Her dissertation *Entanglements: Gendered discourse in textile crafts, images, techniques* emerged from the ERC/SNF project "Textiles: An Iconology of the Textile in Art and Architecture" and will be published in spring 2020. She is currently a research assistant at the University of Siegen and is preparing a project on practices in art training after 1945.

## **Section III: Contemporary Forms of Coproduction**

### **Unfinished as A Strategy**

Artemis Rüstau, Dipl.-Rest.

Doctoral student (NACCA), Maastricht University

### **Abstract**

In 2005 the collector Axel Haubrok bought the work *Storage Piece* from artist Haegue Yang at the Art Forum Berlin. Haegue Yang had just presented her gallery Barbara Wien with an ultimatum: If they didn't sell it, she would give it up. The work was created in 2003 due to a shortage of space and consists of works by the artist, stacked onto four wooden pallets and most of them packaged, which had been returned to her after exhibitions. *Storage Piece* has since become one of the artist's major works and is regularly shown by established institutions.

The work has been in a state of flux ever since it was created and is adapted to the needs and requirements of each exhibition context. In 2007 owner-collector Haubrok had the work taken apart for

a show he devised called “Unpacking *Storage Piece*”. The work was unpacked in his public venue and presented at an exhibition devoted exclusively to the piece. Yang insists that *Storage Piece* did not alter its identity as a result of the unpacking and that the unpacking is part of the work, but she conceded a share in authorship to the owner. At the same time she recognises that other people who played a role in the context of the work, such as gallery manager Barbara Wien, exercised a responsibility and influence, and she characterises the work as collective.

Art historian Martha Buskirk describes contemporary art, in contrast to traditional works, as non-self-evident and as objects which, rather than being self-contained, are contingent on process and can be manifested in different material or immaterial forms (e.g. performance, audience participation) and constantly changing (e.g. photographic documentation, performance relics). If we understand *Storage Piece* as a process, as an unfinished work of art, it would be a concept developed by the artist whose realisation and ongoing development must be repeatedly redefined in the exhibition context with the relevant agents. The actual implementation of the work, then, depends on the context and on the interests of the agents concerned, and consequently a part of the realisation is not under the sole control of the artist.

The paper aims, by relating the biography of this work, to demonstrate the constantly changing division of creative processes. However, this development is linked to the need to exhibit and the willingness of the owner and / or exhibitor to assume responsibility by formulating what they need from the work, which can be generated through an individual discourse with the work. The presentation also shows, however, that in order to conserve the piece there is ultimately at least a partial need for a division of the work processes in its realisation to enable *Storage Piece* to develop and hence survive. It could thus be argued that regular exhibition and a division of the creative processes are essential strategies in the conservation of the work.

### **The speaker**

Artemis Rüstau studied the restoration of paintings at the Academy of Fine Arts (HfBK) in Dresden. Before starting her doctoral research at Maastricht University supervised by Prof. Renée van de Vall and Dr Vivian van Saaze, she was a postgraduate intern at the Hamilton Kerr Institute, Cambridge University and worked in restoration at the Kunsthaus Zürich and the Landesmuseum in Hanover. In her dissertation she explores how private collections of contemporary art address the conservation of works in their collections; her methods include ethnographic surveys. The dissertation project is framed by the EU-funded interdisciplinary Marie Skłodowska-Curie Innovative Training Network NACCA (New Approaches in the Conservation of Contemporary Art). In this NACCA project 15 doctoral students from different disciplines are examining various issues around the conservation of contemporary art.

## **Decision-Making in the Genesis of Media Art in the Built Environment and Its Impact on Conservation**

Kamilla Ødegård, MA Konservierung-Restaurierung

Assistant on the conservation and restoration degree course in modern materials and media, HKB

### **Abstract**

Art in the public space tends to be commissioned. Typically the artist responds to a call for projects with an artistic concept that must meet the terms of the brief. The paper draws on specific cases to show what role the terms of the commission in the purchase process play in the conservation of media art works. In the case of *Horizont* the artist Hannes Rickli was contracted by the City of Zurich to carry out the work, but he also contracted others in turn. To implement the work *Horizont* the artist called on the services of three specialists, which meant that decision-making in the genesis process involved four agents. The purchase process and the documentation currently available about the interactive video installation *Horizont* were investigated for an MA thesis at Bern University of the Arts (HKB). To assess the status of the various work components, the author reflected on why specific components were used and which of their properties are relevant to the work. She concluded that the decision-making in the genesis process, the way the artist collaborated with the three specialists and the terms of the commission for art in the built environment play an important role in evaluating work components for the purposes of conservation.

Given the number of stakeholders, decision-making in the process of implementing works of art for the built environment can be highly complex. Different levels of contractual relationships make it harder to access relevant information when drawing up a conservation strategy, demonstrating the need to establish clear responsibilities, e.g. for documentation and conservation, when purchasing a work for the built environment. The paper addresses the resulting difficulties for work conservation and discusses ways of optimising the purchase process in complex commissioning relationships.

### **The speaker**

Kamilla Ødegård studied the conservation and restoration of modern materials and media from 2013 to 2018 at Bern University of the Arts. While on the course she was able to gain experience in a number of museums, including the Kröller-Müller Museum in the Netherlands. She graduated in September 2018 with an MA thesis on the purchase and documentation of interactive works for the built environment. From February 2019 she worked as a course assistant at Bern University of the Arts specialising in “Modern Materials and Media”, and since July 2019 she has been a conservator-restorer at the Kunstmuseum in Basel.

### **Practical Ethics v3.0: Version control**

Jonathan Kemp, PhD

Lecturer / researcher, Grimwade Centre for Cultural Materials Conservation, The University of Melbourne

### **Abstract**

Recent ideas coming from contemporary art conservation – especially performance, installation, media art – have focused on how documentation and archiving are key to preserving the identity and

continuity of such artworks. By comparing documentation (in its widest sense) from various iterations of a work, conservators are enabled to make decisions around what changes are permissible for any subsequent iteration. Various models have been proposed for this decision-making and all are designed to assimilate how such artworks are both necessarily open-ended and changeable. These models suggest that conservators can both manage change and understand the parameters necessary for an art work's continued identity.

Where many approaches to conservation, of contemporary art or otherwise, continue to be founded around notions of identity and, by default, autography, one argument to be made is that the preservation of cultural heritage is ultimately an allographic process and that any iteration of a work effects a particular and time-stamped 'version of record'.

The logic of this approach is that conservation can be recast as being fundamentally engaged in practices akin to Version Control (VC). Typically version control systems allow each phase of software development to be made accessible for cross-checking against any other version by all involved. VC thus allows collaborative groups of people to work on a project without losing sight of any changes and, importantly, with its authorship distributed. Each project can be understood as ontologically open-ended and with its own obsolescence or forking into distinct software both freighted within its VC management.

The presentation will describe particular version control practices in software and hardware aligned with FLOSS (Free / Libre and Open Source Software) approaches to technology; it will then draw links and parallels with practices by default enacted by conservators and others involved in the care of cultural heritage; finally it will discuss how recasting conservation's practices as acts of version control can help revitalise the profession and foreground its role in the production of cultural heritage.

### **The speaker**

Jonathan Kemp has worked in sculpture conservation for over 25 years, primarily with a focus on stone and allied materials both in the UK and abroad including in Canada, Iran, Taiwan, and the Ukraine. He was a Senior Conservator at the V&A Museum, London, and he is a Researcher/Lecturer at the Grimwade Centre for the Conservation of Cultural Materials at the University of Melbourne. He has published widely in the conservation field with a focus on theory and ethics, along with various technical studies, and is Editor of the Journal of the Institute of Conservation. In parallel to his conservation work for the last 15 years he has both initiated and co-organised art-related projects including DIY material processing laboratories, environmental installations, performances, interdisciplinary symposia, and social software events executed in various international media art festivals and venues throughout Europe, the US, Brazil, Japan, Taiwan and Australia, where he currently lives.



## **The Work of Art in the Age of Technical Reproducibility: Case studies on third-person restoration**

Anabel von Schönburg, Dipl.-Rest.

Kunstmuseum Solothurn / restore[art]

### **Abstract**

Because of the “absent hand of the artist”, third-party conservation and restoration raises fundamental questions about the original: What should be conserved, what can be conserved – and how? What status is granted to the artist’s idea, what status to the authenticity of the material?

Apart from the needs of the object, the ideas of its author and the wishes of its owner, the position of the fabricator must be taken into account. Drawing up a list of measures optimally geared to the work means researching into and reflecting upon materials and production techniques, often in an environment that has little to do with art. Who is an appropriate specialist? Are the repairs planned by the specialist workshop acceptable from the restoration perspective? How can interventions in the original fabric be minimised? How can industrial methods be transposed to treat minor defects? Are there alternative techniques that might supply satisfactory results? What preventive measures can be taken to keep the ageing process in check? Is restoration possible? Under what conditions must a remake be contemplated? What do owners, authors and fabricators have to say about these considerations?

This discussion of how the division of labour influences conservation of the work considers the examples of Ingeborg Lüscher: *Bernsteinzimmer* [Amber Room], Kris Martin: *Mandi XXI* and Roman Signer: *Stiefelbrunnen* [Boot Fountain].

### **The speaker**

Pre-university work experience with polychrome painted wooden objects in Regensburg, Munich and Hamburg; degree course in conservation and restoration with a focus on modern materials and media at Bern University of the Arts (HKB); graduated in 2008 with a paper on degradation phenomena in holograms. Granted a bursary for research in the holography collection at the ZKM in Karlsruhe. 2009 / 2010 assistant in the Art Technology depart of SIK-ISEA. Freelance since 2011; since 2016 she has also been using her skills at the Kunstmuseum in Solothurn.

## **Market Value and Residual Value: The problematic valuation of art derived from a division of labour for the purposes of restoration, partial replacements and remaking**

Dietmar Stock-Nieden, Dr. phil.

Art valuer / senior loss adjuster, AXA Art Versicherung AG, Zurich

### **Abstract**

The market value of art works is usually inextricably tied up with the name of their creators. This forgets that the idea of the lone, gifted artistic genius is a relatively modern invention. Be it medieval sculpture workshops, the studios of “great artists” like Leonardo or Rubens, the cooperation between 17th-century Dutch painters, Berthel Thorvaldsen’s workshop productions or bronzes by Alberto Giacometti – division of labour is the normal state of affairs, although the market value of works produced in this manner is almost exclusively rooted in the name of the artist who signed the work.

The paper investigates the significance today of the “artist’s mark” or the artist’s authorisation on a work resulting from a division of labour if it comes to suffer damage and has to be restored, partially replaced or even remade. What are the conflicting interests? What impact can the position of the artist have on the market value or any depreciation in value? What criteria can be applied to determine an impairment?

When damage occurs to such an object produced either within a division of labour or by a “third party” which an artist then sold under his or her own name, restoration does not constitute a third-party intervention in something that had been single-handedly created, comparable to the “healing” of a “personal” injury by a “doctor”, but rather an intervention in the materiality of a “thing” made partially or entirely by others which the artist was only able to insure by means of a signature, certificate or other form of authorisation or “appropriation”. This begs a fascinating question about the extent to which, in practice, the artist’s prerogative to decide whether a restoration is appropriate or not, whether partial or total damage has occurred, and hence to influence the market value or “destruction” of monetary value, is possible, desirable or justified. The aim here is decidedly not to adopt a specifically legal perspective but one driven by cultural history, in order to shine a critical light on today’s focus in attitudes to art on the art market and the investment principle.

The paper follows on from the examples described by Anabel von Schönburg to illustrate conservation and restoration issues and considers the implications for valuing such works of art. As the conflict between the rights of owners and the copyright or moral rights of artists is a permanent question that defies definitive resolution, above all because the concepts “originality” and “authenticity” are open to many different interest-driven interpretations, a huge dilemma could potentially arise for a collector who has suffered a loss or a museum faced with damage if, for example, an artist refuses to re-authorise a work following restoration or repair or the partial or complete replacement of a work on the grounds that the work is no longer “original”, while an insurance underwriter may not agree to consent to the complete de-authorisation of a work following expert restoration or argues in the event that an identical replacement or a remake is an option that a “usable” pre-damage condition, and thereby a material prerequisite for equal value, can be recovered through the work of a third party. Drawing on the experience of a practitioner, the paper will present the many facets to this problematic area caught up between expectations of originality / authenticity, restoration ethics and commercial interests and discusses criteria for determining market value and impairments.

### **The speaker**

1988–1994 studied art history, pre- and early history, and classical archaeology in Giessen and Freiburg im Breisgau. 1994–1997 art valuer at the Bern auction house Dobiaschofsky, initially for prints & drawings and antiquities, later for paintings of the 16th–20th centuries. 1997–2000 Galerie Koller in Zurich, responsible for various decorative arts, in particular European porcelain, faience and glass. Since February 2000 art valuer / senior loss adjuster at the Swiss office of AXA Art Versicherung AG, Cologne. 2006 received his doctorate for a dissertation on *The Vitra Design GmbH buildings in Weil am Rhein: Studies in the history of architecture and ideas in an industrial company in the late 20th century*. Since 2013 member of the Museum Committee at the Glarus History Museum in the Freulerpalast in Näfels (voluntary). March – June 2019 lectured at the Institute of Art History at Bern University.