

MEDIA RELEASE

Zurich, 6 May 2013



Honoré Daumier (1808–1879)
– Eh! bien en regardant ce tableau de près on finit par y découvrir des qualités ...
Lithograph, 22.8 x 20.3 cm (D 3445)
Published in *Charivari*, 16 June 1865

The Knowledge of Art

Conference:

Expertise – how history, technology, law and the market inform judgments of art

Art experts on trial, works damaged by restoration, lawyers demanding that paintings be returned to their rightful owners – events like this often hit the headlines. How is what we know about art determined by methodological foundations and established practices? Who does know about art and what right to they have to claim as much? Do art historians, restorers, dealers and lawyers all mean the same thing when they talk about art?

When recognised experts make a bad call in the art world, the workings of the art market can suffer serious disruption. Knowledgeable appraisals of artworks are consequently not merely the core business of art scholars, but a factor in the economy. Specialists and the general public alike therefore have a major interest in finding the right methods to detect the truth, often turning to the natural sciences for answers. But for a differentiated assessment of artworks and an appropriate response, there needs to be an interaction between comparative scrutiny by the human eye, historical contextualisation, archive research and investigations into provenance, and analysis by optical and chemical means.

What are the methodological foundations and established practices underlying our knowledge of art? On the first day of the conference these questions will be examined from an art history perspective, tracing how connoisseurship and critiques of style dominated access to the field of art expertise for centuries. A second cluster will be devoted to the legal frame of reference within which art historians issue their judgments. For some years now, specialists in art law have drawn increasingly on guidelines for the formulation of expert assessments, their legal impact and the liability of their authors. However, much remains to be done, both by lawyers and art scholars, especially with regard to ethical questions and the relationship between expert knowledge and market conditions. Finally, the conference will address the interplay between methods derived from the humanities and the natural sciences, and also the way social media are changing the conditions in which art expertise will operate in the future.

The conference is organised by the Swiss Institute for Art Research (SIK-ISEA) together with the Institute of Art History at the University of Zurich and the Centre of Cultural Law (ZKR) at Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK). It will take place at SIK-ISEA in Zurich on 16 and 17 May 2013.

A detailed programme can be downloaded [here](#) or at www.sik-isea.ch (Events).

Venue, registration and fee

The conference on 16 and 17 May 2013 will be held at SIK-ISEA, Zollikerstrasse 32 (near Kreuzplatz), Postfach 1124, CH-8032 Zurich.

Please register by 8 May 2013: by post, by e-mail to sik@sik-isea.ch or by fax to +41 381 52 50.



SIK ISEA

The attendance fee is CHF 150 (both days are included). A reduced fee of CHF 80 applies to alumni of ZHdK and the University of Zurich. The amount must be paid in advance into the account of Stiftung SIK-ISEA at Credit Suisse AG, 8070 Zurich (IBAN CH76 0483 5030 8188 4100 0, BIC CRESCHZZ80A, reference «Expertisentagung») or in cash when registering on the first day of the conference.

Attendance is free for students, employees of the University of Zurich, ZHdK and SIK-ISEA, and members of the VKKS and SKR.

Contact for further details

Sandra Ruff, Head of Communications, SIK-ISEA, Zollikerstrasse 32, Postbox 1124, CH-8032 Zurich
www.sik-isea.ch, sandra.ruff@sik-isea.ch, T +41 44 388 51 36