

<b>Parallel session</b>	<b>Contemporary Art: Who Cares?</b>
Title	<b>The Role of Science in the Conservation of Contemporary Art</b>
Type	discussion
Date, time	Date, time Thursday 10th June, 14:00-16:00
Organisation	Tom Learner, Senior Scientist / Head of Modern and Contemporary Art Research, Getty Conservation Institute
Guests	Lydia Beerkens, private conservator / SRAL conservator of modern and contemporary art Alberto de Tagle, Chief Scientist, Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage / ICN Susan Lake, Director of Collections, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden Lynn Lee, Andrew W. Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow in Conservation Science, Harvard Art Museum Bronwyn Ormsby, Senior Conservation Scientist, Tate Thea van Oosten, Senior Conservation Scientist, Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage / ICN
Description	Few would argue that scientific research will continue to play a crucial role in the study, documentation and conservation of modern and contemporary art. However, has the conservation science field responded effectively to the range of new conservation needs and challenges being constantly thrown up by these works of art? Or is the more traditional approach, based principally on materials identification, still largely followed? And how do we strike the correct balance between technical study and documentation needs, with research into conservation treatments? Encouragingly, a number of longer-term projects have been recently set up with specific components dealing with investigating conservation treatments of works of art made with modern materials, eg POPART (12 European partners), and the Modern Paints project (Tate/GCI). But is this an overall trend within the field? This roundtable discussion will consider these and other questions with a view to examining the ways in which the scientific research being carried out is being guided by, and feeding into, the changing needs of the modern and contemporary art conservator.
Biography	Tom Learner is Senior Scientist and Head of Modern and Contemporary Art Research at the Getty Conservation Institute (GCI) in Los Angeles. He has a PhD in chemistry (University of London, 1997), and a Diploma in conservation of easel paintings (Courtauld Institute of Art, London, 1991). Before joining the GCI in 2007, he was senior conservation scientist at Tate in London, where he coordinated a major collaborative research project into the conservation issues of modern paints, culminating in the Modern Paints Uncovered symposium, held at Tate Modern in 2006. He now oversees a number of scientific research projects at the GCI, including: Modern Paints, Outdoor Painted Surfaces, and Preservation of Plastics, and organized the Object in Transition conference at the Getty Center in 2008. He is currently the coordinator for the Modern Materials and Contemporary Art working group of ICOM-CC, and sits on the advisory committees for INCCA (the International Network for the Conservation of Contemporary Art), and RPM (Rescue Public Murals). He has published widely, including two books: The Impact of Modern Paints (2000) and Analysis of Modern Paints (2004).
Biography	Lydia Beerkens is a conservator of modern and contemporary art working for several Dutch museums and collections from her own private studio. She trained as a conservator of paintings and sculpture at SRAL Maastricht (Stichting Restauratie Atelier Limburg) (1995) following her studies in art history at the University of Nijmegen (graduated in 1989). Lydia worked as a research-conservator in the project on conservation of modern art, resulting in the symposium and publication 'Modern Art: Who Cares?' (1997/1999). After 1997 she developed the modern and contemporary art training programme at SRAL and is now responsible for or the post-masters training programme in modern and contemporary art conservation in collaboration with the

University of Amsterdam. She was lecturer at the Cologne Institute for Conservation Sciences for two years. She gives workshops in at different schools for conservation in Europe, lectures on a regular basis at international conferences and has published in many conservation journals and magazines. Lydia is a board member of the SBMK (Foundation for the Conservation of Modern Art) and part of the SBMK 'Balance group'. She is currently on the editorial board of the SBMK publication 'The Artist Interview' which is due for launch in 2011. In addition, Lydia is helping to organise the programme of the international symposium, Contemporary Art: Who Cares?. Lydia is member of INCCA, of the ICOM-CC working group MMCA and the VDR Fachgruppe MKKM.

#### Biography

Alberto de Tagle was born and raised in Havana, Cuba. He studied at the Bergakademie Freiberg, Germany, where he obtained an MS in analytical chemistry. He returned to Cuba in 1972 and served for the next 10 years as head of inorganic instrumental analysis at the National Centre for Scientific Research. Alberto earned a Ph.D. in inorganic atomic spectroscopy at the TH Merseburg, in 1980 also in Germany. From 1982 until 1990 he directed scientific research in cultural heritage conservation at the National Centre for Conservation, Restoration, and Museology, Havana, Cuba. He lectured as associate professor on colonial decorative paintings at the University of Havana. Since 1991 Alberto has been a visiting lecturer in advanced conservation science at the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, USA. In 1992 he was appointed head of the analytical laboratories at the Winterthur Museum and Gardens in Delaware and adjunct associate professor in the Art Conservation Program at the University of Delaware. From 1995 until 2001 he was Director of the Scientific Program and then Chief Scientist at the Getty Conservation Institute, Los Angeles, USA. Since 2002 Alberto was Head of Research, and currently Chief Scientist at the Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage (ICN) in Amsterdam, The Netherlands. Alberto is member of ICCROM's General Council, lectures internationally and participates in scientific advisory committees at several conservation research institutions in Europe.

#### Biography

Susan Lake is Chief Conservator and Director of Collection Management at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution. Her research interests include the painting materials of the American Abstract Expressionist artists, the conservation of modern art materials, and the conservator's role in the stewardship of museum collections. Her book, Willem de Kooning: The Artist's Materials, published by the Getty Conservation Institute, will be available Spring 2010. Susan has a MA in art history from the University of California, Davis, and a PhD in Art Conservation Research from the University of Delaware.

#### Biography

Lynn Lee is an Andrew W. Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow in conservation science at the Straus Center for Conservation and Technical Studies at the Harvard Art Museum. She received her Ph.D. in physical chemistry at the University of California, Berkeley in 2005. Her interests include technical examination of artist materials and techniques. She recently organized a symposium on the technical conservation issues of time-based media.

#### Biography

Dr Bronwyn Ormsby is currently Senior Conservation Scientist at Tate, London, UK, specialising in the scientific analysis of works of art and the evaluation of conservation treatments on modern and contemporary art, with an emphasis on acrylic emulsion paints. Bronwyn held the AXA Art (2006-2007) and Leverhulme Trust (2003-2006) postdoctoral Research Fellow positions at Tate – focusing on characterising and evaluating the effects of surface cleaning treatments on acrylic emulsion paint films - after gaining her doctorate from Northumbria University, UK, in 2002. Prior to her career in heritage science, Bronwyn was employed as a painting conservator at the National Gallery of Australia (1993-1998), during which time she completed a 2-year conservation science internship at the Hamilton Kerr Institute, Cambridge, UK (1995-1997). Bronwyn trained as a painting conservator at Canberra University, Australia, graduating in 1992, having had prior experience in biochemistry and paper conservation.

## Biography

Drs. Thea B. van Oosten has worked for ICN since 1989 when she started the research programme in modern materials. She is currently engaged in Fourier Transform Infrared Spectroscopy (FTIR), Raman spectroscopy, Differential Scanning Calorimetry(DSC) and Thermoluminescence(TL) analyses of plastics in objects of cultural heritage and modern materials in modern and contemporary art objects. Specialised in the conservation of modern and contemporary art and design objects she has contributed to several publications such as *Modern Art: Who Cares?* (1999), *Plastics, Collecting and Conserving* and *Plastics In Art*. Thea disseminates her knowledge and experience by teaching courses and workshops and giving lectures in the Netherlands and abroad. She was involved in several international research projects supported by the European Union or businesses in the industry. Her research is currently focused with the European project POPART (Preservation Of Plastics ARTefacts in museum collections, 2008-2011). <http://popart.mnhn.fr/>. Thea is treasurer of the Directory Board of ICOM-CC.