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INTERNATIONAL MEETING ON RETOUCHING OF CULTURAL HERITAGE, RECH3 POSTPRINTS OF THE 3RD MEETING

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INDEX

I. Plaster sculptures from the national museum of Soares dos Reis: cleaning methodologies to achieve colour re-integration	9
<i>Alexandre Fernandes; Elsa Murta</i>	
II. The “value-function” attributed to cultural heritage as a criterion for reconstruction or reintegration: the paintings	17
<i>Ana Bailão; Ana Calvo</i>	
III. Perspectives on the restoration of porcelain - selecting the retouching method	23
<i>Ana Bidarra; Filipa Quatorze; Pedro Antunes</i>	
IV. Crowd funded research: low-cost multispectral imaging	33
<i>Antonino Cosentino</i>	
V. Use of retouching colours based on resin binders – from theory into practice	43
<i>Barbka Gosar Hirci; Lucija Močnik Ramovš</i>	
VI. Bringing the Rembrandt back to life: the retouching of Saul and David	53
<i>Carol Pottasch; Susan Smelt</i>	
VII. Materials and techniques for retouching glass plate photographic negatives in the beginning of the 20th century	65
<i>Catarina Pereira</i>	
VIII. Hand building a low profile textured fill for a paint/ground loss	73
<i>Francisco Brites, Leslie Carlyle; Raquel Marques</i>	
IX. Heritage documentation and 3D retouching of virtual objects	83
<i>Frederico Henriques; António Candeias; Alexandre Gonçalves; Eduarda Vieira</i>	
X. Treatment of lacunae, gestalt psychology and cesare brandi. From theory to practice	93
<i>Giuseppe Agulli; Liliana Silva</i>	
XI. Different hands, different paintings, one retouching - the conservation project of the Funchal’s cathedral altarpiece	103
<i>Glória Nascimento; Sofia Gomes; Carolina Ferreira; Joana Júlio; Mercês Lorena; António Candeias</i>	
XII. Chromatic reintegration of 20th century monochrome photographs showing plain and textured paper surfaces	113
<i>Leonor Loureiro; Cátia Silva; Ana Catarina Rosa</i>	

II

**THE “VALUE-FUNCTION” ATTRIBUTED TO
CULTURAL HERITAGE AS A CRITERION FOR
RECONSTRUCTION OR REINTEGRATION:
THE PAINTINGS**

THE “VALUE-FUNCTION” ATTRIBUTED TO CULTURAL HERITAGE AS A CRITERION FOR RECONSTRUCTION OR REINTEGRATION: THE PAINTINGS

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Abstract

The intervention criteria applied to old objects and paintings in each historical period, in the treatment of reconstruction and reintegration of the form and the lost colours, has depended of the value-function attributed. The conservation and restoration processes applied in each period have relied on the values given to each type of goods. So it has been able to prevail the aesthetic, historical, documentary, or other values. To understand the history of interventions in the objects of the past it is necessary first understand the social and cultural bases that determine the criteria used at different times and in different cultures. Furthermore, the current criteria for reintegration are determined by the “values” that now we apply to different cultural objects, including paintings by their role or function at this time.

Keywords

Chromatic reintegration; Painting; Value; Function.

1. INTRODUCTION

The present article synthetize the main values considered by important figures of conservation theory like Alois Riegl, Gustavo Giovannoni and Cesare Brandi and from contemporary conservation theory Salvador Muñoz Viñas. The authors will be presented by chronological order. Although not specifically referring to painting, Riegl and Giovannoni, the first two authors mentioned, could be the source of inspiration for the later authors. The aim of this study is to understand and evaluate the values that determine the criteria of the interventions used at different times and in different cultures.

2. ALOIS RIEGL

Values assigned by Riegl, and in the context of monuments, allude to some of the important principles in the ethics of conservation and restoration, such as respect for the original and the historical and documentary value, that are relevant before the intervention decision and during the process of conservation and/or restoration.

The distinct values coexist and Riegl recognize that these are often contradictory. Take the case of “antiquity value”, which is contrary to the “novelty value” and may come into confrontation with the “use value” and the “historical value”. The “utility value”, in turn, can contradict the “artistic value relative” and “historical value.”

Alois Riegl establishes two categories: the “memorable” monuments, which have implied

the definition of values linked to the past, and the monuments of the “contemporary”, associated with the present values. Within the first category, distinguishes the monument with “antiquity value”, those with “historical value” or “intentional recall value.” Riegl considers that each of these types of monuments have different requirements and needs in case of intervention [1].

3. GUSTAVO GIOVANNONI

As Riegl, the thought of Gustavo Giovannoni is also directed to the architecture, but the way it interprets the monuments helps to define intervention strategies for movable property. Giovannoni advocates an evolutionary conception of art and as a result, the preservation of the remains of the different periods that can be present in a work of art, trying to counteract the historical reality with aesthetic problems.

He understands the monument as a document, in the continuity of the theories of Boito, which can be a “dead monument” as the case of archaeological monuments that have not a utilitarian function, or a “living monument”, which retains its original function or another, but that fits the present reality. Giovannoni included in his concept of “monument” not only the great buildings that have marked the history of architecture, but also more modest works when their historical and artistic value can be integrated into the context and studied as a whole. This comprehensive notion of Giovannoni has modified the way the concept of heritage was understood [2].

4. CESARE BRANDI

Brandi, considering the specific problem of the reintegration of paintings refers to the potential unity of the work of art that is invalidated by the presence of losses or lacunas. Reintegration responds to the need to return to the work of art its aesthetic and expressive capacity, respecting the historic character of the losses, so the retouchings or inpaintings should be differentiated so that not incurred in a historical or artistic false [3].

5. SALVADOR MUÑOZ VIÑAS

In the context of contemporary theory were adopted other values, such as the symbolic, religious, economic, personal, sentimental, tourism, functional, among others. The huge variety of objects make it impossible to use the term historical-artistic just for classified objects, being the "artistic" concept, many times, also inaccurate because it changes over time, and because it depends on the type of training of each person / observer. The value also depends on the personal interpretation of each viewer. Also for this reason exists the classification of "cultural heritage" for the objects [4].

In the context of the various values that a work of art can have, we consider that two of them related to each other, can help in reintegration decision-making: the heritage function and the symbolic character of the object at the time of the intervention. The function can be divided into two categories: spiritual contemplation,

associated with ritual, symbolism and iconography, and the material function, related to the creation of the work, the techné. In the first situation, where the losses interfere with the iconographic reading and the spirituality or the ritual of a community, it is considered the reconstitution of the work so that it can fulfil its function or role. Reintegration is performed when there is formal and chromatic and / or photographic or graphic documentation. In the second case, the decision depends on several actors and so can vary between non-intervention, minimal intervention or full reintegration (mimetic or differentiated) [5].

6. CONCLUSIONS

Despite the decision-making for the retouching process, there can always be some controversy, since the notion of what should be reconstructed or not, varies from individual to individual according to their values, social context and subjectivity. For this reason, any decision about reintegrate or not, about the appropriate method, technique and materials, should be collective, either by a "group of experts" who analyse the work, or by a collective representing the many viewers of the object, to be possible to appreciate different "values".

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