

ASSOCIATION PROFESSIONNELLE
DE CONSERVATEURS - RESTAURATEURS
D'OEUVRES D'ART ASBL



BEROEPSVERENIGING
VOOR CONSERVATORS - RESTAURATEURS
VAN KUNSTVOORWERPEN VZW

Call for Papers
13th BRK-APROA Brussels Colloquium

Delightfully Diverse
Conservation-Restoration of
Multi-Material Objects



The Belgian Professional association for Conservators-Restorers launches a call for professionals to submit papers for its 13th Colloquium with the theme 'Delightfully diverse. Conservation-restoration of multi-material objects.'

The Colloquium will take place on 13 and 14 November 2025 at the Marie-Elisabeth Belpaire Building in Brussels, close to the North Station.

Some 18 lectures of 20-minutes are planned. Short talks of 5 minutes are also welcome, to briefly present a case or ongoing research.

The content of the Colloquium will be prepared by a working group of the association. The logistical organization is in the hands of Die Keure/La Charte.

Introduction to the conference theme

Conservators-restorers know the traditional combinations of materials within an artwork or object but sometimes this multiplicity is more surprising or unexpected. Different materials in objects occur across every period and in every form. This often raises complex conservation issues where consultation between different specialists is essential.

Ethnographic objects are made from a wide variety of materials, ranging from wood to metal, materials from nature such as shells and feathers, textiles and dyes. Unique material combinations are pre-eminent in the Closed Courtyards, where polychrome figurines are complemented by refined cottage industry and decorative elements of all kinds. Techniques such as press brocade or incrustation of other materials on paintings and sculptures are also examples of this material combination. Historic interiors and facades sometimes reveal a surprising mix of unusual elements. Other examples can be found in funerary heritage, costumes and textiles, military heritage, folk art objects and curiosity cabinets Think also of musical instruments, bound manuscripts, , furniture marquetry, artistically wrapped relics and archaeological objects. Finally, contemporary art also makes extensive use of what are known as mixed media. Throughout the ages, artists have experimented with unusual materials or combinations to achieve certain artistic effects.

Each material has its own ageing process and specific degradations, which can affect or influence the other elements present. The interactions between these different materials can be technical, mechanical or chemical in nature, and can influence the conservation and restoration choices made for these objects. In addition, each material has different requirements in terms of conservation and optimal climatic conditions, such as relative humidity (RH), temperature and light intensity. The conservation-restoration of one material is not necessarily compatible with the needs of other components within the same object. This also represents a challenge for preventive conservation.

Because of these sometimes conflicting conservation and treatment requirements, compromises are often necessary. Restoration options may prioritize one material over another. How are these decisions made? Is there an objective basis for justifying these sometimes drastic choices?

Themes

We welcome contributions that meet the following non-exhaustive list of topics within the theme 'Delightfully diverse. Conservation-restoration of multi-material objects':

1. Ethical approach to the restoration of composite objects

- Material conflicts: analysis of the specific properties (physical, chemical or mechanical) of the different materials and their interaction
- Prioritization of materials: ethical dilemmas where choices have to be made to give priority to a particular material, sometimes to the detriment of another material within the same object.

2. Alteration mechanisms of composite objects

- Degradation processes: research on specific alteration mechanisms of composite objects, focusing on changes in structure and aesthetics
- Preventive conservation: methods and techniques to control or delay alterations and/or degradations, including innovative approaches and technologies

3. Conservation and restoration

- Critical evaluation of conservation-restoration treatment of complex, composite objects, focusing on the challenges, restoration options and final results
- Interdisciplinary collaboration: cases of collaboration between professionals from different fields, leading to the development and application of innovative techniques and methods.
- Presentation of integrated and holistic approaches that take into account the complexity of composite objects.

We invite you to share your experiences with such challenges with colleagues from the heritage sector and we hope to welcome you as a speaker at our next colloquium.

Submission of proposals

Abstracts will be accepted for full papers and short talks (see boxes for more details).

Proposals are expected no later than **December 20, 2024**, and should be sent to judy.de.roy@kikirpa.be

The selection of conferences and the composition of the program by the working group will take place in mid-January 2025. Selected speakers will be notified at the end of January 2025. They will then receive more concrete information and guidelines for the conferences and for the publication of the texts.

Contributions to this Colloquium may not have been presented or published elsewhere in the same form before November 2025.

FULL PAPER

Your proposal must contain:

1. The name of the speaker (the co-authors can be mentioned in the text)
2. A title
3. An abstract of no more than 500 words
4. A brief CV of the speaker (10 lines maximum)
5. Your contact details: name, (if applicable: name of institution or firm), postal address, telephone, possibly a website.

SHORT TALKS

The BRK-APROA also invites abstracts (maximum 250 words) for short talks to briefly present a case or an (ongoing) research within the theme.

The speaker will have the opportunity to present their research or restoration in 5 minutes and with 1 slide during the conference.

A short contribution (one A4 page and one page of images) will be included in the Postprints. For rules on language and timing, see general notes.

The lectures (full papers and short talks) are published in their entirety in the in the APROA-BRK Postprints, published by La Chartre in Bruges. You can find examples of previous Postprints on the association's website: www.aproa-brk.org

Crucial dates:

Submission of the proposal: December 20, 2024

Selected speakers will be informed at the end of January 2025

Colloquium: November 13 and 14, 2025

Publication Postprints: Spring 2026