

Call for Papers

THE FRAGMENT IN THE DIGITAL AGE

Opportunities and risks of new conservation-restoration techniques

International Symposium by the HAWK
(Faculty of Architecture, Engineering and Conservation and the Hornemann Institute)

May 13th and 15th 2020 in Hildesheim, Germany

in cooperation with
the German National Scientific Committee for Conservation-Restoration of ICOMOS
and the Verband der Restauratoren e. V. (*Association of Restorers e.V.*)

Works of art are mostly handed down in fragments. The handling of the fragment, its investigation, preservation and mediation are among the central tasks of conservator-restorers operating in the preservation of cultural monuments, in museums and libraries. The treatment of the fragment has always depended on the respective social context and the taste of contemporary times - this is still true today: between the two poles of complete restoration on one side and the preservation of the fragmentary state on the other, there are the most diverse possibilities of real or virtual reintegration, based on different theoretical principles. The new media offer us even more efficient methods and techniques of virtual supplementation and the mediation of fragmentary works, and this encounters great social acceptance. They have undoubtedly changed the way we look at cultural heritage. How can we use them for their best possible preservation and presentation?

The last major conferences in Germany on the subject of the digital in restoration and monument conservation (including "Das Digitale und die Denkmalpflege", 2016, published 2017; "museum-3-d-digital", February 2018; "3D - Durchblick oder Datenmüll? Dreidimensionale Scanverfahren in der Restaurierung", March 2018; "das-digitale-objekt", December 2018), have devoted themselves not only to the various areas of application of digital technology, but also to the sustainable management and linking of the data generated.

This conference would now like to focus on what the new digital possibilities mean for the preservation and mediation of the historical fragment. Experts from various disciplines currently state "a gap between the increasing importance and professionalization of the visual reconstruction of the historical on the one hand and the theoretical foundation of such activities on the other" (e. g. Blokker 2017, after Hoppe/Breitling 2016).

Following an introduction to the history of the fragment and its restoration or presentation, lectures will be given on the theoretical foundations of the conservation-restoration of fragments, also taking into account international documents and charters (e.g. the charters of London and Seville).

Based on recent projects, the effects of digitalization on the fragmentarily preserved artwork and its mediation will then be discussed in concrete terms. For instance, the new opportunities for research will be explored by virtually reintegrating what is missing or - vice versa - by "digitally removing" later additions. Do today's possibilities lead to more or less interventions of restoration? The step towards reconstruction or partial reconstruction becomes simpler, but the demand for differentiation

between the original and the time-bound suggestions of the supplement becomes stronger. Often the digital representation seems to draw all the attention to itself and the original fragment is pushed into the background. But also the opposite tendency, the desire for more materiality, is increasingly gaining relevance.

How can digital technology increase the acceptance of the fragmentary original? The new possibilities certainly help in the visualization of research results and in the communication between experts and society and also offer great opportunities for the sustainable preservation of our cultural heritage.

The aim of the critical debates at the conference is to produce a practical policy paper on how to deal with the fragment in the conservation-restoration sciences. The established ethical and theoretical principles of conservation-restoration must take into account the new digital possibilities with additional considerations of principles. Scientific standards should also apply to the digital world, i. e. the objective and speculative parts of virtual reconstructions must be clearly identifiable for viewers, and their psychological effects on perception must be recognised.

We therefore ask for one-page abstracts, at most, for lectures and posters from the different fields of restoration in the exhibitions and the historical monument preservation:

- Basic contributions on the opportunities and risks of the new techniques in conservation-restoration, with a critical evaluation of the latest developments and with suggestions on current guidelines for theory and practice.
- Current case studies on interdisciplinary cooperation between conservation-restoration experts and specialists in the new media, also with regard to the mediation and presentation of fragments.
- Research projects that seek to demonstrate the scientific validity of digital models, i.e. the degree to which a digital reconstruction of a fragment is based on scientifically reliable sources.

Preference will be given to examples in which it is weighed up when the use of certain technologies is appropriate and how the original with its substance, its complex cultural-historical statements and the focus of its character is not lost. Please present only not yet published case studies.

Submission deadline of abstracts: July 31st 2019 send to service@hornmann-institut.de

Final decision: August 31st 2019

Travel expenses of the selected speakers will be covered.

For information about the conference, the abstracts of the selected lectures and posters will be published on the website of the Hornemann Institute of the HAWK.

The conference will be held in German and English. A simultaneous translation will not be possible. A publication of the conference contributions is planned.

In case of queries please contact:

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