

Sullo stato di conservazione

On the state of preservation

Establishing an object's state of preservation is an essential step towards setting up a restoration project and taking concrete action for damage prevention and systematic maintenance of historical and artistic features. To carry out this important task, attention has always focused on the individual constituent materials and the various types of deterioration. This approach led to establishing the state of preservation of individual parts rather than the whole item. The type of preservation chart recently devised for the territorial risk map system, employs a first-ever unified method for evaluating the state of preservation of the item in its entirety, not just the materials or the individual components. A standardised procedure is used to calculate the coefficient of vulnerability for every item on the records, making it possible to rate all the cultural heritage items throughout Italy, according to a single scale indicating the state of preservation. The process of recording preservation work has benefited from recent developments in 3D digital technology. Together with the calculations, it is now possible to carry out direct measurement of the state of preservation using a numerical system to define the artwork's formal and chromatic structure. An artwork is an abstract entity, perceivable only through the physical support produced by the artist, and deterioration is a natural and unstoppable process however much we try to slow it down. Therefore, direct measurement represents a basic way of entrusting the 'memory' of the artistic form not only to the materials but also to an immaterial entity, such as a digital system, in the same way that music is remembered by a written or printed musical score.

Stratigrafia e reintegrazione. La *Teoria* di Brandi come punto di partenza per una riflessione sul trattamento delle lacune nelle opere d'arte su carta

Stratigraphy and reintegration. Cesare Brandi's Teoria as a starting point for observations on treating lacunae in artworks on paper

Over the last twenty or thirty years, paintings have been thoroughly investigated in terms of the theoretical aspects regarding reintegrating lacunae, starting from the approach developed by Cesare Brandi. A paper written by Laura and Paolo Mora together with Paul Philippot, entitled *La conservazione delle pitture murali* (preserving wall paintings), set out the criteria and methods for applying Brandi's theory to the reintegration of lacunae. The methodologies they described have been widely employed by many experts for restoring artworks, not only wall paintings. It is important to emphasise that this approach is based on the concept of recognising that a painting is a stratified object. A painting's stratification, both in the original process of creation and in its current state, is not a unique characteristic but is present in other categories of artworks as well. The article presents some ideas about reintegrating lacunae on paper-based artworks, posing the initial question, in methodological terms, whether these works can be considered as stratified objects, and whether the criteria established for paintings can be applied to them. The comparison provides a starting point for observations on the specific structural characteristics of paper-based artworks. In addition, brief mention is made of other problems relating to artworks on paper, such as the reversibility of retouching, and the compatibility of restoration materials with the original ones.

ABSTRACT

Considerazioni sull'integrazione nel restauro. Il dibattito sulle esperienze contemporanee

Comments on integration techniques used in restoration: the discussion on present-day experiences

Starting with some of the subjects dealt with during the seminar, several observations are made from the point of view of Ms A, who is specialised in restoring paintings. Several of the participants brought up the question of why restorers nowadays are moving more and more towards detailed re-composition of images. Ms A's criticism of this trend, which harks back to a 'period' approach, is that such a technique is limited to filling in lacunae (as opposed to what happened in the past) thus leading to a sub-standard and rather faded appearance, especially since the surrounding pigment has lost many of the layers that made up the shading and tones of the original. This means we should rethink the interaction between theory and practice, and reflect on the many links between historical-artistic disciplines and restoration culture.

Per la storia del restauro della casa dei Vettii in Pompei: una nuova applicazione del diagramma di flusso stratigrafico

Pompeii: restoring the Casa dei Vettii. A new application for stratigraphic flow charts

The plasterwork in the Casa dei Vettii, preserved *in situ*, has been restored several times since its discovery in 1894. Amongst other things, this previous restoration work involved using large quantities of mortar. Removing this mortar became necessary for practical and aesthetic reasons, and was carried out according to the principles of the stratigraphic method, on the assumption that different types of mortar represented different restoration attempts. The stratigraphic flow chart that was prepared made it possible to produce a relative chronology; the certain date of several operations made it possible to establish an absolute time scale for many of them. The *matrix* of the flow chart clearly showed that the building underwent more frequent restoration during certain periods. However, the unpainted rooms, or those with minimum decoration, were given less attention, according to criteria of importance that have always prevailed. Careful examination of the mortar made it possible to see the development of various types of deterioration. A further result achieved by the project was identifying the chronology of the materials used, not merely linked to the time sequence, but also to the reason why they were used. Finally, the results of the project added another element to the history of restoring archaeological paintings – a subject that is still little investigated from this point of view.

L'alterazione dei pigmenti nei dipinti murali: paratacamite come prodotto di trasformazione dell'azzurrite

Alteration of pigments in wall paintings: natural azurite transformed into paratacamite

Restoration has been carried out in recent years (1992-2002) on important cycles of paintings in Italy (Anagni, Crypt of San Magno; Assisi, Basilica of St. Francis; Orvieto, Chapel of San Brizio and the apse wall paintings; Padua, the Scrovegni Chapel). These projects have made it possible to get a better understanding of the alterations that take place in azurite over time, especially the greening effect. All the cases in question showed widespread transformation of natural azurite into paratacamite. This was observed by means of X-ray diffraction analysis, observation by polarised microscope and scanning electronic microscope, accompanied by X-ray microanalysis.

Studio degli smalti policromi di una scultura in maiolica di scuola robbiana

Study of polychrome enamels used on a majolica sculpture of the Luca della Robbia school

Restoration is being carried out at the Central Institute for Restoration's laboratories on a sculpture in majolica (depicting an announcing angel) of the Luca della Robbia school (16th century), coming from the Orvieto Cathedral Museum. This has provided the occasion for the Institute and the Glass Experimental Station to conduct analyses of the enamels in order to clear up several aspects of the technology used by the della Robbia school, in particular to identify the raw materials used and the composition of the pigments. The enamels were examined using X-ray microanalysis with energy dispersion associated with SEM, microanalysis of wavelength dispersion by means of electronic micro-probe and X-ray diffraction. By comparing previously published results of analyses carried out on similar works, we were able to see whether the composition of the enamels had been deliberately altered by adding other substances, in order to change their properties. Finally, by taking samples of the same colour from different panels of the work in question, we checked the reproducibility of the preparation and firing techniques for the enamels, as well as their correspondence with the techniques described by Piccolpasso.

Una definizione che viene da lontano. Avvio allo 'smontaggio' della *Teoria del restauro* di Cesare Brandi

A definition that comes from afar. Beginning to 'dissect' Cesare Brandi's Teoria del restauro

Starting from recently discovered documents, including Cesare Brandi's lesson notes and several chapters of his *Teoria del restauro*, a process of 'dissecting' the text has begun, in order to investigate its origins in more detail. Against this background, the overall identity of the *Teoria* stands out as a stimulating way of interpreting the text, where the source of his ideas and experiences emerges over a period of twenty years. The contribution of interlocutors such as Giulio Carlo Argan becomes clear through a number of unpublished letters; while looking back at ideas that were first expressed in his graduate dissertation in jurisprudence shows how much Heghel and Croce contributed to his early education and how much he returned to them over time, also for his work in the restoration sector. During the research project, we looked back at the original title he suggested to his publisher: *Lezioni di teoria del restauro (1941-1961)* where the didactic nature of the proposed work was emphasised. For the definitive version, he chose to highlight the theoretical nature of the work, especially in the first eight chapters. The appendix and the choice of forty illustrations – ranging from the back of a panel by Antonello to architectural designs by Scarpa – reflected specific areas of his work field.

Documenti: Un ricettario rinvenuto nell'Archivio Segreto Vaticano

Documents: A book of ingredients discovered in the Secret Archives of the Vatican

Research conducted in the lesser known areas of the Vatican's Secret Archives has led to the discovery of an unpublished manuscript containing recipes for making paints and inks as well as various suggestions for cleaning and maintaining everyday objects. Publishing this material could be useful as a source of information for studies on restoration and the history of artistic techniques. The article contains a brief historical introduction with comments, as well as the transcription of some of the more interesting sections.