



FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

*Programme Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Heritage*

# Masterclass plastics: Identification, Degradation and Conservation of Plastics

By Thea van Oosten and Anna Laganà

---

## Overview

This masterclass aims to acquaint object and sculpture conservators with the current state of knowledge regarding identification, degradation, curative and preventive conservation of plastics, rubbers and composite materials. This four day course is split between theoretical and practical sessions. Participants will improve their theoretical background on plastics and develop practical experience in conservation treatments such as: cleaning and adhering plastics and consolidating PUR ether flexible foams. The state of the art for preventive and curative conservation will be discussed and include the latest research.

This course will bridge the gap between the practical aspects of conserving plastics and the physical-chemical basis underlying their degradation. Although the emphasis will be on three-dimensional objects, conservators from all other disciplines are welcome to attend. Plastics and rubbers are found in a variety of collections: historic, ethnographic, scientific, design, as well as modern and contemporary art. Most museums have these materials in their collections and the amount of works of art and plastic objects will increase over the years. Due to the growing need, this course on the conservation of plastics is to be offered by the University of Amsterdam for an international audience.

Participants are strongly encouraged to bring objects or images of objects to the course for discussion.

---

## Instructors

*Thea van Oosten* ([vanoostenthea@gmail.com](mailto:vanoostenthea@gmail.com))

Since 1975, Thea B. van Oosten has been employed as a conservation scientist at the Central Laboratory for Objects of Art and Science (CRL) which was also known a Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage (ICN) and from January 2011 called Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands (RCE). In 1989 she started as senior conservation scientist the research programme on plastics and she has been developing that ever since.



## FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

### *Programme Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Heritage*

Specialized in the conservation of modern and contemporary art and design objects of Cultural Heritage she has contributed to several publications and books, such as 'Modern Art, who Cares', 'Plastics, Collecting and Conserving' and 'Plastics in Art' and 'Preservation of Plastic Artefacts in Museum Collections'. One of her research topics was the consolidation of polyurethane foams, which resulted in a book published in May 2011 called 'PUR Facts, Conservation of Polyurethane Foam in Art and Design'. She further tries to disseminate her knowledge and experience by teaching courses and workshops and giving lectures on this topic both in the Netherlands and in various countries around the world. Since July 2011 she is on retirement and is working as a free-lance conservation scientist for the research into plastics and the conservation of modern and contemporary art.

*Anna Laganà* ([anna.lag@tiscali.it](mailto:anna.lag@tiscali.it); [a.lagana@uva.nl](mailto:a.lagana@uva.nl))

Anna Laganà is conservator / researcher specialized in the conservation of plastics. She is trained as conservator at the Istituto Superiore per la Conservazione ed il Restauro (ISCR) in Rome where she specialized in modern and contemporary art conservation with a thesis on conservation of plastics in art. In 2006 she completed a one-year teacher training course at the Centro Conservazione e Restauro La Venaria Reale (CCR) in Turin that included an internship on modern materials conservation at the research department of the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands (RCE). From 2007-2008 she worked as coordinator of the Contemporary Art Conservation Laboratory at the CCR in Turin. From 2008-2012 she worked at the RCE, as a conservator/researcher of modern materials on several research projects on plastics conservation such as the EU project POPART (Preservation Of Plastics ARTefacts). She has collaborated with institutes and museums in the Netherlands and abroad such as: the Biennale of Venice, the Castello di Rivoli Museum, ADI (Association for industrial design), the Stedelijk Museum and the Rijksmuseum of Amsterdam and the Getty Conservation Institute.

She is currently working as lecturer at the University of Amsterdam and as freelance conservator / researcher. She regularly disseminates her knowledge on plastics through professional development workshops for conservators in several institutes and universities.

Anna is founding member and coordinator of the INCCA Italy group (International Network of Contemporary Art).

---

#### **Dates**

Four full time days: 15-18 September 2015 from 09:00 till 17:00.

---

#### **Venue**

Ateliergebouw, Hobbemastraat 22 in Amsterdam. The Ateliergebouw is situated next to the Rijksmuseum.



---

## **Programme**

### *Day 1*

- History of plastics: from Celluloid to Biobased Plastics
- Chemistry of polymers and plastics manufacturing processes
- Manufacturing PMMA
- Practical (Solvents and Plastics)
- Properties of plastics
- Practical (Solvents and Plastics)
- Manufacturing work of art (Ron Mueck)
- Degradation of plastics

### *Day 2*

- Degradation of plastics
- Identification of plastics practical
- Identification of plastics (instrumental analyses) Research Department RCE
- Case studies: adhering PMMA, UP and PVC objects
- Practical (Adhering plastics)

### *Day 3*

- Evaluation Adhering
- Introduction into Cleaning Plastics. POPART cleaning project
- Case studies: the conservation of Cellulose Acetate (CA) art works
- Case studies on conservation treatments
- Practical (Cleaning Plastics)
- Evaluation Cleaning

### *Day 4*

- Case studies: consolidation of PUR foam design objects and works of art
- Practical (Consolidation and filling of PUR foam; materials and techniques)
- Preventive conservation of plastics
- Objects from participants
- Conclusions

---

## **Costs**

Course fees are € 935,00. We would like to invite you for drinks at the end of the first day of the course. Participants are responsible for all evening meals, accommodation and transportation. Lunches will be provided in the restaurant of the Ateliergebouw.

---

## **Language**

The course will be given in English. Participants are advised that a basic knowledge of scientific terms in English is required.



## FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

*Programme Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Heritage*

---

### **Personal Equipment**

Participants are also requested to bring with them personal tools, a pair of UV safety glasses/goggles, a lab coat (or equivalent) as well as a personal gas mask with appropriate filters for organic solvents. Materials for the workshop will be provided.

---

### **Participants**

Number of Participants: maximum 12.

Registration is open to restorers, conservation scientists and related professionals practicing within the field.

---

### **Deadline for application**

The deadline for application is **August 1<sup>st</sup>** 2015. On this date we will make the decision whether or not to proceed with organizing this workshop (depending on the number of enrolments for the course). Participants will be informed at this date or sooner.

---

### **How to apply**

Please send a signed application form by mail or e-mail, addresses are mentioned on the attached registration form. The Programme Conservation and Restoration of Cultural Heritage aims to compose a list of participants of whom the level matches each other's as much as possible. For that reason, we would like to receive your resume.

Once you have registered you will receive a confirmation plus information for payment. Your registration is final when we have received the course fee.

---

### **Contact**

Please contact Angèle Goossens (coordinator continuing professional development) en Rosa Hoogenboom (secretariat continuing professional development) by e-mail [pe-CenR@uva.nl](mailto:pe-CenR@uva.nl) or telephone +31 (0)20 525 2015 with any further queries. For more information please also have a look at our website: <http://www.conservation-restoration-training.nl/>