Transmitting Embodied Knowledge in Contemporary Art Conservation (Hildesheim, 21 Jun 24)

HAWK, Hildesheim, Jun 21, 2024
Registration deadline: May 31, 2024

Tiziana Caianiello

How Do You Do It? Transmitting Embodied Knowledge across Generations in Contemporary Art Conservation.

Embodied knowledge refers to the tacit understanding residing within the body that enables us to perform and refine tasks without having to consciously consider every step of such actions. In the context of complex artworks, which often incorporate technology-based or performative components, this knowledge is embedded in the artist's vision, developed and fine-tuned throughout their career, and transferred often implicitly to their assistants through years of experiencing the artist's creative process. Custom-made devices, unique installation techniques, and aesthetic preferences define the artwork. However, these individualised tweaks tend to defy traditional forms of documentation, thus raising the question: How can we impart embodied knowledge to others effectively?
Bringing together experts from an array of disciplines, the symposium aims to refine the understanding of concepts such as implicit, tacit, procedural, and embodied knowledge. Participants including linguists, sociologists, conservators, artists, artist's assistants, art historians, curators, and representatives of artists' estates will explore the functioning of embodied knowledge and share experiences and best practices in intergenerational and interdisciplinary transmission.

The symposium will address crucial questions concerning the transmission of knowledge in several key scenarios:
How can we bring implicit and embodied knowledge into awareness so as to make it accessible and transferable?
What approaches can ensure a continuing transfer of knowledge to future generations in a way that extends beyond the artist-assistant relationship to include conservators and institutions?
Once a complex artwork enters an institution, the transfer of knowledge necessary for its survival also needs to be enabled across different departments, including curation, conservation, and archiving. What are the obstacles to the flow of knowledge in this context?
Knowledge is not always shared without hesitation. What motivations may different stakeholders have, and why might they be reluctant to share knowledge?

Furthermore, training future practitioners in the field of contemporary art preservation in the

process of reinstalling complex artworks is a prerequisite for their longevity and for managing change with sensitivity. Given the sheer number of unique artists' installations, which are deeply reliant on techniques developed within their studios, as well as on specialised tools and refined procedures, it seems unrealistic to expect future conservators and other professionals to master every technique and process. We therefore need to identify and provide training in the adaptable skills that are essential for dealing with a wide array of artistic challenges:
What forms of knowledge are necessary to equip new generations to support the longevity of such complex artworks?
What kinds of educational frameworks and hands-on experiences are best suited to transferring this knowledge?

This event marks the launch of the research project "Legacies of Artists' Studios (LAS): Sharing and Archiving Embodied Knowledge for the Conservation of Technology-Based Artworks." The project is a collaboration between Cologne Institute of Conservation Sciences | TH Köln, HAWK University of Applied Sciences and Arts in Hildesheim and Wüstenrot Stiftung in cooperation with Università Vita-Salute San Raffaele in Milan, Museum Ostwall im Dortmunder U, Künstler:innenarchiv der Stiftung Kunstfonds in Puhlheim, artists' studios and freelance conservators.

Programme

8:00–9:00: Registration

9:00–9:10: Wolfgang Viöl (Executive Board, HAWK Hildesheim Holzminden Göttingen): Welcome

9:10–9:45: Tiziana Caianiello (HAWK), Gunnar Heydenreich (TH Köln), Introduction to the Symposium and Presentation of the "Legacies of Artists' Studios" Project

Session 1: Definition of Terms and Issues
Chair: Julia Giebeler

9:45–10:15: Christian Scheidemann (Conservator, New York City), Collecting Expertise in the Artist's Studio
10:15–10.45: Oliver Ehmer (Professor of Romance Linguistics, Universität Osnabrück), Transmitting Embodied Knowledge and Social Practices

10:45–11:15: Coffee Break

11:15–11:45: Agathe Jarczyk (Associate Conservator Time-Based Media, Guggenheim Museum New York), Beyond Technological Literacy: Finding a Common Language

11:45–12:15: Christoph Rausch (Associate Professor of Economic Humanities, University College Maastricht), Legacy Assets: Embodied Knowledge and the Financial Assetization of Contemporary Artists' Estates

12:15–13:15: Lunch Break

Session 2: Embodied Knowledge in Artists' Studios, Artists' Estates, Institutions
Chair: Mareike Opeña

13:15–13:45: Francesca Pola (Associate Professor of Contemporary Art History, Università Vita-Salute San Raffaele, Milan), Studio Azzurro's Documentation Practices: Collaborative Knowledge and Material Engagement

13:45–14:15: Diego Mellado Martinez (Technical Director, Studio Daniel Canogar), Documentation and Conservation of Software- and Data-based Art from the Studio Practice. Works of Studio Daniel Canogar

14:15–14:45: Anna Schäffler (Art Historian and Curator, Berlin), Navigating Change: Transmitting Artistic Legacies across Generations through Embodied Acts of Care

14:45–15:15: Elena Engelbrechter (Curator, Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg), Artemis Rüstau (Conservator, Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg), Mobilising Embodied Knowledge from the Museum's Perspective

15:15–15:45: Coffee Break

Session 3: Transmission Processes
Chair: Francesca Pola

15:45–16:15: Hélia Marçal (Lecturer in History of Art, Materials and Technology, University College London), Experimenting with Transmission in the Conservation of Performance Art [working title]

16:15–16:30: Martina Pfenninger Lepage (Co-Head of the Contemporary Art Conservation Programme, Bern Academy of the Arts, HKB), Transmission of Knowledge in the Context of Collaborative Conservation

16:30–17:30: Panel Discussion: Transferring and Safeguarding Embodied Knowledge
Mischa Kuball (Professor of Public Art / Public Spaces, Academy of Media Arts, Cologne), Martina Pfenninger Lepage (Co-Head of the Contemporary Art Conservation Programme, Bern Academy of the Arts, HKB), Jochen Saueracker (Artist) and Gaby Weijers (Director of LI-MA, Amsterdam)
Chair: Mareike Opeña

17:30–18:00: Tiziana Caianiello, Gunnar Heydenreich, Closing Remarks and Outlook

Venue: HAWK, Aula (Auditorium), Hohnsen 2, Hildesheim
Conference language: English

Participation is free of charge. Limited places. Binding registration is required by 31 May 2024 via email to Sandy Bruer, HAWK: sandy.bruer@hawk.de

Conference committee:
Prof. Dr Tiziana Caianiello (Faculty of Architecture, Engineering and Conservation, HAWK Hildesheim)
Prof. Dr Gunnar Heydenreich (Cologne Institute of Conservation Sciences, TH Köln)
Julia Giebeler (Cologne)
Mareike Opeña (New York)
Prof. Dr Francesca Pola (ICONE – European Research Center for History and Theory of the Image, Università Vita-Salute San Raffaele, Milan)

Reference:
CONF: Transmitting Embodied Knowledge in Contemporary Art Conservation (Hildesheim, 21 Jun 24). In: ArtHist.net, Apr 14, 2024 (accessed Nov 1, 2026), <https://arthist.net/archive/41652>.