

10th Interim Meeting of the ICOM-CC Metals Working Group
5–9 september 2022, Helsingfors

Cross-disciplinary collaborations, innovative conservation treatments, preventive conservation and elevating the voice of the conservator were some of the themes discussed and presented, with *sustainability* being the main theme of the conference. Panel discussions were held with conservators and conservation teachers from different countries to discuss the term sustainability. It not only covered conservation methods and materials but also the social, economic, political and gender perspectives. Although the discussion was interesting, the broadness of the topic resulted in only highlighting some of the aspects of sustainability without setting concrete examples or giving ideas on how to move forward.

The venue was located at Sveaborgs fästning which meant taking a ferry every morning followed by a day filled by lectures and every night a social program, from an opening reception to poster presentations.

During the week an interesting discussion arose, mainly voiced during the coffee breaks; the growing gap between conservation scientists and the research they undertake in laboratories and the conservation questions that arise in the work field of the conservator that probably needs to be answered by those same scientists. How many conservators will be able to clean with subcritical fluids in situ?

That is probably why many conservators will look in anticipation to the results of research from other conservators, like Peter Meehan: “A comparison of the Long-Term Outdoor Performance of Two Modern Paint Coating Systems and a Traditional Lead-based Paint Applied to Historic Wrought Iron”. This time not carried out by a scientist applying paint on coupons in a laboratory, all with the same thickness in microns but by a conservator with a brush, trying his best to apply the paint evenly and placing them outside on the shed of a friend.

Apart from meeting new colleagues within the same work field and hearing about groundbreaking new techniques the conference also was valuable in more practical areas.

Thanks to the poster presentation of Meredith Sweeney “Investigating Three Types of Dry Cell Battery Deterioration” we now have a contact that can help with some questions that might arise during the treatment of 52 batteries that are awaiting conservation at Armémuseum.

Furthermore, I hope that the presentation of Paul Lankester “Long Term Provision of Stable Environments for Metals Conservation” might contribute to us finding an adequate solution for the storage of a few heavily corroded archeological sword in our new storage.

As with most conferences there is an overload of information but it is a thankful source of new information and it is great to learn about new techniques like for example the use of proteins, fungi and bacteria as bio-patinas and corrosion converters.

I am very thankful for the generous contribution from the Märta, Gunnar och Arvid Bothéns Stiftelse to have been able to participate, make connections and learn about the latest research within the metal conservation community.

Jeroen van Halder