

Conservation strategies for modern and contemporary art

Recent developments in the Netherlands

In 1939 the Dutch artist Rueter sent out a questionnaire to his colleagues asking for instructions on the maintenance of contemporary paintings. Since then, a range of interdisciplinary and collaborative projects for the conservation of contemporary art followed in the Netherlands. This article discusses the growing importance of documenting the artist's intent and the role of museum staff as performer in the execution and conservation of the works.

IJsbrand Hummelen

Since the beginning of the twentieth century, visual artists have used an increasingly varied repertoire of materials and techniques. Academicism, with its strict, almost regulated technical procedures, gave way to experiment. Moreover, the optical, aesthetic and iconological qualities of the materials used in modern artists' explorations have taken on yet greater significance. Artists consciously choose their materials by virtue of these qualities. At first, the relationship between materials and artistic intentions received little attention from critics, collectors, art historians or conservators. This situation changed as it was gradually realized that the essential qualities of the materials were being ignored during conservation work: matt paintings were being varnished or impregnated with wax, while materials of iconological significance were being replaced by those which lacked any such significance.

1940-1970

In the Netherlands, artists themselves quickly drew attention to the danger of ignoring the relationship between their choice of materials and the artistic intentions or significance of their work. In 1939, for example, artists who had sold work to the City of Amsterdam received a letter from the painter Georg Rueter, who was also secretary to the city council's Supervisory and Advisory Commission on Paintings. 'Every artist develops a working method which enables him to attain his objectives according to his vision. The working methods, materials and techniques will vary greatly from person to person. In the interests of preserving the works held in the City of Amsterdam's collection, we request your cooperation in providing some instructions.'^[1]

On the reverse of Rueter's letter was a checklist of items which the artist should consider when providing such information. We thus see a first move towards the systematic collection and retention of the knowledge considered necessary to ensure the sustainability of artworks.

What knowledge was this? And why did it suddenly become necessary then, in 1939?

Turning to Rueter's checklist, we immediately notice that the

questions are largely concerned with the composition of binding media used in the ground layer, the underpainting or the final paint layer. Rueter also asked whether varnish had been used and whether the painting could be varnished in future. He states that this knowledge is important for the future cleaning of the paintings and, '... aside from the matt appearance which many wish to achieve, and which would be lost following the application of the wrong type of varnish, a painting in gouache, light tempera, etc., would be drastically altered by the use of a varnish which is not as the artist desired.'

From the letter, it is clear that Rueter accepts that painters of the 1930's would use materials and techniques of extremely varied nature. The artists were given the opportunity to explain exactly how their choices related to the attainment of their artistic aims. In other words, Rueter's letter acknowledges the importance of differences in materials and techniques in relation to the artistic intentions.

We do not know how many replies Rueter received, nor what happened to the completed questionnaires. It was several decades before anyone in the Netherlands would once again make serious efforts to collect and retain this type of knowledge. But by this time, the nature of the artworks themselves demanded such efforts, as we shall see below.

In the post-war years, there seemed to be little demand for this type of information as a precondition of maintaining contemporary artworks. In any event, very few initiatives were undertaken between 1945 and 1960, either in the Netherlands or elsewhere. A possible explanation for this is that complete freedom of choice (in materials and techniques) formed a precondition to the artistic development for the artists of the predominant schools. At this time, sustainability and the conservation of the work was seen as a hindrance to such development. In the Netherlands, this was certainly the attitude adopted by the members of Cobra, and later by the Zero Group. However, museums soon came to experience problems as rapid deterioration and the fragility of the materials eroded the strength of the work and the vitality offered by the free choice of materials.

1970-1985

Research into conservation methods for modern art gained renewed attention as a direct result of this problem. By now, most scientific research into new methods involved the cooperation of the Central Laboratory for Research of Objects of Art and Science, an organization founded in 1963 as one of the forerunners of today's Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage (ICN). Since then, scientific research in relation to modern art has focused on aspects of deterioration and on conserving synthetic materials.^[2] In addition, significant research has been conducted into the composition of new paints and pigments.

In the early 1970s, the Central Laboratory would often approach a conservation problem as an interdisciplinary project. In 1972, for example, it was asked to consider the issues surrounding the cleaning of *Achrome* by Piero Manzoni (1933-1963), a work owned by the Amsterdam's Stedelijk Museum and comprising

twenty squares of cotton cloth stitched together to form one large canvas. A team of textile conservators and research scientists was assembled. They were joined by the Central Laboratory's art historian, Ernst van de Wetering, who later described the dilemmas presented by this case study in a comprehensive report.^[3]

The project revealed that for modern and contemporary art it was becoming ever more difficult to arrive at a compromise between the conservation of the material object as a historical document on the one hand, and the maintenance of its original (vital) function and physical appearance on the other. The original appearance of many modern artworks changes due to rapid ageing, even during the artist's lifetime. Artists find this difficult to accept. There is then a discrepancy between the perception of the object as a historical document and the artist's memory of that object in its original context.^[4] The artist's recollection will also include the process of production, which may explain why many artists suggest creating the work anew. The more fragile and vulnerable the material, the more direct and immediate will be the vitality and *rücksichtslosigkeit* of the choices made during the creation process. Similarly, the rapid loss of the essence of those choices will be even more painful, whereupon the need to reconstruct ('re-enact') the memory will be more acutely felt. The artist sees the work not merely as an object, but as a process.

Van de Wetering applied a hitherto unconventional research method. He interviewed fellow artists and collectors of the deceased Manzoni in order to gain a better understanding of the context of the work, and involved them in making decisions regarding conservation and restoration. Artists from Manzoni's immediate circle, including the Dutch painters Jan Schoonhoven and Henk Peeters, were in favour of repainting the white surface of the soiled *Achrome*. Schoonhoven had previously overpainted Manzoni's work at the artist's request, and had overpainted some of his own work. Peeters would also later adopt the practice.^[5]

The 1990s

In 1986, the painting *Who's Afraid of Red, Yellow and Blue III* by Barnett Newman (1905-1970) was seriously vandalized while on display at the Stedelijk Museum. The incident immediately prompted a public discussion about the most appropriate restoration method. The task was contracted out to a restorer who claimed to have stood alongside Newman while the painting was being produced, and who could thus call upon first-hand knowledge of the significance and context of the creation process. These claims later proved to be questionable. However, the fact that the work was assigned to this restorer demonstrates that alleged presence at the moment of creation is regarded as an effective argument in favour of the restorer's credibility. He too would actually engage in re-enactment: he overpainted the entire red section of the painting without informing anyone of his intention to do so. This overpainting, which resulted in a completely different surface texture, was later denied by the restorer. The incident had repercussions which caused a political crisis within the city authority.^[6]

Would it have been useful to have a Rueter-style checklist completed by Newman at hand during the restoration, giving information about his use of materials? Yes, but his views on the changes to the extremely fragile surface of the painting would have been just as important, if not more so. It would even have been useful to have just enough information to clarify the significance of the great variety shown by the surfaces of his paintings, from high gloss to matt, and his use of coarse-textured cotton canvases. Unfortunately, no one actually asked him for this information while he was alive.

For some, the memory of the vitality of the painting's surface was more important than the maintenance of the painting as a histori-

cal document (like with Peeters and Schoonhoven in the case of the Manzoni work). The problems of the restoration were greatly exacerbated by the museum's inexperience in dealing with the stakeholders, such as the artist or his estate, assistants, collectors, curators, etc.

There was great dismay when a second Barnett Newman masterpiece in the Stedelijk Museum's collection, *Cathedra*, was vandalized in 1996 – and by the same man. In terms of restoring monochrome paintings, however, it is difficult to imagine a greater difference in approach between the restoration of *Who's Afraid of Red Yellow and Blue III* and that of *Cathedra*, which this time was undertaken by the Stedelijk Museum's staff restorers in 1999. The museum conducted extensive preparatory research to acquire the necessary knowledge about the painting's creation process. This formed a precondition to good decision-making for the restoration which, together with research into advanced restoration techniques and the sheer professionalism of the restorers, ensured a successful result. In this case, it did indeed prove possible to maintain the vital function and appearance of the work, while also conserving the material object as a historical document.^[7]

New developments

In the current era, conceptual works and installations which incorporate 'new media', such as film, video and computers, have brought about more informal museum practices. If a light bulb, motor, monitor or video player fails, the problem is simply resolved by replacing the part in question. Some artworks are regularly reconstructed on the advice of the artist, either by the artist himself or by assistants.

Against this background, in 1993 the Dutch museums specializing in modern and contemporary art decided to join forces to research the rapidly changing issues involved in the conservation of contemporary art. This led to the creation, in 1995, of the foundation of the Stichting Behoud Moderne Kunst (Foundation for the Conservation of Contemporary Art; SBMK). The museums, represented by the SBMK, have since conducted a number of joint research projects with the ICN, the structure and content of which have led to various new insights and practices.

The project approach can be described as qualitative and case-based, whereby both artist and artwork are central within the context.^[8] This approach was adopted partly as a continuation of the Dutch tradition of interdisciplinary research into conservation and restoration, such as that conducted within the Manzoni project. Moreover, qualitative research methods, such as interviews, surveys and case-based reasoning, are now increasingly applied with regard to the conservation of modern art, both in the Netherlands and beyond.^[9, 10, 11] Given the complexity of the context of modern art, as well as the diversity in production methods and in the significance of the materials and techniques used, this approach seems the most appropriate to investigating new strategies for conservation and restoration.

The first major project conducted by the SBMK and the ICN was entitled 'Conservation of Modern Art'. This is described in detail in the first volume of *Modern Art: Who Cares?*, the second edition of which is to be published shortly.^[12] Conservation issues were examined from various perspectives by interdisciplinary teams, while the working methods of the teams themselves were also subject to review. The results of this process included a decision-making model which emphasizes the role of the 'constructed' meaning of the work in the choice of conservation method. Another important outcome has been the cooperation between a group of international museums, educational institutes and research centres in the European project International Cooperation in Conservation of Modern Art, which led to the symposium *Modern Art: Who Cares?*



Lydia Shouten, *A Virus of Sadness, the Virulence of Loneliness*, 1990. Multimedia installation. The conservation of this installation in 2003 consisted of the real time documentation of the reinstallation with the artist, an artist interview and extensive documentation of the installation and preservation of hardware, photographs and props (realia). Collection ICN. Photo: Tim Koster

Other roles

The project and its follow-up research revealed that the roles of conservator, curator and other museum professionals involved in maintaining and presenting contemporary art are now changing. A new aspect is that of 'performance' which, as we have seen, can present various problems in the context of traditional western restoration practice. Many contemporary artworks include a greater performance component, such as the movement of kinetic art, the display of a video, the various elements of an interactive website, not forgetting 'performance art' and 'events'. Similarly, the activities of the conservator and curator include a more significant performance aspect. They become the executor and interpreter during any re-installation, when replacing parts of an installation, or when determining and supervising maintenance protocols.

Rueter's 1939 letter asks whether paintings may be varnished. This question elicits an instruction: an instruction for an action or performance. To varnish or not to varnish. Nevertheless, the purpose of the instruction is to ensure an original and unchanging performance. In many contemporary works, change has actually become an essential component of the work: several different variants are possible or in some cases are required.

The role of the museum of modern art as a documentalist therefore becomes more important. The conservator must concern themselves with the documentation and archiving of work processes and artistic practices within a huge range of different techniques and layers of significance. This documentation is frequently the only source by which the future presentation of works can be based. It may also be an alternative to the conservation of physical objects. Clearly, the process of documentation calls for additional techniques and research methods.

It is unnecessary to state that the limits of the conservator's role in documenting, selecting maintaining, conserving, restoring and reinstalling contemporary artworks must be constantly re-explored in the light of these developments. The role of the conservator and curator, and indeed that of the entire organization of a museum of modern art, must be subject to ongoing discussion.

Artist interviews and Artists' archives

During this discussion, the value of the artists' intentions as a guiding principle for conservation must be considered. The standpoint is likely to be that, in addition to the object itself, the artist and

his/her (working) environment will form the richest source of information upon which one can call. In the case of ephemeral art, the documentation of these aspects may form the most important source of all.

The belief that an archive which records the working methods, production and intentions of artists can form a basis for later interventions and presentations therefore entails that merely collecting information about materials and techniques will not be enough. There is a clear need for knowledge concerning the context of the works. However, the exact nature of that knowledge and how it can be obtained has only recently become the subject of research.

The relevant research forms part of the projects Artists' Interviews/Artists' Archives, now being conducted by the SBMK and the Research Department of the ICN.

Here too, an interdisciplinary, qualitative and case-based research structure has been adopted. Each museum taking part in the SBMK proposed an artist to be interviewed, these being the artists whose work presents issues in terms of conservation and maintenance within the collection. For each artist, an interdisciplinary group of experts determined the type of information which would be important in this regard. The artists were then interviewed, and the interviews were recorded on video. As the project progressed, it became clear that the sheer volume of relevant material that could be collected even during the preliminary research phase would present problems in terms of archiving that material and making it available at a later date.^[14]

In the project Artists' Archives, conducted in 2003-4 under the auspices of the Dutch-Flemish Commission on Cultural Cooperation, curator Hans Janssen researched methods for collecting information about production processes, materials, techniques, presentation and the intentions of the artist Daan van Golden.^[15] The research also considered how this information should be archived for future reference. A number of proposals were further elaborated by the Rijksdienst Kunsthistorische Documentatie (Netherlands Institute for Art History; RKD) and the V2_ Institute for Unstable Media.^[16]

At the same time, the ICN joined the Faculty of Mathematics and Computer Science in researching possibilities for assembling artist archives in digital form, which could then be made available on the Internet. In a recent project, a group of students designed a 'digital dossier' for works by the artist Marina Abramovic. It presents a series of artworks in a virtual setting, together with relevant context information and extracts from interviews with the artist.^[17]

International cooperation

International cooperation is already of growing importance in the conservation of contemporary art. The Netherlands Cultural Heritage Institute is a co-founder and acts as coordinator of the International Network for the Conservation of Contemporary Art (INCCA).

In 1999, the INCCA project was launched as a continuation of earlier European cooperation. It began with eleven members. The thought behind this project is that, alongside the artists themselves, museum professionals, assistants and technicians also possess considerable knowledge and information concerning the artists' working methods, materials and intentions. In many cases, museums have records of past interviews, correspondence, notes, photographs, etc., or there has been close contact with the artist during the creation and (re-)installation of a work. Moreover, the museums know where the gaps in current knowledge lie with regard to the conservation or recreation of a work. In the peer-to-peer setting of INCCA, the partners work to create virtual artists' archives by such means as a database which includes references to the knowledge of artists' practices held by each museum. There is a website, www.incca.org, and the INCCA network now includes over fifty organizations. Besides being an information network, the INCCA is also a platform for joint research projects. The ICN maintains the website and provides central network organisation.

Such international cooperation in collecting and sharing knowledge is a direct consequence of the internationalization of art, and the opportunities for communication offered by the Internet. At the same time, however, various dilemmas further to the general trend of globalization have emerged. For example, INCCA strives to achieve greater variety in conservation strategies, while the style of communication within this type of international network is more general in nature and is geared towards standardization.^[18]

The influence of the new media

The use of film, television, video and digital media in contemporary art has had a major influence on the theory and practice of conservation and restoration. The rapidly developing paradigms of media studies have a role to play here, alongside the existing paradigms of traditional disciplines such as (art) history, the natural sciences and philosophy. As in the nineteenth century, when the relatively new discipline of applied scientific research began to play an important role, so do media studies now present a number of new themes which demand reflection and a reconsideration of accepted premises.

The discussion about conservation is a topical one within media studies, partly because the boundaries between documentation, archiving and conservation are less distinct.^[19] Given the ephemeral nature of the media, the choice of conservation technique must often be made at the time of acquisition. It cannot be put off until later, as is often the case for more traditional objects. Moreover, the question of authorship of new media is established by means of intellectual property laws covering display and reproduction, while agreements regarding the manner of display, performance or reproduction are rarely made.

The appropriate presentation and conservation strategy for the

new media may be found in the domain of the 'Black Box', the darkened auditorium in which sounds and sights are experienced independently of the medium itself. The conservation strategy should therefore also rely on a method which is independent of the media.^[20]

By contrast, conservation strategy of museums is more in keeping with the domain of the 'White Cube', the bare gallery in which the physical relationship between the observer, the work and the medium plays an important part, just as in the case of exhibitions and installations. This difference has led to distinct acquisition strategies. In the 1970s, Dutch museums acquired artists' films as museum objects, without stopping to consider the copyright arrangements. While the purchase of the film itself often implied the acquisition of the screening rights, it did not include reproduction rights. Moreover, the films were rarely offered as 'limited editions', as would be the case for a graphic work or a photograph.

Today, the Netherlands Film Museum always purchases the full screening rights, reproduction rights and also the rights with regard to replication, digitization and distribution, thus ensuring its ability to maintain and conserve the material in future. The purchase of these rights is often part of a 'total package' which includes the masters, the rough cuts and sometimes also alternative versions of the film. This represents a form of archive which, in combination with the rights themselves, forms the basis for all further action involving that film. There are similarities to be seen with contemporary ephemeral art, as described above in the section on the interview and archiving projects conducted by the SBMK and ICN.

In the Netherlands, the institutes most active in the conservation of media-based arts are the Netherlands Institute for Media Art /Montevideo (NIM)^[21] and the V2_Institute for Unstable Media. The development of new conservation and presentation methods for media-based arts is largely the task of the SBMK, acting for the joint museums. Between 2000 and 2003, the NIM conducted the 'Conservation of Video Art' project on behalf of the SBMK.^[22] The SBMK maintains an ongoing dialogue with the NIM and ICN, as well as with the Film Museum and V2.

The discussion about the conservation and presentation of the new media may be seen to have penetrated the museum sector in recent years, particularly with regard to (media) installations and ephemeral objects. Communication and cooperation between the relatively new media institutes and those responsible for conservation of the more traditional 'material heritage' can offer both parties new insights. International collaboration like in the recently

2 Still from the artist interview, in 2003, with Constant Nieuwenhuis (1920-2005) explaining the context of his working methods in his Babylon Project.



Introducing

Elizabeth Nijhoff Asser

Discipline: Book conservator.

Training: At the National Conservation Training School (now a department of ICN), the course in natural polymers (1980 - 1984) with specialisation in paper, parchment and leather.

Present work place: I run my own workshop, *Mooie Boeken*, which I share with Pau Groenendijk who is a designer bookbinder.

Previous work places: Between 1985 and 1987 I worked part time as a paper conservator at the Teylers Museum in Haarlem.

Do you think the profession has changed in this period? Much has changed in the past twenty years. When I started my training, we new book conservation students walked into the workshop of the Royal Library in The Hague and were welcomed by old men in aprons standing in front of their workbenches. They looked at us mostly female students and shook their heads saying, 'girls can't round the back of a book; you won't be strong enough to enter this profession'.

Have your own activities changed in any way? A lot has changed in my own work. For years I was at the bench shaving leather, pressing book blocks, making glue, or in the wet department rinsing prints, gluing paper, leaf-casting, travelling internationally to master craftsmen who gave workshops on certain themes, etc. Now I am a teacher myself and am more involved in managing my workshop and projects than in actual hands-on work. Still learning every day, though.

Did any changes have anything to do with shifts in the profession, or was it a personal reason? Of course management has taken its place in our profession as it does in every profession that grows into a more structured state with a registered training program and a professional association.

A lot of structure had to be developed: an ethical code, professional attitudes, decision making procedures, damage inventories, first aid programs, risks assessment methods, etc.

Do you regret any changes in the profession? Non, je ne regrette rien. (I also have no regrets about growing old; life goes on – autumn, winter, spring etc. – the world goes on turning).

Do you regret any changes in your own work? Non, je ne regrette rien. (See above. Should I have had regrets, I would have made changes).

How do you see the position of the Netherlands conservators in comparison with those internationally? I think that we can learn a lot from the English, German and American situations, but that we also have our own Dutch way in dealing with the development of our profession. In some museums in Holland, curators and conservators already share equal salary levels and status.

How do you think the profession will develop in the future and what is your opinion? Three factors are important for a sound, mature profession:

1. The full development of a professional attitude held by all participants (curators, researchers, conservators) in the conservation field.
2. A well-structured education and training program at all levels.
3. A firmly established and supported professional association.

I hope we will continue in our striving for these accomplishments.

started project Preservation and Presentation of Installation Art, offers the kind of integrated approach necessary to developing new theory and practice. This project can be followed on the INCCA website, which will also present further developments in strategies for the conservation of modern art as and when they emerge.^[23]

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- [1] Letter from the City of Amsterdam Supervisory and Advisory Commission on Paintings: Gemeente Amsterdam no. 20 K, 1939.
- [2] See: Thea van Oosten, 'Wie wat bewaart die heeft...wat? Een inventarisatie van de problemen bij de conservering van vroege synthetische materialen', *Kunst.....stof tot nadenken. Problemen bij het behoud van synthetische materialen*, (Central Laboratory for Research) Amsterdam, 1995, pp 7 - 27.
- [3] E. van de Wetering, 'Het wit bij Piero Manzoni. Een conserveringsvraagstuk.' *Museumjournaal*, 1975, pp. 56-63.
- [4] A.C. Danto (1999), 'Looking at the future, looking at the present as past', *Mortality immortality? The legacy of 20th-century art*, Corzo MA, ed. (Getty Conservation Institute), Los Angeles, 1999, pp 3-12.
- [5] IJ. Hummelen, D. Sillé (eds.), *Modern Art: Who Cares? An interdisciplinary research project and an international symposium on the conservation of modern and contemporary art*, (Foundation for the Conservation of Contemporary Art/ Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage/ Archetype), Amsterdam, 1999.
- [6] IJ. Hummelen, 'Who's Afraid of Red, Yellow and Blue III, Barnett Newman'. *Zeitschrift für Kunsttechnologie und Konservierung*, 2, 1992, pp. 215-221.
- [7] J. Adrichem, M. Soeting, L. Wijnberg (2001), 'Barnett Newman, Cathedra', Vol. 24, (Stedelijk Museum) Amsterdam, 2001.
- [8] The qualitative research approach assumes that the specific context of each case will in itself provide an important contribution to the understanding of those cases and situations. Accordingly, qualitative research methods are particularly suited to the registration and interpretation of the context
- [9] W. Stebler, 'Technische Auskünfte von Künstlern. Fragen zur Praktikabilität und Brauchbarkeit von Künstlerinterviews durch Restauratoren und Kunsttechnologen in bezug auf die Probleme der Materialerhaltung in der Zeitgenössische Kunst, Maltechnik.' *Restaurio*, Vol. 1, 1985, pp. 19-35.
- [10] R.A.C. Cobbe, 'Examination of modern paintings: technical information received from artists.' *Studies in Conservation*, 1, 1976, pp. 49-50.
- [11] E. Gantzert-Castrillo, *E. Archiv für Techniken und Arbeitsmethoden moderner Kunst Bd. 1*, Wiesbaden, 1979.
- [12] See 5.
- [13] Nineteen interviews have been conducted to date.
- [14] IJ. Hummelen, N. Menke, (a.o.) 'Towards a method for artists' interviews related to conservation problems of modern and contemporary art.' *ICOM-CC Triennial meeting (12th)*, Lyon, 29 August-3 September 1999, preprints. Vol. 1, (James & James London) Lyon, 1999.
- [15] H. Janssen (2005), 'Daan van Golden: case-study voor een kunstenaarsarchief.' *Jong Holland*, 1, 2005, pp.13-20.
- [16] *Capturing Unstable Media* at www.v2.nl/ 2004.
- [17] <http://www.few.vu.nl/~dossier05/>
- [18] IJ. Hummelen, T. Scholte, 'Sharing knowledge for the conservation of contemporary art: changing roles in a museum without walls?', *Modern art, new museums: contributions to the Bilbao Congress, 13-17 September 2004*, (International Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works) 2004, pp 208-212.
- [19] *Archiving the Avant Garde. Documenting and preserving digital and variable media art*, http://www.bampfa.berkeley.edu/about_bampfa/avantgarde.html
- [20] A. Depocas, J. Ippolito, C. Jones, *Permanence through Change: The Variable Media Approach*. New York/ Montreal, (The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation/ The Daniel Langlois Foundation), www.variablemedia.net/ 2003.
- [21] V. van Saaze, G. Wijers, 'Reanimaties' *Onderzoek naar de presentatie en registratie van vier media-installaties*. *kM Vakinformatie voor beeldende kunstenaars en restauratoren*, Vol 46, 2003, pp.18-20.
- [22] *De houdbaarheid van videokunst. Conservering van de nederlandse videokunst collectie*, (SBMK/ Foundation for the Conservation of Contemporary Art) 2003.
- [23] The author would like to thank Tatja Scholte and Karen Baldock for their support, critical reading and suggestions.