

The Challenges of Conserving Contemporary Art

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Contemporary art challenges the underlying values of conservation. Committed to prolonging the physical life of objects in the face of inevitable change, conservators are particularly vexed by Conceptual and other art that questions notions of permanence and deliberately employs ephemeral media.

Clad in white lab coats and armed with instruments of material analysis in museum laboratories, conservators pursue their quest of understanding the physical mechanisms of change. They strive to inhibit chemical and physical degradation with stabilized museum environments and technical interventions such as consolidation and repair. Yet conservators are not just materials scientists and hands-on craftsmen. They work with curators and others to identify symbolic meaning invested in museum collections. Their mission is to conserve not just the object but its cultural significance for present and future generations. The cultural significance of fine arts most typically resides in the conceptual intention of the artist. Thus an aim of fine arts conservation is to preserve the artist's intent by inhibiting physical change.

Conflicts arise when the artist's intent is contrary to the preservation doctrine. This tension makes conserving contemporary art a particularly lively terrain. Debate over meaning turns to action when conservators make decisions and intervene in the physical lives of artworks—including conceptual pieces whose primary value lies in the nonmaterial realm of experience and interaction. The aim of this essay is to examine the conflicts and tensions that arise in conserving contemporary art and to consider recent trends that address the challenges of conserving nontraditional contemporary works.

ETHICS, VALUES, AND MORAL RIGHTS

Conservators work within ethical and professional standards developed by their professional bodies. As conservation increasingly professionalized during the twentieth century, membership organizations formed, with ratified codes of ethics and standards for practice.¹ These guidelines, along with conferences and a growing body of literature, shape the philosophy and practices of the field. They also articulate the underlying values that drive conservation. Two such values that come into conflict with the aims of contemporary art are the “preservation ethic” and respect for the “true nature” of the object.²

The preservation ethic is central to the mission of most museums: “*Preservation* is the most fundamental of [a museum’s] responsibilities, since without it research and presentation are impossible and collection is pointless.”³ Museums assume that collected artworks have something to offer future generations, as testaments to our time or as expressions of individual genius. As defined by the American Institute for Conservation (AIC), conservation is the “profession devoted to the preservation of cultural property for the future.”⁴ According to the International Council of Museums (ICOM) in 1984, the task of conservator-restorers “is to comprehend the material aspect of objects of historic and artistic significance in order to prevent their decay.”⁵ This zeal to preserve conflicts with artists who want their work to deteriorate or who assign greater value to a concept than its material manifestation.

The second conservation value that conflicts with much of the art produced today is respect for the integrity of the object. Conservation literature and guidelines for practice remind practitioners of the importance of the object as an authentic document that represents a culture or an aesthetic expression. Objects are thought to have a “true nature,” an essential value that can be identified and preserved: “At the foundation of the conservation ethic lies the precept ‘thou shalt not change the nature of the object.’”⁶ A 1983 definition of conservation offered by the United Kingdom Institute for Conservation (UKIC) defines conservation as “the means by which the true nature of an object is preserved. The true nature of an object includes evidence of its origins, its original construction, the materials of which it is composed and information as to the technology used in its manufacture.”⁷

In fine arts conservation, the integrity or true nature of the object is linked to both the “artist’s intent” and the original (authentic) appearance of the work. Conservation research focuses on artistic intentions and the materials and methods used to achieve them. In his influential “Theory of Restoration,” Cesare Brandi emphasizes the uniqueness and specificity of artworks, and argues that the material form, and its image, can be restored only through an aesthetic

approach.⁸ He further describes a defining principle of restoration as “reestablishing the potential unity of the work of art.”

When the artist is alive and actively expressing his or her intentions, the focus shifts toward documenting and honoring the artist’s interests. Problems arise when artists change their mind or express interests that are either unachievable or undesirable by current owners. Some artists recommend conservation strategies that dramatically alter their earlier work. Some prefer conserving their own art using methods that contradict conservators’ codes of ethics, such as repainting surfaces and changing original elements. Artists claiming continued rights to alter their work can come into conflict with owners, particularly when greater value is assigned to works from an artist’s earlier period.

Once art is purchased and enters the domain of a collection, other stakeholders come to the table with their own concerns regarding longevity, integrity, and monetary value. Artists give up certain rights once they sell their work, but retain others that are dictated by copyright legislation or written contracts from the sale. The legal rights relevant to conservation are artists’ “moral rights,” as defined in national and international copyright legislation. The European Berne Convention, originally signed in Switzerland in 1886, specifically protects artists’ rights of “integrity” from any “distortion, mutilation, or other modification” of their work (article 6 bis (1)).⁹ Conservation intervention, whether through cleaning, repair, or replacing missing elements, falls into the category of “other modification.” The United States belatedly adopted the Berne Convention in 1989, then established its own Visual Artists Rights Act (VARA) in 1990.¹⁰ Through these laws, artists’ moral rights are protected for fifty years after their death in the U.S., seventy years in most of Europe, and “forever” in France.¹¹

United States law is less protective of artists’ rights than European law. VARA specifically recognizes the rights of conservators: “The modification of a work of visual art which is the result of conservation . . . of the work is not a destruction, distortion, mutilation, or other modification . . . unless the modification is caused by gross negligence” (paragraph 106A(c)(2)). This places the burden on the artist to prove reckless activity on the part of the conservator. The statute similarly states: “The modification of a work of visual art which is the result of the passage of time or the inherent nature of the materials is not a distortion, mutilation or other modification. . . .” (paragraph 106A(c)(1)). A critical difference between U.S. and European legislation is that in Europe moral rights legislation protects the artist, whereas in the U.S. it protects the object.¹²

Moral rights legislation is frequently invoked in the removal or destruction of site-specific works. The legislation is rarely invoked in conservation conflicts, however, even in Europe. Perhaps this is because the legal category of “distortion, mutilation, or other modification” is more difficult to prove when

it comes to good-faith efforts to clean and repair works of art. Conflicts do occur, however, and the legislation will no doubt be fully tested in the courts. The Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam came into conflict with Barnett Newman's recommended conservator after the artist's death, when the conservator used a paint roller during the repair of a vandalized work.¹³ In another situation, a conservator replaced a section of fat in a Joseph Beuys sculpture after it melted in an overheated exhibit case in 1977.¹⁴ Unfortunately, the artist was not consulted in this process. Since Beuys incorporated the process of degeneration into much of his work, he might have accepted the melted fat as part of the sculpture's "biography."

Copyright legislation protects artists' moral rights when someone modifies their work, but it does not require conservators to consult artists prior to conservation. Conservators' interest in identifying artists' intent comes from a deep-seated concern for honoring symbolic meaning, embodied by professional codes of ethics. Since neither legislation nor professional codes provide full guidance for navigating the difficult terrain of contemporary art, conservators continually modify their approach according to individual situations; increasingly, they work in collaboration with artists, curators, and others with interests in defining how artworks should or should not be preserved.

PRESERVATION, CHANGE, AND ARTISTS' INTENT

Some contemporary art is doomed to disintegrate because of poor media selection or material incompatibility. Conservators call this "inherent vice." Self-destruction can come from under-engineering or material interaction, as when one metal corrodes in contact with another through galvanic oxidation. Widening the scope of art media in the twentieth century led to material experiments that sometimes failed. In acquiring works with unstable "found" objects, synthesized modern polymers, and other new technologies, museum collections shifted from the predictable to the unknown.

Plastics are a case in point. Synthetic polymers vary enormously in their inherent stability. Many early plastics, such as cellulose nitrate, are now known to decompose both chemically and physically.¹⁵ Plastics yellow, craze, and become brittle as additives migrate within their structure and their long molecular chains break down and cross-link. They react to acidic and alkaline environments, heat, ultraviolet light, and extremes of moisture. Whereas some plastics are notoriously unstable, others (such as many polyethylenes and polystyrenes) are relatively inert and even used for archival museum storage containers. Conservators and conservation scientists devote time and effort to identify plastics in art and their mechanisms of deterioration. They create

micro-environments in exhibitions and in storage facilities to lengthen the lives of fragile plastics, and they research synthetic polymers for use in conservation interventions.

Aside from mending breaks and filling losses, conservators have few options for dealing with structurally deteriorating plastics. Depending on the specific plastic and its physical condition, conservation recommendations are frequently limited to preventive measures such as handling with clean gloves, exhibiting under low ultraviolet light levels, and storing in cool, dark environments with the relative humidity stabilized between 40 and 60 percent. Chemical scavengers and absorbents that reduce the harmful effects of emissions may be added to storage and exhibition environments. Some early cellulose nitrate sculptures deteriorate to the point of no longer representing the artist's intent (figs. 1, 2). Considered effectively "dead," they are not exhibited and are archived in museum graveyards solely for research purposes.

Just as some contemporary artists unknowingly threaten longevity by their selection of media, others make deliberate compromises. Ephemeral materials and unstable juxtapositions may convey symbolic meaning that expresses the artist's intent but also knowingly leads to self-destruction. Unstable works can accumulate monetary or social value, leading to conservation interventions that challenge ethical practice but are sometimes justifiable. In certain circumstances, substitutions may be made for original materials that have degenerated and no longer represent the artist's intent. However, material replacement is in direct conflict with the conservation ethic of respecting the integrity of the authentic object. In such cases of conflict, codes of ethics and legal restrictions provide a theoretical framework for decision-making, but they inevitably fail to give clear direction for practice. Decisions about deteriorated elements take place in collaboration with artists, artists' representatives, owners, art historians, conservators, conservation scientists, and technical consultants.

Conserving Donald Lipski's *Building Steam—190* (fig. 3) involved analysis by an entomologist and collaborative decision-making between the artist, the owner, and the conservator. The sculpture consisted of an industrial neoprene glove filled with rice from China, stretched around the flange of a ship's porthole. The rice was visible through the porthole. The glove developed tears and micro-cracks in areas of stress where it stretched over the porthole. I was asked to conserve the sculpture when cigarette beetles infested the rice. Initial research included identifying the original materials and the insect larvae. I entered into lengthy conversation with the artist and the owner's representative about options for conservation intervention. A joint decision was made in which the artist purchased new Chinese rice and shipped it to my studio. We purchased a new neoprene glove, meeting the artist's specifications. Before placing the new

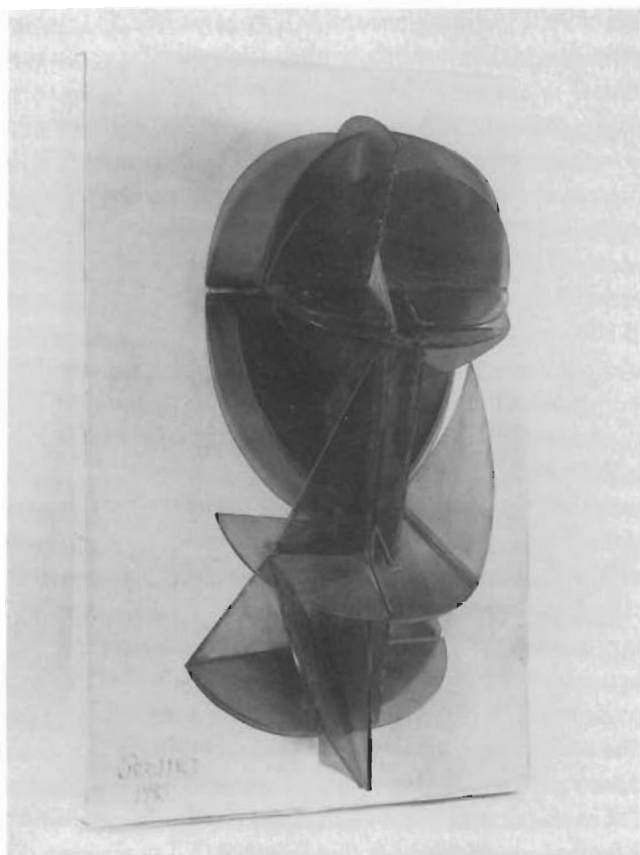


Fig. 1. Antoine Pevsner (Russian, 1886–1962), *Head of a Woman*, 1923. Cellulose nitrate; $14\frac{3}{8} \times 9\frac{1}{4} \times 4\frac{5}{8}$ in. ($36 \times 23.1 \times 11.5$ cm). Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. Gift of Joseph H. Hirshhorn, 1972

rice in the new glove, we exposed it to a cycle of freezing for forty-eight hours, thawing for twenty-four hours, and re-freezing for forty-eight hours to kill any insects or larvae. The treatment satisfied all parties. The solution was temporary, however: two years later book lice infested the glove. After this second infestation, the artist suggested replacing the rice with the plastic “sprinkles” he had originally thought of using when creating the work. This pushed my personal ethics to a new limit, since it meant changing the original materials in the name of preservation. The owner supported the proposal, and I agreed to perform the intervention. The artist purchased the plastic pellets and sent them to our studio. We disassembled the sculpture, cleaned the glove with ethanol, and



Fig. 2. Antoine Pevsner, *Head of a Woman*, 1923. Recent photograph after irreversible deterioration of the cellulose nitrate.

replaced the infested rice with the same volume of “sprinkles.” All parties agreed to re-date the piece as follows: 1983 (reconstructed in 1990).

Moving-image and electronic works pose other challenges to conservation values and practice.¹⁶ Most artists working in technology media want their work to survive, despite its lack of fixity. Traditional cellulose nitrate film stock disintegrates and can self-combust. Although recent moving-image media are more stable (e.g. polyester/polyurethane), other risks include the de-magnetization of video work or its simply becoming outmoded as new projection technology develops.¹⁷ Replacement parts, projectors, monitors, and other exhibition equipment become increasingly difficult to find over time. Electronic art faces similar

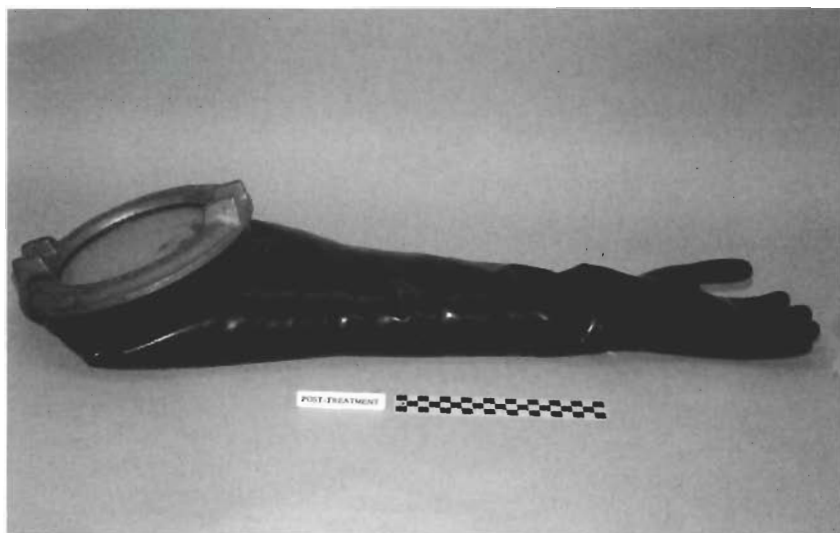


Fig. 3. Donald Lipski (American, born 1947), *Building Steam—190*, 1983 (reconstructed in 1990). Neoprene, metal, glass, and plastic sprinkles; 10¼ × 27 in. (25.6 × 67.5 cm). Private collection

conservation problems. Carrier systems change from floppy to hard discs, CDs, and DVDs. Software needs periodic updating to remain compatible with new computer technologies.

According to Howard Besser, director of New York University's program in Moving Image Archiving and Preservation, conservators of electronic art need the combined skills of archivists and cultural anthropologists.¹⁸ They are charged with documenting and archiving artists' intentions as well as overseeing preservation strategies in the face of ever-shifting technologies. Technicians with up-to-date knowledge from computer industries or the artists themselves conduct much of the hands-on work of preserving video and electronic art.¹⁹ This work includes "refreshing" (transferring onto new storage media), "migration" (upgrading equipment and software), and "emulation" (duplication on entirely new media). Specialized businesses are developing to carry out this technical work for museums. Master and submaster copies are archived for the future, while duplicates are distributed for exhibition. Part of the conservator's role is to insure that highly specialized technicians comply with ethical conservation standards and parameters set by artists.

Documenting the artist's limits on acceptable change for each work includes recording their opinions about changing media from analogue to digital or about changing the projection format from cathode ray tube to liquid crystal or

flat panel digital display. Paul Kos didn't mind migrating his video work *Chartres Bleu* (1983–86) from analog to digital for a recent exhibition at the University of California's Berkeley Art Museum, but he insisted on using round television monitors rather than flat panel screens to better simulate the look of medieval stained glass.²⁰ Nam June Paik established minimal conceptual criteria for reinstalling his video work *TV Garden* (1974–2002), including the juxtaposition of plants and televisions (nature and technology). He allows curatorial flexibility in choosing the televisions, programming, and surrounding plants: "I don't like to have complete control—that would be boring. What I learned from John Cage is to enjoy every second by decontrol."²¹

Temporary installations and performance art present other conservation concerns when they enter permanent collections. At issue is what, exactly, the buyer is purchasing.²² Certainly this includes the right to reinstall the work. Typically the collector acquires some, if not all, of the primary installation materials, along with secondary documentation, such as still or moving images and notes from the artist. Conservation can become a matter of archiving the secondary materials and documenting the essential elements of the work for reinstallation, including acceptable substitute materials and tolerance for change in the exhibition environment.²³ Collectors of Sol LeWitt wall drawings archive his instructions and photographs of temporary works for later reinstallation. He is specific about who can re-create the drawings and suggests that conservators should always be in touch with those who did them originally.²⁴ This will inevitably cause problems when the original installers are no longer around.

Not all art is meant to survive. This certainly isn't new—artists have always created ephemeral works for consumption at public festivals, in spiritual practice, and through other social and personal activities. What is new is that many of these works are collected and exchanged on the open market. They are valued as testament to an ephemeral moment, or for their association with a well-known artist. Also new is the conceptual significance of loss. Original installation materials may be "used up" in the course of an exhibition. Felix Gonzalez-Torres invited viewers to take pieces of stacked papers and candies in his installations: "The fact that someone could just come and take my work and carry it with them was very exciting."²⁵ Collectors of his ephemeral works purchase certificates that give them the rights (and responsibilities) of decision-making on issues of authenticity, such as purchasing new candies when the original make and color are no longer available.

Some artists use deterioration as an element of process in their work. Anya Gallaccio is interested in the degeneration of her organic media: "Some people find it repulsive, but I think it's quite beautiful and fascinating how things decay over time."²⁶ Joseph Beuys expressed a similar sentiment: "The nature of my

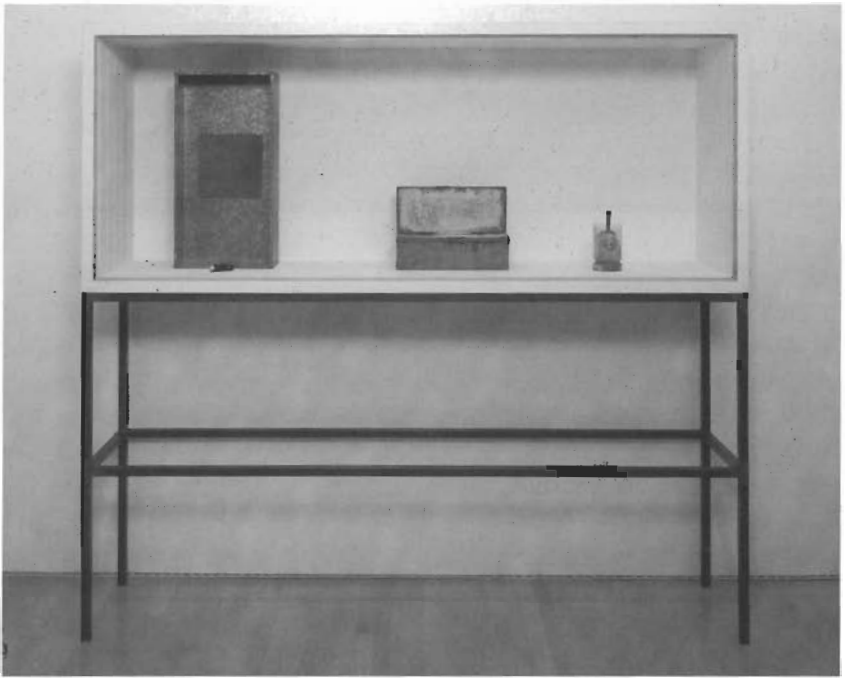


Fig. 4. Joseph Beuys (German, 1921–1986), *Untitled (Vitrine with Four Objects/Plateau Central)*, c. 1962–83. Mixed media (sausage covered with zinc ointment; galvanized box with sheet of lead, glass front and paint; galvanized box filled with fat; glass jar filled with dry battery cell and copper sulphate crystals) in painted wood, steel, and glass vitrine; 81 $\frac{1}{8}$ \times 19 $\frac{11}{16}$ \times 86 $\frac{5}{8}$ in. (202.8 \times 49.3 \times 216.5 cm). San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. Fractional Gift of Norman and Norah Stone

sculpture is not fixed and finished. Processes continue in most of them: chemical reactions, fermentations, colour changes, decay, drying up. Everything is in a state of change.”²⁷ Janine Antoni originally created *Gnaw* (1992) by sculpting a six hundred–pound cube of chocolate and a five hundred–pound cube of lard with her teeth.²⁸ Conservators at the Museum of Modern Art in New York store the chocolate in specially lined crates. The lard is re-cast for each exhibition, using aluminum molds that replicate the artist’s teeth marks. The lard cube is packed in dry ice until the exhibition opening, then slowly self-destructs on display. The deliberate deterioration of some contemporary works forces museums to reconsider their preservation doctrine. In some cases images that record the demise of original materials are preserved rather than the object itself.

Other concerns arise when the deterioration process creates toxic by-products or unpleasant odors that affect staff and the visiting public. Putrefied

organic materials can attract pests that infest other objects in the collection, and recycled building materials may contain asbestos, as in some works by Gordon Matta-Clark. The San Francisco Museum of Modern Art took action to reduce the odors from Joseph Beuys's *Untitled (Vitrine with Four Objects/Plateau Central)*, which contains a deteriorating sausage covered with zinc ointment, a galvanized box with fat, and a glass jar with a dry battery cell and copper sulfate crystals (fig. 4). Charcoal absorbers placed behind the objects now effectively eliminate the odors.²⁹

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN CONSERVATION

Conservators and conservation scientists address the needs of contemporary art on many fronts. Researching the behavior of new art materials and technologies can involve a number of institutions as well as artists and their foundations. For instance, six different institutions joined forces to investigate patterns of surface irregularities on highly polished metal sculptures of artists such as Donald Judd.³⁰ A growing body of literature chronicles this genre of technical research on modern materials. In 2001 Harvard University created a Center for the Technical Study of Modern Art.³¹ The Center will assemble an archive of art and conservation materials together with information received from artists.

Conservators must rethink their standard methodology in the face of new materials, new technologies, and conceptually driven art. New models for conservation include active participation by artists and other stakeholders and are not necessarily motivated by the ethic of preserving the "authentic" object. One model with a high tolerance for incorporating change according to artists' intentions comes from the Foundation for the Conservation of Modern Art in Amsterdam.³² As described by the authors, this model follows standard conservation methodology in its emphasis on documentation, material-condition research, and identifying the meaning, or artist's intent. The model forces a discussion of two types of discrepancy. The first is whether the current condition of a work conflicts with its intended meaning—does the aging, damage, or decay warrant conservation intervention? As the authors suggest, a scratch in a floor plate by Carl Andre confirms the artist's meaning, whereas a similar scratch on a pristine Donald Judd negates the artist's intent.³³ Similar scratches may lead to very different conservation decisions, based on artists' expressed goals for their work. The second point for discussion of discrepancy is in considering options for conservation. The conservator gathers relevant information from a range of sources, such as material analysis, industrial literature, and documented artist's intent. She then formulates passive and active options for

conservation. Stakeholders discuss these options, as well as others they bring to the table. A central question is whether conservation intervention helps unite the object with its intended meaning. Polishing or refinishing a scratched Donald Judd may do just that, whereas similar treatment of a Carl Andre floor plate would contradict his objectives.

Collecting and archiving artists' intent is tricky business. Some artists are readily approachable and easily express their thoughts on acceptable patterns of aging. They define their tolerance for shifting colors, cracking resins, soiling, and physical damage. Others choose not to address the future of their work. To reduce needless or unwanted contact with artists, conservators first consult published and unpublished documents from prior interviews or written exchange. These documents often exist in museum registration files or on collection databases.

Museums increasingly ask artists to fill out questionnaires or participate in an interview when a work enters their collection. Some institutions prefer structured survey forms and questionnaires, whereas others draw on ethnographic methods, using unstructured interview techniques. The Tate Gallery in London developed a model database for recording information on acquired collections.³⁴ When possible, they interview the artists in front of their acquisitions, with a questionnaire tailored to suit each artist and his or her work.

Carol Mancusi-Ungaro of the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York and Harvard University conducts videotaped interviews with artists. She argues against long surveys for acquiring detailed information. Her videos and their transcriptions are frequently not edited: "An unedited film can convey an artist's uncertainty or doubt which the finished printed word, by its very nature, cannot."³⁵ She adds that unedited interviews contain information that could seem irrelevant today, but may prove critical in the future.³⁶ Since artists do change their minds and respond differently to different conservation problems, frequent dialogue and documentation of responses help construct more advanced understanding of their concerns.

Museums work collaboratively to share their archived data on artists' materials and intentions. Two recent initiatives illustrate this trend in information sharing. The first is the International Network for the Conservation of Contemporary Art (INCCA),³⁷ funded by the European Commission and organized by the Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage with the Tate Gallery. INCCA's mission is to establish a virtual archive of information on artists' intent. The primary tool is a meta-database of references to unpublished documents held by member institutions, such as video interviews, notes from conversations, and analysis of materials used by individual artists. Because of restrictions on copyright and confidentiality, the documents themselves are not posted online. Once an authorized researcher locates a document from an online search, she contacts

the owning institution for permission to view or obtain a copy of the document. An additional project of INCCA is an online literature database for publications on contemporary art conservation, along with conference postings, guidelines for conducting artist interviews, models for conservation decision-making, a conservation vocabulary list, and links to related websites. Fortunately, this aspect of their work is accessible online to non-members.

A second model devised to document and share information from artists is the Variable Media Network, funded by the Daniel Langlois Foundation for Art, Science, and Technology and coordinated by the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York.³⁸ The Variable Media Network is a shared database for museum staff designed primarily to house information about the reinstallation of nontraditional artwork. Launched in 2003, it consists of a website and an online database accessible to the general public. The network discards traditional, medium-specific categories such as painting, sculpture, and video, since media are often mixed and can even change over time through migration and emulation. Instead, works are assigned to categories of installation, such as “interactive” (for those that museum visitors interact with), “networked” (for works distributed across the Internet), and “contained” (for more traditional art such as paintings and sculpture).

These new initiatives reflect new modes of working in order to conserve the increasingly diverse interests of artists. These interests can extend beyond conceptual concerns to concrete political action.³⁹ In activist art, social intervention takes precedence over physical longevity. The artist Judy Baca, of the Social and Public Art Resource Center (SPARC) in Los Angeles, works with disenfranchised populations to create murals in public spaces. She insists that the process of instilling neighborhood pride is inherent to her work, and consequently her murals cannot be conserved without involving future generations of community representatives. “Outside” professional conservators alone cannot conserve the murals: “It isn’t just a question of consolidating a surface, it’s consolidating the community and reactivating it.”⁴⁰ It may be argued that conservation of activist art can be achieved only through continued activism. This may cause problems for conservators and owners with different political orientations, or in changing social circumstances that render action on old issues obsolete.

The models suggested in this chapter for conserving contemporary art challenge standard beliefs in preserving the authentic object. They also point to greater collaboration and sharing of conservation authority. The multidisciplinary nature of creating contemporary art leads to a conservation that is more diffuse at its borders. Not only do traditional divisions of conservation (e.g., paintings, sculpture, and paper) break down, but conservation research and

decision-making also reach into new technical and social arenas. While striving to hold onto a strong sense of professional ethics, conservation is forced outside of museum walls to become a more participatory practice that is shaped by new technologies and new currents in contemporary culture.

NOTES

1. For example, see Code of Ethics and Guidelines for Practice of the American Institute for Conservation, 1994, <http://aic.stanford.edu/geninfo/>; the Professional Guidelines of the European Confederation of Conservator-Restorers' Organizations (ECCO), 1993, at <http://palimpsest.stanford.edu/byorg/ecco/library/ethics.html>; and the Code of Ethics of the International Council of Museums—Conservation Committee, 1984, <http://icom-cc.icom.museum/About/CodeOfEthics/> (all accessed 19 November 2003).

2. Miriam Clavir, *Preserving What Is Valued: Museums, Conservation, and First Nations* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2002).

Catherine Sease, "Codes of Ethics for Conservation," *International Journal of Cultural Property* 7, no. 1 (1998): 98–114.

3. Philip Ward, *The Nature of Conservation: A Race against Time* (Marina del Rey, Calif.: Getty Conservation Institute, 1986).

4. American Institute for Conservation, *Directory: The American Institute for Conservation of Historic & Artistic Works* (Washington, D.C.: AI Conservation, 2002), 21.

5. International Council of Museums—Conservation Committee, 1984, <http://icomcc.icom.museum/About/DefinitionOfProfession/> (accessed 27 July 2004).

6. Suzanne Keene, "Objects as Systems: A New Challenge for Conservation," in *Restoration: Is It Acceptable? Occasional Paper No. 99*, ed. Andrew Oddy (London: British Museum, 1994), 19.

7. United Kingdom Institute of Conservation, *Guidance for Conservation Practice* (London: UKIC, 1983), 2.

8. Cesare Brandi, "Theory of Restoration, I, II, & III," in *Readings in Conservation: Historical and Philosophical Issues in the Conservation of Cultural Heritage*, ed. Nicholas Stanley-Price, M. Kirby Talley, and Alessandra Melucco Vaccaro; trans. Gianni Ponti and Alessandra Melucco Vaccaro (Los Angeles: Getty Conservation Institute, 1996), 231; originally published 1963.

9. Cornell Law School, 1967, <http://www.law.cornell.edu/treaties/berne/overview.html> (accessed 23 July 2004).

10. Ivan Hoffman, *The Visual Artists Rights Act*, 1990, <http://www.ivanhoffman.com/vara.html> (accessed 15 November 2003).

11. Annemarie Beunan, "Moral Rights in Modern Art: An International Survey," in *Modern Art: Who Cares?* ed. IJsbrand Hummel and Dionne Sillé (Amsterdam: Foundation for the Conservation of Modern Art and the Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage, 1999), 222–32.

12. *Ibid.*

13. *Ibid.*, 227–28, and Roy S. Kaufman, *Art Law Handbook* (Gaithersburg, N.Y.: Aspen Publishers, 2000), 983–84.

14. Kees Herman Aben, "Conservation of Modern Sculpture at the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam," in *From Marble to Chocolate: The Conservation of Modern Sculpture Tate Gallery*

Conference 18–20 September 1995, ed. Jackie Heuman (London: Archetype Publications, 1995), 104–109.

15. Michele Derrick, Dusan Stulik, and Eugena Ordenez, “Deterioration of Cellulose Nitrate Sculptures Made by Gabo and Pevsner,” in *Saving the Twentieth Century: The Conservation of Modern Materials*, ed. David W. Grattan, (Ottawa: Canadian Conservation Institute, 1993), 169–82; and Christopher W. McGlinchey, “The Physical Aging of Polymeric Materials,” in *ibid.*, 113–19.

16. William A. Real, “Toward Guidelines for Practice in the Preservation and Documentation of Technology-based Installation Art,” *Journal of the American Institute for Conservation* 40 (2001): 211–31.

17. Howard Besser, “Longevity of Electronic Art” paper presented at the conference of the International Cultural Heritage Informatics, 2001, available from <http://www.gseis.ucla.edu/~howard/> (accessed 1 November 2003); and Pip Laursen, “The Conservation and Documentation of Video Art,” in *Modern Art: Who Cares?*, 263–71.

18. Howard Besser, director of the Moving Image Archiving and Preservation Program, New York University, communication with author, 8 April 2003.

19. Mitchell Hearns Bishop, “Evolving Exemplary Pluralism: Steve McQueen’s *Deadpan* and Elija-Liisa Ahtila’s *Anne, Aki and God*—Two Case Studies for Conserving Technology-Based Installation Art,” *Journal of the American Institute for Conservation* 40 (2001): 179–91; and Timothy Vitale, “Techarchaeology: Works by James Coleman and Vito Acconci,” *Journal of the American Institute for Conservation* 40 (2001): 233–58.

20. Constance M. Lewallen, senior curator for exhibitions, Berkeley Art Museum, communication with author, 12 December 2003.

21. John G. Hanhardt, “Nam June Paik, *TV Garden*,” in *The Variable Media Approach: Permanence through Change*, ed. Alain Depocas, Jon Ippolito, and Caitlin Jones (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications and the Daniel Langlois Foundation for Art, Science, and Technology, 2003) 70–77.

22. Martha Buskirk, *The Contingent Object of Contemporary Art* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2003).

23. Carol Stringari, “Installations and Problems of Preservation,” in *Modern Art: Who Cares?*, 272–81.

24. D.H. van Wegen, “Between Fetish and Score: The Position of the Curator of Contemporary Art,” in *Modern Art: Who Cares?*, 201–209.

25. William Bartman, Tim Rollins, Jan Avgikos, and Susan Cahan, “Interview with Felix Gonzalez-Torres,” in *Felix Gonzalez-Torres* (New York: Art Resources Transfer, 1993), 9.

26. Ralph Rugoff, “Dark Art: A New Generation of British Sculptors Is Finding Inspiration in the Morbid and Macabre,” *Vogue* 182, no. 9 (1992): 352–58.

27. Caroline Tisdall, *Joseph Beuys* (New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1979), 7.

28. Lynda Zyberman, conservator of sculpture, Museum of Modern Art, New York, communication with author, 18 December 2003.

29. Michelle Barger, associate conservator of objects, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, communication with author, 1 December 2003.

30. Researchers suspect that these patterns originate from lubricants such as oils, waxes, and silicones used in industrial production prior to purchase by artists and fabricators. From Eleonora Nagy, project director and sculpture conservator at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, communication with author, 5 November 2003. The collaborating institutions are the Guggenheim, the Chinati Foundation in Marfa, Texas, the Museum of Modern Art in

New York, Orion Analytical in Williamstown, Massachusetts, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York.

31. More information on the Center for the Technical Study of Modern Art can be found at <http://www.artmuseums.harvard.edu/press/released2000/mancusiungaro.h> (accessed 18 November 2003).

32. Wilma van Asseldonk et al., “The Decision-Making Model for the Conservation and Restoration of Modern and Contemporary Art,” in *Modern Art: Who Cares?*, 164–72.

33. *Ibid.*

34. Marja Peek and Agnes W. Brokerhof, “Documentation and Registration of Artists’ Materials and Techniques: Proceedings,” in *Modern Art: Who Cares?*, 388–90.

35. Carol Mancusi-Ungaro, “Original Intent: The Artist’s Voice,” in *ibid.*, 392–93.

36. Carol Mancusi-Ungaro, director of the Center for the Technical Study of Modern Art at Harvard University and director of conservation at the Whitney Museum, communication with author, 8 December 2003.

37. See International Network for the Conservation of Contemporary Art (INCCA) at <http://www.incca.org/> (accessed 1 October 2003).

38. See the Variable Media Network at <http://www.guggenheim.org/variablemedia/> (accessed 1 October 2003).

39. Tom Finkelpearl, *Dialogues in Public Art* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2000); and Suzanne Lacy, ed., *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art* (Seattle: Bay Press, 1994).

40. Judith Baca, “The Public Role in Preservation,” in *Conservation and Maintenance of Public Art*, ed. Hafthor Yngvason (London: Archetype Press, 2002), 21–29.