



Bonnefanten Museum
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Seminar 'Theory & Semantics of Installation Art'

Thursday 11 May 2006

Bonnefanten Museum, Maastricht.

The seminar is part of the European project *Inside Installations: Preservation and Presentation of Installation Art*.* It has been organised by the Foundation for the Conservation of Contemporary Art (SBMK) in collaboration with Instituut Collectie Nederland (ICN) and is kindly hosted by the Bonnefanten Museum.

To attend, please send the reply form by Monday 1 May to Paulien 't Hoen, SBMK coordinator info@sbmk.nl

Pre-seminar drinks Wednesday 10 May, 8 – 10 pm
Join us for a pre-seminar welcome drink at the Bonnefanten Museum restaurant. All participants are welcome.

Installation works of art are distinct from traditional art objects and demonstrate specific vulnerabilities in terms of both the contexts and the technologies on which they are dependent. To safeguard these works for future generations, traditional approaches to long-term conservation, documentation and presentation are being challenged by professionals in the field.

One of the most difficult theoretical (and practical) issues of installation art is the notion of 'the original'; particularly in the case of site-specific installations.



Suchan Kinoshita, no title, 2000 (detail). Collection Bonnefantenmuseum.
Photo: Peter Cox.

- What is essential to determining origins and authenticity of the work?
- What parts of it should be preserved, transformed or re-created?
- How to identify the 'original' work when reproducible media are involved, such as video, and the artist is using (parts of) the original work in future editions?

Other questions that arise are:

- How to identify 'craftsmanship' where new technologies are being used in contemporary art?
- How to identify the public's (interactive) participation when the work undergoes changes in the course of time?
- What is the museum's role when it interacts as intermediate between the artist and the public?

Another problem is the lack of a 'common language' to describe installation art. As with contemporary art in general, new concepts are being introduced and new ways of thinking are developed rapidly. This 'sliding semantic scale' presents a challenge to the international conservation community who recognises the need for exchanging knowledge and information.

These and other issues will be explored by experts from diverse professional backgrounds, in the form of lectures, 'statements' on specific themes and a panel discussion. Speakers include:

- **Martha Buskirk**, M.I.T. lecturer in art history and criticism and author of *The Contingent Object of Contemporary Art*, on authenticity and authorship in modern and contemporary art.
- **Marga van Mechelen**, University of Amsterdam lecturer and has published widely on conceptual, performance and installation art since the late seventies and on issues concerning historiography and visual theory in general and visual semiotics and psycho-semiotics in particular.
- **Pip Laurenson**, Senior Conservator, Time-Based Media, Tate
- **Cornelia Weyer**, Conservator and Director, Restaurierungszentrum Düsseldorf
- Artist **Suchan Kinoshita** will discuss her experiences in regard to research that has been carried out within the Inside Installations project on two of her works.

* *Inside Installations: Preservation and Presentation of Installation Art* started on 1 June 2004 and is a research project initiated by Instituut Collectie Nederland (ICN) into the management and conservation of installations. It is supported by the European Commission's Culture 2000 programme. Thirty complex installations (many multimedia) will be re-installed, investigated and documented. By sharing their experience the partners work together to develop guidelines for conservation, re-installation and documentation of installation art. ICN is coordinator of the project which is co-organised by: Tate, London; Restaurierungszentrum, Düsseldorf; Stedelijk Museum for Modern Art (SMAK), Ghent; Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid and the Foundation for the Conservation of Modern Art (SBMK) in The Netherlands. The project runs through May 31, 2007.