

The International Closing Conference **Plastics Forever? Researching and Preserving Historical Exhibition Icons** is an opportunity for an interdisciplinary exchange on aspects relating to the history, materials science and conservation and restoration of museum objects made of cellulose-based plastics. While the focus from a scientific conservation point of view is on studying and researching ageing behaviour and restoration options, the conference will also examine the production, exhibition and collection history of these highly innovative exhibits from a historical viewpoint.

The conference is aimed first and foremost at restorers, scholars of the humanities, natural sciences and conservation science, museum professionals and collection curators eager to find out more about the latest findings in interdisciplinary plastics research.

CONFERENCE CONCEPT

Academy of Fine Arts Dresden
Benjamin Kemper, Dipl.-LMChem.
Maria Lörzel, M.A.
Prof. Dr. Ursula Haller
Prof. Dr. Christoph Herm

Deutsches Hygiene-Museum Dresden
Julia Radtke, M.A.

Technische Hochschule Köln
Prof. Dr. Friederike Waentig

CONFERENCE ORGANISATION

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Deutsches Hygiene-Museum Dresden
Julia Radtke, M.A.
Manuel Voitech, M.A.

REGISTRATION

by 30 August 2019 by email to: veranstaltungen@dhmd.de,
keyword: Transparent Figures

CONFERENCE FEES

50 € for regular participants, 30 € for concessions

With German–English / English–German
simultaneous interpreting

In cooperation with:



Technology
Arts Sciences
TH Köln

The research project is supported
by the Volkswagen Foundation
as part of its 'Research in Museums'
funding stream.



ORGANISERS

Deutsches Hygiene-Museum Dresden

Study course on Art Technology, Conservation
and Restoration of Works of Art at the Academy
of Fine Arts Dresden

Cologne Institute of Conservation Sciences (CICS)
at the University of Applied Sciences Cologne

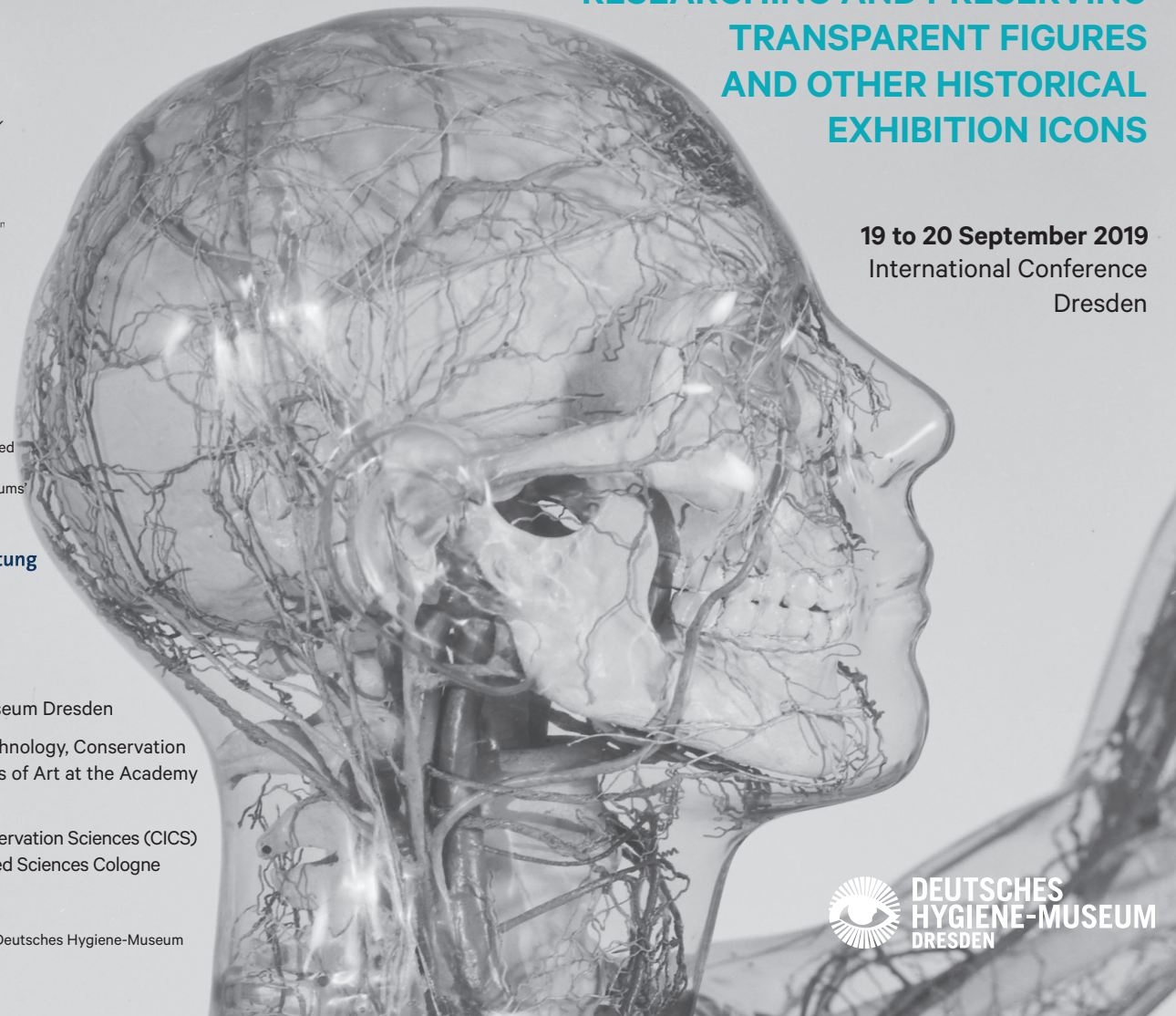
Cover: Transparent Man, 1955, Deutsches Hygiene-Museum

DEUTSCHES HYGIENE-MUSEUM

PLASTICS FOREVER?

RESEARCHING AND PRESERVING TRANSPARENT FIGURES AND OTHER HISTORICAL EXHIBITION ICONS

19 to 20 September 2019
International Conference
Dresden



Well into the 20th century all sorts of objects were manufactured using cellulose-based plastics. Many of those objects are now preserved in museum collections. Other than mass-produced items of everyday use such as combs, spectacles and handbags, cellulose plastics were also used to create artworks such as the works by Russian sculptor Naum Gabo. These materials were highly innovative in their day and were also used by natural history museums, museums of society and social hygiene, and technical museums to produce exhibits subsequently showcased as thrilling 'masterpieces of technology'. But now cellulose-based plastics are proving to be a particular challenge with regard to their long-term preservation. Indeed, they are ageing rapidly, and many of these historical exhibits now show signs of significant damage. Many invaluable works of art and cultural assets are at risk of complete degradation over the next few decades, due to general ageing processes, improper storage conditions, or the lack of restoration and/or conservation options.

The research project **Transparent Figures – Exhibition Icons of the 20th Century** funded by the Volkswagen Foundation was set up in direct response to this situation to enable exemplary research into and study of the anatomical models of the Deutsches Hygiene-Museum, i.e. its 'Transparent Figures'. The production and exhibition history of these exhibits has been extensively studied since 2016, along with fundamental research on potential conservation and restoration strategies. Ultimately, the experience gained from the Dresden models will be used to formulate general recommendations and guidelines for the long-term preservation of cellulose acetate objects.

PLASTICS FOREVER?

RESEARCHING AND PRESERVING TRANSPARENT FIGURES AND OTHER HISTORICAL EXHIBITION ICONS

September 19, Thursday

8.30 am Registration

9 am
Welcome
Prof. Klaus Vogel, Deutsches Hygiene-Museum

Introduction
Susanne Roeßiger, Deutsches Hygiene-Museum

UNDERSTANDING, COLLECTING AND RESEARCHING HISTORICAL PLASTIC OBJECTS AS CULTURAL ASSETS

Moderator: Prof. Dr. Ursula Haller, Academy of Fine Arts Dresden

9.15 am to 9.30 am
Plastics in form– Design history as materials history
Dr. Wolfgang Schepers, Kunststoff-Museums-Verein e. V.

9.30 am to 9.45 am
Plastics as a research topic of conservation sciences
Prof. Dr. Friederike Waentig, University of Applied Sciences Cologne

10 am to 10.30 am Coffee break

Panel 1 HISTORICAL EXHIBITION ICONS MADE OF PLASTIC

Moderator: Susanne Roeßiger, Deutsches Hygiene-Museum

10.30 am to 11 am
Transparent women: Local and global museum histories
Dr. Karen Rader, Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond

11 am to 11.30 am
Dresden and Cologne’s ‘Transparent figures’ within the regime rivalry, 1949 – 1990
Dr. des. Christian Sammer, Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg

11.30 am to 12 noon
Utopian dimension of the notion of transparency: design icons made of synthetic material
Dr. Julia Bulk, Wilhelm-Wagenfeld-Stiftung, Bremen

12 noon to 12.30 pm
The modern synthetic building for the modern human
Dr. Pamela Voigt, BAKU – Bauen mit Kunststoffen, Leipzig

12.45 pm to 2 pm Lunch

International Conference, Dresden Deutsches Hygiene-Museum

Panel 2 CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION OF HISTORICAL PLASTIC OBJECTS MADE FROM CELLULOSE ESTERS

Moderator: Prof. Dr. Ursula Haller, Academy of Fine Arts Dresden

2 pm to 2.30 pm
The complexity of the Transparent figures – Assessment of damages and development of conservation concepts of the multilayered and interwoven objects
Maria Lörzel, Academy of Fine Arts Dresden

2.30 pm to 3 pm
Conservation and restoration of three-dimensional objects made from cellulose esters
Odile Madden, Getty Conservation Institute, Los Angeles

3 pm to 3.30 pm
Mass – Unique objects – Documents. 5,000 tooth-brushes at the Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum
Margrit Bormann, State Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau

3.30 pm to 4 pm
Managing cellulose-based film material at the Deutsches Filminstitut
Anke Mebold, DFF – Deutsches Filminstitut & Filmmuseum, Frankfurt a. M.

4.15 pm to 4.45 pm Coffee break

5 pm to 6 pm Guided tours of the permanent and special exhibition

6.15 pm to 7.30 pm Dinner

7.30 pm
What should we do with ageing objects – research, exhibit, discard, renew?
Panel discussion with Prof. Dr Angela Matyssek (Academy of Fine Arts Dresden), Prof. Johannes Vogel (Natural History Museum Berlin), Prof. Klaus Vogel (Deutsches Hygiene-Museum Dresden), Dr. Sabine Witt (Deutsches Historisches Museum Berlin), Suzan de Groot (Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands, Amsterdam)
Moderator: David Vuillaume, Deutscher Museumsbund e. V.

Panel 4 CURRENT PLASTICS RESEARCH

Moderator: Prof. Dr. Friederike Waentig, University of Applied Sciences Cologne

12 noon to 12.15 pm
Recommendations for managing cellulose acetate objects
Benjamin Kemper/Maria Lörzel, Academy of Fine Arts Dresden

12.15 to 12.30 pm
COMPLEX: The degradation of complex modern polymeric objects in heritage collections: A system dynamics approach
Dr. Katherine Curran, University College London

12.30 to 12.45 pm
A national framework for managing malignant plastics in museum collections (the PolyMuse project in Australia)
Dr. Petronella Nel, University of Melbourne

12.45 to 1 pm
Facets of a collection. Research on the vivid colours of early plastics as illustrated by an inventory from the Technisches Museum Wien
Anne Biber, Academy of Fine Arts Dresden

1 to 1.15 pm
Materials in motion. A research project on animation artwork conservation
Aafke Weller, EYE Filmmuseum, Amsterdam

1.30 pm Summary / Farewell