



LECTURE ON:

Authenticity and conservation state of art works:
The market and auction houses
&
Presentation of the historical-technical Journal
"Conservation Science in Cultural Heritage"

Salvatore Lorusso

Department of Histories and Methods of Conservation of Cultural Heritage
Alma Mater Studiorum University of Bologna

*La sapienza è figliuola della esperienza...
E la esperienza non falla mai, sol fallano i
nostri giudizi*

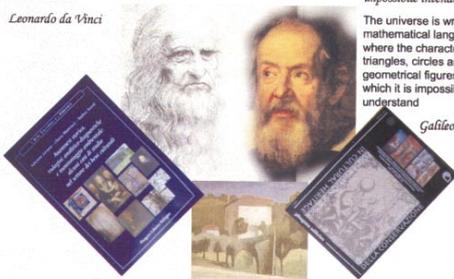
Wisdom comes from experience....
experience never fails, only our
judgments do

Leonardo da Vinci

*«L'Universo è scritto in
lingua matematica, e i
caratteri sono triangolari,
cerchi, ed altre figure
geometriche, senza i quali è
impossibile intendere»*

The universe is written in a
mathematical language
where the characters are
triangles, circles and other
geometrical figures, without
which it is impossible to
understand

Galileo Galilei



Italian Cultural Institute - New York
November 19th 2008



Giorgio Morandi. Still life, 1960

After the many requests received, I have willingly agreed to publishing my lecture presented on the 19th of November of this year in New York at the Italian Cultural Institute, on the occasion of the Giorgio Morandi retrospective, held both at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and at the same Institute.

I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to the people involved in preparing the different aspects of my lecture with great care: firstly my wife Franca De Leo, then my coworkers Andrea Natali, Chiara Matteucci, Giovanni Palmeri, Elena Giurlanda, Filomena Volpe, Antonella Frosina and – a very important person – my English teacher Angela Mari Braida. Lastly my deep gratitude must go to the person who made the event possible: my dear friend and learned scholar Renato Miracco.

(Note of the scientific editor)

AUTHENTICITY AND CONSERVATION STATE OF ART WORKS: THE MARKET AND AUCTION HOUSES

&

PRESENTATION OF THE HISTORICAL-TECHNICAL JOURNAL “CONSERVATION SCIENCE IN CULTURAL HERITAGE”

Salvatore Lorusso

Dipartimento di Storie e Metodi per la Conservazione dei Beni Culturali
Alma Mater Studiorum Università di Bologna (sede di Ravenna)

1. Introduction

Initially I wish to greet all the people present and express my thanks to everyone for being here.

“Who hears forgets, who sees remembers, who acts learns”: a quotation by the artist Bruno Munari.

Not just for this reason but also because of my limited knowledge of English, I will be accompanied by a series of slides and the valuable presence of an interpreter.

I would like to acknowledge those present: not only the neophytes and those newly interested in the topics of this lecture, but also the experts in the art market.

I would like to express my appreciation to Professor Renato Miracco, Director of the Italian Cultural Institute of New York, and his coworkers: Doctor Amelia Carpenito, in the past meeting Deputy Director of New York and recently nominated Director of the Italian Cultural Institute of San Francisco; Doctor Renata Rosati, manager of planning and development and finally Doctor Eva Zanardi, Director’s Assistant of the same New York Institute.

Following my invitation by Professor Miracco, together we decided on the subject of the lecture.

This theme is: “Authenticity and conservation state of art works: the market and auction houses”.

The theme is very complex, because it concerns many aspects, which are: technical and economic, cultural and hedonistic, social and mercantile, spiritual and also commercial.

The lecture also includes the “Presentation of the historical-technical journal Conservation Science in Cultural Heritage”.

This journal represents the realistic integration of the various cultural experiences and competences, which determine – in a complete and correct manner – the resolution of the problematics in the sector of art work.

The arguments of the first part of this lecture are:

- a brief introduction,
- the initial considerations,
- the art market,
- the auction system,
- the auction houses and the market,
- further points regarding ethnic art work,
- the afore-mentioned subjects have been the object of our study and involvement. For these reasons, I would like to highlight the importance of the:
 - subjective and objective evaluation of art works;
 - case studies, examined through the years with my coworkers concerning:
 - the attribution and state of conservation of three paintings,
 - the marble sculpture representing Madonna with child,
 - the Dante codex.

After, in relation to the Presentation of the historical-technical journal “Conservation Science in Cultural Heritage”, I will mention:

- the preface;
- the scientific and editorial staff;
- interdisciplinary skills and objectives;
- the conclusion.

The two parts of the lecture are connected to each other, as already highlighted in the brochure presented for this occasion, and deal with:

- a particular situation in the American system and, I would say, not only American;
- consequently a question.

The situation is: the lack of social criticism, in other words everything must respond to reassuring aesthetics, that is complacency and elegance of form win.

The consequent question arises: is this really true?

2. Authenticity and conservation state of art works: the market and auction houses

- Initially I will introduce some **brief considerations**.

The first concerns: art and science, art is science.

Science is not capable of explaining everything, because there is always the risk that new scientific theories will formulate new truths. Art is conscious that there is nothing new to say, but only new and different ways of formulating the truth. Consequently the assertion and verity is:

«together, art and science are two ways of telling the story of the world, not two subjects in contrast with each other, but two different ways of reading reality».

The second consideration is related to: artistic cultural heritage as material heritage.

Cesare Brandi defined restoration as “the methodological moment of recognition of the work of art, in its physical consistency and in its aesthetic and historical dual polarity”.

In this definition there are very important terms.

These are the conceptual terms:

- “methodologies” include “study of methods”;
- “method” includes various operative steps: diagnosis, restoration, conservation and maintenance;
- “physical consistency” emphasizes the necessity of knowing the material typology.

Deriving from this, the following annotation which refers to the third consideration: cultural heritage as economic heritage.

A work of art is composed of material: therefore cultural heritage can be considered an economic heritage. But there are a series of immaterial values such as intellectual enrichment and aesthetic emotion.

It derives that there are different areas of investigation: historical, symbolic, social, aesthetic, spiritual values and authenticity. This last term determines the next argument.

➤ **The art market.**

After these brief notes, we examine the “art market” or more appropriately the “art system”, because there are different figures and institutions interacting with each other. As for “demand”, there is: private collecting, big markets, museum curators, enterprises, banking institutions.

As for offer, the principal operators are the auction houses, galleries, antique dealers and art dealers,

However, it is right to pinpoint the various artistic sectors which make up the different sectors of visual art (fig. 1).

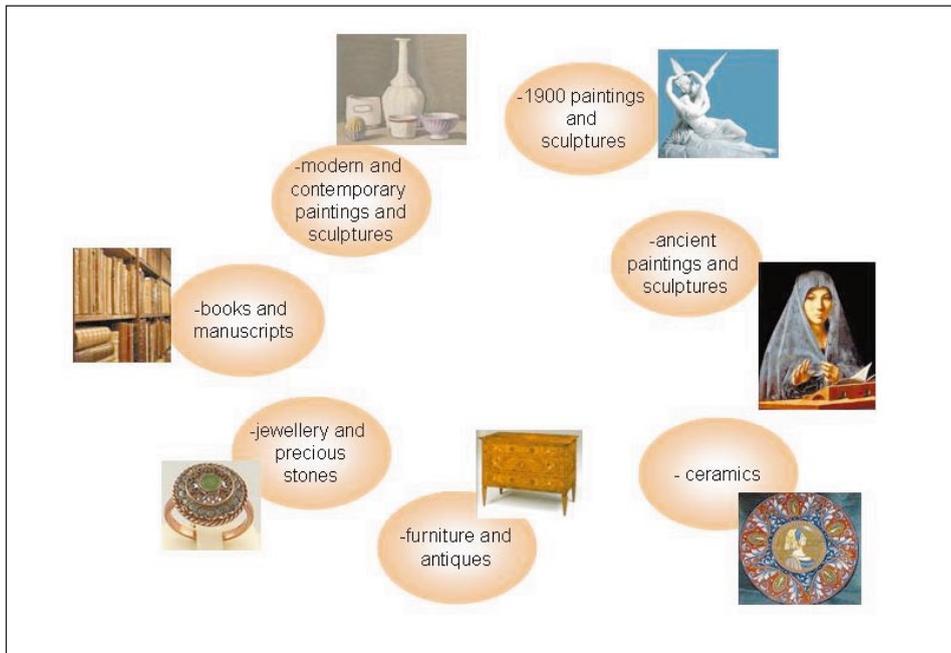


Figure 1. Different sector of visual art.

These artifacts are classified according to a chronological criteria and/or based on the artistic techniques used.

However, currently, there is “computer art”, which includes images from digital technologies: this causes a crisis in the concept and definition of art work.

➤ At this point we introduce **the auction system**.

Initially there was the auction system, the so-called “take it or leave it offer”. In other words, the normal channel of selling: the seller defines the “posted price” and the buyer decides after, whether to accept or reject the offer. Afterwards, the auction house became the meeting point between the demand and offer of art works, a go-between for the seller and the buyer.

The catalogue, supplied by the auction house, is very important, because it represents an indispensable informative instrument in relation to estimated prices, but it also contains various information, both explicit (for example: date, author, school, material constituents, state of conservation, etc.) and implicit (that is: importance of the work in the catalogue).

In relation to the falsification of a work, this cannot be attributed to the sellers, because its authenticity is a personal opinion.

There is then the problem of stolen works. The certainty that a work does not come from a theft is not a legal requisite, and therefore it is easy to be deceived. The Art Loss Register, the most extensive private international data base in the world, underlines that no less than 54% of stolen works of art is discovered in auction catalogues.

➤ **Auction houses and market.**

Now we shall examine the market of auction houses and the correspondent trends. Firstly, I will underline the factors, which have determined the great increase in the business done by the auction houses. These are:

- transparency;
- objectivity;
- the diffusion of Internet, especially by virtue of the fundamental informative role, carried out by the catalogues, which provide buyers with a first approach to the work.

The widespread use of Internet is very important, even if buying “on line” is a questionable choice, due to the lack of checking and protecting the final buyer’s interests.

But the growth of auction houses can be explained in economic terms too, though:

1. Improved economic conditions which have led to an increase in the price of luxury goods and scarce goods. This economic situation, as is known, has drastically changed in recent months (recession is the word used). The consequent question is: “what will happen to the market in relation to financial price lists?” We can’t know the answer : the market has responded in opposite directions.
2. Confidence in the principles which regulate purchasing.
3. Suitable communication and marketing strategies

Table 1. Shows some data which demonstrate the extent of the market.

Table 1. Development of the art market.

	Global turnover	Growth rate in the period 2000-2007	Average annual profit
2007	7 billion dollars	266%	5,8% (global art) 9,2% (contemporary art)

Comparing the distribution, by countries, of sales of art objects during the period 2003 (fig. 2) and 2007 (fig. 3), it is evident that there was an increase in the market due to the participation of Russians, Chinese and Arabs.

These people, benefitting from the weakening of the dollar, have substituted American collectors.

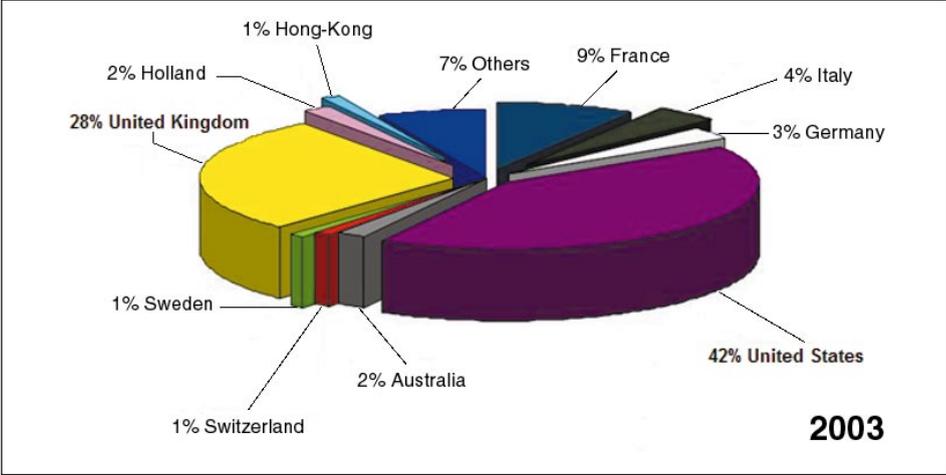


Figure 2. Main buyers during the year 2003.

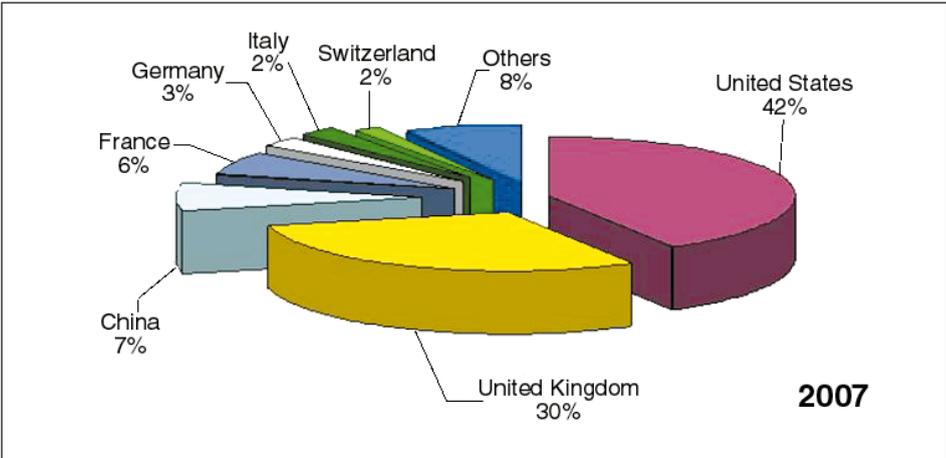


Figure 3. Main buyers in 2007.

Basically, the art market has always been the union of aesthetic, cultural and economic needs. There are two motives which determine a purchase:

- ✓ the work of art as a status-symbol;
- ✓ the work of art as an alternative investment

As it is known, Christie's and Sotheby's hold a "king of oligopoly" on the world market.

The London and New York markets share between 40% and 70% of all business. But there are two different strategies: Christie's for the mass market and Sotheby's for artifacts of great value. In simple terms Christie's for quantity and Sotheby's for quality.

This chart (fig. 4) shows Christie's International's and Sotheby's International's financial performance in these years from 1993 to 2007 (1999 and 2004 are not available).

The data is expressed in millions of pounds and are inclusive of auction rights.

In the last years the market trends show:

- growth of contemporary art – detriment of modern art, because the first presents more affordable prices and is not limited by state intervention;
- modern art, however, continues to be important;
- instability of paintings;
- growth of the antique furniture and furnishings sectors;
- decline of the sector related to precious stones and jewellery;

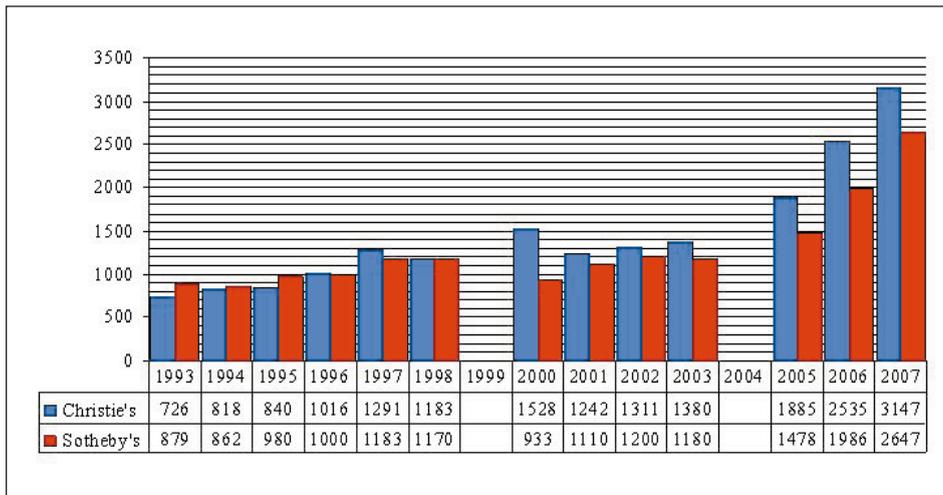


Figure 4. International financial performance of two auction houses Christie's and Sotheby's, during the period 1993 and 2007.

– the market for silver and rare books is very specialized and the correspondent leaders are goldsmiths and humanistic experts.

➤ At this point I think that it is important to underline some notes about ethnic **works of art**.

This market, relative to the tribal works from Africa and Oceania, in recent years is on the rise. With regard to ethnic art, the economists from the University of Bologna, Guido Candela and Antonello Scorcu, have prepared statistical models, hedonic prices and indexes of evaluation. They have thus set up a digital databank based on auction bid-dings at Sotheby's and Christie's in New York and Paris, during the years (from 1998 to 2007). In this way they have contributed to a greater transparency in the ethnic sector of collecting.

➤ We are now at the core of my lecture, which is: **subjective and objective evaluation**. The aim of auction houses is to offer legal guarantees and to protect its clients¹.

The evaluation of art work made by auction house experts is fundamentally subjective, based on visual inspection and deriving from a reading and analysis of an aesthetic, stylistic, iconographic and historical nature.

The completion of this examination includes the use of Wood's Lamp, the collaboration of restorers and the involvement of the living author. Other means of experimental investigation depend on the value and interest of the work in question. Instead the objective evaluation is based on the use of diagnostic and analytical technologies: this verifies authenticity².

Through the years the non authenticity of works of art has been and continues to be a profitable "business", being fundamental to establishing an economic evaluation.

Economic evaluation depends on: authenticity; dating; production period of the work; creative technical development; provenance; state of conservation.

In relation to the problem of the production of identical copies of an original work, it must be pointed out that for antique art works it is easier to verify authenticity, because different methodologies and techniques can be used³.

For contemporary works of art identification is more complex, because materials are easily available.

3. Case studies

And now follow the case studies carried out in the Cultural Heritage Diagnostic

Laboratory of the Department of Histories and Methods for the Conservation of Cultural Heritage in the University of Bologna (Ravenna).

The artifacts to be examined were chosen appropriately, because they belong to various sectors of interest, to typologies of different chemical nature and, consequently, different applications. What is important is the comparison between the initial subjective evaluation and the subsequent objective evaluation.

There is reference, in particular, to some paintings, to a sculpture and to a codex⁴.

Points regarding three paintings, their attribution and state of conservation

The three case studies, proposed by the various private clients, are ascribable to different historical periods but have one objective in common.

This is to ascertain and/or confirm the validity of the attribution of the paintings to a particular artist, not only by examining the historical, artistic and stylistic aspects of the work, but also by using a series of objective tests aimed at distinguishing the components, pigments, the layer of preparation, the practical techniques used and last, but not least, the state of conservation.

Diagnostic investigations

The diagnostic investigations were carried out using various instrumental techniques. In this way it was possible to confirm or not confirm whether a work was attributable to a painter or not and to assess the state of conservation.

The first is an oil painting on wood representing a *Madonna with child and saints Jerome and Catherine of Siena* (85 × 63 cm) (fig. 5), attributed by Federico Zeri, a distinguished art historian, to the Sienese painter Domenico Beccafumi (1486-1551). The second is an oil painting on canvas *Portrait of a gentleman* (73,8 x 61,7 cm) (fig. 6), attributed by the art historian Maurizio Marini to the Flemish painter Antony Van Dyck (1599-1641).



Figure 5. Oil painting on wood representing a Madonna with child and saints Jerome and Catherine of Siena.



Figure 6. Oil painting on canvas Portrait of a gentleman.

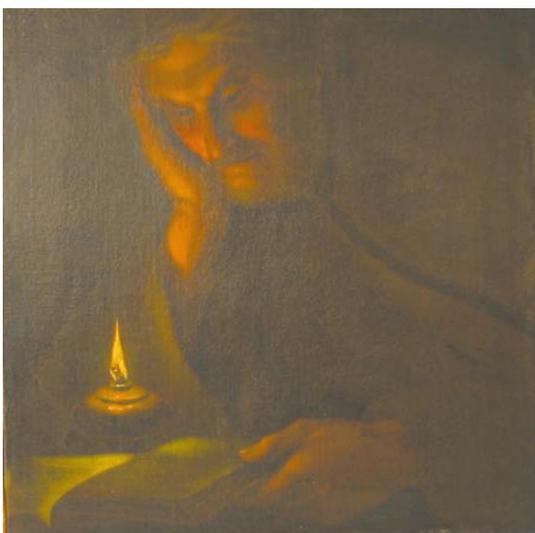


Figure 7. Oil painting on canvas representing a Man reading by lamplight.

The third is an oil painting on canvas *Man reading by lamplight* (70 x 50,5 cm) (fig. 7), attributable through traditional references, to Gerrit Van Honthorst (Gherardo delle Notti) (1590-1656).

Analytical and diagnostic examinations were carried out using: visible and ultraviolet photography; image analysis using videomicroscope; infrared and ultraviolet reflectography; X-ray fluorescence spectroscopy; X-ray radiography; colorimetry- spectrofotometry; gas chromatography-mass spectrometry.

The application of two techniques in particular, from the above-mentioned, was conclusive in determining the attribution: these were the infrared reflectography and X-ray fluorescence spectroscopy.

Reflectographic examination

For the first case related to *Madonna with Child and saints Jerome and Catherine of Siena* as the following pictures show (fig. 8), the paintings were examined in zones and the resulting images were compared using visible light (A) and infrared light (B).

Some anatomic details are correct or however, at least in part,

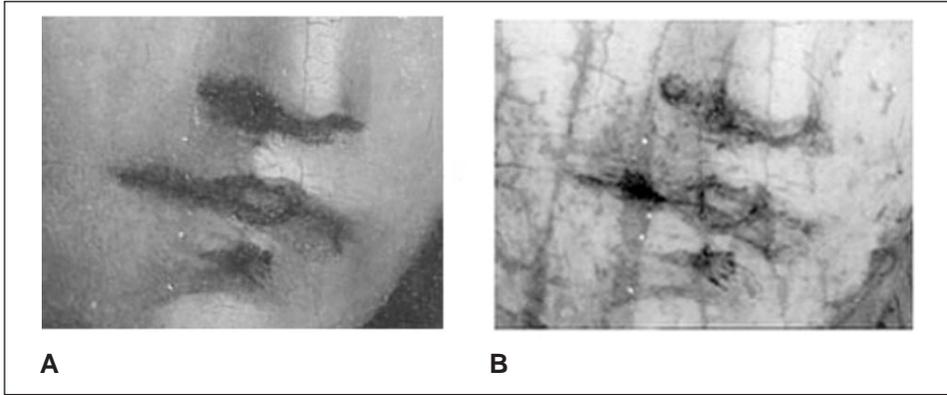


Figure 8. Comparison between infrared (A) and ultraviolet (B): detail of the Virgin's mouth.

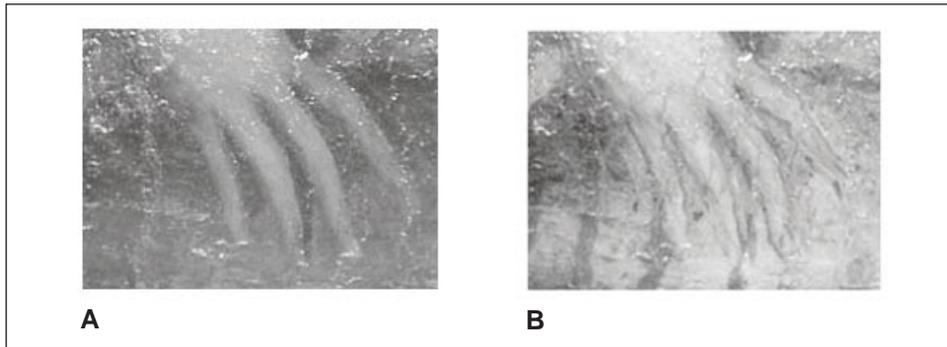


Figure 9. Comparison between visible (A) and infrared (B): detail of the Virgin's right hand.

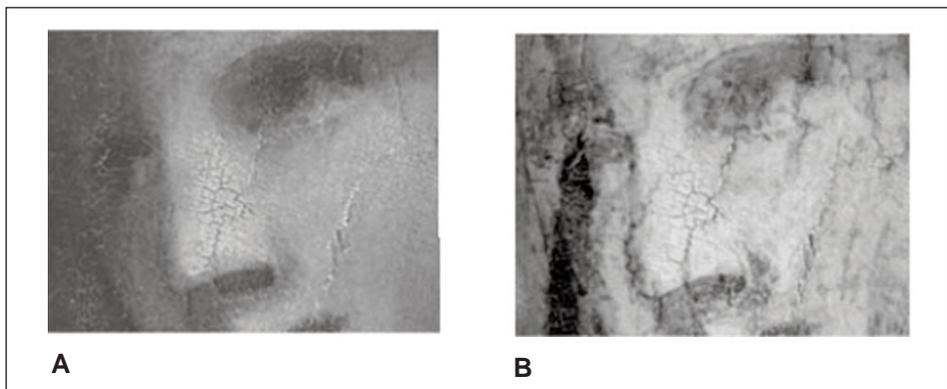


Figure 10. Comparison between visible (A) and IR (B): detail of saint Catherine's nose.

reconsidered: it is the case of the “mouth” of the Virgin, which shows an anomalous lower lip, which makes one think of an upward movement, also considering the unusual depth of the “dimple” between this latter and the chin.

Similar results were obtained for the Virgin’s “right hand” (fig. 9) which shows some very thin fingers in the preparatory drawing, but are more clearly defined by the author at a later date.

Saint Catherine’s “nose” (fig. 10) seems to have been radically reconsidered with respect to its preparation.

In this case too, the detail of saint Catherin’s hand (fig. 11) shows that it has been radically reconsidered.

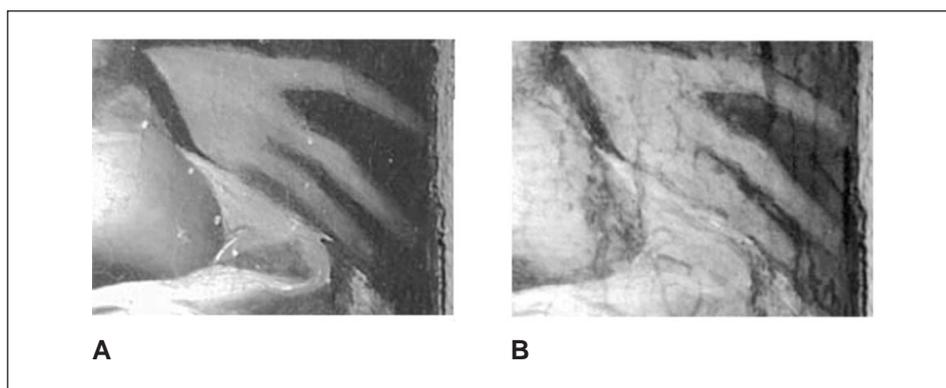


Figure 11. Comparison between visible (A) and IR (B): detail of saint Catherine’s hand.

Infrared reflectography

In the case of *Portrait of a gentleman* (fig. 12), the images in visible (A) and infrared values near infrared radiations (NIR) (B-C-D), related to the overall view of the painting and to the detail of the eye (fig. 13), do not show the presence of a preparatory drawing: in fact, the definition of the shadows and the “chiaro-scuro” was carried out during the final phases of the pictorial procedure.

In the case of *Man reading by lamplight* (fig. 14), the images regarding the overall view of the painting does not reveal the presence of a preparatory drawing: the definition of the shadows and the “chiaro-scuro” was present from the very first steps of the pictorial process and subsequently perfected.



Figure 12. Comparison between visible (A) and infrared light with different wavelength (B-C-D) of the Portrait of a gentleman.

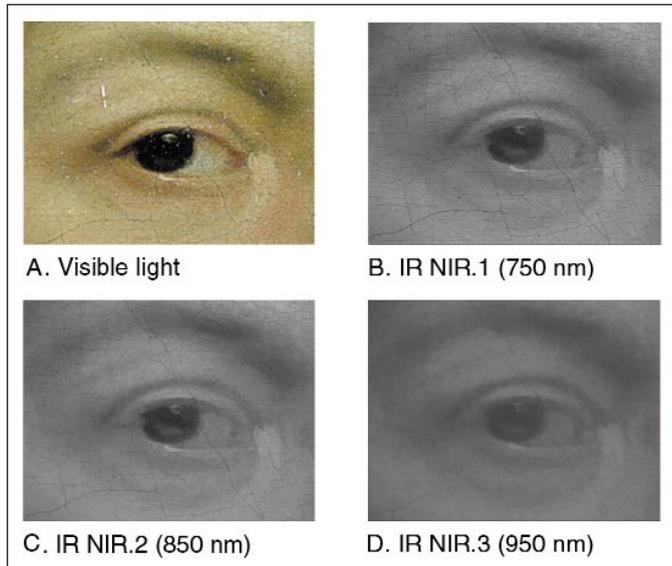


Figure 13. Comparison between visible (A) and infrared light with different wavelength (B-C-D) of the gentleman's eye.

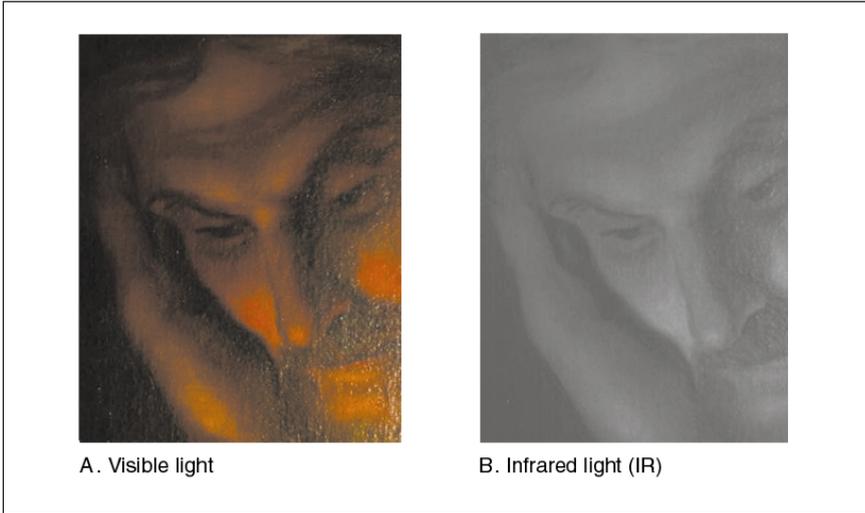


Figure 14. Comparison between visible (A) and infrared light (B) of the Man reading by lamplight.

With reference to the detail of the “light” (fig. 15), progressive modifications have evidently been made during the realization of the work, both in the shape of the flame and in the area around the lamp, where the light is diffused.

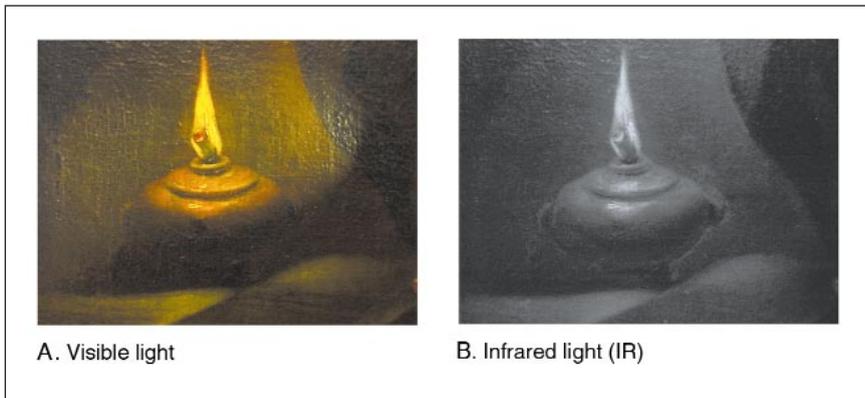


Figure 15. Comparison between visible (A) and infrared light (B) of the “light” detail.

X-ray fluorescence spectroscopy

At this point the second technique, which was important in determining the attribution, is: X-ray fluorescence spectroscopy (XRF) (fig. 16). This technique was used to identify the pigment in the three paintings

In correspondence with the different coloured areas examined, chemical elements were revealed: this detection permitted pigment identification.

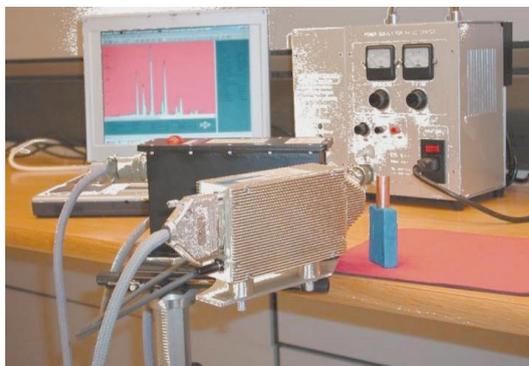


Figure 16. The instrument for the X-ray fluorescence spectroscopy (XRF).

The first case is related to the Madonna with Child and saints Jerome and Catherine of Siena (tab. 2).

Table 2. Pigments identification of the various part examined related to Madonna with Child and saints Jerome and Catherine of Siena's paint.

Area examined	Colour	Detected elements	Possible pigments
Background	Brown	Fe, Mn	Sienna (mixture of $\text{Fe}(\text{OH})_3, \text{MnO}_2, \text{Al}_2\text{O}_3 \cdot \text{SiO}_2 \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$) or umber (mixture of $\text{Fe}(\text{OH})_3, \text{MnO}_2, \text{Al}_2\text{O}_3 \cdot \text{SiO}_2 \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}, \text{CaCO}_3$)
Fibula on the Virgin's mantle	Yellow	Pb	Lead yellow (Pb_2SNO_4).
Virgin's dress	Green	Cu	Verdigris ($\text{Cu}(\text{CH}_3\text{COO})_2 \cdot \text{H}_2\text{O}$) or malachite ($\text{Cu}_2\text{CO}_3(\text{OH})_2$)
Virgin's dress	Carmine-red	Fe, Pb	Iron trioxide (Fe_2O_3) united with minium (Pb_3O_4)
Virgin's dress	Scarlet	Fe	Iron trioxide (Fe_2O_3)
Complexion	Pink	Pb	White lead ($2\text{PbCO}_3 \cdot \text{Pb}(\text{OH})_2$)

Table 3. Pigments identification of the various part examined related to the Portrait of a gentleman's paint.

Area examined	Colour	Detected elements	Possible pigments
Background	Brown	Fe, Mn	Sienna or umber
Conjunctiva	Red	Pb, Fe	White lead and iron trioxide or red ochre
Complexion	Pink	Pb, Fe	
Lip	Red	Fe, Mn	
Right lobe	Red	Fe, Mn	
Part of hair in shadow	Dark brown	Fe, Mn	
Part of hair in light	Light brown	Fe, Mn	
Collar	White	Pb	

In relation to the *Portrait of a gentleman* (tab. 3), these pigments obtained were not used by Van Dyck in his works.

For example, this is true of the *Portrait of the Marchesa Grimaldi* (National Gallery, Washington) (fig. 17).

The same for: *Man reading by lamplight* (tab. 4).

Table 4. Pigments identification of the various part examined related to the Man reading by lamplight's paint.

Area examined	Colour	Detected elements	Possibile pigments
Background	Brown	Fe, Mn	Sienna or umber
Wick	Red	Pb, Hg	Cinnabar more or less modulated with white lead or litharge
Complexion	Pink	Pb, Hg	
Lamp	Orange	Pb, Hg	
Flame	Yellow	Pb	Litharge
Dress	Brown	Pb, Fe, Mn	Sienna or umber more or less modulated with litharge
Dress	Black	Pb, Fe, Mn	
Pages of the book	Green	Pb, Fe, Mn	



Figure 17. Portrait of the Marchesa Grimaldi (National Gallery, Washington).

In considerations to the *Madonna with Child and saints Jerome and Catherine of Siena* the instrumental answers obtained confirm the painting is attributed to Beccafumi.

It is important to underline that, following this examination, the painting by Beccafumi was sold by the auction house Finarte-Semenzato in the auction held in Venice, on the 4th July 2004. The price was knocked down at nearly for thousand (372,850) euros and was based not only because F. Zeri attributed the painting to this artist, but also on the diagnostic and analytical investigations related to the identification of the material components and Beccafumi's pictorial technique.

For the *Portrait of a gentleman* the possibility that the painting could be attributed to Van Dyck has been excluded and confirmation given that it is a sixteenth century copy.

For the *Man reading by lamplight* the painting is a copy from the late-Caravaggio period.

Marble sculpture representing Madonna with child

The second case study is related to the Marble sculpture representing *Madonna with*



Figure 18. Marble sculpture representing Madonna with child.

child: historical and artistic classification, diagnostic examination with chronological definition and attribution and evaluation of the state of conservation.

The sculpture arrived at the Diagnostic Laboratory of the University of Bologna. On the basis of the stylistic and representative characteristics of the sculpture, especially as regards the refined nobility of the Virgin's features, the experts have assumed the work to be by Francesco Laurana (1430-1502).

With regard to the historical-artistic

evaluation, this leads one to believe that the sculpture in question (fig. 18) is an imitation of a late 14th century composition. The analysis of some details (fig. 19-21) of the composition persuade one that it is not a simple academic exercise, but a real fake.



Figure 19. Workmanship of the stone.



Figure 20. Detail of coarse corpulence of the child.



Figure 22. Madonna's and child's face.

In relation to the evaluation of the state of conservation, the marble artifact has been affected by a phenomenon of erosion due to anthropic causes: this degradation is more evident on the Madonna's and child's face (fig. 22), the Madonna's left hand (fig. 23) and on the child's right foot (fig. 24).



Figure 21. Detail of the thickness of the drapery.



Figure 23. Madonna's left hand.



Figure 24. Child's right foot.

Considerations

The historical and artistic assessment, the mineralogical-petrographic investigations and the diagnostic examinations (diffrattometric and spectrophotometric FT-IR) (fig. 25-26) have demonstrated that the work is a fake made of Carrara marble reproducing the Renaissance style.

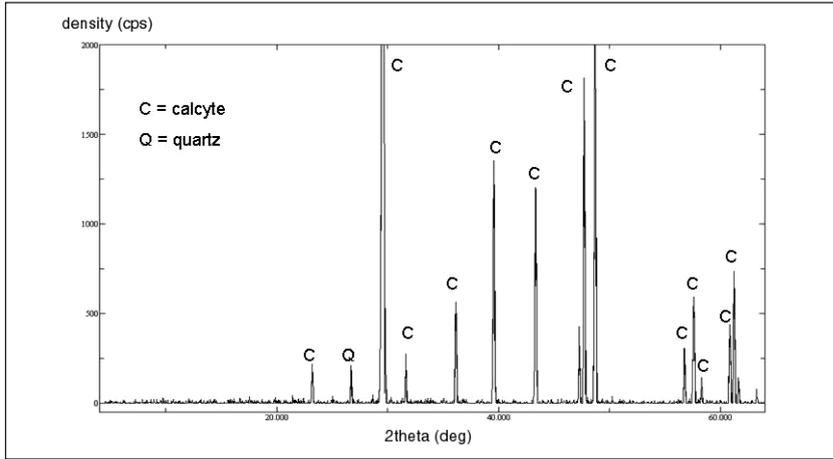


Figure 25. Diffrattometric spectrum.

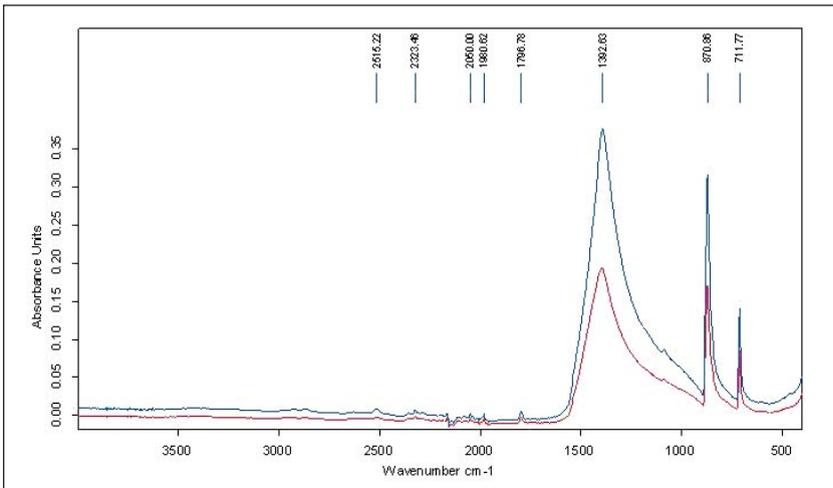


Figure 26. FT-IR spettrofotometry spectrum: marble on study (blue); standard calcium carbonate (red).

Dante codex

The third case study is related to the Dante codex (fig. 27): an emblematic example of a universal documentary testimony (cultural heritage), but also an artifact with a commercial value (economic commodity).

This Dante codex is the only palimpsest manuscript on parchment and contains one of the oldest examples of the traditional written manuscripts of Dante's Comedy.

The aims are: evaluation of the state of conservation; characterization of materials; evaluation of the environment of conservation; improvement in the legibility of the Dantesque text; reading and dating of the palimpsest; digitizing the codex to facilitate use on intranet and internet.

The different states of conservation can be seen and some forms of deterioration are evident in the three Canticles (fig. 28-30).

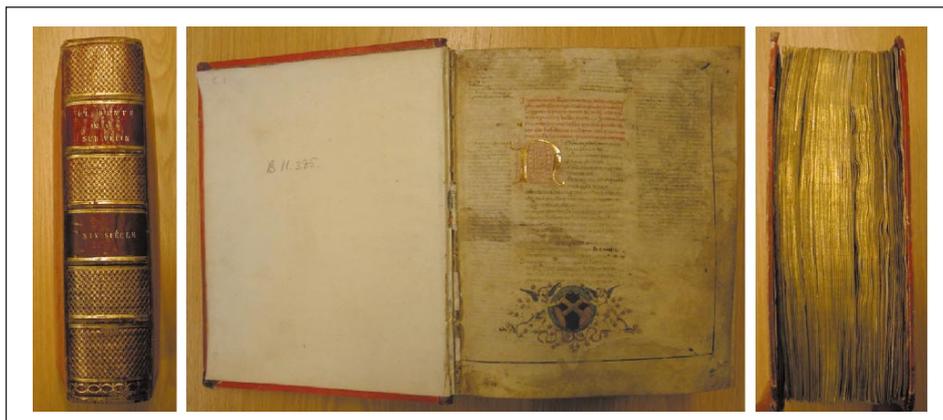


Figure 27. Dante codex.

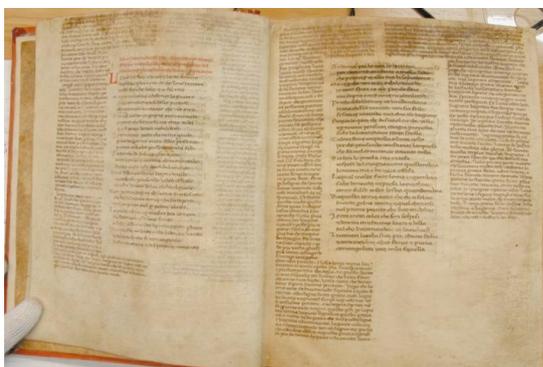


Figure 28. Dante codex: state of conservation of two pages of Hell Canticle.

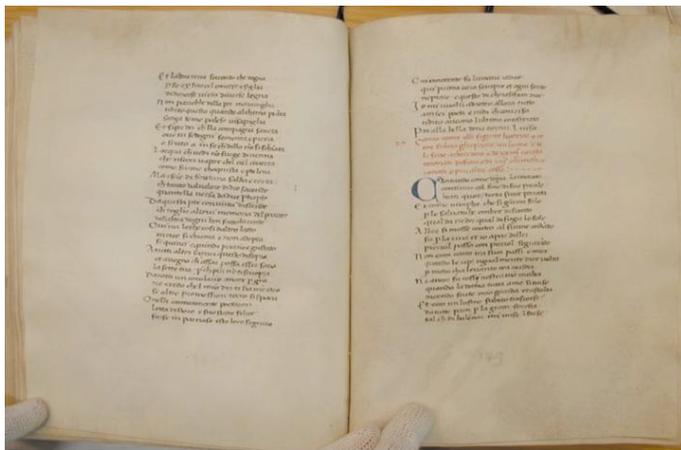


Figure 29. Dante codex: state of conservation of two pages of Purgatory Canticle.



Figure 30. Dante codex: state of conservation of two pages of Paradise Canticle.



Figure 31. The instrument for the multispectral analysis (MUSIS).

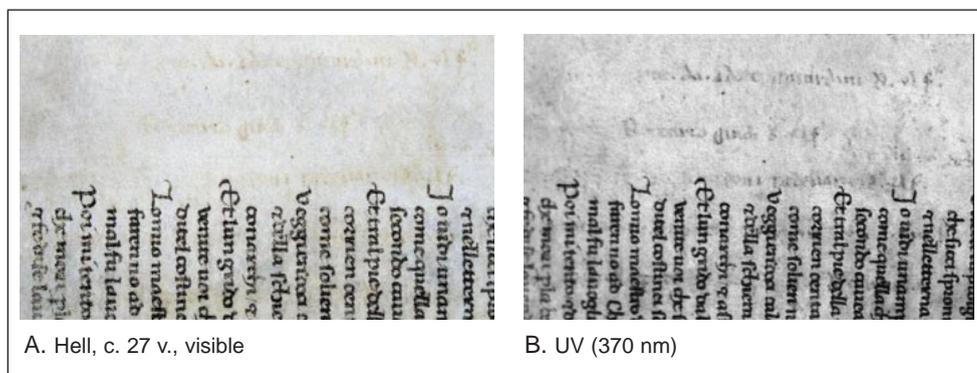


Figure 32. Dante codex: multispectral examinations in visible (A) and UV light (B) of the c. 27 v. of Hell Canticle.

These are the multispectral examinations (fig. 31), (in particular visible -A- and ultraviolet rays -B) (fig. 32) which have enabled the paleographic study to be carried out.

Considerations

The palaeographic study has shown:

1. the “scriptio superior”, which refers to the Dantesque text, is written in semigothic or prehumanistic script dating approximately to around the last two decades of the 14th century.
2. The “scriptio inferior”, most of which is covered by the writing of the Dante codex, is a notòrial script dating to the end of the 13th century and beginning of the 14th century.

This study has brought about an increase in the historical and philological importance of the manuscript and consequently in its economic value too.

4. Presentation of the historical-technical Journal “Conservation Science in Cultural Heritage”

The journal (fig. 33) is edited by:

Dipartimento di Storie e Metodi per la Conservazione dei Beni Culturali (Di.S.Me.C.)
 Alma Mater Studiorum Università di Bologna (sede di Ravenna)
 Centro Interdipartimentale di Ricerca in Ingegneria dell’Automazione e dei Sistemi, Università di Palermo
 EUREKA project – European Agency Cultural Heritage
 Research area CNR – Roma, Padova E.S. Sistemi, Roma Inet, Genova

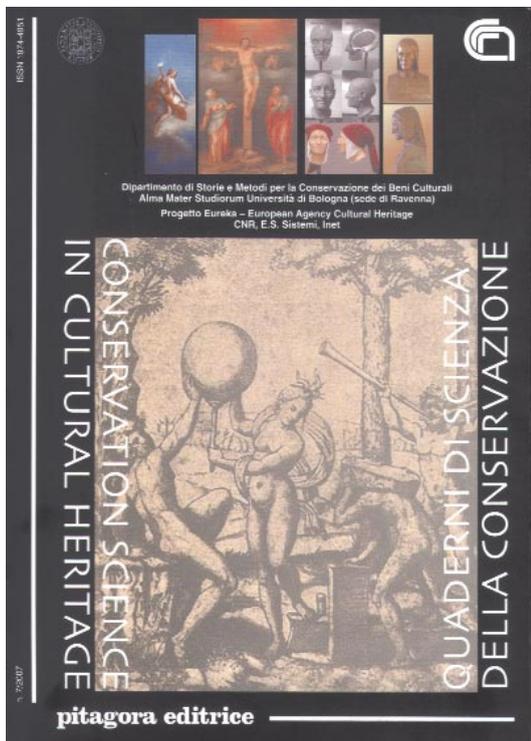


Figure 33. "Conservation Science in Cultural Heritage": cover of num. 7 of 2007.

The Scientific editor is Salvatore Lorusso.

The Scientific board is made up of the following professors from the above mentioned department

<i>Scientific board</i>	Enrico Acquaro Pierfrancesco Callieri Antonio Carile Eleonora Cavallini Salvatore Cosentino	Alfredo Cottignoli Giorgio Gruppioni Alba Maria Orselli Antonio Panaino	Mauro Perani Angelo Pompilio Eugenio Russo Angelo Turchini
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There are also: the Advisory committee; the publishing manager; the linguistic adviser; the editorial staff; the head editor from "Pitagora Editrice" Bologna.

The Advisory committee includes the various national and international experts.

The name of the Department is in Italian. The names of the Institutions, to which the authors – who publish in the Journal – belong, are in the original languages: this makes functionality easier. But there is another motive too, which is "nationality". This is, as is known, an endemic and chromosomal quality belonging to Americans.

The journal was founded in 2000. During the years, other numbers have been published, Volume 7 was published in English and an electronic version is available on line.

This decision was made following the request of the authors and growing internationalization which is fundamental to our modern-day society.

Advisory committee

Pio Baldi architect, Direttore Regionale per i Beni Culturali e Paesaggistici della Campania
Maria Cristina Bandera, art historian, Direttore Fondazione Longhi, Firenze
Salvatore Barbaro engineer, Ordinario di Fisica Tecnica Ambientale, Università di Palermo
Ségolène Bergeon Langle Conservateur Général du Patrimoine, Ministère de la Culture, Paris (France)
Maria Brai physician, Ordinario di Fisica Applicata, Università di Palermo
Luigi Campanella chemist, Presidente Società Chimica Italiana (SCI), Roma
Vincenzo Cappelletti Presidente Società Europea di Cultura e Società Italiana di Storia della Scienza, Roma
Giovanni Carbonara architect, Ordinario di Restauro Architettonico, Sapienza Università di Roma
Enzo Casolino jurist, Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, Roma
Ernesto Chiacchierini chemist, Direttore Dipartimento per le Tecnologie, le Risorse e lo Sviluppo, Sapienza Università di Roma
Lucio Colizzi engineer, Centro di Progettazione Design & Tecnologie dei Materiali (CETMA), Brindisi
Valentina Comba Responsabile Centro e-learning, Università di Bologna
Giorgio Cozzolino architect, Soprintendente per i Beni Architettonici e per il Paesaggio di Ravenna, Ferrara, Forlì-Cesena, Rimini
Maurizio Cumo engineer, Presidente Società Italiana per il Progresso delle Scienze (SIPS), Roma
Maurizio Fallace Direttore Generale per i Beni Librari, gli Istituti Culturali ed il Diritto d'Autore, Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali
Franco Faranda art historian, Soprintendenza per il Patrimonio Storico, Artistico e Etnoantropologico per le Province di Bologna, Ferrara, Forlì-Cesena, Ravenna e Rimini
Cosimo Damiano Fonseca historian, Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, Roma
Karl Hellemann Director Consulting International - Environment & Health, Graz (Austria)
Salvatore Italia già Capo Dipartimento per i Beni Archivistici e Librari, Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali
Sergej P. Karpov historian, Faculty of History, University of Lomonossov, Moscow
Filippo Mangani chemist, Università di Urbino
Antonio Marcomini chemist, Ordinario di Valutazione di Impatto Ambientale e di Chimica dell'Inquinamento, Università Ca' Foscari, Venezia
Mauro Matteini chemist, Alma Mater Studiorum Università di Bologna
Guido Meli architect, Direttore del Centro Regionale per la Progettazione e il Restauro, Palermo
Renato Miracco art historian, Director of Italian Cultural Institute, New York
Franco Palla biologist, Associato di Biologia Molecolare, Università di Palermo
Ruggero Pentrella architect, Direttore Regionale per i Beni Culturali e Paesaggistici del Molise
Luigi Persico state attorney, Tribunale di Bologna
Giovanni Rizzo chemist, Ordinario di Scienza e Tecnologia dei Materiali, Università di Palermo
Jan Rosvall Centre for Environment and Sustainability, Chalmers University of Technology, Goteborg (Sweden)
Gian Tommaso Scarascia Mugnozza, Presidente Accademia Nazionale delle Scienze detta dei XL, Roma
Leonello Serva geologist, Istituto Superiore per la Protezione e la Ricerca Ambientale (ISPRA), Roma
Massimo Stipo jurist, Ordinario di Diritto Amministrativo, Sapienza Università di Roma
Claudio Strinati art historian, Soprintendente per il Polo Museale Romano
Marialaura Vignocchi publishing manager, Università di Bologna
Angela Mari Braidà linguistic adviser, Roma

<i>Editorial staff</i>	Elisabetta Bolelli	Franca De Leo	Ekaterina Karpova Fasce
	Chiara Matteucci	Andrea Natali	Anna Maria Tarola
<i>Head editor</i>	Franco Stignani		

For this reason I'd like to underline the importance in this journal of interdisciplinary skills. Specifically for the historical-technical peculiarity of the journal, the scientific editorial staff is made up of Italian and foreign researchers and experts from various cultural backgrounds. Their competences are: historical (from ancient to contemporary periods), technical (chemical, physic, biological, engineering, geological), legal, social, economic

and management – related. These experts do not only come from the Department of Bologna University of Histories and Methods for the Conservation of Cultural Heritage, but also from other Universities, Ministerial and Cultural Institutions and Italian and foreign Scientific Organisations.

Studies and experimental research, related to the problems of protection and valorization of artifacts, are thus published. They are artifacts belonging to these sectors: historical-artistic, archeological, architectonic, archival, book, demo-ethnic-anthropological and musical, but also include the environmental and landscape sector.

In addition, the problem relating to the professional figure of the “conservator” in the cultural sector is examined.

This is a very important and current issue, because it represents the result of the meeting-point between the various partners of the labour market: university, ministry and territory. This is the “institutional pluralism” for complete and correct formation.

With the same aims, the Course of Higher-level Formation in: “Conservation, management and cataloguing of the gatherings and collections in cultural and productive units” of Bologna University has been opened and of which I am the Director.

Concisely the aims are: of a scientific nature, relating to correct methods of analysis; of an institutional nature, to promote the progress, coordination and diffusion of the sciences and their application in the field of Cultural Héritage and of a communicating nature. This is and continues to be, for the Scientific board, a fundamental objective: the “quality” of the information must reflect the “truth” of science and the “clarity” of communication.

5. Conclusion

And this is true, if it is true that: “perhaps, the greatest challenge one must face up to is that of beauty”.

Because “beauty” is individuality, difference, it is superiority, excellence.

While everything that is standardization, number, quantity, dullness and normalization is ugly. How can we continue to create beauty, choose beauty, diffuse beauty and educate people to respect beauty? I think that we can if, from the beginning, there is “beauty” inside us.

Notes

¹ The key words for the auction houses, referred to protect the clients, are:

- **expertise**, means the photo and the guarantee of the provenence and authenticity of the art work;

- **vetting**, which includes “detailed examination”. That of The European Fine Arts Fair. A board of experts, including dealers, museum directors and critics, examine each work before the opening;
- **condition report**, this consists of a kind of file containing information of a qualitative and non-quantitative nature based on visual observation: that is the subjective evaluation of the state of conservation.

² Below is listed the terminology used by experts in this sector to distinguish between the different degrees of certainty attributed to antique works of art. The authentic and the fake are opposites:

- **authentic**: when the author and period are sure;
- **fake**: when the complete substitution is made for speculative motives;

The other conceptual terms are:

- **original**: by a determinate artist whose stylistic characteristics are all present;
- **replica**: a new copy of an original by the artist himself;
- **copy**: reproduction of the work by a different artist;
- **attributed to**: this refers to the most likely author;
- **signed by**: the attribution to the named artist, but the authenticity of the signature must be verified;
- **school of**: for an artist gravitating within the circle of the mentioned artist or a pupil;
- **follower**: an artist ascribable to a particular master.

³ At this point I would like to highlight three aspects, which need a clear solution:

- the need for the guaranteed attribution of a work of art;
- the importance of the period of execution of a given work, because there are important experiences and events which have determined the realization of the work itself;
- and lastly, the possibility of distinguishing, the original work from its reproduction made with sophisticated computer methods.

For these current, topical issues, the set up and use of diagnostic-analytical techniques, preferably non destructive, non invasive, non manipulative (without taking a material sample from the art work examined), which are sensitive, specific, repeatable, reproducible and thus reliable, make up the present, objective within the field of our research and application.

⁴ I would like to mention here that I am going to discuss works from past centuries, for which there are both scientific standardized methodologies and investigations of preservation and restoration. On the contrary, it is necessary to define and follow the appropriate methodological path about contemporary works of art. The afore said refers – I mention this briefly here – to the present retrospective on Giorgio Morandi’s works at the Metropolitan Museum.

Summary

The title *Authenticity and conservation state of art works: The market and auction houses* mirrors the particular status of confusion and instability in which the auction houses – find themselves – nowadays. It is an international situation of existential and economic crisis in which humanity appears to be excited and schizophrenic.

This lecture is part of a series all dedicated to various aspects of art, with a particular focus on the great Italian artist Giorgio Morandi. A good selection of his works is currently displayed at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.

Giorgio Morandi conceived art as a “practice of silence”, where his “still life” functioned as a filter to observe the world outside his small cloistered art studio.

By emphasizing the importance of weight and gravity with grace and attention, this artist can therefore teach us how important it is to judge a piece of art not only subjectively – giving greatest relevance to the satisfaction of individual aesthetical standards – but also objectively – where the techniques and the materials utilized assume the greatest significance. This allows the estimator to estimate correctly their economic and financial value.

The second part of the lecture consists in the presentation of the historical-technical journal *Conservation Science in Cultural Heritage*. It represents an emblematic gathering of experts, symbolizing therefore a necessary encounter among people with different cultural backgrounds, experiences and skills. They meet to address and discuss issues related to their common field of study, the Cultural Heritage sector.

This jolts, as it can be imagined, American art critics. They often lack social criticism showing them to be too focused on aesthetics and elegance of form.

The consequent question arises: is this really true?

Riassunto

Nel mondo molto particolare e molto instabile delle case d'asta, al quale ricondurre una situazione internazionale di crisi esistenziale ed economico-sociale oltre che una condizione umana ipereccitata e schizofrenica, è sembrato significativo l'inserimento del tema *Autenticità e valutazione dello stato di conservazione dei beni culturali: il mercato e le case d'asta*, in un ciclo dedicato all'arte nei suoi vari aspetti, in concomitanza con la vasta retrospettiva del grande artista italiano Giorgio Morandi in corso di svolgimento a New York al Metropolitan Museum. Giorgio Morandi visse l'arte come una “pratica del silenzio”, affidando alle sue “nature morte” il compito di “mediare” con il mondo che si estendeva oltre il suo studiolo claustrale.

Egli ci può quindi insegnare, in uno spostamento di peso e di baricentro, concentrazione e positività ovvero quanto è fondamentale per valutare una opera d'arte non solo secondo canoni soggettivi poggiati su aspetti estetici e tratti stilistici, ma anche secondo indagini oggettive di carattere tecnico-materico-conservativo, consentendo la conseguente valutazione corretta di carattere economico-finanziario.

Si completerà la lecture con la Presentazione della rivista storico-technica *Conservation Science in Cultural Heritage*, esempio emblematico dell'incontro – sinonimo di integrazione e bisogno reciproco – di studiosi con estrazione, esperienza e competenza culturali diverse e, comunque, confluenti nell'affrontare e nel risolvere le problematiche inerenti al settore dei beni culturali.

Ciò – si può immaginare – scuote un po' una certa situazione nel sistema americano e, direi, non solo americano. In esso – si fa presente – manca la critica sociale, tutto deve rispondere a una estetica rassicurante, vincono il buonismo e l'eleganza della forma.

Ma – ci si domanda – è proprio vero?

Résumé

Dans le monde très particulier et très instable des maisons des ventes, auquel reconduire une situation internationale de crise existentielle et économique-sociale outre qu'une condition humaine hyperexcitée et schizo-phrénique, l'introduction du thème *Authenticité et évaluation de l'état de*

conservation des biens culturels: le marché et les maisons des ventes, dans un cycle consacré à l'art dans ses différents aspects, concomitamment avec la vaste rétrospective du grand artiste italien Giorgio Morandi en cours de déroulement à New York au Metropolitan Museum, a semblé significatif. Giorgio Morandi vit l'art comme une "pratique du silence", confiant à ses "natures mortes" la tâche de "servir de médiateur" avec le monde qui s'étendait au-delà de son studio claustral.

Il peut donc nous enseigner, dans un déplacement de poids et de barycentre, concentration et pondération c'est-à-dire combien il est fondamental, pour évaluer une oeuvre d'art, non seulement selon des canons subjectifs appuyés sur des aspects esthétiques et des traits stylistiques, mais aussi selon des recherches objectives de caractère technico-matiériste-conservatif, consentant la conséquente évaluation correcte de caractère économique-financier.

La lecture se complètera avec la "Présentation de la revue historico-technique *Conservation Science in Cultural Heritage*", exemple emblématique de la rencontre – synonyme d'intégration et besoin réciproque – de studieux avec extraction, expérience et compétence culturelles différentes et, quand même, confluents dans l'affrontement et la résolution de problématiques inhérentes au secteur des biens culturels.

Ceci – on peut l'imaginer – secoue un peu une certaine situation dans le système américain et, je dirais, non seulement américain. Dans ce système – fait-on remarquer – la critique sociale manque; tout doit répondre à une esthétique rassurante, la bonté à tout prix et l'élégance de la forme gagnent. Mais – on se le demande – est-ce bien vrai?

Zusammenfassung

Es war eine bedeutungsvolle Entscheidung, in der sehr besonderen und extrem instabilen Welt der Auktionshäuser das folgende Thema einzuführen: *Die Authentizität und die Bewertung des Erhaltungszustands der Kulturgüter: der Markt und die Auktionshäuser*, eine Welt, die eine internationale existentielle und wirtschaftliche – gesellschaftliche Krise und einen menschlichen Zustand der Überregbarkeit und der Schizophrenie widerspiegelt. Das Thema wurde im Rahmen eines Zyklus über die verschiedenen Aspekte der Kunst vorgestellt, anlässlich der umfangreichen Retrospektive des großen italienischen Künstlers Giorgio Morandi, die im Metropolitan Museum in New York zur Zeit im Gang ist. Giorgio Morandi erlebte die Kunst als "Erfahrung der Stille" und gab seinen "Stilleben" die Aufgabe, mit der Welt jenseits seiner einsamen und kleinen Arbeitszimmer zu "vermitteln".

Er kann uns also durch eine Verschiebung des Gewichts und des Schwerpunkts Konzentration und Gesetztheit lehren, in anderen Worten die Grundlage, um ein Kunstwerk zu bewerten, und nicht nur aus subjektiven Maßstäben, die sich auf ästhetischen und stilistischen Aspekten stützen, sondern auch nach objektiven technischen, materiellen und konservativen Untersuchungen, die eine korrekte wirtschaftliche – finanzielle Bewertung ermöglichen.

Während der Konferenz wird außerdem die historische – technische Zeitschrift *Conservation Science in Cultural Heritage* vorgestellt, ein Synonym für Integration und für das Bedürfnis, miteinander zu arbeiten. Außerdem ist sie auch ein emblematisches Beispiel für ein Treffen von Wissenschaftlern verschiedener Abstammung und mit verschiedenen kulturellen Erfahrungen und Kompetenzen, die aber alle zusammen die Probleme im Bereich der Kulturgüter anpacken und lösen möchten.

Diese- wie man annehmen kann – ist eine Gelegenheit, um viele Menschen in der heutigen Situation des amerikanischen Systems irgendwie wachzurütteln, aber nicht nur im amerikanischen System. In solchem System fehlt es – wie hingewiesen wird – an gesellschaftlicher Kritik, alles muss mit einer beruhigenden Ästhetik übereinstimmen, alles im Namen des Gutmenschentums und der Eleganz der Form. Aber- man fragt sich- stimmt das wirklich?

Resumen

En el contexto especial e inestable de las casas de subastas, que remite a una situación internacional de crisis existencial y económico-social, así como a una condición humana hiperexcitada y esquizofrénica, nos ha parecido significativa la introducción del tema *Autenticidad y evaluación del estado de conservación de los bienes culturales: el mercado y las casas de subastas*, en un ciclo dedicado

al arte en sus distintos aspectos, coincidiendo con la amplia retrospectiva del gran artista italiano Giorgio Morandi que se está celebrando en el Museo Metropolitano de Nueva York. Giorgio Morandi vivió el arte como una "práctica del silencio", asignando a sus "naturalezas muertas" la finalidad de "mediar" con el mundo que se extendía más allá del pequeño estudio en que se enclaustraba.

Él nos puede enseñar así, en un desplazamiento de peso y de baricentro, concentración y ponderación, es decir, lo que es fundamental para evaluar una obra de arte, no sólo según los cánones subjetivos apoyados en aspectos estéticos y rasgos estilísticos, sino también según estudios objetivos de carácter técnico-matérico-conservador, permitiendo así la consiguiente evaluación correcta de carácter económico financiero.

La lectura se completará con la "Presentación de la revista histórico-técnica *Conservation Science in Cultural Heritage*", ejemplo emblemático del encuentro – sinónimo de integración y de necesidad recíproca – de estudiosos de distintas extracciones, experiencias y capacitaciones culturales, que, pese a ello, confluyen en afrontar y resolver las problemáticas inherentes al sector de los bienes culturales.

Esto, como se puede imaginar, representa una sacudida para una determinada situación en el sistema americano y, podríamos decir, no se limita al contexto americano. Un sistema en el que podemos notar que falta la crítica social: todo debe responder a una estética tranquilizadora donde triunfan la candidez política y la elegancia de la forma.

Sin embargo, nos preguntamos, ¿es de verdad así?

Резюме

В ситуации большой нестабильности аукционных домов, международного социально-экономического и бытового кризиса, факта, что люди живут в шизофреническом и бурлящем ритме, казалось важным введение темы «Аутентичность и оценка степени сохранности памятников культуры: рынок и аукционные дома». Это стало частью цикла, посвященного разным аспектам искусства в связи с большой выставкой итальянского художника Джорджио Моранди (Giorgio Morandi), проходящей в музее Метрополитен в Нью-Йорке. Джорджио Моранди видел искусство как «практику молчания», отводя своим натюрмортам роль того, кто «общается» с миром, существующим вне стен его мастерской, в которой он жил затворником.

Он, таким образом, может нас научить в момент смещения веса и центра тяжести, концентрации и степенности, или тому, сколь важно оценивать произведения искусства не только с позиций субъективных канонов, базирующихся на стилистических и эстетических аспектах, но и с позиций исследований технико-материально-консервативного характера, позволяющая последующую верную оценку экономико-финансового характера.

Конференция закончится презентацией историко-технического журнала «*Conservation Science in Cultural Heritage*». Эта встреча – эмблематический пример, синоним интеграции и взаимной потребности ученых различного происхождения, опыта и культурных знаний, приехавших на конференцию, чтобы обсудить и решить различные проблемы в области сохранения культурного наследия. Это, можно представить, сотрясает американскую систему и, я бы сказал, не только американскую. В ней, отметим, не хватает социальной критики, все должно отвечать ободряющей эстетике, побеждает позитивность и элегантность формы. Но спросим себя : «Это действительно так?»