

Foreword

International Conference MUNCH2022

*“Understanding Munch and
the Art at the Turn of the Centuries, Between the Museum and the Laboratory”*

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Edvard Munch played a fundamental role in shaping a new path into the modern art with his taste for experimentation and innovation, along 60 years of artistic production at the turn between 19th and 20th centuries. At his death in 1944 he bequeathed to the City of Oslo his entire collection, nowadays housed in a brand-new building (MUNCH Museum) in Bjørvika, over the fjord in Oslo. This unique artist collection encompasses many different types of objects, not only artworks, but also handwritten letters and notebooks, photographs, printing plates, 9830 personal belongings.

The MUNCH Museum object collection comprises close to 28.000 artworks, divided in four collections: Edvard Munch, Rolf Stenersen, Amaludus Nielsen and Ludvig O. Ravensberg.

26.724 of these are works by Edvard Munch, more specifically close to 1200 paintings, 18.322 graphic works (prints), 7.050 drawings and sketches, 15 sculptures (including models and fragments) and many original artist materials (tubes, easels, palettes, crayons etc.), representing an important asset for research in a multidisciplinary context that the museum can provide.

As a joint venture between the Conservation sections of MUNCH, the Hercules Laboratory at the University of Evora in Portugal, The National Museum (NaM) in Oslo, Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) in Gjøvik and the University of Oslo (UiO - Museum of Cultural History) a first 3-day international conference MUNCH2022 - UNDERSTANDING MUNCH AND THE ART AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURIES, BETWEEN THE MUSEUM AND THE LABORATORY has been organized at Munch Museum, between 21st and 23rd March 2022 (http://www.hercules.uevora.pt/THE_SCREAM/conference/). This conference was the final dissemination action of the research project: THE SCREAM - "Touchstone for Heritage Endangered by Salt Crystallization: a Research Enterprise on the Art of Munch" (2018-2022) funded by Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT) in Portugal, through grants POCI-01-0145-FEDER-031577 and PTDC/QUI-OUT/31577/2017.

This Special Issue is thus the follow-up of this conference and contributes to further the knowledge we have on Edvard Munch's collection and art, and also on other artists who were active in the time he lived. The contributions published here foster the framework for shared knowledge between Humanities and Applied Sciences and launch an innovative, holistic insight on the historical and technical background of modern art at the turn of the centuries, the characterization of art-objects and phenomena of degradation and deterioration these art-objects are subject to and the way we can further preserve these assets while also facilitating the access to them by the wider public.

From the 69 presentations made at the conference (as oral and poster communications), a selection of 22 papers has been submitted, peer-reviewed and accepted for publication in this Special Issue. This selection covers all the topics of the conference, as they were addressed in the 6 sessions:

- Art historical research and authentication studies on Munch and his contemporary artists – 7 papers;
- Modelling and technical art history research on modern painting materials – 5 papers;

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- Conservation and restoration studies on modern paintings – 3 papers;
- Ageing and degradation mechanisms in modern painting materials – 3 papers;
- Historical art reference collections and their study – 3 papers;
- Museum education and digital innovation for dissemination of scientific research – 1 paper.

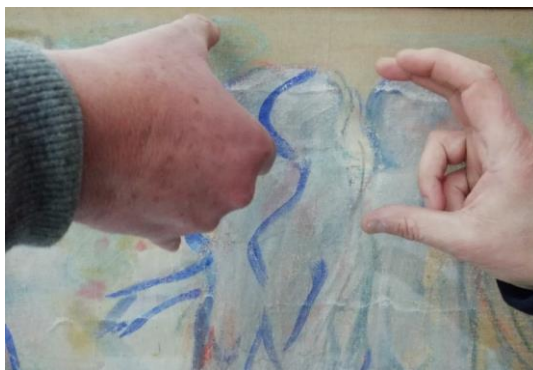
22 corresponding authors and around 30 co-authors of these papers represent 12 countries, among those also represented by the conference participants. The authors of these papers are researchers from academic and museum institutions, spanning art history and curatorial sectors, conservation of cultural heritage, sciences for art and conservation, education, etc. Several of these papers are presenting results from research projects developed in the museum or academic environments, showing the importance and relevance of multi and interdisciplinary approaches in Cultural Heritage Research field.

The main topics you can find in the Special issue are: art historical and technical studies around major artists and art-objects as the Scream (in its different versions) from MUNCH’s collection, or paintings by Mondrian, Rene Magritte, Karel Appel, Asger Jorns, Pavel Filonov, Emil Filla, Josef Čapek, Josef Šíma, Jan Zrzavý, Václav Špála; counting of a whole paintings collection at MUNCH; scientific analyses of paintings and original artist materials (powdery pigments, paint tubes, crayons, watercolours, printing inks) from 20th century; research into consolidation of flaking, poorly adherent paint layers with different solutions and assessment of their effectiveness; studies into the lightfastness of paint materials and the effect of vibrations on objects collection at MUNCH; studies into new participatory designs for the interactive experience of colors and their changes in art-objects.

Considering the success of the MUNCH2022 Conference, the aim of this Special Issue is to give readers a glimpse on the complexity and the new developments in the field of modern art research, covering many different artists, styles, materials, techniques, original reference materials collections, preservation challenges and possible conservation-oriented solutions.

Guest editor, organizer and chair of the MUNCH2022 Conference,

Irina Crina Anca SANDU, PhD



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