Questions of conservation.
Polychrome wooden sculptures of the high altar retable of St. Nicholas’ in Tallinn.

Intensive workshop
by Dr Arnulf von Ulmann in collaboration with Nikolai Bregman

Dates: 11–15 November 2013


Credits: 2–4 ECTS

Hosting institutions: Department of Conservation and Cultural Heritage, Estonian Academy of Arts; Art Museum of Estonia; Graduate School of Culture Studies and Arts (GSCSA)

Programme directors: Dr Anneli Randla (Estonian Academy of Arts); Dr Hilkka Hiiop (Art Museum of Estonia / Estonian Academy of Arts)

Programme manager: Ms. Hedi Kard (hedi.kard@ekm.ee), Art Museum of Estonia / Estonian Academy of Arts

Student coordinator: Ms. Heili Sõrmus (heili.sormus@artun.ee)
The retable of the high altar of St. Nicholas Church in Tallinn was made between 1478 and 1481 in Hermen Rode’s workshop in Lübeck. It is one of the most magnificent and best preserved late medieval northern German altarpieces in Europe and one of the greatest masterpieces in the collection of the Art Museum of Estonia.

In 1978–1992, the retable was restored in Moscow by the Research Institute of Restoration (VNIIR) under Nikolai Bregman’s supervision. At the time, the work could not be finalised. In the framework of a new initiative to complete the conservation, a five-day intensive workshop led by Dr Arnulf von Ulmann is held for doctoral students in Niguliste Museum. Arnulf von Ulmann will give lectures on the technical aspects of wooden polychromy in the mornings, and during the afternoon workshops, participants will be involved in the practical research of the retable. Nikolai Bregman will give a lecture on the earlier restoration of the retable as well as discuss the current conservation methods.

Dr Arnulf von Ulmann is conservator of polychrome wooden objects and the former director of the Institute of Art Techniques and Conservation of the German National Museum. In 1992–2008, he led the international project for the conservation of the coat of arms epitaphs in Tallinn Cathedral. Nikolai Bregman is the leading conservator at the Russian Research Institute of Restoration.

**Programme**

The lectures will take place in the Estonian Academy of Arts 10.00 am to 1.00 pm. Workshops take place in Niguliste Museum 2.00 pm to 5.00 pm.

**November 11th**

10.00 am The use of wood and the woodcarving techniques of the late medieval to modern era. Arnulf von Ulmann
11.30 am The virtual 3D reconstruction of medieval polychromy. Arnulf von Ulmann
2.00 pm Observation and assessment of condition of the high altar in Niguliste Museum. The condition of previously restored sculptures. Arnulf von Ulmann

**November 12th**

10.00 am Anti-Aging for Art – Conservation – Treating the ravages of time. Arnulf von Ulmann
11.30 am Polychromy and applications of medieval wooden sculptures. Arnulf von Ulmann
2.00 pm Observation and assessment of condition of the high altar in Niguliste Museum. The condition of previously unrestored sculptures. Arnulf von Ulmann

**November 13th**

10.00 am The Coat of Arms Epitaphs in Tallinn Cathedral Church: their meaning, history and conservation. Arnulf von Ulmann
11.30 am Visit to Tallinn Cathedral. Arnulf von Ulmann, Hedi Kard
2.00 pm Methods of conservation and options of uncovering and cleaning of original polychromy today. Arnulf von Ulmann
November 14th
10.00 am The conservation of the Triumphal Cross by Bernt Notke in Lübeck’s Cathedral. Case study. Arnulf von Ulmann
11.30 am The artistic repertoire of foreign materials in Notke’s Workshop. Arnulf von Ulmann
2.00 pm Aesthetic issues. Visual harmonization of the object as a whole, given its previous practice of cleansing. The problem of patina. Arnulf von Ulmann and Nikolai Bregman

November 15th
10.00 am New light in museum – the controversial LED. Arnulf von Ulmann
11.30 am Conservation of the sculptures from the retable of high altar of St. Nicholas Church in Moscow 1978–1992. Nikolai Bregman
2.00 pm Discussion: whether and how the history of conservation influences current decisions. Arnulf von Ulmann and Nikolai Bregman

Requirements for participation
Interested graduate students can apply for the intensive workshop by sending a short letter of motivation indicating whether they want to participate in the lectures or both lectures and practical workshops by October 21, 2013 to Heili Sõrmus (heili.sormus@artun.ee). Students who are not members of GSCSA are required to add a short CV to specify their education and research interests. Participation in the course is free of charge; accommodation and travel costs of the students of GSCSA will be reimbursed.
The language of the workshop is English. Students are expected to do preparatory reading in order to participate in the intensive workshop.
Upon participation in all lectures and discussions graduate students will be awarded 2 ECTS.
The number of participants in the lectures is unlimited. Upon full participation in the programme – lectures and practical research workshops – graduate students will be awarded 4 ECTS. The number of participants in the practical workshops is limited to 20.
The event is supported by the European Union through the European Social Fund (Estonian Graduate School of Culture Studies and Arts) and Art Museum of Estonia.