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Forever Young : the reproduction of photographic artworks as a conservation strategy

Marchesi, M.

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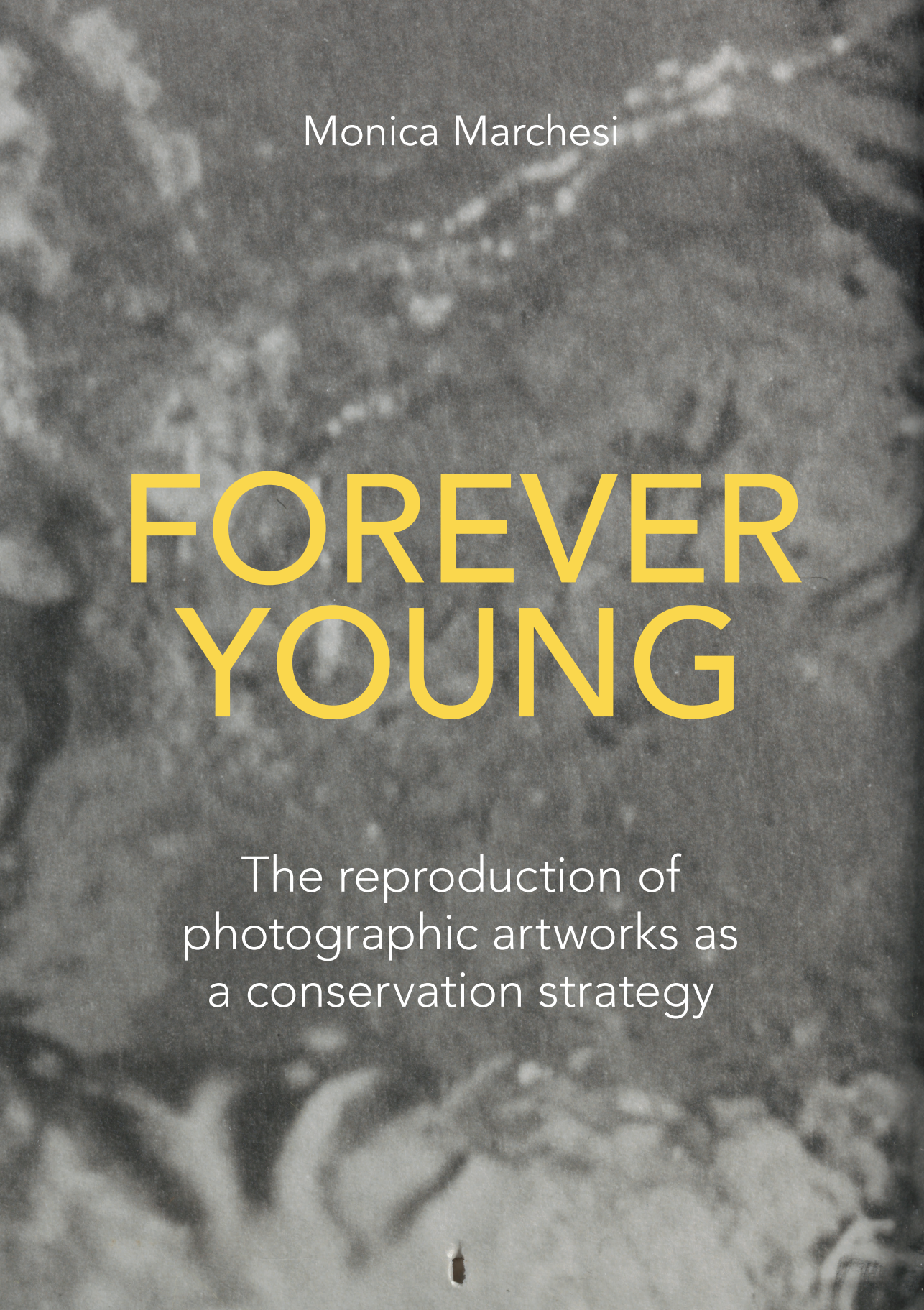


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Monica Marchesi
FOREVER YOUNG
The reproduction of photographic artworks as a conservation strategy

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Van Abbemuseum.
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Forever Young

The Reproduction of Photographic Artworks as a Conservation Strategy

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Introduction

Reproduction as a strategy to preserve analogue photographic works is the main topic of this dissertation. In the course of the research, I have investigated how artists and museums have turned to reproduction as a means to substitute damaged exemplars with new, faultless photographs. For the works under study, the reproduction process was not straightforward or self-evident, but it never fundamentally questioned the dominancy of this principle. Reproduction was viewed as an acceptable practice that counters the inherent instability of the photographic medium and takes advantages of its mechanical reproducibility. It is even possible to suggest that reproduction might be regarded as the quest to guarantee a photograph's pristine look. In this sense, it is as a metaphorical fountain of eternal youth. Reproduction was welcomed as it brought the damaged, older works to a new life. Through reproduction, the photograph is "restored to strength and freshness and suppleness of youth" and signs of deterioration are no longer visible (Irving 1831, 40). But all that glitters is not gold and youth comes at a price.

In Nathaniel Hawthorne's novel *Dr. Heidegger's experiment* (1897), Dr. Heidegger offered water collected from the fountain of eternal youth to four of his friends. The doctor did not drink the miraculous liquid himself, but he watched the transformation of his companions from old, miserable individuals into merry youngsters full of life and passions. But during the metamorphosis, the friends forget the lessons they have learned from life and start to make the same mistakes again that they had made decades before. Because of this obliviousness, Dr. Heidegger declared:

> For if the fountain gushed at my very doorstep, I would not stoop to bathe my lips in it; no, though its delirium were for years instead of moments. Such is the lesson ye have taught me! (Hawthorne 1897, 19).

Youth erases the signs of decrepitude and infirmity, but the experiences and wisdom that comes with age are also obliterated. In this pessimistic light, the reproduction of photographs removes signs of unwanted ageing, it substitutes material characteristics, but it also deletes traces left behind by usage and time. In this sense, it may even interrupt emotional bonds that individuals may entertain with specific objects.[1] But besides affection for objects and artefacts and their capacity to evoke the past, original materials were perceived as tangible evidence of the past. This belief has, for decades, been the backbone of traditional conservation theory and supports the quest to objectivity and scientific enterprise.[2] Original materials are a source of knowledge that enables researchers to study how objects were produced, functioned, and used. Conservation might be viewed as an attempt to keep intact the object's evidentiary value and its connection with the past (Clavir 2002, 52). By producing again

the photographic works, the direct link with the past is interrupted and the evidentiary value of materials, together with the modes of production, fades away.

However, reproduction may also open up new horizons. By resuming the metaphor of the fountain of eternal youth, reproduction may also be regarded as a marvellous spring that leads to new enterprises, by retaining the knowledge and wisdom of age together with a revitalized body. In this optimistic light, the fountain of youth does not cause experience or knowledge loss, rather it prolongs life without the nuisance of having an old body.

Reproduction — as a fountain of eternal youth — might open up new possibilities as it can prolong the works existence and increase the works' dissemination; it might lead to new experiences and introduce innovative ways of thinking about preserving photographic works.

The beginning of research

Two specific episodes led me to the decision to embark on this scholarly journey. In 2011 and 2012, two artists came separately to the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, the museum where I work as a conservator, and complained about the appearance of their photographic works.[3] Gerald Van Der Kaap made clear that his work *Lalalalalight* (1989–1990) could not be exhibited in its current damaged state. Jan Dibbets expressed his disappointment about the appearance of the work *Comet Sea 3°–6°* (1973).[4]

---

[1] Roland Barthes nicely depicted people's attachment to objects and artefacts when he described his ties with the Winter garden's photograph of his mother as a young child, by emphasizing the age of the photographic object: "There I was, alone in the apartment where she had died, looking at these pictures of my mother, one by one, under the lamp, gradually moving back in time with her, looking for the truth of the face I had loved. And I found it. *The photograph was very old. The corners were blunted from having been pasted into an album, the sepia print had faded*, and the picture just managed to show two children standing together at the end of a little wooden bridge in a glassed-in conservatory, what was called a Winter Garden in those days" (Barthes 1981, 67, emphasis added).

[2] In this dissertation, the term 'conservation' should be understood according to Anglophone international terminology and as it is stated in the 2009 ICOM-CC resolution. Acknowledging the biased connotation that the term 'restoration' has in the English language, within this research it will be used when referring to historical books or citing texts written in a language where the term does not have negative implications. http://www.icom-cc.org/242/about-icom-cc/what-is-conservation/ [accessed March 21, 2014].

[3] The museum's official name is Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, but for ease, the name will be shortened to Stedelijk Museum throughout the dissertation.

[4] Since 1982, Gerald van der Kaap has Gerald Van Der Kaap (all initials capitalized) as his artist's name, rather than the traditional Dutch style of Gerald van der Kaap. This artist's name will be used throughout the manuscript.

Both artists declared to the museum's curators their wish to reproduce the works. They promised that the process would take place under their supervision and they would not additionally charge for their time. The museum would pay only for the material and manufacturing costs. The museum's director, together with the management team, agreed to the proposals and, consequently, both photographic artworks were reprinted and the new prints replaced the old, damaged ones.

As both works fell under the care of the paper conservation department, it was expected that paper conservators would take part in the process. Being so closely involved, I started to reflect on my own task as a conservator within this course of action. The preservation and conservation of the artwork's original material has been, during my training as a conservator and in my professional life, one of the most important and relevant aspects to cherish and to look for. I realized how uncomfortable I felt with the idea of reproducing an artwork. What about material authenticity, one of the main pillars of traditional conservation theory? Is it possible to consider reproduction as a conservation strategy? All these intriguing, but conceptually difficult questions started to spin and to resonate. The two episodes also embodied the dilemmas a conservator faces when dealing with living artists, who have distinct and strong opinions about the way their creations should look, should be displayed and be preserved. The professional 'discomfort' and theoretical uncertainty of determining which arguments a conservator should follow when facing the reproduction of a photographic artwork was the catalyst for this research. Moreover, to my knowledge, there was little engagement with systematic research about reproduction of photographic artworks from a conservation perspective. This lacuna encouraged me to pursue this investigation.[5]

In the same period within the Science4Arts programme, the Stedelijk Museum together with Leiden University started a four-year research project titled 'Photographs and Preservation. How to save photographic artworks for the future?'.[6] The Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO) funded the project and, the Kröller Müller

[5] In the meantime, other researchers and conservators were increasingly interested in the topic of reproduction of contemporary photographic artworks, as attested to by the ongoing PhD research 'Authenticity and Reproducibility: Conservation Strategies for Contemporary Photography' by Marta Garcia Celma, the symposium 'Uniques and Multiples' organized by the ICOM-CC Photographic Material Working Group (PMWG) and held at the Rijksmuseum on 21–24 September 2016 in Amsterdam, and a survey about the use of reprinting in fine art photography, presented as a lecture titled, 'New Original: Reprint in Fine Art Photography', during the 45th Annual Meeting of the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (AIC) held in Chicago in May 2017. For further reference see http://nacca.eu/research-projects/conservation-strategies-for-contemporary-photography/ [accessed 19 May 2017], https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/nl/icom-cc.pmwg [accessed 3 April 2017], and https://aics45thannualmeeting2017.sched.com/event/8xPt [accessed 12 June 2017].

Museum in Otterlo, the Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven, the Utrecht University, and the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands supported the research. The project focused on 'photo-works': post-1960s analogue photographic artworks with an artistic application such as paint, tape, paper or other materials, thereby creating unique and irreproducible works of art. It studied these hybrid works from an art historical, chemical, and conservation perspective. This project formed the perfect ground for starting an inquiry about the reproducibility of analogue photographic artworks.

Three of the cases studies in this study are from the Stedelijk Museum. The museum does not have a predefined position about matters regarding reproduction of photographic artworks and it generally prefers to follow what the creating artist has to say about it. For example, if an artist considers reproduction as something in line with his or her practice, then the museum is willing to follow his or her wishes. By contrast, if an artist does not contemplate reproduction for a specific work or in more general terms, the museum will tend to respect the artist's opinion.[7] It is interesting to note that the museum adopted a similar approach in the past, and it followed the artists' wishes by consenting to the reproduction of various photographic artworks.

The museum's former paper conservator, André van Oort, in his role as artist's technical assistant, has helped the Dutch artists Ger van Elk (1941–2014) and Jan Dibbets (b. 1941) in the reproduction of some of their works. In the lapse of time between the 1980s and the beginning of the 2000s, Ger van Elk reproduced, under the auspices of the museum, *C'est moi que fait la musique* (1971), *The Adieu I* (1974), and *The Return of Pierre Bonnard 1917–1971* (1971); while Jan Dibbets reproduced *Film-Painting: White Table* (1972), and *Comet Sea 3°–6°* (1973). Despite a substantial number of reproduced photographic artworks, the museum has little written documentation about possible theoretical discussions carried out at the time by the involved artists, curators,

[6] The Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research initiated and funded the Science4Arts programme (2012–2018). The main goal of the Science4Arts research was to develop new strategies and perspectives on the preservation and conservation of works of art and historic objects through the joint effort of museums, universities, conservators, curators, researchers in the humanities and scientists. For further reference about the general research agenda and the various projects included in the Science4Arts programme see https://www.nwo.nl/en/research-and-results/programmes/science4arts [Accessed 17 May 2017].

[7] For example, when considering the acquisition of photographic works by Clegg & Guttmann (both artists born in 1957), the Stedelijk Museum decided to purchase the photographs despite them not being in pristine condition and respected the artists' wishes not to reproduce their work. This artist duo does not contemplate reproduction of their work as a viable option and they hardly ever reproduce their unique photographs. The artists consider fading and other marks on the photographic surfaces as an index of the time passing, as an indication of the works' existence. Moreover, Clegg & Guttmann place much importance on the aesthetic qualities of certain photographic techniques, such as silver dye-bleach photographs. As this technique is no longer available, they avoid reprinting with other imaging technologies.

directors, and conservators on the consequence of this practice. Van Oort's technical reports were, together with the correspondence dealing with the practicalities of the reproduction process and a short mention in the museum's registration database, one of the few testimonies of the substitution. Van Oort's reports have been invaluable for this research, but they recorded mainly the practical aspects of the reproduction.[8]

To sum up, the main question of the dissertation is whether reproduction of photographic artworks might be considered a conservation strategy. By examining the reproduction of four photographic artworks from the vantage point of a conservator working in a museum of contemporary, the research focuses on the theoretical challenges that this approach entails.

Reproduction as an act of substitution and replacement

In this study, the terms 'reproduce' and 'reproduction' will be frequently encountered and thus it seems appropriate to describe their etymology and the specific way these words will be used in this dissertation. The verb 'reproduce' and the derivative noun 'reproduction' are etymologically and morphologically complex words.[9] Both terms have their origins in Medieval Latin mediated by the French language. Etymologically, both words have several meanings that have been added in the course of time. Initially, the two words were mainly used to describe the action or the process of formation, creation, as well as to bring something into existence again. They were in no way correlated with art and the practice of multiplying artworks. According to the Oxford English Dictionary (OED), the relation to artworks is one of the latest senses added to the words' meanings: 'reproduction' began to have the implication of an exact equivalent, especially a copy of a picture or other work of art around 1700, while 'reproduce', in the sense to produce again in the form of a copy or to replicate a picture, only started to be employed in the 1830s.[10] Earlier, the English language used the words 'imitation', 'duplication', 'copy' or 'replica' to describe these actions.

Morphologically, both words are formed by the prefix re- united to the words 'produce' or 'production'.[11] In Latin, the original sense of *re-* is 'back' or 'backwards', but in English (as well as in French and Italian) formations, whether on native or Latin

[8] The articles written by Sanneke Stigter are some of the few publications that discuss the conceptual difficulties linked to the practice of reproducing photographic artworks within the Stedelijk Museum (Stigter 2004a, 2004b, 2016).
[9] For the different senses and references of 'reproduce' and 'reproduction' see the Oxford English Dictionary (OED).

bases, re- is almost exclusively employed in the sense of 'again'. When reflecting on the French term *représenter* (in English to represent), the French art historian Louis Marin analysed the meaning of the prefix *re-*. In his investigation, he argued that the bound morpheme re- adds the value of substitution. Something, which has been *présent* (in English to be present or to appear) but not anymore, becomes substituted and therefore maintained by its *représentation* (in English representation) (Marin 1993, 11).

The prefix re- in the word reproduction also underlines this act of substitution and, because of this, I have selected the term reproduction to indicate the process of producing a photographic work again in order to substitute and replace an older version.[12] Moreover, from the end of the nineteenth century, the term reproduction has been used frequently in relation to photography and its ability to represent and depict the physical world as well its capacity to produce several objects with the same image. I have decided not to employ the terms 'replication' or 'reconstruction', despite the fact that the same bound morpheme re- is used in these two words. The reason lies in small semantic differences: 'replication' generally denotes the intention to make something look exactly the same as something else. In the works under study, the objective to create an identical work of art was perhaps pursued at an ideal level, but in the course of the process it became clear that identical replicas could not be achieved. Artists and the museum staff agreed to a degree of modification and the use of different materials and techniques was admitted. Reconstruction is a term frequently related to architecture conservation and it defines the practice of rebuilding heritage sites or monuments as it occurred in the aftermath of World War II in the historical centres of Dresden, Germany or Warsaw, Poland.[13]

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[10] The OED quotes the sentence "So many reproductions of one thing, like the image of the same face repeated in a multiplying glass" written by John Norris in 1701–1704 in his *An essay towards the theory of the ideal or intelligible world…* as one of the first examples of reproduction as an act of multiplication. The OED refers to the letter of Francis Beaufort to Charles Darwin dated 26 May 1838 that employs the term 'reproduce' as an act to multiply artworks: "I should therefore recommend you to send your lithographer to this office with the proper ink for taking a transfer proof from the plate; by which means you will be able to reproduce as many impressions as you may think fit." For further reference see http://www.darwinproject.ac.uk/entry-415B [accessed August 04, 2014].

[11] Both words originate from the Latin term *reproduco* formed by the prefix *re-* and the verb *produco*, which is again formed by the prefix *pro-* united with the verb *duco*, where *pro* means 'in front' and *duco* 'guide'.

[12] The term 'version', as it is used here and elsewhere in this dissertation, describes a numerically distinct work that shares a broad range of constituent features with other versions of the same work.

In this research, the term reproduction will bear the meaning of substitution, either when the initial version of a work is fully replaced by another one or when the substitution occurs partially. A full substitution occurs when a new version substitutes an older one, which is irretrievably lost or damaged. A partial substitution occurs when the initial and subsequent versions are both available. In this instance, it is possible to compare the various versions with each other. Moreover, the presence of the initial version may exert a strong influence on the way the subsequent versions are perceived and valued.

Reproduction excludes here other kinds of replication in which the photographic image is printed again for enhancing its visibility or accessibility; it ignores the use exhibition copies for the 'safeguarding' of the original object of the use of facsimiles with didactic purposes by showing how the object may have looked before its material decay (Park 2010, 156–157). In these instances, a substitution occurs between the initial print and successive ones, but the intention of the reproduction is entirely different as both the museum staff and the public will acknowledge the difference in status between the two artefacts.[14]

Moreover, the term reproduction, as used in this dissertation, does not include the image's duplication of a work of art by means of mass media. The translations of a photographic image from its original carrier to different sizes, formats, and editions are not taken into consideration, nor are the theoretical implications of such a modification. Reproduction is intended as a means to contrast the inherent impermanence of certain photographic techniques, by taking 'advantage' of their mechanical reproducibility.

In photography, reproduction and permanence were regularly viewed as two sides of the same coin, because they counteract the instability of many photographic

[13] According to the influential *Burra Charter* (1979), issued by the Australia International Council of Monuments and Sites, "reconstruction means returning a place as nearly as possible to a known earlier state and is distinguished by the introduction of materials (new or old) into the fabric." From the 1970s, many international professional organizations discussed whether reconstruction should be accepted as a good practice in architectural conservation. For further reference see http://australia.icomos.org/wp-content/uploads/Burra-Charter_1979.pdf [accessed 05 March 2017]; Jokilehto 2013; and Stanley-Price 2009.

[14] In museums, the habit of producing and displaying replicas and facsimiles is widespread, but generally there are no clear standards that deal with the care and handling of these objects. For further reference see Park, 2010. Moreover, this practice is far from unequivocal and may lead to conflict due to opposing views about whether it is appropriate for museums and art galleries to exhibit replicas, as recently shown in the Netherlands by the incident concerning the planned display of exhibition copies rather than original etchings of Maurits Cornelis Escher. For further reference on the Escher controversy see http://www.afp.com/en/news/escher-museum-accused-displaying-copies-dutch-artists-work [accessed 29 September 2015] and "Reproducties. Stichting verhindert expositie Escher", (2 September 2015), *NRC Handelsblad*, 7.

techniques (Romer 1999). From the beginning of photography, silver halide chemistry showed drawbacks and presented durability issues. Silver reacted with pollutants present in the mounts, it was sensitive to atmospheric gases, to residual processing, and it often revealed stains and loss of density. Other systems were developed in order to respond to the inherent instability by employing more stable imaging substances such as gold, platinum, carbon, or other stable pigments. Platinum prints, for example, were one of the most stable and permanent photographic processes that have ever been designed. At the end of the nineteenth century, this technique became the preferred choice for archival, permanent prints meant for posterity (Edwards 2009, 140–141). Despite their beauty and their relative superior permanence, these other imaging systems were commercially and practically not profitable and they never replaced the silver halide systems within the photographic industry. Other strategies had to be found in order to counteract the instability/permanence issue. The transfer of vulnerable images to new carriers, thus reproduction, became commonly used as a means of long-term preservation.

Outline of the research and theoretical frame of reference

By studying the practice of substituting four damaged photographic artworks with new ones, the dissertation explores the theoretical and material challenges that reproduction of photographic artworks entails. Is reproduction a conservation strategy for photographic artworks? Are the various versions of a reproduced work exactly the same? Or are they different? And if dissimilarities exist, what kind of differences are these? By comparing the material, technical, and image characteristics, the research attempts to answer these questions. The classification between constituent and contingent features together with an attentive visual examination are introduced in chapter two as knowledge-producing tools that might help in the categorization of visible similarities and differences between the various versions. This approach is systematically employed with the four case studies described in the successive chapters.

The selected cases vary to a large degree from an art historical perspective as each of the three artists has his specific ideas about art and photography. The three artists operated in different places and periods and used dissimilar photographic materials and techniques. Taking into account all the variables, the disparities seem vast. However, the cases show important similarities as well, as the works were all made after the 1970s, they were produced as analogue photographs, they were made with the intention to create artworks and they were collected as such by museums of modern

and contemporary art. That said, the crucial connection between the works is that within the institutional setting of a museum, the works have been reproduced under the direct supervision of the creating artists after they had been damaged or deemed unsuitable for display. All the works were reproduced with the intention of substituting the initial damaged versions with new pristine versions of the works. This is the main reason why the works, despite their disparities, have been brought together in this research.

A note of caution should be added. For the artists discussed in this dissertation, reproduction is not a practice that can be employed for all their photographic works. For them, reproduction should not be viewed as a one fits all strategy, it can be envisioned only in specific cases. Reproduction is regarded as a practice to resort to when the type and the extent of the damage of the work does not allow many other options. As will become clear further on, all the artists were deeply involved during the process and much concerned with the results of the reproduction. All were aware of the material as well the theoretical difficulties that this course of action implies.

Five chapters constitute the dissertation. Chapter one, 'Defining the field', centres on the role that the 'respect' for material characteristics plays in fine art conservation ethics. This introductory chapter describes the concepts and notions regarding materiality and conservation as they are articulated in conservation literature. Chapter two, 'Reproduction as a practice of reduction', introduces the theoretical frame of the literary theorist Gérard Genette and the historian Carlo Ginzburg, which will be used to analyse the issues concerning the reproduction of the four cases. Chapter three examines the difficulties encountered during the reproduction process of the first case: Jan Dibbets' *Comet Sea 3° – 60°* (1973). Chapter four investigates the shifting conservation strategies employed for the preservation of the second case: John Baldessari's *Virtues and Vices (for Giotto)* (1981). Chapter five discusses the reproduction and the aftermath of the third and fourth cases: Gerald Van Der Kaap's *Lalalalalight* (1989 – 90) and *Xiada (Girls' dorm), Xiamen* (2002).

The last three chapters (three, four, and five) have a similar structure and each of them is divided in two sections. The first section of each shortly introduces the artist discussed in that particular chapter from an art historical perspective and it analyses the reproduction process of one work by comparing the first version with the subsequent ones. Each second section examines some specific characteristics that belong exclusively to that particular reproduction process by introducing additional theories and my knowledge and experiences coming from daily practice as a conservator. In Dibbets' case, this section focuses on the artist's ambiguous approach to reproduction and to how a reproduced work should be dated on a museum's wall label. In Baldessari's case, the second section discusses the unframed and framed condition of *Virtues and*

Vices (for Giotto) as an example of how the perception of what the essential features of an artwork are may change over time. In Van Der Kaap's case, the second part suggests how the underlying principles of moral rights may play a role in the acceptance by the museum staff of the works' 'disqualification', de-accessioning, and physical elimination.

After the concluding remarks, a coda briefly reports the results of my dialogues with the artists Wout Berger, Koos Breukel, and Rineke Dijkstra. During these meetings, the artists shared their thoughts about a possible reproduction of their photographic works. In all instances, we discussed the possibility of reproducing their photographs, but none of the works has been reprinted yet. The coda should be read as one of the first attempts to determine whether the reproduction of the examined artworks is a process that should be pursued in the future or not, as well as presenting the general ideas that the various artists have about the topic. It is based on the notes taken during our meetings and it is my own interpretation of the facts that I discussed with the various artists in my dual role of researcher and conservator at the Stedelijk Museum. In my opinion, the coda is a helpful addition as it illustrates how other artists may consider reproduction a viable practice to counteract the physical instability of analogue photographic prints. In this light, the coda provides a glimpse of how the research on reproduction is not limited to the artists examined in this dissertation, but may involve and interest a wider group of artists, museums, and conservators.

Furthermore, the appendix presents one of the two models I have developed as a researcher within the Science4Art project 'Photographs and Preservation. How to save photographic artworks for the future?' The 'Stakeholders Identification Model' is intended as a concrete tool that might help conservators or other professionals to manage the identification of individuals who should be included in the decision-making concerning a conservation treatment. As the dissertation discusses reproduction as a possible conservation strategy, it seemed interesting to add this model here. The model is divided into two phases. The first phase takes place at the beginning of the process and, at this stage, the compiler of the form establishes which individuals should ideally be involved and why. The second phase occurs at the end of process and the compiler evaluates the role and the influence of the various stakeholders during the reproduction process. I believe that the model adds value as it encourages its users to systematically determine who should be included, but it also avoids overlooking those individuals who are not usually engaged in the process. It may also foster transparency in the decision-making, by mapping the authorities that have been followed.

In more general terms, the dissertation addresses theoretical issues that conservators may encounter in their daily practice. It attempts to build a bridge between practice-related and theory-related knowledge within the conservation field, and specifically regarding photography conservation. The aim of this dissertation is to reflect on

the principles that shape the profession, and the fact that these beliefs may conflict with existing habits. By taking into account the findings of related disciplines such as art history, theory of photography, and history of science, this may lead to a better understanding of what the substitution of an analogue photographic artwork entails.

1

Defining the field

This dissertation is located at the boundaries of different disciplines: conservation theory, art history, and the theory of photography, and it deals with the reproduction of photographic artworks. Whilst I have drawn on elements and arguments from all of these fields, it is my knowledge as a practicing conservator within a museum setting that has been most influential. This background, together with assumptions originating from training and daily practice, have impacted the way in which works of art were initially viewed and dealt with. Works of art were, above all, objects made of physical substance and, as such, they obeyed physical laws. During the research, I started to question the material approach of conservators and what role this perspective has on the reproduction of photographic artworks.

This chapter starts by presenting the assumptions that have, for a long time,underpinned 'traditional' conservation practice as well my own training as a conservator. It continues by arguing how this 'material-based' approach has come under pressure, in particular due to the influence of 'non-Western' perspectives concerning the care of cultural heritage as well as the specific needs and issues raised by the conservation of modern and contemporary artworks. It ends by briefly discussing how the different conservation specialisms may have different views concerning the practice of reproduction.

The material perspective of a conservator

As a profession, conservation has traditionally been linked to the care and the preservation of physical objects and the information these objects contain (Sully 2013, 2). The objects may have a substantial weight or large dimensions, and because of these features they may be difficult to move or to handle. They react to external circumstances: if it is too dry, photographic prints may curl, and if it is too humid they may be infected by mould or be disrupted by chemical deterioration. Light, mishandling, display, and chemical instability are circumstances that may cause damage to the (art) objects and conservators have to take these physical conditions into account. [15] Conservators are interested in the materials forming the objects they take care of, in their physical and chemical properties; they are concerned with the interactions materials have with each other and with the environment. They want to understand how these materials have been produced, how these substances have been manipulated in order to make that particular artefact; they look at the materials' surface, whose appearance has a decisive importance for the object's aesthetics, and how the work is perceived. Thus, when conservators speak about materials, they often do it differently than scholars investigating the theoretical implications of materials and their relationship with humans or society at large.

Since World War II, but particularly since the1960s, scholars of various disciplines have started to include the notion of 'material' in their research; they have begun to examine how material culture might play a role in shaping the lives of human beings.[16] From the 1990s onwards, the involvement of material triggered a renewed focus on materiality that resulted in the 'material turn' in many areas of the humanities and the social sciences. This revived interest is often regarded as a reaction to the little attention materiality had received in the 1970s, a period dominated by the so-called cultural turn, which privileged languages, discourse, culture, and value (Coole and Frost 2010, 3). Currently, material and materiality have become topics of study in art history, history, and museum studies (Dudley 2010; Gerritsen and Riello 2015; Lange-Berndt 2015). However, as art historian Petra Lange-Berndt has argued, the material approach is more difficult than it seems at first sight. Academics tend to denote material as an inert substance that will be further processed and thus it will change because of human handling, interaction with the surroundings, or chemical reactions. In this view, the focus lies primarily on the processes of the making and the power relations associated with them. Lange-Berndt has also remarked that materials have their own agency; a non-human life of their own and, in order to be "complicit with the material," scholars should look for assistance in their investigations by collaborating with artists, architects, designers, conservators, or technicians and other individuals that are truly involved with materials (Lange-Berndt, 16–17).[17]

Similarly, in the theoretical studies of photography, a material approach has gained momentum and quietly distanced itself from the conceptual mainstream that ruled this field since the beginning of the 1960s, which traditionally viewed photographs as images. Yet, scholars' attraction to 'old photographs' was, until recently, mostly directed to the discourse of heritage, nostalgia, and the indexical functions of the

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[15] It should be noted that, even if the majority of artworks is made of physical matter, there are works of art that defy materiality. Classic examples of 'non-material' artworks are those created by Tino Sehgal (b. 1976). Sehgal is not interested in the making of objects, rather he creates 'situations' within the museum galleries, in which performers enact choreographed actions and sometimes converse or interact with visitors. Non-material artworks may also undermine established conservation's ideas, as conservators are traditionally asked to care for material objects. Pip Laurenson and Vivian van Saaze have pointed out how conceptual art works, whose initial form was non-material, were primarily collected by making them tangible in the form of instructions, film, video, photography, contracts, drawings, diagrams, or props. In this regard, Sehgal's works differs from this type of conceptual artwork, as Sehgal does not allow any kind of 'materialization' by recording or by creating tangible documentation (Laurenson and Van Saaze 2014, 30–35).

[16] For literature references on the topic of modern material culture in other disciplines see Graves-Brown 2000, 2; Dudley 2010, 2.

[17] For a short review on the intellectual tradition in art history that opposes 'material' to 'form' see Didi-Huberman 2015; Wagner 2015.

trace, while researchers have largely failed to engage with the material existence of photographs (Edwards 2010, 23). Within the material turn, photographs started to be regarded not only as images, but also as objects. In the introductory chapter of their book, Elisabeth Edwards and Janice Hart exemplified this new approach by stating:

> The central rationale of *Photographs Object Histories* is that a photograph is a three-dimensional thing, not only a two-dimensional image. […] Photographs are both images and physical objects that exist in time and space and thus in social and cultural experience" (Edwards and Hart 2004, 1).

Further on, the two authors argued that the references to photographs as objects had resonated in the past, but that these were never pursued fully or systematically. They also remarked that, until recently, very little research on the physicality of photographs has been practiced. Photography's physical and technical issues were almost exclusively the domains of two related disciplines: photography's technical history and the conservation field. The engagement of technical history ends when the technical process under study is completed. A technical study has accomplished its task when the necessary steps for the production of a photographic technique have been described and analysed. Conservation's engagement with photography's materiality is mainly concerned with conservation and preservation issues (Ibid., 8).

Edwards and Hart's book aspires towards a shift in methodological focus, away from the 'tyranny' of the image and towards a more encompassing approach. In this light, the photograph's meaning not only resides in the image, but also in the photographs' material, its presentational forms, and its (social) uses. Within the proposed material methodology, the materiality of photographs emerges in three interrelated forms: firstly, the study of photographs' technical and physical aspects as chemistry, printing paper, toning, and other surface variations; secondly, the analysis of presentational form like *cartes de visite*, albums, mounts, and frames; and thirdly, the investigation of physical traces left behind by usage and time (Ibid., 3). In photographic studies, this new approach does not aim to eliminate the image content, as usually the image content is the reason why photographs are cherished, purchased or collected, but it attempts to consider how the materiality of the photographic image and "peripheral" information, such as stamps, inscriptions, mounting cards, or albums, may influence the image itself and its reading from a historical and social perspective (Serena 2013, 15).

The material turn in photographic studies, as an acknowledgment of the materiality of a photograph, presents welcome crossovers with the conservation field as attested by the exhibition catalogues *Color! American Photography Transformed* (2013) and

Light, Paper, Process: Reinventing Photography (2015). In these books, photograph conservators have written technical histories or technical notes with the explicit intent of shedding light on the technical and material aspects of the photographic works (Heckert 2015, 8). Both volumes testify to the extent to which a material approach in photographic studies might be made manifest; with conservators analysing materials and examining the meaning residing behind the technical features and material substances that form a photograph. This mutual interest might further increase the reciprocal understanding and appreciation of each profession. However, fundamental differences will remain in the aims and in the way these materials are observed and studied. Conservators' functions, tasks, and duties, are for the most part, circumscribed by the description found in various professional codes of ethics and museums' institutional viewpoints. Despite certain differences in the normative attitudes, conservators argue that their field is rooted in the physical aspects of objects and that they are responsible for their physical care. The basis of the profession is thus object-centred and conservators are not usually involved in the study of cultural parameters or in the assessment of cultural significance (Clavir 2002, 33 and 46–51). Thus, conservation's focus continues to be the physical care and protection from physical deterioration of objects; it is less concerned with the relationship materials have with humans or societies, and with the interpretation of cultural signs transmitted by artefacts (Prown 1982; Batchen 2001, 78). As will be argued further on, contemporary art conservation, perhaps more than other areas of conservation, has actively explored the notion of artist's intention and material authenticity and, in doing so, has questioned the theoretical and practical framework of an 'object-based conservation approach'.[18]

In museum practice, the division between the conservation and the curatorial department is often blurred and much overlap exists. Preservation and conservation may have a profound impact on artefacts' aesthetic and historical perception and different parties are generally involved in decision-making. By having an intimate knowledge of materials, conservators attempt to slow down or stop the objects' physical wear and tear, to stabilize the condition of the deteriorated objects, to repair damage, and to restore the damaged physical appearance. All these aspects define the prerogatives of the profession. Generally, conservators will not intervene when deterioration or even destruction is conceived as integral part of the artistic creation, or when the deteriorated material is supposed to be replaced. For example, in the case of the lettuce in Giovanni Anselmo's (b. 1934) sculpture *Senza titolo* (1968)

[18] For an overview of the different frameworks used in the 'object-based', 'value-based', and 'people-based' conservation approaches see Sully 2013.

(fig. 1), it is only the daily care of replacing the salad that guarantees the unstable balance between the two granite elements. If the lettuce is allowed to age, it will sag, the smaller stone will fall on the ground, and the internal relation between the pieces will be broken. This example underscores the opposition of impermanence versus permanence as the transitory nature of the lettuce openly contrasts with the material durability of the granite blocks. The replacement of organic materials in this case probably will not raise many concerns as this action should be regarded an integral part of the work. However, there are many other instances in which matters such as ageing, decay, damage, and interventions to stop these phenomena are less straightforward and raise fundamental questions in conservation practice.



Figure 1 Giovanni Anselmo, *Senza titolo*, 1968, Centre Pompidou, Paris, granite, lettuce, and copper wire.

The materiality of objects in conservation

Reproduction intended as substitution and replacement of a work of art is a 'thorny' issue within the conservation field because it pressures and problematizes some of the fundamental beliefs that shape the entire discipline. Respect for the 'true nature' of objects is at the core of the entire profession since its 'emancipation' from the skilled craft of restoration that started, according to most scholars, at beginning of the twentieth century (Clavir 2002).[19] The reverence for material authenticity increased after World War II, as demonstrated by the influential *Venice Charter* (1964) and by the prominent book *Teoria del restauro* (1963), written by the Italian scholar Cesare Brandi.[20] In his writing, Brandi stated: "the physical nature of the work must of necessity take precedence, since it represents the real 'place' where the image is materialized, and it secures transmission of the image to the future" (Brandi 2005, 49). According to the author, a treatment should be based on the full respect of the work's material authenticity, rather than the capacity to 'adjust', complete, or beautify. This is the only way to prevent a restoration treatment from becoming a forgery (Basile 2005, 22). Thus, through respect for an object's material authenticity, restoration is removed from the sphere of forgery and it becomes the objective, scientific profession of conservation.[21] Forgery is seen here as the intentional processes of making an object look like something else, a fraudulent imitation. The profession of conservation was born as a

[19] It should be remarked that, from the beginning of nineteenth century, the respect of materials is described as a good practice during treatments and it is opposed to 'excessive' restoration as attested in the writings of restoration pioneers such as Pietro Edwards (1774–1821), John Ruskin (1819–1900), and Camillo Boito (1836–1914). For further reference, see Clavir (2002) for a historical overview that describes the changes in professionalization from restorer as a skilled craftsman to the profession of modern conservator based on a scientific approach; see Conti (2002) for a general history of restoration and conservation from the Renaissance onward; and see Van Saaze (2013) for a historical account of the changes in meaning of the term authenticity within the conservation field.

[20] The official name of the *Venice Charter* is the *International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites*. The *Venice Charter* was drawn up in 1964 by the Second International Congress of Architects and Technicians of Historic Monuments and provided a theoretical framework for the conservation and restoration of historic buildings and archaeological sites. Even if the *Venice Charter* mainly focused on immovable cultural heritage, it resonated greatly throughout the conservation field. For example, the use of extensive documentation before, during, and after conservation treatment (art. 16) and the use of scientific materials and methods (art. 15) were adopted elsewhere, such as in conservation specialisms dealing with movable heritage. The *Venice Charter* is frequently incorrectly published under the name of the International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS). In fact, this organization came to recognize the *Venice Charter* in 1965 as its fundamental doctrinal document (Jokilehto 1998, 230). For a historical review of the *Venice Charter*, see Hardy 2009. The text of the Charter can be retrieved online at http://www.icomos.org/charters/venice_e.pdf [accessed 1 December 2016].

reaction to the 'excess' of restoration, in which the tendency to extensively fill in and to beautify the missing parts or lacunas made difficult the distinction between a fraudulent intent and a genuine one, the latter meant as the capacity to safeguard a cultural or artistic object from physical decay through an objective and scientific approach.

In their account on objectivity, the science historians Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison state: "to be objective is to aspire to knowledge that bears no trace of the knower — knowledge unmarked by prejudice or skill, fantasy or judgment, wishing or striving" (Daston and Galison 2010, 17). They also argued that objectivity, being the inextricable counterpart of subjectivity, could not be conceived without subjectivity. But from the second half of the nineteenth century, the two features — objectivity and subjectivity — were set apart and, depending on the circumstances, they were felt as a benefit or as a detriment. On the one hand, artists were exhorted to express their subjectivity; on the other hand, scientists were required to deny any subjective contribution and to strive for 'scientific' objectiveness (Ibid., 37). A similar path can be detected in the conservation field where the conservator moved away from the artistic realm towards a scientific approach.

For a long period, artists had a role in the restoration and conservation of works of art. Many celebrated artists and less famous ones took care of older artworks. Artists were called to reconstruct the missing parts of fragmented ancient statues, such as the reconstruction of the Laocoön Group, or to take care of beloved paintings and frescos (Rossi Pinelli, 1986).[22] At the end of the sixteenth century, for example, the renowned painter Carlo Maratta (1625–1713) felt obliged to safeguard the older masters' achievements by restoring some of the most important paintings of Rome, such as Raphael's Stanze (1508–ca. 1520) at the Vatican Palace and the frescoes of *Cupid and Psyche* (1511–1514) at the Villa Farnesina. However, from the end of the eighteenth century, the first steps towards the professionalization of the care of works of art were made. From this moment, artists relinquished the restoration practice and, with a few exceptions, professionals with specific abilities were called in (Conti 2002, 107–118).[23]

A century later, the conservator gradually moved away from being a skilfull craftsman who learned the profession from his or her master, to becoming, at the beginning of

[21] It is outside the scope of this dissertation to examine the concept of forgery and its theoretical implications. Conservation has always been involved in the authentication process of objects and specifically of works of art. Conservators, through technical examinations, have been regularly asked to provide objective support to curatorial attributions. There is an extensive literature on this subject within the field of conservation. For further reading on the technical aspects of detecting forgery see Craddock 2009; for more philosophical aspects on the topic see Dutton 1983.

[22] For further basic reference on the Laocoön Group, see http://www.digitalsculpture.org/laocoon/index02.html [accessed 10 June 2016].

the twenty-first century, a university-trained professional. This 'emancipatory' path is characterized by the adoption of the language and the image of the scientist: the conservator wears a white lab coat, uses a microscope and other scientific equipment in a workshop that is nowadays called a laboratory (Clavir 2002, 39). In her book *Preserving What Is Valued* (2002), Miriam Clavir argues that the shift from restoration to conservation as a scientific profession started as: "a scientific meta-narrative that claimed to guarantee objectivity and to ensure that the object would be preserved in and of itself, regardless of the ever-changing tastes and politics of society" (Clavir 2002, 53). It is through the material evidence that the conservation field grasps the ideal of objectivity, unblemished by changes in taste and fashion.

The materiality of objects fulfils another fundamental role in conservation, that of being a tangible link with the past. Because of their evidentiary value, the object's materials became the subject of study and therefore a source of knowledge.[24] Generally, art conservation strives, on one the hand, to safeguard the artistic value of the object's form. On the other hand, it strives to keep as intact as possible the documentary value of the object's fabric. Brandi underscored this principle by saying: "the material used in the work of art carries the message of the image and it does so in two ways which can be defined as *structure* and *appearance*", where 'structure' represents the historical evidence and 'appearance' designates the aesthetic value" (Brandi 2005, 51).[25] The conservation theorist Salvador Muñoz Viñas labelled this approach as 'classical' conservation theory, where treatment is perceived as a revelatory action that discloses the object's 'true nature' through the removal of later additions considered as obscuring elements (Muñoz Viñas 2005, 92). He argued that this view considers conservation as a truth-enforced activity in which authenticity is regarded

[23] This professional division has become standard procedure in today's conservation world where, generally, artists are the creators of works of art while conservators are the professionals in charge of the physical care of those creations. It is interesting to note that Italian conservator Antonio Rava argued that an artist should never conserve his/her own work as, inevitably, he or she will introduce new ideas or artistic expressions. According to Rava, only professional conservators truly conserve and preserve works of art (Chiantore and Rava 2012, 17–18). Nevertheless, artists have not disappeared from the conservation field since they are viewed as repository of information about their own works. From the 1970s onwards, several initiatives in this direction emerged: in the form of databases such as the 'Archive of Techniques and Working Materials Used by Contemporary Artists' initiated in the 1970s by chief curator Erich Ganzen-Castrillo. More recently, similar approaches have started: in the form of artist interviews on conservation issues as the 'Artist Documentation Program' (ADP), promoted by Carol Mancusi Ungaro at the Menil Collection, Houston, or the two projects Artist Interviews (1998–2000) and Artist Interviews/Artist Archives (2001–2005) stimulated by The Foundation for the Conservation of Contemporary Art (SBMK) together with the former Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage Institute (ICN).

[24] For further reference on the conceptual difficulties of museum objects as evidence and their changing social readings see Kavanagh 1989.

as an absolute value that cannot be added to the object, but can only be revealed. From this perspective, the notion of authenticity is allied to the evidentiary value of the object's materials and conservation should therefore restrain from falsifying the object and disturbing its fabric.

It should be remarked that the roots of classical conservation theory lie within the European framework for the preservation of moveable artefacts and monuments; and for a long period, the conservation field shared the same values and concepts. In the preamble of the *Venice Charter*, the compilers introduced the word 'authenticity' when they spoke of handing historic monuments on to future generations "in the full richness of their authenticity" (ICOMOS 1964). Article twelve of the Charter declared that the "replacements of missing parts must integrate harmoniously with the whole, but at the same time must be distinguishable from the original so that restoration does not falsify the *artistic or historic evidence*" (Ibid. Emphasis added). In this light, it is interesting to note that the editors felt no need to define the term 'authenticity' and what it is stands for, either in the preamble, or in article twelve. Indeed, the meaning of this newly introduced term is never further explained (Russell 2008, 102). Those involved in writing the Charter shared similar backgrounds and broad assumptions about the nature of appropriate response to conservation problems. This common basis has been suggested as the reason why the term authenticity was introduced "without fanfare, without definition, without any sense of debate that will swirl around its use and meaning in the conservation world twenty-five years later" (Stovel 1995, 23).

The crisis of materiality in conservation

For a long period, the conservation world shared the same assumptions and cultural background. An artefact's materiality was highly regarded, it was cherished, and it had to be protected by extensive or intrusive treatments. From the end of the

[25] It should be noted that Brandi was well aware of the possible conflict between these two values and, where the contrast cannot be reconciled, he argued the primacy of the aesthetic value over the historic one: "in the end *appearance* will override *structure*, where they cannot otherwise reconciled" (Brandi 2005, 51).
Throughout its professional history, conservation has struggled and still strives to find an equilibrium regarding the degree of intervention allowed. A treatment should prevent further decay; at the same time, it should interfere as little as possible with the fabric of the object treated, because of the evidentiary value of the materials. The whole notion of 'minimum intervention' rotates around these two opposites. For further reference on the topic of minimum intervention and the methodological difficulties encountered with this approach see Appelbaum 1987; Oddy and Carol 1999; Rubio Redondo 2008.

1960s, however, 'non-Western' cultural traditions and contemporary art practices have put this European-centred conservation view, in which materiality was considered the repository of historical evidence and aesthetic value, under pressure. These two new perspectives have underlined the (partial) failure of classical conservation theories when dealing with 'non-Western' artefacts and contemporary artworks and they have contributed to a (partial) revision of those theories.[26]

'Non-Western' artistic and creative expressions may be less bound to materials and their presumed evidentiary values. Objects created for ritual use may be considered 'sacred' or 'culturally significant' because they are believed to contain intrinsic, intangible qualities by their originators. These objects may have to be ritually used and it may be acceptable to have physical decay in order to maintain the objects' 'sacred' content, rather than be preserved according to modern conservation standards. The care of these objects does not necessarily lie in the preservation of the original materials, but in their ceremonial use or in regeneration customs as exemplified in the ritual reconstruction of the Ise Shrine in Japan.[27]

In short, the inclusion of 'non-Western' perspectives in the safeguarding of cultural heritage has brought to light how Western-centred conservation ethics and standards might not be the best approach for the preservation of cultural heritage produced outside the Western cultural framework, as attested by the Nara *Documents on Authenticity* (Larsen 1994) or as Clavir's book convincingly reveals. In the latter, the author highlights the dilemmas and difficulties around the preservation and conservation of 'ethnographic' objects made by individuals belonging to First Nations' cultures (Clavir 2002).

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[26] For a further literature reference on other significant changes in the theory and the practice of conservation see Sully 2013. In this dissertation the terms 'non-Western' and 'Western' are used in a general manner. Non-Western refers to societies and cultures outside of Europe, North America. Conversly, Western indicates the European, North American, and to up to certain extent Australian and New Zealand societies and cultures.

[27] The Ise Shrine is rebuilt every twenty years according to a religious tradition started in the seventh century C.E. It is outside the scope of this dissertation to focus on the peculiar conservation traditions in Japan. However, on the renewal of the Ise Shrine, the Japanese professor Nobuko Inaba has warned that the reconstruction of the Shrine is a religious ritual ceremony and therefore it should not be misunderstood as a Japanese conservation methodology (Inaba 2009, 157). According to Nicholas Stanley-Price, Japan should be credited as one of those countries that have integrated tangible and intangible values within a conservation philosophy very similar to Western ones (Stanley-Price 2005, 9). A divergent view of what is authentic within Japanese conservation practice is to be found in Sugiyama 2014, 13–25. According to Monika Wagner, the cultures of Asia, and especially Japan, ascribe a different status to materials. Materials have a communicative function of their own, which cannot be completely translated through words. The fascination for this other form of communication may explain the appreciation of plain and simple materials (Wagner 2015).

Likewise, from the 1960s onwards, the conservation practice related to modern and contemporary art also began to question traditional conservation theories. Artists had started to experiment with (industrial) materials that were not crafted for fine art. Many were not interested in or did not take into consideration the ageing or chemical interaction of the used substances; some employed perishable items such as vegetable, fruits or other organic matter like animal fat, chocolate, blood or even animal and human faeces. Some were fascinated by the decay, ageing and death of materials; some of them used mechanical, electric, and electronic devices that quickly became worn-out or obsolete. Yet others challenged the work's 'objecthood' by placing the emphasis on the work's dematerialization — where the concept or the artistic practice became art, rather than the art object itself. These new trends will have a deep and long-lasting influence in conservation theory.

The painting conservator Heinz Althöfer presented one of the first essays regarding the conservation of modern works of art in October 1972 at the ICOM-CC meeting in Madrid, Spain.[28] On that occasion, he warned the audience of the physical risks of modern materials by stating: "the damage that occurs in modern and especially in contemporary art, appears earlier and are more dangerous than in the works of ancient art" (Althöfer 1972, 1).[29] He concluded his paper with the observation that the conservation of contemporary works of art is not comparable with the conservation of old master paintings. A few years later, Althöfer began to recognize how some modern art objects differed profoundly from artworks made in a more traditional way, and he also argued that classical conservation theories were not sufficiently equipped to solve the specific needs of modern artworks. According to Althöfer, because of the different use of materials and practice, a different definition of 'original' and therefore authenticity had to be developed.[30]

Forty years later, innumerable conferences and publications have stressed the necessity for a revised or a new conceptual frame for the preservation and conservation of modern and contemporary artworks. Scholars and practicing conservators have felt the inadequacy of traditional conservation theory, revolving around the two poles of historic evidence and material authenticity. Thus, they have tentatively developed new practices and strategies: on documentation, which focused on what, to what extent, and how to document works of art; on the sharing of information within a network

[28] ICOM-CC stands for International Council for Museums Committee Conservation.
[29] English translation is by the author. The original French text reads: *"Les dégâts qui surviennent dans les oeuvres d'art modernes et avant tout contemporaines, se présentent plus tôt et sont plus dangereux que dans les oeuvres d'art anciens."*
[30] For further reading on Althöfer's pioneering role, see Beerkens 2012.

of professionals as the International Network for the Conservation of Contemporary Art (INCCA); on the involvement of artists in order to define the framework and the context in which preservation and conservation should proceed (Van Saaze 2013); and protocols for interviewing contemporary artists have been drawn up (Beerkens et al. 2012). Great effort has also been put into understanding how modern and contemporary materials behave — either alone or in combination with other materials — and these might change with ageing, during storage, or when undergoing treatment. Specific environmental conditions and guidelines for the display, storage, packing, and transportation of contemporary artworks have been established and are still developed in an on-going process of learning and revision. New artistic areas, such as installation art, media art and born-digital art studied and theorized conservation approaches in their own field regarding documentation, reconstruction, reproduction, duplication and migration (Depocas, Ippolito, and Jones 2003; Ferriani and Pugliese 2013; Laurenson 2006, 2011; Scholte and Wharton, 2011). In this view, conservation is not regarded as a process that arrests decay, but rather a process that manages change (Staniforth 2006, 35 cited in Sully 2013).

As a result of these changes, the conservation field witnessed a methodological shift that challenged the object's centrality; at the same time, it sustained the rise of the 'subject'. Subject is intended here as the individual or the community, who 'uses' and 'evaluates' the heritage object in different ways (Muñoz Viñas 2005, 179). This development has led to a questioning of what constitutes value, meaning, and significance. In this perspective, artefacts are not seen as static embodiments of culture, but as a social construction as a result of social processes specific to time and place. Hence, heritage does not possess fixed meanings given by intrinsic values, but meanings shift and are built through "conscious decision and unspoken values of particular people and institutions" (Avrami, Manson, and De la Torre 2000, 6).

The methodology that accompanies the shift from object to subject seeks to identify and articulate why a place, an artefact, a building, or a collection is supposed to be relevant to (part of) the community. Clear articulation of cultural values is quintessential for the so-called value-led conservation attitude.[31] But, as Muñoz Viñas has argued, the value-led approach is not free of theoretical and practical difficulties. Taking into account the opinions of the non-experts may result in a loss of the authority, which has traditionally been given to the established professionals. Additionally, by considering a

[31] See the Getty Conservation Institute Research Report, *Assessing the Values of Cultural Heritage* (2002); and the various editions of *Significance, a Guide to Assessing the Significance of Collections* (2001, 1st edition; 2009, 2nd edition) compiled by the Collections Council of Australia Ltd and its predecessor the *Burra Charter* (1979) composed by Australia ICOMOS.

lot of different views, interests, and concerns, it may also become difficult to determine which beliefs should be followed in order to reach a meaningful decision. Since the stakes cannot be objectively quantified, it could be hard to reach an agreement, especially when stakeholders may be proposing conflicting views (Muñoz Viñas 2005, 160–163). Furthermore, in this approach, an object is not only a link to the past, because of the materials and the modes of production it embodies; in contrast, an object is also a testimony to different views at different times. For example, an artefact that has been conserved in the past might show traces of older treatments. These actions might now be deemed obsolete or even damaging due to new knowledge or changing insights. But, above all, an artefact reminds the viewer how people's appreciation is temporally situated and it documents how choices may change over time. Thus, an artefact is also a record of standpoints, judgements, and decisions that may no longer be understood or believed. Taking into account that various stakeholders may have conflicting interests and opinions or that ideas may evolve with the passage of time is one of the greater achievements of the value-led conservation approach. At the same time, taking into account the continuous variability of the decision-making is also one of its biggest challenges.

'Function' and 'artist intent' and their problematic use in conservation

Despite the practical and theoretical difficulties of implementing a value-led conservation strategy, this perspective has had a long-lasting impact on the field. In his essay on the influence of Brandi's theory of architectural conservation, the architecture historian Frank Matero elegantly summarized this tendency, by arguing how 'appearance' and 'structure' — intended as fundamental properties of visual works — are not necessarily intrinsic qualities, but they exist outside the work and it is the viewer or user that determines these properties.[32] This position challenged Brandi's concept of the 'potential unity of the work'— the relationship between material and image — by consciously adding the aspect of 'function' or 'value' (Matero 2007).

Matero argued that conservation rotates around "three basic modalities or constructs: form, fabric, and function, the latter being intangible beliefs, uses, and

[32] It should be mentioned that the art historian Alois Riegl theorized as early as 1903 the changing nature of monuments' qualities, seen as cultural and temporal constructs. He organized monuments in shifting categories: artistic and historic values, the age-value, and use and newness values. For further reading on the differences and similarities of Riegl's and Brandi's conservation theories see Andaloro 2006.

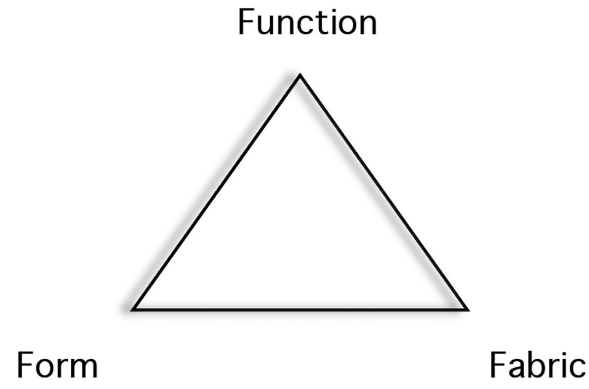


Diagram 1 Triadic model of heritage developed by Frank Matero.

traditions associated with the material correlates of form and fabric" (Matero 2011, 48). He exemplified the correlation between these basic modalities as a 'triadic model of heritage' and he depicted them as an equilateral triangle (Diagram 1).[33] Each of the triangle's vertices represents one of these modalities. 'Form' characterizes the appearance of the object or work of art, 'fabric' embodies the materials of the artefact, and 'function' denotes its original and subsequent uses, as well its original and subsequent meanings. Function comprises, therefore, the uses and the meanings given by society at large in different periods of time.

Function, for example, comprises the specific uses deriving from an institutional setting. A 'public life' deeply influences the way a work of art is presented, taken care of, or preserved. A museum object generally has to comply with the aesthetic expectations of the "museum style", a sort of cosmetic effect that leaves the object subtly well groomed (Van de Wetering 2012, 106). A museum object may also be valued for its epistemological function and this might influence the way museums present an object to the public. Curators tend to display natural history specimens according to a scientific classification; they generally exhibit ethnographic artefacts to illustrate a particular way of life; and with historical objects they are inclined to present the object's biographies and the individuals associated with them (Dudley 2010, 4).

[33] Other authors have developed similar triadic diagrams for mapping conservation decision-making. For further reference see Caple 2000, 34 and Kemp 2009, 62.

Moreover, museums may follow different theoretical approaches and practices in respect of how a work of art should be preserved. Within photography conservation for example, institutions may treasure so-called vintage prints or they may cherish new, pristine images.[34] The diversity in stances may deeply affect the way photographs are conserved and preserved.

Form, fabric, and function are inevitably tied together. Depending on the situation, a conservator—in dialogue with other experts—may choose a strategy that privileges one characteristic over the other; or he or she may attempt to present all three modalities in balance. The choice to favour one aspect or to try to reach equilibrium depends on many factors: cultural, social, technical, visual, economic, and artistic (Matero 2011, 48).

By giving more space to function, the conservation field has reintroduced subjectivity as an acceptable practice. From Matero's triadic model perspective, the rising influence of stakeholders and end users in decision-making regarding the preservation of heritage sites, monuments, and objects may be viewed as an approach that gives prominence to 'function', while in the field of contemporary art conservation, the notion of 'artist intent' may also be considered as a specific type of function.[35]

In the conservation field, artist intent has been described as a concept "in flux" that has taken, depending on the context and backgrounds, different meanings and values (Gordon and Hermens 2013).[36] Conservators have employed this term to describe

[34] No consensus exists on the definition of 'vintage print'. The art market generally considers photographs as vintage if they are printed by the photographer or under his or her close supervision, within the five years the negatives were made. The market employs two other categories: 'lifetime prints' are those made during the photographer lifetime and under his or her supervision; 'posthumous prints' are those produced after the death of the photographer. It is beyond the scope of this study to investigate the fluctuations in the economic value of a photograph, depending on its labelling as a vintage, lifetime, or posthumous print. However, as a rule of thumb, the market follows the following convention: the further away from the creation moment the less monetary value is attributed to the print, even if the artist's technique or equipment improved in other periods of his of her life. Vintage prints, even if technically less refined than lifetime prints, supposedly bring viewers closer to the creation moment and for such reason are more treasured. Other aspects such as signature, date and edition contribute in increasing or lowering the prints' economic value. All these parameters have their resonance in regulations adopted by museums and intellectual property laws (Benhamou and Ginsburgh 2006). This dissertation does not focus on the possible impact that reproduction may have on the economic value of reproduced photographic works. This is an interesting and challenging theme open to future research. This topic requires a deep understanding of the economic, commercial, and social mechanisms involved in the art market.

[35] Stakeholders may be defined as those who need to be taken into account in achieving project goals and whose participation and support are crucial to its success. Stakeholder analysis is normally used as a tool for project management and several methods have been developed in the past decades. Further information about stakeholder theory and stakeholder's approach in archaeology and in the architectural heritage field can be found in the appendix.

several different features related to a work of art: it may define the initial conception of the work's idea, the various stages of the making process, the realization of the work as well as more general opinions and thoughts of the artist on his or her oeuvre. The ideas conveyed in the notion 'artist intent' have often replaced the authority of the materials — in Matero's model represented by the modality of the fabric — in sanctioning what is reasonable and acceptable to the profession. When dealing with the conservation of contemporary art, conservators and scholars have often argued that "whenever possible, the author of a damaged work should guide a conservator toward a treatment consistent with the author's desired aesthetic" (Sheesley 2006, 161) or "the importance of the artist's intent, or the requirements to accurately convey the scope of the idea for a particular work must be kept in the foreground" (Davenport 1995, 52). In the slipstream of these beliefs, conservation projects and approaches have sought an extensive and deep collaboration with artists. The engagement to build and maintain durable relationships with living artists is assumed to be beneficial for an informed decision-making regarding the preservation of complex artworks.

Nonetheless, archiving, collecting as well as conserving works of arts according to artist intent has turned out to be a tricky business (Wharton 2006, 174). This approach is not free of difficulties and, nowadays, conservators show a growing awareness of the different connotations as well as the ambiguities that the notion artist intent entails, depending on the context and on the way scholars and conservators use the term. Conservators have begun to realize that artist intent is a shifting concept, rather than a static one, but they have also started to recognize that a single artist may possess different intentions, which change depending on the period and the context. Conservators have faced situations in which artists wish not to be involved in decision-making concerning the work's conservation (Van Saaze 2009; Wharton 2006), they have noticed that artists' definition of essential qualities of a specific work may be stated retrospectively, they have realized how artist's intent has often become synonymous with authenticity (Gordons and Hermans 2013), and they also recognize that other individuals may contribute to the artwork's identity (Noel de Tilly 2011). Recently, conservators have started to recognize the possibility of divergent intentions between artists and conservation practitioners: the objectives and the commitment to works of art may not necessarily coincide between these two groups. Some conservators have tried to entertain a more honest relationship with artists, by openly articulating the

[36] For in-depth analysis of the different interpretations and meanings in the conservation field of the notion 'artist intent' see Dykstra 1996. For a critical reading in contemporary art conservation see Van Saaze 2013, especially 52–57.

available amount of time and funds allocated to the preservation of very demanding artworks; they have recognized the impossibility of spending all their energy in the care of one single piece and the necessity of a sustainable approach that takes into account the expectations and capabilities of collecting institutions (Zirlewagen 2011). They aimed to act as "critical interpreters", by considering all the information that the artwork itself and the context provide after the work's creation (Sommermeyer 2011, 150). But they have also started to contemplate the possibility of a different, more mature involvement with the artworks as conservator and scholar Pip Laurenson has contended: works not regarded as fixed and finite objects of investigation, but as unfolding "epistemic objects" that acquire new properties and change the ones they have.[37] By doing so, they may leave behind the widespread tendency among conservators to consider artists' shifting attitudes as inconsistent and even annoying, and instead envision changes as liberating, multiple options.

However, despite much theoretical debate, the concept of artist intent remains strong in conservation theory and practice and it is still felt as being leading and authoritative. In her investigation on conservation and presentation of contemporary art, the researcher Vivian van Saaze has argued that, particularly when dealing with living artists, conservators tend to regard artist intent as "interchangeable with what the artist says about the work" and use this information as such (Van Saaze 2013, 54). Consultation with artists is therefore not only sought in terms of advice in order to reach informed decisions about treatments and preservation strategies, but artists' articulations are regularly considered as privileged interpretations which should be adhere to. Consequently, artists are often asked to endorse decisions about conservation treatment and strategies. In the works discussed in this dissertation, the reproduction — conceived as a conservation strategy to counteract visible damage to photographic works — occurred under direct supervision of the creating artists and their authority sealed and legitimized this activity.

In three of the four cases, the artists instigated the reproduction, as they were dissatisfied with the way their work appeared after a period of time. The reproduction process was, in most cases, engaged in with the aim of recreating the works as closely as possible to the original versions. However, as will be argued in the course of the dissertation, by studying the unfolding of the reproduction process, the new versions

[37] Laurenson presented this theme at her inaugural professorial address at the University of Maastricht on 18 March 2016 titled "Practice as Research: Unfolding the Objects of Contemporary Art Conservation". In this lecture, Laurenson referred to Knorr Cetina's notion of an "epistemic object" as something that has an unfolding ontology. For further reference see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rEZzsg3OzJg [accessed 19 May 2017].

did not exactly correspond to the older versions. Small or big changes crept into the new versions, due to unexpected contingencies or because they were intentionally pursued by the artists. As I will contend, the reproduction of photographic works entails modifications both from a material and a technical perspective and sometimes the images' content.

Because of this insight and due to the complexity of choices to be taken, it is my opinion that all parties involved should remain intellectually engaged in any decisions—rather than abdicating authority to the artists and to their 'intent'. The involvement of the artists should not justify the lack of a theoretical discussion within the collecting institutions about the necessity and the appropriateness of the process. Museum staff may want to respect the artists' wishes, but they might also recognize and acknowledge other stakeholders as sources of authority as well the other modalities present in Matero's triadic model, fabric and form. In this light, reproduction should not be viewed as an easy and straightforward process that substitutes a damaged work by producing an exact copy. Rather, it is a complex process of calibration or recalibration for a different set of values at a different time.

Context in conservation

The influence of context is a well-documented aspect of conservation decision-making. The term 'context' refers here to the overall framework that determines the conditions, circumstances, and approach that leads to the adoption of a certain conservation strategy (Philippot 1996a, 271). Muñoz Viñas convincingly described how the regular maintenance of a Mustang fighter airplane might become a conservation treatment in another setting: "the same activity can qualify either as conservation or as a maintenance/repairing/servicing even if it is performed upon the very same object" (Muñoz Viñas 2005, 29). Context also tends to influence the way objects look or how the custodians, conservators, and the public at large perceive them. The range of values or attributes assigned to the object influences how they will be preserved and treated. In an archaeological museum, conservators tend to give prevalence to the evidence value or historic value of a Roman mummy portrait, leaving the paint lacunas fully visible, while in art galleries, where the artistic values of objects are considered of great importance, conservators will be more keen to retouch the same losses (Pye 2001, 61).

Likewise, the context has a long-standing influence on the preservation of photographs. A photograph can be many things — even simultaneously — depending on the function it fulfils: an *aide-mémoire*, a historical document, the portrait of a

beloved person, a scientific or a documentation tool, a work of art. A photograph's appreciation is variable as it differs with viewpoint and it may change over time. In a museum, the same photograph may initially be made or acquired as a reference, but, with the passage of time, the same object might be re-evaluated, becoming a work of art.[38] The care of the same object may change as well: a document once housed in a paper folder in a filing drawer may be transferred to an individual window mat and kept in a print box specially designed for high-value prints (Kennedy 2016). Values and context greatly influence the way photographs are regarded, employed, preserved, or treated. Generally, the arguments and strategies employed by libraries and archives for the preservation of books and archival material tend to give more prominence to the preservation of documents' content and less to the aesthetic or material qualities of the objects and the artist practice that led to certain choices. In this light, the vast campaigns to digitize books and archival records can be viewed as a preservation strategy that privileges the documents' content by facilitating easy access for the public and by restoring the usefulness of the information resources (Matusiak and Johnston, 2014).

Likewise, in the preservation of photographic materials, bearing in mind all relevant exceptions, it is possible to detect a similar division. On the one hand, custodians, archivists, and conservators have implemented large-scale preventive conservation strategies to protect and preserve the greatest number of photographs and negatives by means of environmental management, digitization, re-housing, and packaging of collections with chemical inert materials. Due to the vast amount of photographic materials found in institutions and to the financial impossibility of treating each object on an individual basis, caretakers tend to adopt a pragmatic approach that should have a beneficial effect on the entire collection. This is a collection-wide attitude that underscores the necessity of preservation strategies and challenges the direct intervention on few items.[39] On the other hand, photography's fine art conservation, following the principal art historical tropes of originality, uniqueness, and aesthetic innovation, puts a great deal of emphasis on the conservation of high-value single pieces and in the examination of the so-called vintage prints (Batchen 2012, 73).[40]

Hence, context greatly influences the implementation of preservation and conservation strategies, but also their appropriateness. By adhering to the context of fine art conservation, this dissertation does not generally take into consideration the

[38] It is outside the scope of this dissertation to examine the practice of valuation and re-evaluation of cultural heritage. This process has been a recurring theme of study for many scholars, for an extensive bibliography on the subject see Ashley-Smith 1999, 79–80; Avrami, Manson, and De la Torre 2000, 73–96.

arguments and strategies employed by libraries and archives for the preservation of photographic material. In that context, the reprinting of negatives and photographs is considered a viable and acceptable practice. The photographs selected as case studies for this dissertation have been created and they are referred to as works of art, hence they comply with the principles generally entailed in the art historical discourse.

Disunity of 'epistemic cultures' in conservation

Context is one of the factors that influence the way conservation is practiced. The institutional setting of a museum of modern and contemporary art generally follows a different set of values than archives and libraries. However, even in the same context other rules may apply, depending on the types of artefacts conservators are dealing with. For example, the retouching of missing painted areas is an accepted practice in painting conservation, less so in paper conservation. In this field, loss compensation and reintegration is far more controversial and there is a large school of thought that

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[39] For further reference on the preservation strategy that emphasizes and oversees the care of the entire photographic collections see Ritzenthaler and Vogt-O'Connor 2006. In the past and at present, vast digitization campaigns are undertaken in order to increase the availability of photographs through online digital access. Sometimes, decision-makers believe that digitization may also be regarded as a preservation strategy. Users of libraries and archives are increasingly consulting digital files rather than the physical document, photographic print, or negative. With the existence of digital files, the physical items are kept 'safe' in the repositories and, because they are no longer handled directly, they are less prone to wear and tear. According to this view, digitization can contribute to the preservation of those objects. For further reading on the subject see Robledano 2016; for a critical standpoint about digitization as a strategy that attracts economic resources at the expense of funds allocated for the conservation of physical objects, see Beentjes 2013.

[40] In recent decades, various institutions have developed online examination tools for the recognition of the material characteristics of photographic prints. The reference database 'Photograph Conservation and Connoisseurship Online Resource' of the George Eastman House can be viewed as an example of the art-historical canon in its attempt to visualize and characterize the key attributes of photography's masterworks; *the Atlas of Analytical Signatures of Photographic Processes* (2013) by the Getty Conservation Institute and the 'Messier Reference Collection of Photographic Paper' may be regarded as similar helping tools. The Atlas strives to identify photographic processes and post-processing that may provide important information to, among other things, support or supplement provenance and authentication of original photographic prints (Stulik and Kaplan 2013, 3). The Messier Reference Collection was initially formed by photograph conservator Paul Messier as a direct response to the art-market frauds of the 1990s; an objective tool for dating and authenticating photographic prints for scholars and connoisseurs in the aftermath of the fraud concerning Lewis Hine's photographs (Messier 2016). For further reading on Lewis Hine's forgery and fraud see http://www.nytimes.com/2001/08/16/arts/shadows-cast-by-forgery-the-fbi-investigates-complaints-about-lewis-hine-prints.html?pagewanted=all; http://www.ifar.org/case_summary.php?docid=1184603465 [both accessed 24 May 2016].

encourages paper conservators to refrain from any retouching on the original work as in many instances this may not be reversible (McAusland 2014, 466).[41]

The material characteristics and needs of a specific medium have often led to the emergence of habits and traditions among the practitioners of various specialisms in conservation. This differentiation in conservation practices and the specificity of each discipline may also be perceived through the notion of 'epistemic cultures' proposed by sociologist Karin Knorr Cetina.

In her book *Epistemic Cultures: How the Sciences Make Knowledge* (1999), Knorr Cetina has contended that the terms 'discipline' or 'specialty' well capture the differentiation of knowledge within natural sciences, but are less felicitous in spelling out the strategies and policies of knowing, which are not codified in textbooks, but which are informed by expert practice. Knorr Cetina's investigation takes into consideration both the epistemic and the non-research side of science — the latter intended as the administrative side and financing mechanisms that make possible the scientific enquiry. The expression 'epistemic culture' underscores the distinctive practices that the various scientific fields follow: from the specific traditions of teamwork, to the way publications are made and authored, from the use of particular vocabularies, to the targeting of different objects of study. These fields are distinct from each other because they 'look' differently at things and they possess a distinctive system of reference that is not shared across the disciplines. Knorr Cetina has argued that: "science was not as unitary as had been thought; not just in relation to method […] but also with respect to how reality is accessed and constructed" (Knorr Cetina and Reichmann 2015, 874).

By comparing the specialties of experimental high-energy physics (HEP) and molecular biology, Knorr teased out profound differences in ontological approach and sociological organizations. On the one hand, HEP investigates subatomic particles, which are too small and too fast to be observed directly. This field goes beyond the human scale of time and space, and it is characterized by a relative loss of experiential observations. HEP depends on huge arrangements of technical instruments and it requires the collaboration of several thousand physicists for the duration of the experiment, which might last twenty or thirty years. The amount of people involved and the *longue durée* of the experiment influence the social organization of the HEP

[41] It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to investigate the practice of loss compensation in paintings and paper conservation. For further references on the practice of retouching works on paper see Brown 2007; Poulsson 2008; for a historical overview of the reintegration of losses see Stanley Price, Kirby Talley Jr., and Vaccaro Melucco 1996, 325–364; and for an overview on the various retouching techniques used in painting conservation see Hartman Samet 1998, 412–424; Nadolny 2012, 573–585.

field, which is based on the collaborative effort of the participants. One mechanism that well illustrates this collective order is the way authorship of the experiment is shared in publications: all the accredited members of the collaboration — and it can be hundreds of authors — are alphabetically listed (Knorr Cetina 1999, 166–171). On the other hand, molecular biology is very much driven by an anthropocentric focus, the construction of knowledge is based on first-hand empirical examinations, and generally it still involves bench work groups that range from a handful to fifty scientists. Moreover, microbiological laboratories have a completely different social organization than HEP as they are based on a hierarchical structure that rotates around the laboratory leader. The latter is the most powerful individual in the lab and, in publications, his or her rank is acknowledged by the fixed position at the end of the authors' list (Ibid., 108 and 171).

By comparing the two fields, the author challenged the image of a unified natural science and claimed the existence of different cultures within science, informed by "aggregate patterns and dynamics that are on display in expert practice and that vary in different settings of expertise" (Ibid., 9). It should be stressed too that internal discussions, debates, and criticism exist within the various epistemic cultures. These are, to an extent, internally coherent, following the same general set of rules, but they are not free of conflict and they might be affected by disagreements or even conflict among the participants of one epistemic culture (Knorr Cetina and Reichmann 2015, 874).

The notion of epistemic cultures was introduced and proposed in other fields such as literature criticism (Mallard 2005), forensic sciences (Cole 2013), and social sciences (Gore 2011). A similar division or disunity in epistemic cultures might also be suggested in conservation in order to acknowledge the differences present in the profession.[42] Each discipline has its own culture. Each area has its specific knowledge, expertise, and training based on the material specificity of the objects to be preserved. But the practice of conservation is also shaped by patterns and dynamics that transcend the material needs of the objects and deals with more theoretical and ethical issues. This diversity counters the general assumption that a same set of values and practices should inform the various specialisms. One of the topics that may simultaneously reveal the essential features of each field as well as the differences between the fields is the concept of reproduction. The theoretical model followed by painting, paper, and object conservation generally values the 'agency' of the author, the authenticity of

[42] In her inaugural lecture, Laurenson introduced idea of conservation as an epistemic practice for which Knorr Cetina's analysis might be a useful in understanding the different relationship of the conservator, curator, and artist to the unfolding ontologies of contemporary artworks.

the material, and the retention of the 'original' artefact, even in those instances when the artist has not necessarily produced the work with his or her own hands.[43] Other specialties, such as time-based media, electronic media, and in some instances the conservation of contemporary art, instead, take — when necessary — advantage of the inherently reproducible qualities of the objects they treat and they contemplate the possibility of substituting an artefact with another one. But even within conservation disciplines that have adopted a 'substitutional' model, it is possible to discern a degree of disunity in approach.[44]

In sculpture, substitution is generally practiced as an exception and it still encounters resistance or suspicion, as attested by the title of the meeting 'Inherent vice: the replica and its implications in modern sculpture workshop' held at Tate Modern in October 2007. Regarding the workshop, the art historian Julian Stallabrass has remarked that the title may have an air of irony but it "does not withdraw the implication, that replication in sculpture is an inherent vice (an internal flaw) that will damage the value of the piece" (Stallabrass 2007).[45] In this light, replication is perceived as a strategy to employ as a last resort, when no other possibilities are available. During the same meeting, the making of posthumous replicas of Naum Gabo's early plastic sculptures was presented as a necessary "evil" due to the artist's choice of instable materials (Lodder 2007).

Within the preservation and care of films and time-based media for example, master material such as negatives, interpositives, and internegatives are not intended for display, instead they are designed to facilitate the production of prints for display which have to be replaced due to the mechanical wear and tear exacted on the material when projected. Copies are necessary for the screening of the material and thus they are accepted as a common practice. In these fields, the discussion and debate revolve more around the dependency of some artworks on a particular technology that might become obsolete in time, and how these changing technologies may impact the

[43] As convincingly examined by Martha Buskirk, the 'absence' of the artist's hand in some areas of contemporary art production has actually emphasized the profound connection between the work and the artist rather than lessening the importance of artistic authorship (Buskirk 2005).

[44] The term 'substitutional' follows the terminology introduced by Alexander Nagel and Christopher S. Wood in their book *Anachronic Renaissance* (2010). Nagel and Wood's book, especially the relationship of the subsitutional model with time, will be further discussed in section, The anachronistic use of material and technique, of chapter four.

[45] It should be noted that the symposium, supported by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, arose out of a conservation project begun by the sculpture conservators at Tate, Jackie Heuman and Derek Pullen, to respond to the deterioration and collapse of cellulose acetate works of Naum Gabo (1890–1977). The notion of inherent vice was used for the conference to describe the inherent problem with the materials used by Gabo in his plastic sculptures as art historian and former director of Tate Britain, Penelope Curtis has argued "the definition of inherent vice – while it reflects very accurately the problems posed by Naum Gabo's plastic sculptures […] by no means cover the range of questions raised by the question of replication" (Curtis 2009).

availability or the audience's perceptions towards the works.[46]

Within the field of conservation of photographic materials, reproduction and the possibility to have more than one version is often far more controversial. Photographic artworks may be created as a unique work of art or as an edition. In the case of an editioned work, more prints are allowed to exist and circulate within the art market and the museum world. The situation becomes more complex when, for conservation purposes, a photographic print might be reproduced after a certain time. Some museums have a policy of acquiring two prints of a photograph. One print is permanently stored in the museum repository, never to be displayed, which is used as a reference, and is generally considered as the original work. The other print functions as an exhibition copy, is put on display and is considered, to a degree, disposable. The fading and the decay of this print are accepted as the inevitable result of exhibitions. This strategy has been propagated especially to counteract the fading of chromogenic prints. Nevertheless, this policy is not free of criticism, because it only postpones the decay of the photograph, it does not resolve it. It also raises many questions about how to cope with the fading of the exhibition copy during the artist's life and, of course, after his or her death. Who has, besides the artist, authority to determine if and when the exhibition copy is faded beyond what is conventionally acceptable? Is the museum authorized to reproduce the exhibition copy by using the repository print as a reference, or is the museum going to display the pristine repository print and accept that that print, too, will eventually be "exhausted"? (Kennedy and Mustardo 2008, 700). What appears problematic is the notion of accepting the possibility of reprinting photographs as a standard preservation strategy and allowing the migration of the photographic image by using different materials and techniques as a standardized practice.

Museums do not have a shared approach on the matter and they deal with reprinting and reproduction of fine-art photography in different ways. Some may openly state the use of reproductions to safeguard (sensitive) prints, especially in permanent or semi-permanent display. These institutions are aware of the advantages of using high-resolution facsimiles: on the one hand, facsimiles, by preventing long display of the original photographs, protect them; on the other hand, they allow for a greater dissemination, as facsimiles are not tied to environmental and lighting restrictions.[47] Other institutions prefer to show the 'original' photographic prints by following a strict exhibition policy, which reduces to a minimum the photographs' exposure to light and to environmental risks such as high temperatures and humidity. Matters become

[46] For further reference on the concept of obsolescence in time-based media see Laurenson 2014.

more complicated with editioned pieces or works that are part of a series, where a difference in preservation policy may have an effect on the appearance of the various photographic prints. Some museums might accept reproduction as a viable strategy, others will prefer to show the deteriorated photographs. This, of course, may become an issue for monographic shows, where works of one artist, loaned from different institutions, are displayed alongside each other.

In general, 'fine art photography' is more closely aligned to traditional autographic works and therefore the relationship to them in this area is governed by a more traditional set of values. Photographic historians, collectors, curators, and conservators have borrowed heavily from the traditional fine arts in the way photographs are valued and exhibited to the public (Romer 1986). This might explain why conservators of photographic material have taken over the tropes of originality, uniqueness, and aesthetic innovation typically found in the art historical discourse and have relied heavily on and adopted a set of values that is generally found in other conservation specialties that deal with unique objects, like paintings and, to a certain extent, paper conservation.[48] This attitude is well summarized by Nora Kennedy — photograph conservator at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Taking into account the differences between the two disciplines, she made a provisional distinction between the values followed by traditional photographic conservation and the values that inform time-based conservation:

[47] An example of 'institutionalized' use of facsimiles as a preventive measure and as a dissemination tool can be found at the *Atelier de Restauration et de Conservation des Photographies* (ARCP) — the conservation institution that supervises, preserves and conserves the photographic heritage of the city of Paris. The ARCP's mission openly states that when the photographs are too fragile to be handled or exhibited high quality reproductions are made promoting an alternative access to the content of the works. For further reference see Cartier-Bresson 2016 and http://www.paris.fr/services-et-infos-pratiques/culture-et-patrimoine/musees-collections-et-art-dans-la-ville/les-collections-de-la-ville-de-paris-2027#l-atelier-de-restauration-et-de-conservation-des-photographies_12 [accessed 24 May 2016].

[48] It is important to remember that until the 1970s, photograph conservation was often regarded as subspecialty of paper conservation. Formal vocational training in photograph conservation started in most Western countries at the end of the twentieth century or beginning of the twenty-first century. For further reading on this issue see Kennedy 2010, Koch 2002. This affiliation may also explain how some basic viewpoints common to the field of paper conservation might have provided general guidelines to the specialism of photograph conservation (Mustardo 2016). Also practitioners of paper conservation have struggled with the possibility to have multiple originals in printmaking. For further reading on the issue see Holben Ellis 2014, especially part III 'Printmaking: Multiple originals' pp. 86–157. The similarity in the way prints and photographs are produced will be further examined in chapter two. The correlation between the rise of photograph conservation as an independent conservation specialism and the renewed interest to photography as fine art medium has been briefly noticed by photograph conservator Grant Romer and it might be an interesting topic of research in the future (Romer 1999).

> In general the original Object, the original Substance is *sacrosanct*, but in the case of time-based media, the image is virtual and can be migrated to another medium, and all or some of the original component of the works can be replaced as needed (Kennedy 2016, 112. Emphasis added).

And she also concluded that the role and the mission of photograph conservators working within fine art museums are:

> We act as the advocate for the object, for the substance, in order to preserve the full gamut of aesthetics, the history, the artwork (Kennedy 2016, 119).

To sum up, regarding the topic of reproduction it is possible to detect a difference in approach among the various disciplines that varies from a negative, to neutral, to a positive one, depending on the 'epistemic culture' they belong. Within the conservation fine art photography, reproduction of photographic prints is regarded with suspicion. Some authors even draw a link between the reproducibility of photography and the delayed appearance of photograph conservation as a specialism whose mission is to protect original photographic prints. In this light, photography's capacity to be mechanically reproducible may have negatively influenced the rise and growth of the profession (Mutardo 2016, 170). Others acknowledge the utility of reproduction and the creation of facsimiles as a preventive measure and for larger public access, but they hasten to add that the added values surrounding the original are undeniable, since those "are definitive for a small group of connoisseurs who are able to perceive and evaluate them" (Fuentes 2016, 85). Reproduction of photographic artworks remains controversial within the tradition of classical conservation: the substitution of a photograph with another one negates the evidentiary value of materials and their own specific qualities that might influence the way an artwork is made and perceived.

Reproduction to counteract damage

With regards to all the works under study, the artists or collecting institutions have turned to reproduction because they considered these artworks 'damaged'. The Oxford English Dictionary (OED) describes the term 'damage' as harm, a physical injury to a thing that impairs its value or usefulness.[49] Damage is often regarded as de *conditio sine qua non* for conservation, preservation, and restoration. Without damage or the risk of damage conservation as a discipline would not exist. Muñoz Viñas has declared: "damage is a crucial notion in conservation: it is a prerequisite for conservation itself to

even exist, since if not actual or potential damage existed no conservation act would be ever performed" (Muñoz Viñas 2005, 101).

The conservator Jonathan Ashley-Smith has defined 'damage' as an alteration, as a change of state with a permanent and noticeable loss in value or potential.[50] A change of state presupposes a modification of the object's properties in comparison to a previous condition, but not every change can be considered damage. There are some instances in which changes can be considered beneficial, beautiful, or evidential. Changes that were originally associated with loss, such as the shotgun hole and blood's stains in Horatio Nelson's jacket, may gain historical value and thus not be regarded anymore as damage.[51] During conservation treatment of this garment, the hole will not be filled in and the stains will not be removed, but on the contrary, the evidential values of these traces will be treasured and a lot of effort will be made in order to preserve them (Ashley-Smith 1999, 99–101).

Damages may also be appreciated as a mark of authenticity and they may, sometimes, increase the object's market value. In the past, silver mirroring of black-and-white analogue photographs — an oxidative and migration phenomenon of the silver ions that gives photographs a highly reflective bluish sheen — was viewed by caretakers, curators, and collectors alike as a disgraceful alteration. Nowadays, the presence of silver-mirroring is often regarded as testimony to the photograph's age and, consequently, its removal is not perceived as a beneficial treatment, which enhances the aesthetic quality of the print; on the contrary, it might even lower the market value of the photographic prints as the treatment has eliminated the physical evidence of the prints' age (Lavédrine 2016).

Modification turns to damage when a change of state — considered detrimental for the object — takes place and it is generally "associated with a loss of material, a loss of well being or a loss of expectation" (Ashley-Smith 1999, 99). Damage is not an entity that can be objectively quantified, but it remains a subjective experience. Certain injures are more likely to be perceived as seriously disfiguring and detrimental for the object, even if it does affect only a small area or portion depending on their position, type and visibility; other types of damage may be valued as less disturbing despite the fact that it may be extensive. For example, in a portrait, a material loss around the face is judged as much more intrusive disruptive than if the exact same injury occurs

[49] For further reference on the different senses and meanings of the word 'damage' see the full entry in the Oxford English Dictionary.
[50] Ashley-Smith defined the notion of 'state' as: "the description of everything that can be defined or discovered about an object by observation, measurement, or analysis" (Ashley-Smith 1999, 99).
[51] For further reference on Horatio Nelson's coat worn during Trafalgar battle see http://collections.rmg.co.uk/collections/objects/71238.html [accessed 21 March 2016].

at the background of the image. To make things even more complex, individuals may consider the same damage differently: some might find it extremely intrusive while others might sense it as part of the object's story and charm.

Finally, the missing limb or nose of an old Roman sculpture is felt often more acceptable than a scratch on the surface of a Jeff Koons' (b. 1955) highly polished sculpture. In many instances, not the damage itself is the problem, but rather the speed at which it occurs. If unwanted changes take place during the caretakers' or the creating artist's lifespan, these are generally perceived as 'dramatic' and certain urgency is felt to stop or to slow down them. When the rate of change is slower than the human lifespan then the materials forming of the artworks are viewed as stable and the changes may be experienced as an added value or something inherent to their age. This difference in attitude and human lifespan as reference scale might explain why hundred years is often regarded in conservation literature as the limit beyond which a material is considered as having "excellent stability" (Feller 1978 cited in Lavédrine 2006).

Of the case studies discussed in this dissertation, artists and museum staff resorted to reproduction because of the changes that the photographs had experienced during the artists' lives. The prints' current state was perceived as a loss, a shortfall in comparison to the pristine, 'ideal' state of the works, when they were initially created. These changes were identified as damage and, as such, it was thought necessary to act in order to respond to the damage of the works, which were not only on display, but also held within museum collection. Reproduction was viewed as a viable strategy to restore, to bring back the photographic artworks to a desirable condition and more specifically to a desirable aesthetic condition, without the disfiguring marks of wear and tear as well signs of ageing.

For the purpose of this dissertation, the term damage describes, unless clearly stated, an undesirable change that it is not deliberately perpetuated to injure a work of art, but rather is related to changes in the work's condition as a result of environmental, chemical mechanisms, or due to unintentional improper handling.[52]

This chapter has briefly sketched the development in the conservation field and it has drawn attention to the presence of differences in approach as well as convictions within the various conservation specialisms, especially when dealing with the substitution and the reproduction of a work of art. The following chapter will analyse, from a theoretical perspective, multipliable art forms, in particular photography, and the practice of reproduction as an act of reduction.

[52] For a description of the term destruction as a deliberate ruination of artworks see Gamboni 1997, 19–20.

2

Reproduction as an act of reduction

This chapter outlines a theoretical framework to the main question of the dissertation. Is reproduction a conservation strategy for photographic artworks? This inquiry arises from the daily practice of a conservator, working in a contemporary art museum, where questions about the reproducibility of photographic materials are regularly posed. In this chapter, the practice-based research of conservators is related to the theoretical context elaborated by the French literary theorist Gérard Genette in his book *L'Oeuvre de l' art. Immanence et transcendance* (1994), in which he reflected on the status and the function of works of art.

Genette's text is a dense one, sometimes even difficult and it certainly demands an attentive reader due to the many classifications the author makes and the ambiguous terms he uses. Genette is an author who examines the details of artistic traditions, who looks into the rules as well as the exceptions, someone who does not try to condense art in 'easy' dichotomies. Nevertheless, Genette's theoretical framework is of great help to this chapter and to the entire dissertation, because it examines reproducible art forms such as printmaking, cast sculpture, and photography. It allows for the existence of multiple artworks and, by doing so, it moves away from the rigid distinction between 'original' and 'copy', where original is regarded as the first, authentic manifestation of the artwork, while copy is something that comes after and that is generally considered of less value, either from an artistic or monetary perspective. Hence, Genette's theory offers other options for those artworks that do not easily fit into those two categories by providing a detailed taxonomy, taking into account more complex artistic practices than a unique, well-defined artwork made by one recognized artist.

In this research, it will be argued that a photographic artwork 's reproduction, intended as an exact replication at image level as well as at a material level, cannot be achieved. However, it should be noted that the term 'reproduction' has several meanings in photography and it might describe different practices that are often intermingled. Photography is a 'reproduction medium' and this denotes the capacity of photography to capture with great accuracy the visual characteristics of objects, people, and places. In his book *The Pencil of Nature* (1844), photography's inventor and pioneer Henry William Fox Talbot (1800–1877) praised the ability of photography to copy and reproduce artefacts and landscape, truthfully and without human intervention.[53] With the invention of the negative, photography has also become a 'reproducible medium' as it is possible to produce multiple positive prints from one single negative.[54] Some of photography's greatest achievements include the capacity to convey information, to record with precision the physical world, and to multiply it in countless images. Photographs were and are used in a myriad of ways: as illustrations for journals and books, family pictures, souvenirs of distant places, reproductions of works of art, and advertisements for merchandise, to mention just a few uses.

According to photograph theorist Barbara Savedoff, the documentary value of photographs has shaped the way society interacts with images. Photographs are regularly changed and manipulated as they may be downsized, cropped, enlarged, photocopied, scanned, or even enhanced. These manipulations have a long-lasting influence on the way people have approached and still consider photography. Even when photographs are taken seriously as an art form, most people still neglect the importance of properties such as scale, tone, surface, or other material and visual features (Savedoff 2000, 177). The deep-rooted expectation that photographs are reproducible might explain why the creating artists of the works under study and the museum staff took the decision to reproduce the works and regarded these new works as identical enough to be substitutions for the originals. As will be argued in this chapter, the belief that multiple photographic prints produced by the same negative are interchangeable is mostly based on a convention and it is the result of an 'act of reduction', as changes in material, technique and even image can be regularly overlooked.

Here, convention is intended as an implicit recurrent practice or as an opinion based upon general consent, which is accepted by society at large. Conventions can be viewed as:

> Understandings, often tacit but also conscious, that organize and coordinate action in predictable ways. […] Although used by individuals, […] conventions do not reside in, and are not reducible to, individuals (Woolsey Biggart and Beamish 2003, 444).[55]

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[53] In several passages of his book, Fox Talbot drew attention to the capacity of photography to copy and to multiply the depicted image. For example, he claimed that the photographic art was able to produce facsimiles from original sketches of old master drawings and thus these facsimiles could be "multiplied to any extent plate" (Fox Talbot 1844). Fox Talbot's book can be retrieved online at http://www.thepencilofnature.com; for the specific passage about the production of facsimiles see http://www.thepencilofnature.com/plate-23-hagar-in-the-desert/; for an image showing Fox Talbot's photographic copy of an ink drawing seehttp://www.getty.edu/art/collection/objects/129898/william-henry-fox-talbot-hagar-in-the-desert-british-1844/ [all three links accessed 27 January 2017].

[54] In 1841, Fox Talbot invented a paper negative that he named a calotype, uniting the two Greek words καλός (beautiful) and τύπος (print). This invention was a breakthrough in the photographic field and the negative–positive principle laid the basis for modern photography. It should be noted that there are several photographic processes that do not use this principle. Daguerreotypes, photograms, luminograms, or instant prints such as Polaroids® are examples of unique photographic techniques produced without negatives. In all these instances, just one unique photographic image is produced.

[55] It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to examine the various meanings given by scholars to the concept of convention. For further reference see Miller 2011, 328–333; Lewis 1969; Harman 2003, 53–59.

Thus, a convention is a recurrent agreement among a group or an entire population without an explicit normative character. When it becomes a widespread practice, law may sanction it.[56] A typical example of a convention that becomes an obligation is the custom to drive on the right side of the road, as is the case in continental Europe and the United States, or on the left side, as in the United Kingdom and in Australia.

The term reduction, as it is employed in this dissertation, follows Genette's definition as an operation of analysis, selection, and replacement. The act of analysis concerns the identification of the object's properties. Selection involves a distinction between the object's constituting properties and the features that are not reiterated in the reproduction process. Replacement relates to the substitution of features that are not perceived as essential to the work. During the reproduction process, some characteristics are fundamental and, therefore, maintained in each rendition, while other features will be lost in translation and substituted by other new elements. Hence, it is through an act of reduction to the essential properties – or, to use Genette's term, 'constituent' features – and the substitution of 'contingent' elements that we conventionally concord that the reproduced works are the same (Genette 1997a, 82–90).

This chapter is divided into three sections: the first part introduces Genette's and Nelson Goodman's theories; it describes the convention of reduction for multiple artworks such as prints and photographs, and examines it in relation to the case studies' reproduction history. The second section analyses, through the prism of Carlo Ginzburg's essay "Spie di un paradigma indiziario" (1979), how conservation is, fundamentally, a qualitative discipline, how fine art conservators are usually trained to see and discern the specificity of objects, and how this ability can conflict with the reductive approach needed to accept reproduction as a conservation strategy. The third section returns to Genette and the theoretical framework he has suggested for artworks that exist in more than one version. To summarize, this chapter has a circular structure, Genette – Ginzburg – Genette, and its goal is to problematize the notion of reproduction described by Genette by introducing the specific gaze conservators use when examining a photographic artwork by using Ginzburg's essay.

[56] The origin of convention can be found in Roman law where a *conventio* was an informal agreement between parties, which may have formed the basis of a contract. In order to become a contract, a convention had to be sanctioned by external, legal formalities (Burdick 2004, 431).

2.1 The convention of reduction

Autographic and allographic arts

In the 1990s, Genette contributed to the field of aesthetics with a two-part study. The two volumes were published in French respectively in 1994 and 1997 both under the same title, *L'Oeuvre de l'Art*. The subtitle of the first book is *Immanence et transcendance*, the other one is titled *La relation esthétique*. For this research, only the first book in its English translation will be used.

At the beginning of this book, Genette introduces himself as a specialist of literary studies and explains that his engagement with aesthetics derives from the belief that literature should be considered an art as well. It was his conviction that in order to better understand literature it was necessary to widen the field of interest to theory of art and aesthetics. He argued that if literature was to be considered an art, "one is likely to learn something more about it by finding out what *kind* of art it is, what kind the others are, and, indeed, what an art in general is" (Genette 1997a, 2). It is from this search that the author developed his taxonomy, his theory on the different types of art forms, and how these forms function.

According to Genette, an artwork has simultaneously two modes of existence and the two sections in the book correspond to this division. The first part is named 'immanence' and deals with the artwork's physical presence, or in what a work of art consists of. The second one is titled 'transcendence' and examines the experience the artwork produces. For Genette, a work of art cannot exist without its physical manifestation (immanence) and its ideal expression (transcendence). An artwork is thus more than only the materials it is made of. The Greek statue *Venus de Milo* is more than the white marble from which it is hewn, and the *Mona Lisa* is more than the paint that Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519) employed for his masterpiece. An artwork is simultaneously its material embodiment and the experience it induces. Genette also argued that material embodiment can be rather problematic for forms of art such as music or literature, whose 'nature' is not physical, as well as for reproducible works that do not consist of a single artefact, but of several objects.

For his book, Genette employed the theory presented by Nelson Goodman in *Languages of Art: An Approach to a Theory of Symbols* (1968). Genette, though, proposed an additional elaboration of Goodman's categorization, and this further development is especially helpful for works that are not unique but exist as multiple ones. In order to grasp Genette's text, it is necessary to briefly introduce Goodman's terminology.

Goodman defined the artwork's identity by means of its 'history of production' and whether this is integral or not to the work. He made a distinction between 'autographic'

works, like paintings, drawings, and carved sculpture, and 'allographic' works, such as music and literature. The way an object is produced and by whom is significant for the autographic work's identity, while the history of production plays a lesser role for an allographic work. In order to be allographic, a work should comply with a 'notational system', in which its essential or 'constitutive' properties are summarized and where each symbol in the system (an alphabet letter or a musical note) corresponds to only one item and, conversely, one item needs to correspond to just one symbol.[57]

According to Goodman, pictures do not function in a notational system or scheme and therefore, they are 'semantically dense'. In paintings, each small difference in characters, such as a heavier, darker line, or a rounder shape, is semantically important. For Goodman, painting is the autographic art form *par excellence:*

> In painting, on the contrary, with no such alphabet of characters, none of the pictorial properties — none of the properties the picture has as such — is distinguished as constitutive; no such features can be dismissed as contingent, and no deviation as insignificant (Goodman 1968, 116).

Being 'semantically dense' implies that all characteristics of an autographic work are equally important and therefore not dismissible. For a painting, it is relevant whether Rembrandt (1606–1669) or Michelangelo (1475–1564) painted the composition. While allographic forms are exemplified as:

> All that matters is what may be call *sameness of spelling:* exact correspondence as sequence of letters, spaces, and punctuation marks. Any sequence […] that so corresponds to a correct copy is itself correct, and nothing is more the original work than is such correct copy (Ibid., 115–116).

For a (printed) book or a musical score it is not relevant if that specific object was made by Petrarca (1304–1374) or Mozart (1756–1791) in order to keep their authorial authenticity. What matters is that the book or the musical score exactly corresponds to the notational system or scheme. Alterations in contingent features like fonts

[57] Goodman argued that natural languages fail to have a notational system because of words' ambiguities and the presence of 'semantic disjointness'. The first implies that in a language a word can have more meanings (homonyms), the second that two words can semantically intersect each other and therefore refer to the same thing or person. Because of these characteristics, natural languages are organized in a notational scheme rather than a 'notational system' (Goodman 1968, 156).

or format do not affect the authenticity of Petrarca's text or Mozart's score, while a deviation in the constitutive properties does have a profound effect. For example on the one hand, pocketsize or deluxe editions of the *Canzoniere* (1336–1374) are still considered the same text as both have retained an identical sameness of spelling.[58] On the other hand, two versions with a different spelling and/or word sequence cannot both be considered Petrarca's genuine, authentic masterpiece as the sameness of spelling was not retained and alterations in the words or sentence arrangement have occurred. Original manuscripts of books and scores represent a special case, as they are autographic and allographic at the same time. The author's calligraphy makes the manuscript autographic, as the handwriting peculiarities cannot be transferred to other copies, but the text can be reduced to a notational system, the alphabet, therefore it can be replicated to different books.[59]

To summarize, Goodman divided artworks into two categories, autographic and allographic. The classification was made on the basis of the history of production and if the work could be reduced to constituent properties. For an autographic work, such as a painting, this reduction is not possible.[60] Every characteristic, such as the thickness of the brushstroke or the colour density of the paint, is relevant. In contrast, allographic works have been reduced to a notational system or scheme and the exact correspondence to this system makes it possible to replicate them.

Multiple autographic artworks

Due to their complexity and diversity, artistic practices are generally difficult to categorize in rigid classifications such as the one proposed by Goodman. Goodman himself was well aware of the fact that the borderline between autographic and allographic art forms is not always so clear-cut.[61] In his book, he acknowledged the possibility of having multiple autographic works, such as prints, that are, simultaneously autographic and multiple. The author stated:

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[58] Francesco Petrarca's masterpiece is known in English as *Songbook* or lesser known with the Latin title *Francisci Petrarchae laureati poetae Rerum vulgarium fragmenta*.

[59] It should be noted that a strict division is often difficult to make as attested by the establishment of authenticity and original forms of literary texts by philological studies. In the case of Petrarca, two original autographic manuscripts of the *Canzoniere* have been preserved and each of them presents differences in the text. The first book, Codex Vaticano latino 3196, represents a draft edition and therefore it is also known as *Codice degli Abbozzi* as in Italian the word *abbozzi* means drafts or sketches. The other one, Codex Vaticano latino 3195, represents a more definitive version but it is partially autograph and partially have been transcribed by his personal secretary Giovanni Malpaghini. For further reference see Barolini and Storey 2007.

[60] The high-end reproduction of the painting *The Wedding Feast of Cana* (1563) by Paolo Caliari (1528–1588), also known as Veronese, may complicate this view. For further reference see Latour and Lowe 2011, 275–297.

> The example of printmaking refutes the unwary assumption that in every autographic art a particular work exists only as unique object. The line between an autographic and allographic art does not coincide with that between a singular and multiple art (Ibid., 115).

Genette, who expanded on Goodman's theory, was also conscious of the difficulties that the dichotomy between autographic and allographic arts presented. He warned his readers that there would be always some 'mixed', 'ambiguous', or 'intermediate' cases. Mixed cases are for example, concrete poems where the text is tied to the materiality of a particular way of writing. Ambiguous and intermediate cases are practices or objects that find themselves in between the autographic and allographic regimes. He introduced for this purpose an additional, 'in-between' category that was able to characterize multiple works of art.

> I will draw a further distinction, among real objects of immanence, between those which consist in a unique object, like the *Mona Lisa*, and those consisting in several objects assumed to be identical, like *The Thinker* or *Melancholia* (Genette 1997a, 31).[62]

Genette reflected upon the fact that certain autographic works are not unique but they are formed by several objects that are "more or less interchangeable from an artistic point of view and that the existence of such works depends on the fact that their 'history of production' includes two stages" (Genette 1997a, 44). Here, the author built on the distinction made by Goodman on one-stage and two-stage art.[63] This division concerned the phases in which an artwork is produced. The end product of one-stage arts is the result of just one step. A two-stage artwork consists of two phases, where the second step is a derivative of the first one. He called two-stage artworks, capable of producing multiple objects in the second stage, as multiple autographic works.

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[61] Genette allows the possibility of a shifting between the two regimes when he stated: "that an allographic art can eventually become autographic again" (Ibid., 81). It is interesting to note that other scholars have also proposed a revision of the categories autographic/allographic. With regard to Sol LeWitt's *Wall Paintings*, philosopher Renée van der Vall suggested classifying these works as works that "*hover between* the two categories", rather than as autographic works, or allographic ones, or autographic and allographic simultaneously. The works may change direction over time, according to a shifting practice (Van der Vall 2015, 300–301).

[62] Genette refers here to Leonardo's painting *Mona Lisa* (1503–1506), Rodin's statue *The Thinker* (1904), in French *Le Penseur*, and Dürer's print *Melancholia* (1514).

[63] See Goodman 1968, 114.

Many art forms have more than just one step during the creation process. A painting, for example, can be the result of many preliminary drafts or sketches. Yet, a draft cannot be considered instrumental to a painting as this can be directly created on the canvas without any preliminary studies. In the case of multiple autographic objects, this is not possible as both stages are necessary. Here, the relationship between the two stages is a strong kinship: the single object, produced in the first stage, is a 'model' or 'matrix' that guides, controls, and realizes the object in the next following stage. In cast sculpture, the mould acts as the model, in printmaking it is the plate that functions as a model, while in photography generally it is the negative that serves as a model.[64] All these techniques use a mechanical process of realization and this strengthens the connection between the two stages.[65]

Genette recognized the great technical differences within the generic term of photography and thus he made a distinction between one-stage and two-stage photography. Some of the techniques, such as daguerreotypes and instant film photographs, should be classified as autographic because the photographic images are the outcome of a one-stage process of realization. Others, such as the works under study, are multiple autographic arts because they are the result of a two-stage mode of production, in which the negative forms the first stage and the photographic print the second one (Genette 1997a, 40–41).[66]

The principal characteristic of a two-stage artwork is to have a model, created in the first stage, which may produce several 'identical' objects in the second stage. It is important to recognize that variations in the model produce different kinds of artefacts in the second stage, such as Rembrandt's several re-workings of the etching plate. In printmaking, each change of the plate is recorded as a different state: for example, Rembrandt's *Christ Presented to the People [Ecce Homo]* (1655) has eight distinct

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[63] See Goodman 1968, 114.

[64] In this chapter, negative and positive transparencies are used interchangeably. It should be noted that some photographic processes employ positives rather than negatives for making photographic prints as in the case of Van Der Kaap's *Lalalalalight*. This aspect is further discussed in chapter five.

[65] Tapestry making is also a two-stage artwork. According to Genette, an essential difference exists though between tapestry making and the other arts with multiple products. This difference resides in its principle of realization. The author uses Louis Prieto's distinction of model: the second realization can employ a 'matrix' or a 'signal'. A matrix is used in a mechanical process of realization such as printmaking, photography, and cast sculpture. In tapestry-making the process of realization needs an interpretive reading of the signal, the cartoon. The weaver needs to interpret the model, mostly a painting or an oil sketch, and transpose it as faithful as possible in a design formed by coloured wool threads (Genette 1997a, 49). See Prieto 1987, 31–41.

[66] Genette referred only to analogue photography and he never wrote about digital photography. In 1994, when he wrote his book, digital photography was only beginning to be considered.

states and *Abraham Francen, Apothecary* (1657) has up to nine states.[67] Variations may also occur in the second stage, but these normally do not lead to a different state or version. The inking of the plate, the various chemical fixing baths, or the darkroom manipulation techniques such as dodging or burning in photography can produce very different results. For example, by blocking or allowing more exposure in certain areas, a photographic print might become lighter or darker than another print that has not undergone any manipulation. Despite the disparities, the two photographic prints will not be acknowledged as two separate versions and they will be regarded as two 'identical' works. This implies that the majority of people tend to overlook the differences at the second stage.

The identicalness of multiple autographic objects is largely guaranteed by means of a convention. It is because of this implicit understanding or 'belief' in reproduction, embedded and accepted by society at large, that equivalence among the various versions is agreed upon: in the first place, by following the model in the first stage, and secondly, and only to a certain degree, by the material consistency of the various prints in the second stage. It is important to note that multiple prints taken from the same negative are viewed as identical, especially when the prints come from the same batch. In this instance, it is more likely that the same materials and techniques have been used during the printing process. Yet, multiple objects from the same batch may as well be different, due to technical limitations or to the effect of external factors that may influence their following form and physical nature (Ibid., 46). Technical qualities and properties may influence the number of possible multiplications. Cast models and printing plates, for instance, degenerate after a certain number of multiplications and therefore the quality of the objects tends to decline after a while. Cast model and dry point plates are inclined to deteriorate at a faster rate than engraving, etching plates, or modern photographic negatives. From a conservation point of view, external factors, such as a particular environment or a specific conservation history, may have an effect on artefacts produced in the same manner and with the same materials. Two cast bronze statues or two etchings produced at the same time with the same materials can, for instance, differ significantly from each other, depending on the climate in which they have been preserved or on the conservation treatments the two exemplars have undergone in the past.

The works under study comply with Genette's definition of multiple autographic artworks. Their manufacture is, for the most part, the result of a two-stage production:

[67] For further reference on Christ Presented to the People [Ecce Homo] see Hinterding and Rutgers 2013, vol. 2, nr. 290/VIII, p. 256 and on Abraham Francen, Apothecary see White and Boon 1969, vol. 1, pp. 126–127, nr. B273; vol. 2, pp. 219–221.

the negatives function as models in the first stage, and the photographic prints produced according a mechanical process are the result of the second stage. However, the option of having more than one photograph printed from the negative was not contemplated at the beginning of the creation process for three of the four works under study.[68] Only years later it was decided to create a new print as the works turned out to be damaged. The absence of multiple prints at the beginning is not necessarily a problem for identifying the case studies as multiple autographic works. According to Genette, the existence of multiple objects is just one of the possible options:

> [To multiply] is only *a* possibility that is not necessarily always exploited. It is entirely possible to take *a single* bronze, *a single* print, or *a single* photographic print from the original model (Ibid., 49. Emphasis added).

This means that a work can 'potentially' be a multiple, since its manufacture complies with a two-stage production, but it does not necessarily need to exist as a multiple. Artists can choose and decide whether to produce just one print from the model rather than multiples ones. This decision can be determined by artistic preferences or by art market driven reasons. The art market and the art field in general tend to value 'unique' photographic works higher than editioned ones and this tendency often results in a higher monetary value.

With regard to three of the four case studies studied in this dissertation, the artists initially decided to produce a unique print, rather than multiple ones. Only after discernible damage was the option of reproduction envisioned, intended as an act of substitution and replacement and thus acknowledging photography as a reproducible medium. The creation of these new works raises questions about how to consider the initial photographic works and the later ones. Should the initial works be regarded as the originals and the later works as derivative copies, even if the creating artists produce them? Or should the works be acknowledged as variations of the same works? As will be discussed in the detailed analysis of the case studies, there are no straightforward answers to these difficult questions. Moreover, to complicate matters, the equivalence among the initial works and the later ones is problematic from a material and technical perspective. In all instances, the reproduction occurred at least ten years after the first creation moment: Baldessari printed the second version of *Virtues and Vices*

[68] As will be argued in chapter five, Van Der Kaap's *Xiada, (Girls' dorm) Xiamen* differs from the other case studies analysed in this research and was not created as a unique work, but as a limited edition. This implies a different conceptual approach to photography. Moreover, *Xiada (Girls' dorm), Xiamen* was reproduced shortly after the printing of the work's first photographs.

(for Giotto) in 1992, eleven years after the first printing; Dibbets printed the second version of *Comet Sea 3°– 60°* in 1997, thirteen years after the first creation, while he made the third version in 2012, thirty-nine years after the first original photographs and fifteen years after the second photographs were printed; Van Der Kaap reproduced *Lalalalalight* in 2011, which is twenty years after the first work saw the light. In the long interval between the two printing phases technology changed and evolved.

Reproduction as subtractive and additive process

Genette underscored that the identicalness of multiple autographic objects is 'guaranteed' by a mechanical process of realization, but it is above all based on a convention. This shared agreement among various groups of people might explain why material and observable variations among photographic prints are generally overlooked and photography is perceived as a 'reproducible medium'. But in order to consider something an acceptable reproduction, people need to neglect or 'disregard' a certain number of distinctive properties present in the first occurrence, which will eventually disappear and will be replaced by other, contingent features in the subsequent iteration (Ibid., 82).

This insight might be an interesting starting point for how to interpret the reproduction of the works under study. Some features might be considered 'constituent' as these were retained during the reproduction process, while others might be labelled as 'contingent' as other ones replaced them. Reproduction might, thus, be viewed as a subtractive activity, since it removes characteristics that are not regarded essential, but, at the same time, it is also an additive practice, as it introduces new features that were not there in the first place. This awareness might help to value the reproduction process and the resulting variations differently. The subtraction and addition of features might not necessarily be sensed as something negative, as a discrepancy from what is believed to be the 'original' and thus should be avoided at all costs.[69] The acknowledgment of these two practices might help to admit the incapacity to exactly reproduce photographic prints and thus it might allow a certain degree of change. In this regard, this framework is more in tune with other conservation strategies that have been developed for the preservation of complex contemporary art objects. These approaches have enabled and tried to manage changes, rather than to freeze the work in its initial preferred state, which is usually labelled as the original state.

[69] In conservation literature, the term 'original' often relates to the state of the object immediately after the artist completed it. Original bears the meaning of the origin, the beginning of the work. For further references on the theoretical difficulties about the way the notion of original is used in conservation see Muñoz Viñas 2005, 92 and Van Saaze 2013, 24–25.

In the case studies, the artists have more or less consciously defined what the constitutive elements of the photographic artworks were. By analysing the production and reproduction histories, it seems that the artists considered certain properties of fundamental importance and others of lesser significance. Correspondence to the photographic image, dimension and mode of presentation were mostly viewed as the artworks' constitutive properties, while material and technical equivalence were perceived as contingent features, which were allowed to vary, to a certain extent, in each subsequent repetition.

As it turns out, the distinction between constituent and contingent properties is not always so clear-cut in practice. Changes in values and collective cultural norms greatly influence the prominence given to certain characteristics and unforeseen circumstances may deeply affect the course of a reproduction (Ibid., 87).[70] It is almost a truism to claim that the way artists, museum staffs, and society at large look at and value art evolves in time. One should realize that the constituent–contingent classification is an area where practice is shifting practice and the identification of these two categories can change over time, depending on the cultural norms of a certain period, as will be further discussed in relation to Baldessari's example.

It should be acknowledged that the use of the terms 'contingent' and 'constituent' as it is proposed here for the analysis of the works under study differs from Genette's theory. According to Genette, the distinction between constituent and contingent is only applicable to allographic works and it is not tenable for autographic works. For the latter, this differentiation is problematic or even impossible as all the properties forming these types of works are per definition constituent. Despite this theoretical difficulties, the proposed distinction is, in my opinion, useful in the examination of the reproduction process of the case studies as underscores a comparable activity of selection as the one described by Genette. In his reflection about the transition from the autographic to the allographic regime, Genette remarked that this shifting:

> Presupposes, indeed *consists in*, in a more or less conscious mental operation that analyses an object into its constituent and contingent properties, picking out only the first with a view to producing […] a correct iteration that will in its turn display these constitutive properties, accompanied by new contingent properties (Ibid.).

[70] For further reference on other authors that have reflected on shifting values and cultural norms see chapter four.

A similar process can be detected during the substitution of a photographic artwork with another one. The artists and the museum staff have made, through a mental operation, a distinction between what they considered essential for the works and what they deemed of less importance. They have agreed to 'neglect' certain features in order to be able to accept the reproduced version as a genuine substitution of the previous version. This act enabled them to identify the two photographic artworks as "two different instances of the same 'constitutive property'" (Ibid., 86). By using the terms 'constituent' and 'contingent', it is possible draw the attention on the features that were, from the beginning, considered indispensable for each reiterations and on those that were not and therefore replaceable by other properties.

2.2 The conservator's eye

In this section, it will be argued that conservators are traditionally trained to actively observe and give meaning to material properties. For example, by visually examining an object, they are able to discern ageing mechanisms that may give clues about the object's history. Conservators are taught to look for and distinguish material differences, and their professional 'gaze', which I propose calling the 'conservator's eye', shows similarities with the so-called clinical eye. The latter is usually described as a keen visual observation within medical practice.[71] In the context of this research, observation plays a crucial role and expresses an active process of seeing together with the intellectual engagement of the conservator, who knows what to look at or for.[72]

Carlo Ginzburg's essay facilitates a discussion of how visual inspection is at the core of conservation. This specific way of looking, in which the uniqueness of the object is taken into account, is one of the central motives that keep conservation in the sphere of qualitative disciplines. The practice of mapping will be presented here as an example of active observation, in which the conservator systematically marks his or her findings during or after the work's inspection. Although a conservator's visual examination, as all other kind of observations, is biased by the viewer's personal and cultural 'preferences', it is through a mapping that he or she is able to note the material

[71] For further reference on the notion of clinical eye see Gonzáles-Crussi 2006, 195–226; and Foucault 2003, 131–157.

[72] The pivotal role of observation as a knowledge-producing tool has been well described by physiologist Robert Root-Bernstein in his book *Spark of Genius*. The author remarked: "All knowledge begins in observation. We must be able to perceive our world accurately to be able to discern patterns of action, abstract their principles, make analogies between properties of things, create models of behaviours, and innovate fruitfully" (Root-Bernstein 1999, 30).

specificity of a work. Moreover, a visual assessment and its subsequent mapping imply a certain amount of simplification of the object's material characteristics. Despite these limitations, a conservator is able to detect and give meaning to material aspects that for laymen might be negligible either in size or importance. It will also be suggested that, because of this way of looking, conservators generally have feelings of discomfort about accepting photographic reproduction as a possible conservation strategy.

Paradigma indiziario and the 'conservator's eye'

At the beginning of his essay "Spie di un paradigma indiziario" (1979), the Italian historian Carlo Ginzburg reflected on how disciplines such as the psychoanalysis of Sigmund Freud (1856–1939), the literary genre of Arthur Conan Doyle's (1859–1930) crime fictions and the so-called Morellian method in art history share common ground.[73] To a certain extent, all these fields employ the method used in the so-called *semeiotica medica*: the discipline that allows physicians to diagnose diseases inaccessible to direct observation on the basis of (superficial) signs lying close to the surface, sometimes irrelevant to the untrained eye (Ginzburg 1979, 1–8).[74] In the Morellian method, psychoanalysis, and crime fiction, visual observation of clues and microscopic traces play a central role in allowing the art connoisseur, the psychotherapist, and the investigator to deduce and arrive at conclusions that are inaccessible to the others, to the inexpert Dr. Watson among us. Ginzburg went back in time and outlined the history of what he called 'human sciences' and traced their origin in the hunting practice:

[73] Translated in English as "Morelli, Freud, Sherlock Holmes: Clues and Scientific Method" by Anna Davin, *History Workshop*, n.9, spring 1980, 5–36. Passages of Ginzburg's article are quoted in this text, relying on Davin's translated version. However, some terms are left intentionally in Italian or are translated by me, because sometimes Davin's translation fails to grasp Ginzburg's nuances. In the essay's introduction Davin admitted: "This article by an Italian comrade and historian is very different from anything we have included in History Workshop Journal before. It unselfconsciously draws on philosophy, quotes Latin, and ranges across societies and periods in a way which is extraordinary – even shocking – to the English reader" (Davin 1980, 5). Davin, further on in the introduction, summarized how Ginzburg: "examines the relationship between 'formal' and 'informal' knowledge, 'high 'and 'low', lore and science. His concern, in short, is historical epistemology – the history and theory of the construction of knowledge" (Ibid.). The English title is, in my opinion, misleading and fails to do justice to the greater scope of the essay. Ginzburg introduced Giovanni Morelli, Sigmund Freud, and Sherlock Holmes at the beginning of his text as examples of a particular kind of knowledge, Ginzburg's *paradigma indiziario*.

[74] In her translation of Ginzburg's essay, Davin translates the Italian term *semeiotica* into 'medical semiotics' (Ginzburg 1980, 12). In his essay on the origin of the term 'semiotics', the scholar John Deely argues that in 1689 John Locke coined the term, σημιωτική, which transliterates into Latin as *semiotica* and into English as semiotics. According to Deely, Locke deliberately misspelled the medical term in order to move it into a new and larger context, namely his new science based on signs (Deely 2003, 37). To avoid confusion in this dissertation, the Italian term *semeiotica* is deliberately kept, as it exclusively indicates the specific branch of medical science concerned with the study of symptoms, known as σημιωτική ('semeiotics'), to which Ginzburg refers.

> For thousands of years, mankind lived by hunting. In the course of endless pursuits hunters learned to construct the appearance and movements of an unseen quarry through its tracks – prints in soft ground, snapped twigs, droppings, snagged hairs or feathers, smells, puddles, threads of saliva. They learnt to sniff, to observe, to give meaning and context to the slightest trace. They learnt to make complex calculations in an instant, in shadowy wood or treacherous clearing (Ginzburg 1980, 12).

The author drew a line between the natural sciences and human sciences in the course of the seventeenth century. Following the Galilean method, the natural sciences became quantitative disciplines leaning on the repetition of the observed phenomenon, which formed the basis of the so-called scientific method.

The much-theorized and discussed history and the development of the scientific method can only be touched upon in this dissertation. It may suffice to state that, in his essay, Ginzburg referred to the experimental method that Galileo Galilei (1564–1642) contributed to laying the foundations. Contemporaries regarded Galileo as a pioneer and this view has since been widely endorsed. In the nineteenth century, the Austrian philosopher and physicist Ernst Mach (1838–1916) attributed to Galileo the introduction of the experimental method in physics. Mach's view remained prevalent in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, where Galileo is identified as the first scientist to recognize the importance of doing experiments as a way of testing hypotheses (Gower 1997, 22).[75] Although the modern experimental method significantly differs from that of Galileo, in both approaches the validation of a hypothesis through an experiment plays a central role. In other words, natural science, both pure and applied, depends on experimentation that involves the observation of a phenomenon under selected and carefully controlled conditions (Ibid., 10). It is with Galileo that a distinction arises between observation and experimentation. Until the seventeenth century, scholars usually had the role of spectators or witnesses during the observation of a phenomenon. After Galileo, scholars not only observed and listened to what nature had to say, but they also started to pose questions. This change in attitude and the

[75] Some scholars have questioned the role of the experiment in Galileo's method. Alexander Koyré, for example, asserted that some of Galileo's experiments on reclined planes and falling weight were exclusively thought experiments and therefore never carried out in practice (Koyré 1953). Stilmann Drake subsequently refuted Koyré's claim, demonstrating that Galileo's theory was based on careful observations of experiments. For further reference on the reception of Galileo's thought see Drake 1999, 307–320. Giuliano Toraldo di Francia regarded the attribution of scientific method to Galileo mainly as a convention, since Galileo was neither the only, nor the first to use it. On the other hand, he was the first one that developed such a method, "no one before him formed and expressed such clear and precise ideas on science" (Toraldo di Francia 1981, 6).

transformation from observation into experiment provided the key that opened the door to the modern concept of science (Toraldo di Francia 1981, 8).

Galileo introduced two key elements in the methodology of modern natural sciences. Firstly, he promoted the formulation of questions in a simple form by reducing the number of parameters involved. A natural phenomenon can be described and determined with a number of different parameters. Some of these are essential, while others are secondary and the latter may even disturb the phenomenon that a scientist wishes to study. By eliminating the secondary parameters and therefore reducing the factors to be examined, he or she is able to research the phenomenon's behaviour as a function of the primary features. Secondly, Galileo claimed that the formulation of these questions should occur in a measurable or quantitative way.[76] In other words, the physicist should be able to define the observed phenomenon and the performed experiment in terms of mathematical measurements. More in general, science became a process of learning based on the measurement of a material world. Non-material aspects, such as art, whose aesthetic qualities can be neither confirmed, nor explained, started to be excluded from science (Rothchild 2006, 3).

The Galilean experimental method strengthened the foundations of a demonstrative science and it is nowadays seen as a turning point in the methodology of modern physics and, more generally, of science.[77] The introduction of this method marked the separation between qualitative and quantitative disciplines. As Ginzburg remarked:

> The real difficulty in applying the Galilean model lay in the degree to which a discipline was concerned with the individual. The more central were features to do with the individual, the more impossible it became to construct a body of rigorously scientific knowledge (Ginzburg 1980, 19).

[76] Galileo affirmed in a famous passage of *Il Saggiatore* (1623) known in English as the *Assayer*: "Philosophy is written in that great book which ever lies before our eyes – I mean the universe – but we cannot understand it if we do not first learn the language and grasp the symbols, in which it is written. This book is written in the mathematical language" (English translation by Thomas Salusbury 1661, 178 quoted in Burtt 2003, 75). For an explanation of the apparently conflicting terms used by Galileo and what he meant with 'philosophy' and 'mathematical language' see Toraldo di Francia 1981, 10–11.

[77] In the natural sciences, notable exceptions do exist. For scientists in fields such as astronomy as well geology it is impossible to replicate all their observations in experiments. In these disciplines, fieldwork observations are sometimes more important and provide more information than laboratory experiments. On the issue of different practices within natural sciences and the 'disunity' of scientific practice see Knorr-Cetina 1999.

On the one hand, science is based on the experimental method and it gives prominence to the reproducibility of the experiment.[78] By regulating conditions and set up, the scientist is able to control the experiment and to perform the test more than once. On the other hand, *human sciences* or the so-called Humanities became qualitative disciplines that study unique objects, situations or documents. They follow a theoretical model that Ginzburg called *paradigma indiziario*, based on the gathering of knowledge through observation but without the repetition's imperative.[79] Human sciences' findings have thus always had a margin of unpredictability and uncertainty.

Like other humanities' disciplines, conservation deals with objects that, in most cases, are materially and culturally unique. Similar paintings or sculptures are materially different. Even in 'identical' photographs, every print differs from the other as paper quality might differ, exposure time might change, enlarger bulbs and filters might age, and chemical substances might become depleted (Modrak and Anthes 2011, 175). Objects can also be different because of the various events that have shaped their lives: due to changes in its physical state, use, cultural, and historical contexts. In sum, the specificity of the art object is decisive to the qualitative aspect of fine art conservation.

To look at clues or traces is part of the physical examination that conservators perform during the determination of the object's condition. As object conservator Barbara Appelbaum described in her book *Conservation Treatment Methodology* (2007), conservators look for various types of signs: signs of the object's constructions, ageing, use that corroborates the materials' identification. All these signs determine

[78] A difference exists between 'replicability' and 'reproducibility' in science. The first stands for the exact replication under the same conditions at different times of the experiment, the second yields the reproduction of the experiment by performing similar but not identical tests at different times, in different locations, and in a somewhat different setting. Generally, scientists are more interested in the reproducibility of the results rather than the precise replication of the experimental results. Reproducibility of the results is preferred because it implies the robustness of the initial enquiry. Replicability of the experiment and its setup becomes important when subsequent attempts to reproduce the experimental results have failed. For further reference see C. Drummond 2009, http://cogprints.org/7691/7/ICMLws09.pdf [accessed 6 April 2015] and Casadevall and Fang 2010, 4972–4975.

[79] Davin's article translates *paradigma indiziario* as 'conjectural model' using the old and nowadays obsolete meaning of the word 'conjecture'. According to the Oxford English Dictionary (OED), this term means in its archaic denotation: "The interpretation of signs or omens; interpretation of dreams; divining; a conclusion as to coming events drawn from signs or omens; a forecast, a prognostication." However, in its current connotation, the term 'conjecture' and its derivative 'conjectural' carry a negative sense. According to the OED, it is: "The formation or offering of an opinion on grounds insufficient to furnish proof," while the Merriam Webster Dictionary defines it as: "An opinion or idea formed without proof or sufficient evidence." The Italian word *indiziario* does not have any negative implication and therefore it is intentionally kept in this text in order to avoid confusion.

the physical state of the object, and tell the objects' history and behaviour (Appelbaum 2007, 27). According to the author, conservators have their own way of looking at objects and they see things that non-conservators do not see. Proper conservation education trains conservators to look for the physical details, developing what Appelbaum defined as the conservator's professional gaze (Ibid., 26). The author reflected on how, through looking at signs, conservators are able to draw conclusions that, for others – the inexpert – are not visible.

Ginzburg's hunters have learnt to observe, give meaning, and context to the slightest traces. Similarly, according to anthropologist Tim Ingold, an archaeologist's training is also a learning process attending to clues, which the inexperienced might overlook. In this light, archaeologists as well as conservators can be characterized as "knowledgeable hunters", who through an "education of attention", are gathering clues and formulating conclusions (Ingold 1993, 153). The specific way to look at objects' material characteristics, which I have proposed calling the conservator's eye, is the result of professional training. By means of this gaze, conservators are generally able to see, detect, draw conclusions from peculiarities, and therefore disclose important clues about the object's history. This competence gives prominence to material characteristics.

Attentive visual examination: Sight and mapping

Conservators rely heavily on sight when observing an object in order to gather information.[80] Sight is used not only during the initial physical examination, but also when performing the conservation treatment and after its completion in order to judge the resulting outcome. Sight and visual microscopic examination of artistic or historical objects may be regarded as one of the defining properties of the profession. This is underscored by the way conservators are portrayed to the public by fine art museums and professional conservation organizations. A quick Internet search shows that many websites present conservators looking carefully at art objects, often helped by visual aids, such as handheld lamps, goggles or stereomicroscopes.[81] These images illustrate how conservators should, ideally, look at all the details of the object's surface, often at a microscopic level.

When a conservator examines a photographic print, he or she will look for signs often helped by visual aids. As a professional, he or she will note the surface's texture,

[80] During a physical examination, conservators do not rely exclusively on sight, they might use other senses as well. Touch, smell, and hearing can also provide useful information (Appelbaum 2007, 27).

the characteristics of the photographic paper, and the image layer. The conservator will take notice of any sign of deterioration, ageing, physical mark, label, and inscription on the front or on the back of the photographs and, if present, the clues coming from the frame or album in which the print is held. All these elements might help to identify the making process, the history of the object, and its present condition. In order to annotate all this data and information a conservator will make an object mapping. This can be a mental map or a tangible document with drawings, diagrams, documentary photographs, and text in the form of a condition report. Most conservators use a two-dimensional diagram or documentary photographs that depict the object in its entirety or a part of it. Cartesian coordinates might pinpoint, more or less exactly, the location of the phenomena as well as numbers, lines, colours, key coding, or combinations of these attributes that specify the type and the position of the observed details.[82] A conservator will write down in a concise and simplified way the noticed aspects by using marks or schematic drawings, or employing a more or less agreed lexicon that describes particular processes. It goes without saying that the extent of a mapping and conservation report varies from a concise page to volume-thick reports, depending on the nature of the object described and for the purpose of the report.

Mapping, as a documentation tool, is used here as an example of attentive visual

[81] On the websites of the Tate in the United Kingdom, the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, and the Museum of Modern of Art (MoMA) in New York, the pages relating to the conservation department present a conservator/sight combination. For further reference see http://www.tate.org.uk/about/our-work/conservation; http://www.stedelijk.nl/collectie/restauratie; http://www.metmuseum.org/research/conservation-and-scientific-research, http://www.moma.org/explore/collection/conservation/index#projects, [all accessed on 19 June 2014]. Another powerful image employed on professional websites to illustrate conservation practice is the hand of the conservator, often holding a small tool, such as a tweezers, a scalpel or a brush, when treating an object. This association can be found for examples on the websites of the Victoria and Albert Museum, the Institute of Conservation (ICON) in London, Istituto Centrale per il Restauro in Rome, the American Institute of Conservation, and Restauratoren Nederland. For further reference see http://www.vam.ac.uk/page/c/conservation/; http://www.icon.org.uk/; http://www.icr.beniculturali.it/; http://www.conservation-us.org/; http://www.restauratoren.nl/ [all accessed on 19 June 2014]. Often, a fusion of two images, a conservator looking carefully with visual aids and a conservator's hand-held small tool, are used together on the same webpage, emphasizing the ideal qualities a conservator should have: an investigative professional gaze and manual dexterity. The stereomicroscope and small hand tools may be regarded, in this light, as attributes of the profession.

[82] The accurate locating of the position has increased immensely through the use of Geographical Information System (GIS) for the mapping of artworks. Two examples of state-of-the-art mapping that uses advanced cartography and database technology are: Mondrian's painting *Victory Boogie Woogie* and the thirty-one daguerreotype plates researched within the Daguerreotype Research Portal. In both examples, the objects' surface is used as an interface where research results are tagged at the exact position where the features have been observed. For further information, see Van Bommel, Janssen and Spronk 2012 and the website of the Daguerreotype Research Portal http://research.mfa.org/# [accessed 8 July 2014].

examination. The mapping of an artwork, like other types of maps, requires a selection of features.[83] As with all observations, the visual examination and the consequent mapping are not unbiased. The conservator's personal choices as well as historical and contextual considerations have an influence on which material as well aesthetics characteristics will be noted and written down.[84] Moreover, the ability to look at different distances, from the microscopic to the overall level may be considered one of the main difficulties of the discipline. Conservators should ideally be able to zoom in and zoom out, to see at the same time the objects' (material) details and the artwork's totality. This challenge is convincingly described by Appelbaum, who wrote:

> After sweating over the filling and inpainting of a loss in a flat black area, it is difficult for a conservator to stand back and view the whole object without staring at "that damned spot" even if a normal viewer might be unlikely to notice it (Appelbaum 2007, 26).

Despite these limitations, it is during an active observation that a trained conservator takes into account the complexity and specificity of an object. He or she derives a great part of his or her object's knowledge by the careful visual examination and scrutiny of the object itself. To an untrained eye, the object's material characteristics may often remain unnoticed and therefore easily overlooked. This capacity to discern might explain the discomfort conservators, trained in a traditional way, feel in considering reproduction as a viable conservation strategy.[85]

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[83] It should be remarked that a map or the action of mapping per definition does not disclose all the information and aspects present in the artworks itself. In this regard, conservators might be compared to cartographers or mapmakers as these professionals also use abstraction and simplification in their work. The need for simplification for geographical maps is beautifully expressed in the literary works of Lewis Carrol, in the novel *Sylvie and Bruno Concluded* (1893), and in Jorge Luis Borges short story *Del rigor en la ciencia* (1946). In both texts, readers are reminded of the impossibility of having detailed maps that include all the facets of what is portrayed. In order to arrive at such a degree of reliability and perfection, a map should have the exact measurement of the represented, or as is written in Carrol's novel "on the scale of a *mile to the mile!*" (Carrol 1893, 169). This, of course, nullifies the need for such representation.

[84] Conservators are usually well aware of the difficulties or even impossibilities involved in writing down documentation such as condition and treatment reports, artists' interviews free from ambiguities and of value judgements. In old or even new reports, the significance of the terms might change because of the context or and the use over time. The subjectivity of the interview as well as the interviewer may colour the result and the interpretation of the meetings (Beerkens et al. 2012, 53). Specifications and descriptions cannot eliminate all the interpretative decisions needed for the installing of complex artworks, such as installations or time-based media (Laurenson 2011, 238).

[85] The term 'discomfort' is used here as elsewhere in the dissertation to express a feeling of uneasiness that something does not fully conform to certain expectations.

As mentioned elsewhere in this chapter, reproduction as an exact replication at a material level cannot be achieved. Reproducibility is a 'belief' based on a convention and it is an act of reduction. Constituent elements are kept during the process while contingent elements are lost in the reiteration and substituted by other properties. It is because of this ability to discern and give meaning to material clues and traces, following Ginzburg's *paradigma indiziario,* that it remains difficult for a conservator to agree with Genette's remark that differences among the various versions of a multiple autographic work are too small to be taken into account (Genette 1997a, 174). According to Genette's view, the differences between the various versions of a multiple autographic work are considered to be too small to be acknowledged. Accepting this position implies that the material and technical uniqueness of a photographic print inevitably fades away by remaining unnoticed and undocumented.

2.3 The plural work

This section returns to Genette's framework and will argue that the case studies should not be viewed exclusively as multiple autographic artworks, but rather they might also be regarded as 'plural works'. As discussed elsewhere, the notion of autographic multiple works does not do justice to the material differences between the various versions. It is only through a practice of reduction that changes are overlooked, as these are often deemed too small and therefore remain unacknowledged. However, part of a conservator's knowledge arises from in-depth visual examination. The conservator's eye is trained not to reduce, but it is taught to notice and detect material peculiarities. For photograph conservators, a photograph is more than just the image it shows. It is a fusion of the image and the material components forming the image carrier (Romer 2010, 109). Conservators need to take into account the print's material characteristics, as these might turn to bear critical information for the photograph's preservation. Each mark or trait might turn into a clue and therefore be relevant to the object's history.

It should be noted that, in his book, Genette used the term 'plural work' differently than how it is used in this dissertation. For Genette, the term defines the different interpretations that viewers or readers may give to a certain work, as well as the physical transformations that an object experiences over time. He argues that a plural work denotes a "work as an object of reception […] which takes on different appearances and meanings depending on the circumstances and the context" (Genette 1997a, 230). In its place, Genette's concept of 'plural immanence' may help to classify the works under study. In my opinion, this notion allows us to embrace the material differences of the various versions, and at the same time to depart from the distinction between

original and copy, which, for the case studies, is highly problematic since the artists themselves have produced the second or third version. Moreover, the reproduced artworks were created to substitute and replace the damaged ones.

The first part of this section will elaborate the idea of plural immanence, and what the theoretical difficulties are in applying this notion to the artworks in question. The second part will describe the criteria that define the various versions forming the artwork and outline the consequences for the caretakers of dealing with a plural artwork rather than a unique one.

Plural immanence

Genette recognized two modes of existence for works of art. The first mode is defined as 'regime of immanence' and it comprises the artwork's physical presence. The second mode is named 'regime of transcendence' and it defines the experience that the artwork induces.[86] The author defined three possible modes within the transcendence regime: plurality of immanence, partiality of immanence, and plurality of effect.[87] In this research, only the notion of plurality of immanence will be applied to the studied works. Genette described this concept as a mode, which involves several non-identical, concurrent objects, such as works, that have different versions. To the author, this mode is not necessarily restricted to allographic works but it can also be found in the autographic regime. He used the various versions of Jean-Siméon Chardin's painting *Saying Grace*, in French *Le Bénédicité,* as an example of an autographic object with plural immanence.[88]

[86] Genette describes his use of the term 'regime' in note 33 as "two kinds of functioning [that] are mutually exclusive for a given work, which cannot be autographic and allographic at the same time, just as a country cannot simultaneously be a republic and a monarchy" (Genette 1997a, 16).
[87] The second mode, named 'partiality of immanence', occurs when a work manifests itself in a fragmentary manner like a 'lacunary manifestation', such as the statue of the *Venus de Milo*, or 'indirect manifestation', such as copies, reproductions or descriptions. An indirect manifestation is something that "can provide more or less precise knowledge of a work, whenever the work itself is definitively or temporarily absent" (Ibid., 218). The third is the 'plurality of effect'. In this mode, a single object manifests itself or operates in a different way, depending on time, place, individuals or circumstances. By producing a plurality of receptions, a work never exactly generates the same effect twice and it is never invested with exactly the same meaning (Ibid., 237).
[88] Jean-Siméon Chardin (1699–1779) made the three versions in 1740, 1746, and 1761. The three paintings are now kept at the Hermitage in St. Petersburg, at the Louvre in Paris, and at the Nationalmusem in Stockholm, respectively. A different version of the painting with a young boy on the left exists and is attributed to Chardin. This is currently in the collection of the Museum Boijmans van Beuningen in Rotterdam.

> Pluralities of immanence […] are not peculiar to the allographic regime: multiple autographic works like *The Thinker* or *Melancholia* also immanate […] in several objects, obtained by imprint, while plural autographic works, like *Saying Grace,* immanate in several objects obtained when a work is copied, by the original artist or someone else. (Genette 1997a, 112).

Thus, Genette recognized the possibility for artworks to exist as plural entities. He wrote about 'multiple immanence' when differences, stemming from the production process, are accidental and unintended, while he referred to 'plural immanence' for the variations that are deliberately made by the artist. The author was well aware of the complexities of defining the subtle differences between these two categories and how these are, for the most part, the result of cultural norms and conventions. By acknowledging the arbitrary nature of this classification, he claimed:

> This distinction, which is of course more cultural than "ontological", is also more gradual than categorical, since, as we have seen, prints pulled from the same plate are often so different that specialists do not at all regard them as equivalent (Ibid., 163).

Despite these difficulties, he considered the different versions of a painting, drawing or carved sculpture as examples of plural immanence, while the changes of various casts or prints are illustrations of multiple immanence. Here again, the main difference between the two groups is given by the mode of production. For Genette, the existence of the 'model' and the mechanical process of realization are fundamental for marking the difference between the autographic works of art and multiple autographic ones as well as for the categorization between plural and multiple immanence.

The production of a new version of a painting is, thus, fundamentally different from printing several photographs from the same negative. In the first instance, the artist has deliberately decided to make a new version by making something that is considered sufficiently similar to the previous painting. Or, as Genette has contended, the new version of a work is:

> Different from the first in one degree or another, yet sufficiently similar to (and derivative of) it for cultural convention to treat it as *another version* of the same work rather than *another work* (Ibid., 164).

As a result of similar cultural conventions, the noticeable and material differences among the various photographic prints are de facto overlooked and the multiple prints are perceived as identical. Or as Genette has argued:

> Cultural convention accords a *common identity* to all proofs of "multiple" works. It effectively annuls their differences by treating these as purely technical, setting each proof in an (optional) relation of *artistic equivalence* with all others […] Works with replicas, in contrast, stand in an (additive) relation of complementarity (Ibid., 172. Emphasis added).

Since the borders between multiple and plural immanence are fluid and dictated mostly by convention, it is possible to depart from Genette's framework and suggest here a different viewpoint about the works under study. It is my intention to propose a mode of plural immanence for the photographic artworks, rather than one of multiple immanence. This shift makes it possible to recognize, as relevant aspects of the artworks, the visible material and artistic differences between the various sets of prints. Hence, it allows a certain degree of variation, which is inevitable when the works were or are going to be reproduced. This position moves away from the stance that conventionally considers the various prints as equivalent to each other. This decision comes, however, along with some theoretical difficulties. In certain cases, it might be problematic to reconcile Genette's ideas with this new proposition.

Plural immanence: Theoretical difficulties

To accept the works under study as works with plural immanence, it is necessary to reassess how much an artist should be engaged in the creation of a new version. According to Genette, the involvement of the artist is indispensable for works with plural immanence, while it is not for works with multiple immanence. About this distinction, he argued:

> The task of taking multiple proofs [of multiple autographic works] can be (and usually is) entrusted to simple craftsmen, while it is a defining condition of a replica, in the sense under consideration here [autographic works with more than one versions], that it be realized (at least in part) by the original artist (Ibid.).

In this view, the production of a new set of photographs can be delegated to others as the model guarantees enough identicalness among the various prints. As will be analysed in the following chapters, this stance is true to a degree. In the case studies, professional workers rather than the creating artists were involved in the reprinting

and the physical manufacture of the works. For example, Dibbets assigned the printing, the cropping, the mounting of the photographs, and the application of dry transfer letters to his technical assistants because of his aversion to being involved in the process of copying an artwork rather than being active in an artistic process (Dibbets, Van Adrichem and De Herder 2003, 32). Because of financial constraints, Baldessari entrusted the cropping and the application of dry transfer letters to the Van Abbemuseum and he agreed that these activities would take place without his direct supervision. Van Der Kaap left the industrial application of acrylic and aluminium sheets to specialized technicians. In this regard, Genette's opinion about delegating to craftsmen applies to these works. Yet, when the reproduction process is studied in more detail, it becomes clear that Genette's view applies only partially. The artists might not have been engaged manually in the process, but they were very much involved at a conceptual level. All three had a decisive role in the realization of the works: Baldessari requested that the reprinting occur in Los Angeles rather than in the Netherlands, Van Der Kaap deliberately chose for a German photographic lab because of its high working standards, Dibbets and Van Der Kaap were deeply involved in the assessment and determination of the colours for the new prints.

From the twentieth century and onwards, the physical realization of a work of art and its authorship do not necessarily coincide. Countless examples are known where the makers of the objects do not correspond with the authors of the works.[89] On this subject, art historian Martha Buskirk has convincingly argued that in contemporary art practices the removal of the 'artist's hand' in the making process may actually increase the importance of the artistic authorship. Since the physical object has become increasingly unable to identify what constitutes the work, the work of art relies heavily on the presence, the decision-making, and the conceptual engagement of the artist (Buskirk 2005, 15). This insight might help to overcome the distinction between multiple and plural works and recognize the involvement of Baldessari, Dibbets, and Van Der Kaap at a decisional and conceptual level rather than a manual engagement.

A second theoretical difficulty in considering the case studies as works with plural immanence comes from the following question. Are the various versions equivalent or complementary to each other? According to Genette, a work with multiple immanence

[89] Genette was aware of this development, as becomes clear in his analysis of Marcel Duchamp's (1887–1968) ready-mades, *Bottle-rack* (1914) and *L.H.O.O.Q.* (1919). Here he discussed "the regime of immanence of a very special sort of work, which has appeared only very recently, and which we call [...] *conceptual*" (Genette, 1997a, 135). The author suggested that the act of proposing becomes the work itself, but he warned at the same time "that the work consists in the act does not entirely neutralize the specificity of the object [...] to exhibit a boiler is not to exhibit a bottle-rack" (Ibid., 137).

has a relationship of 'artistic equivalence' to the various proofs, while a work with plural immanence has a relationship of 'artistic complementarity' to the various versions:

> *The Thinker* immanates in this particular cast or in another, the assumption being that, when you have seen one, you have seen them all [...] *Saying Grace* immanates in a certain painting *and* in these others, so that looking at one of them does not free you of the obligation to look at the others (Genette, 1997a, 172).

Here, the question arises of whether the case studies' various set of prints has a relationship of artistic equivalence or of artistic complementarity with each other. In other words, should the versions be considered the same by overlooking the material and aesthetic differences? Or are the various prints supplementary and, in order obtain exhaustive knowledge of the work, should all the versions be seen and studied? These questions remain open to debate, but it is my opinion that a conservator needs to examine all the existing versions as much as possible. An art historian will also probably need to compare the various versions as well as a specialist in photographic materials and techniques. By seeing and studying a number of versions, these specialists will decode, date, and reconstruct as far as possible, and they will critically interpret the creating process of a plural artwork. For a less specialized viewer, one version will probably suffice and there will be no need to study all the different stages of the creating process.

By looking and studying the material and technical characteristics, conservators are able to gather clues and, together with other specialists, formulate conclusions.[90] Every difference in material and technique will lead to other clues and therefore to other conclusions. On the one hand, the examination of just one of the versions will give a partial understanding of the artwork and the knowledge will be limited to just that specific photograph. On the other hand, by considering the various prints as complementary, standing next to each other, and therefore regarding the case studies as works with plural immanence, the complexity of the work and its creating process is retained.

[90] It should be noted that visual inspection is just one the first steps in the material artefacts' assessment and a great range of scientific analyses also exist. Conservators in collaboration with conservation scientists can perform non-invasive, non-destructive, and destructive analysis on small samples taken from the studied object or directly on the artefact itself. They can employ enhanced imaging techniques to reveal characteristics that are invisible to the naked eye. They can, by means of reconstruction, mock-ups sample, and accelerated ageing, try to predict the artefacts' behaviour in the future.

As will be discussed in chapter five, by studying the reproduction of Van Der Kaap's *Xiada (Girls' dorm) Xiamen,* the study and the attentive close examination of editioned photographic works may clash with practical obstacles, such as limited economic as well as human resources. Additionally, it might be difficult to trace all the existing versions of an editioned work and sometimes the different prints might be inaccessible for research. This insight also poses questions about the level of complementarity in limited editions of the various photographs, between each other as well as with the prints that have been reproduced at a later moment.

Some consequences of plural immanence

The existence of various versions poses questions about the boundaries that delimit a plural work. Certain versions might be regarded as a part of the work while others are not. Genette argued that there are motives or factors, "induced [by] prevailing usage, to regroup a certain number of non-identical objects and call them 'the same work'" (Ibid., 204). Depending on the type of work and the way it is produced, different criteria might be required in order to set the limits of the work. For the artworks under study, two factors are, in my opinion, necessary and must be taken into account. The first factor is what Genette called 'identity of mode' and this concerns, for example, that two versions are the same type of work, like two paintings and not a painting and a drawing, or two novels and not a novel and a play. The second factor is the 'genetic identity' and it implies that the various versions should be conceived and produced by or under the supervision of the same author.

If the works under study are regarded as works with plural immanence, this entails that the works are formed by the totality of the various versions. When a new version substitutes the previous one, the material characteristics and qualities of the various versions become part of a greater whole. In this sense, the "work with plural immanence does not consist in each object of its immanence, but in their totality" (Ibid., 210). Consequently, the knowledge about this type of work is not restricted to the microscopic level of the clues and the singular history of each individual version, but it is formed by the totality of the group. By acknowledging the possibility of plural immanence, this insight moves away from the assumption of a single artwork, whose material condition reveals simultaneously its identity as well as the artist's intent, towards a more complex relationship among the parts, where each version stands alone but is simultaneously related to the others, and the sum of the parts form the artwork's totality.

Plurality is thus limited to the versions made during the artist's life and therefore posthumous reproductions will be not included in the plural immanence of the studied works. The criterion of genetic identity (same author) leaves a substantial mark when

defining if a reproduction should be regarded as a version or as a faithful copy made by a copyist, working without the direct involvement of the artist. In this reading, the artwork's moment of completion is not fixed, but rather it evolves until the artist's death. The 'restriction' derived from the genetic identity has deep repercussions on the care of these objects. According to this view, the reproduction of photographic artworks should occur under the artist's direct supervision. Subsequently, reproduced works after the artist's death cannot be considered as 'legitimate' substitutions of a damaged exemplar by a pristine version; instead, they should be regarded as copies, which are not part of the plural work.

This reading implies that the so-called freeze frame paradigm traditionally used in conservation is stretched over time. In this view, a certain degree of change is allowed, determined by the artist during his or her life. Conservators can embrace change according to these given boundaries and the freezing of artwork occurs after the creation of the latest version. This implies that the conservative parameters, generally used for display and long-term storage of photographic material, do apply and should be respected for all the various versions. Plurality of immanence is not a licence to reproduce over and over the same image; it is bound to criteria and the preservation precautions are as strict as for other photography materials – also because the replication of multiple autographic artworks is just one of the possible options. The artist may choose to reprint his of her work, but he or she may also decide not to reproduce it. Moreover, as the totality of a plural work is formed by the various versions, each of them should be kept and the same degree of care applied.

Plurality also raises questions about relational hierarchy. Is each version the same? Is one version considered better or worthier than the rest? In his book, Genette does not deal with this question. He saw the totality of the versions as 'the work'. It should, however, be recognized that in visual arts it is common usage and practice to give predominance to the first version in time.[91] Generally, greater artistic and

[91] A hierarchical attitude within the art production is widespread in Western culture. Already from the fifteenth century onwards, a different appreciation existed between the various versions of an artwork made within a painter's studio. According to De Marchi and Van Miergroet, a *principaal*, a work that is not a copy, is more expensive than a copy done by the artist himself (1994, 451–464). On the other hand, in studying the workshop practice of Pieter Breughel the Younger (1564–1636), Currie and Allart state that the words *principael* and *origineel* covered a conceptual field, whose boundaries were still undefined. These two terms were associated with the excellence of the work and especially about its execution. The two authors also add that it would be tempting to add the connotation of *inventio*, the creative impulse behind the work, but from the written sources it is not certain that "this factor conditioned common judgment and weighed on distinctions made in the marketplace" (Currie and Allart 2012, 68). For further readings on the various values given to paintings in the seventeenth century in the Netherlands and the different scholarly views on this issue see Tummers and Jonckheere 2009.

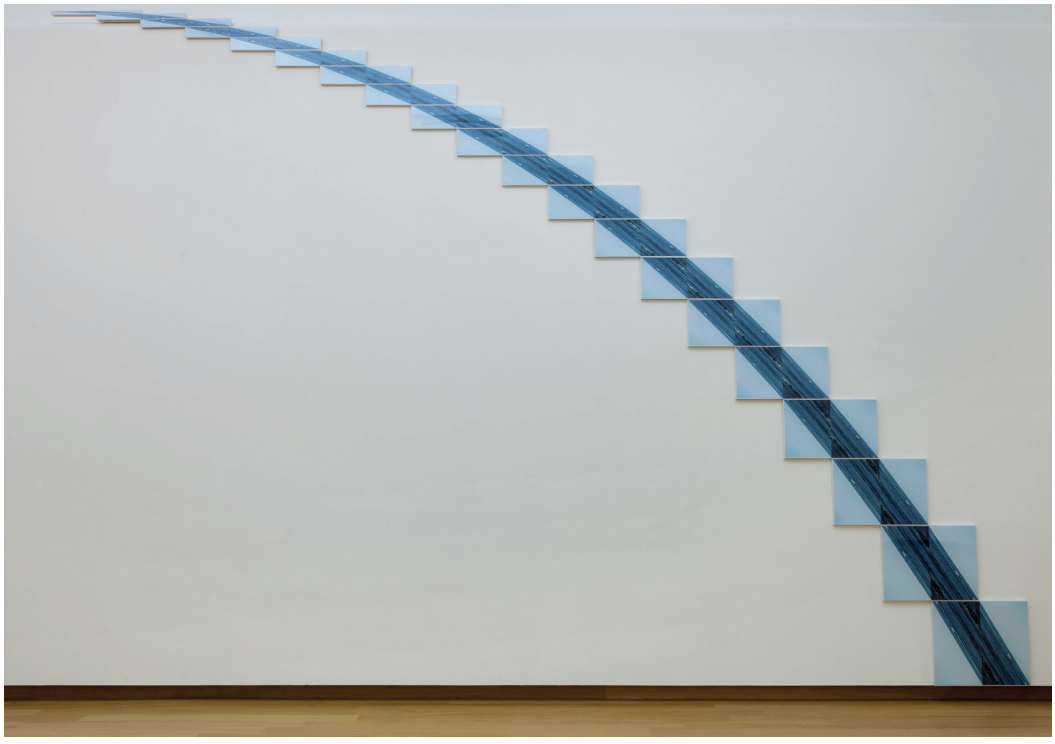
often economic value is given to the one version that has originated as the first in the creative process. The art market tends to recognize greater commercial and economic importance to so-called vintage photographs, subsequently to lifetime prints, and, lastly, posthumous ones. When more than one version exists, as often occurs in time-based media and installations, conservators, together with other stakeholders, and where possible with the artist, try to define what the artwork's constitutive and contingent elements are. Furthermore, they tend to establish which version should be considered the representative model and reference for future installations. Often, the first version is considered archetypal but, just as frequently, successive reiterations might also become the *exemplum* to follow. When a model is selected for future presentations a hierarchy among the versions is established. Practical and financial constraints as well as culturally driven processes often dictate the prevalence given to one version over others. Yet, as a note of caution, the predominance of a version might undermine the notion of artworks' plural immanency. Plurality of immanence has been proposed here as a theoretical instrument that can help conservators in dealing with photographic artworks that have been reproduced. Defining boundaries and criteria may assist conservators in outlining what is a 'legitimate' version and what is not. It provides insight into which preservation approach should be followed and pursued.

To summarize, the main purpose of chapter two has been to problematize the concept and the practice of reproduction. Employing Genette's and Ginzburg's theoretical frameworks drew attention to the tension and discomfort conservators may feel when material characteristics are considered to be too small to be recognized.[92] It was also proposed to use the notion of plural work for photographic artworks existing in more than one version, in order to avoid the hierarchical characterization of original and subsequent copies. Moreover, this view may be helpful for the appreciation and acknowledgement of material differences among various versions. The following chapters will provide more detail about the conservation history of the four case studies. They will examine why the reproduction was initiated and who was involved in the process. They will look into the (material) differences of the various versions. But, above all, these conservation histories will reveal how decision-making is the result of a working process with no pre-definite choices. It is rather the outcome of shifting views on what a photographic artwork is and the practice of reproduction.

[92] This tension was recognizable during the symposium 'Uniques and Multiples' organized by the ICOM-CC Photographic Material Working Group (PMWG) The majority of the speakers were photograph conservators and they had ethical questions about the reproduction of unique photographic works.

3

The reproduction of *Comet Sea 3°–60°*



This chapter examines the first of the four artworks under study — one by Jan Dibbets, *Comet Sea 3°–60°* (1973), which is now part of the Stedelijk Museum collection. It is particularly interesting for this dissertation for several reasons: First, it entered the museum's collection just one year after its creation, thus complying right from the start with museum standards regarding display and conservation. Second, an artist who began as a painter and not as a photographer made this piece. Until recently within the Stedelijk Museum, a photographic print could be categorized as either a photograph or an autonomous artwork. This system of classification had a long-lasting effect on the status of the object and on subsequent conservation issues. Since *Comet Sea 3°–60°* was from the beginning considered an autonomous work of art, it was judged according to the principles of originality, uniqueness, and aesthetic innovation that apply to contemporary works of fine art, such as paintings and sculptures. These standards privileged the individuality of the single object rather than the multiplicity of photographic prints. Third and most important is that this work challenged the issue of uniqueness that the art historical canon usually favours. In its forty years' existence, this piece has been reproduced twice: the first time in 1996, and the second in 2012. On both occasions the artist's technical assistant did the reproduction under the supervision of Dibbets himself.

The intent of this chapter is to apply Gérard Genette's theoretical framework to the three versions of *Comet Sea 3°–60*. The first part of the chapter will mainly engage with two questions: Is it possible to define the visible differences among the various versions of *Comet Sea 3°–60°* by using the classifications of constituent and contingent features? Are there any theoretical difficulties of putting this categorization into practice? The second section examines issues that became apparent during the visual investigation of the artwork, such as Dibbets' opinion about patina and the way the work is signed and dated.

The first section has a descriptive function and attempts to put into words a visual assessment — from full-size to microscopic view — performed by a conservator. However, it also takes into account Dibbets' artistic background, and in particular, his use of photography as a conceptual artist. It subsequently analyses the material narrative of this particular work, focusing on its conservation history. This is my first attempt to apply Genette's theoretical framework to my practice as a conservator. As will become clear further on, this method does not resolve every incongruity met during the reproduction process, as a clear-cut division between constituent and contingent features is sometimes difficult to establish. Choices were made due to unpredictable circumstances or to the contingency of the available materials and techniques, blurring the classifications.

Dibbets, working with André van Oort — former paper conservator of the Stedelijk Museum as well as Dibbets' technical assistant — faced unexpected situations when the artwork was damaged and had to be replaced. A meticulous technical process was necessary, and the artist had to make complex choices and accept compromises. In Van Oort's report, the pivotal role of Dibbets in the decision-making stands out. Moreover, the struggle to find the correct paper and colour underscores that, in practice, the reprinting of an artwork is a difficult matter, and it draws attention to the previously expressed stance that the identicalness of multiple autographic objects, in this case photographic prints, is in reality only a matter of convention. It is because of this implicit understanding or 'myth' of reproduction, embedded in and accepted by society at large, that conformity among the various versions is agreed upon.[93] In the last part of this section, I will argue that in some instances, both of Genette's categories actually coexist in the artwork's three versions, and certain characteristics may be thought of as simultaneously constituent and contingent properties. Nonetheless, the division is helpful for a conservator because it contributes to the articulation and refinement of complex ideas revolving around the notion of reproduction of multiple autographic artworks.

The second section has a more critical approach. This part offers insight into Dibbets' attitude toward reproduction and discusses how his position on this issue, in the long run, reveals a certain discomfort. According to the artist, any sign of discolouration or wear and tear in *Comet Sea 3°–60°* is disturbing and should therefore be avoided. His unwillingness to consent to a weathering of the photographic prints is in line with the iconicity of the depicted subjects of sea and sky, and with the fact that any yellowing of the photographs might be viewed as an index of the time passing by. The last part of the section examines Dibbets' changing practices in signing and dating his works over time.

Before analysing the reproduction process of *Comet Sea 3°–60°*, attention should be drawn to the fact that, for Dibbets, reproduction is not a practice that can be employed for all his photographic works, rather it can only be envisioned in specific cases. In discussing the well-being of his works with the staff of the Stedelijk Museum, Dibbets has made clear that other works in the museum's collection are not suitable for reproduction. This different approach can be dictated, for example, by material and technical limitations, as in the case of his works printed on photographic canvas. The unavailability of light sensitive canvas makes it impossible to reproduce these works.

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[93] In this dissertation the term 'myth' is used in a general manner, meaning "a popular belief or tradition that has grown up around something or someone," as stated by the *Merriam-Webster Dictionary*; see http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/myth [accessed 15 October 2015].

3.1 *Comet Sea 3°–60°* material narrative

Comet Sea 3°–60° in the context of Jan Dibbets' early works (1969–73)

Comet Sea 3°–60° (Fig. 2) is an artwork made up of colour photographs, framed and mounted according to a mathematical sequence. The various parts are arranged in such a way that they form a comet tail on the wall.

Many of Dibbets' interests of the end of the 1960s and beginning of the 1970s merged in *Comet Sea 3°–60°*. The artist's investigations of photography as a means to explore the notion of representation and its conventions coalesce with the monumental use of colour, and with the recurrent themes of horizon and nature as starting points for making art.

Like other conceptual artists, Dibbets developed his reflections on the technical properties of photography (Berrebi 2014, 145). He was not primarily interested in the creation of an aesthetically pleasing photographic image, but in the analysis of what constitutes a photograph. By rotating the camera on its axis, taking series of photographs in a systematic way, increasing the shutter speed, and changing the heights of the tripod, Dibbets started to reflect on illusion and reality, on the difference between what the camera sees and what the human eye sees. He focused on the "observation of the observation" (Fuchs 1972, 10). Dibbets was involved in the dialogue, or rather the discrepancy, between the subject and the photographic camera; for artistic purposes, he intentionally used a so-called 'perspective distortion' in which an object and its surroundings would appear to differ from what they would look like with a normal focal length.

This principle is very well expressed in the *Perspective Correction* series (1967–69). Here, Dibbets questioned the principles of perspective and monocular view of the camera lens to create the illusion of perfect geometrical figures. The squares, however, are in direct contradiction to the perceived recession of the realistic surroundings. For example in *Perspective Correction — My Studio II* (1969) (Fig. 3), Dibbets drew a trapezium on the floor of his studio. The geometrical figure was marked with white tape and subsequently photographed with a camera. The resulting photographic image did not correspond with the actual figure taped on the floor as, in the work, the trapezium looks like a square.[94] This optical illusion is in direct contrast with the

[94] Dibbets briefly described the way he produced the *Perspective Correction* series by stating: "I drew a trapezium on a gradient plane, for example on the wall of a room or applied on a lawn […] Due to the perspective, this trapezoid appeared as a pure square in the photograph" (Leeber 1972, English translation is by the author).

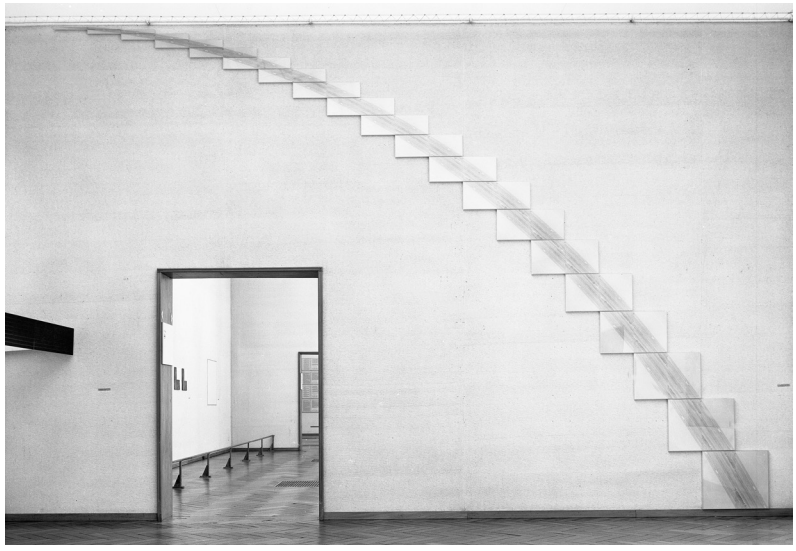


Figure 2 Jan Dibbets, *Comet Sea 3°–60°*, 1973, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam. Photograph taken around 1974–1975.



Figure 3 Jan Dibbets, *Perspective Correction—My Studio II*, 1969, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, gelatine silver photograph printed on canvas.

realism of the photograph, which accurately shows all the details of the artist's studio. This 'incident' can manifest itself and be observed only by the camera from a specific, fixed position, and thus underlines the difference between the observations made by the photographic camera and the human eye.

The choice of printing this work, as others of the same series, on canvas was a deliberate one. As a matter of fact, Dibbets definitively gave up painting in 1967, as other conceptual artists did before and after him. He abandoned that practice, which he perceived as a worn-out art form, adopted photography as his preferred artistic medium, and printed photographs on canvas as an artistic statement.[95] Dibbets wanted to produce monumental works with the same 'wall power' as paintings. However, at the end of the 1960s, it was technically impossible to create very sizable photographic works because large-format photographic paper was, at the time, unavailable. As a reaction to this limitation, Dibbets used light-sensitive canvases or assembled small photographs to form a greater ensemble, as in the *Comet* series. Through these expedients, he could achieve the same monumentality associated with paintings (Dibbets, Van Adrichem, and De Herder 2003, 16). But above all, by creating large photographic artworks, Dibbets was able to introduce photography into the realm of fine art.

In succeeding years, the horizon entered Dibbets' artistic repertoire. According to art historian Erik Verhagen, this theme is "in all probability the subject that has most durably marked Dibbets' oeuvre" (Verhagen 2014, 82). Dibbets once said that he is not very interested in the emotion that certain sceneries may provoke or their beauty. For his works, Dibbets chooses landscapes based on the horizon and he argued: "What interests me is that they [landscapes] have a straight-line horizon. What in the world is more beautiful than a straight line?" (Leeber 1972, English translation is by the author).

In the film series *Horizon–Sea* and the following series, *Comet*, the horizon plays an essential role. In *Horizon–Sea*, the artist filmed the Dutch coast with a moving, tipping camera and started to investigate the skyline and how its appearance was affected by motion. Through the camera's tilting motion, he was able to manipulate the horizon: In *Horizon II–Sea*, the dividing line between sea and sky is still horizontal, but in *Horizon I–Sea* (1971) and *Horizon III–Sea* (1971) it becomes, respectively, vertical and diagonal.[96]

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[95] Around the same period, John Baldessari made similar choices. He too rejected painting, embraced photography for his artistic experimentations, and printed photographs on canvas. For further reference, see section, The role of photography in John Baldessari's conceptual works, in chapter four.

[96] Short fragments of the three works are to be viewed online on the website of LIMA; see http://www.li-ma.nl/site/catalogue/agent/jan-dibbets/3831 [accessed 18 December 2015].

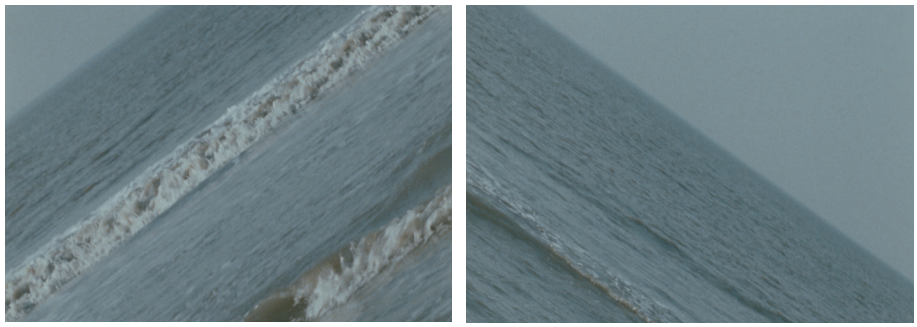


Figure 4 Jan Dibbets, *Horizon III–Sea* (1971), screen shot of two-channel 35mm colour film.

In *Horizon III–Sea* (Fig. 4), a film camera was fixed to a tripod in such a manner that it captured the images of the sky and the sea at a forty-five-degree angle. The film was presented at the Biennale of Venice in 1972 as a diptych with two diagonal seascapes moving randomly.[97] Dibbets used *Horizon III–Sea* as a source or as an inspiration for his subsequent work *Comet Sea 3°–60°*.[98]

Around the same period, Dibbets adopted colour photography as the privileged medium for his art. This may seem unimportant, but we should underscore that at the time, only amateur and advertising photographers used colour photography.[99] Fine art photographers were supposed to use black-and-white photographs for their images.

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[97] *Horizon III–Sea* is a two-channel 35mm colour film with no sound, shown on two adjacent screens, and it lasts about five minutes. The original film, part of the collection of the Stedelijk Museum, has now been converted into a two-channel digital video. For further reference, especially on the work's display at the Venice Biennale in 1972, see Hoogeveen 2008.

[98] In most literature, a film still of *Horizon III–Sea* is considered the direct source for *Comet Sea 3°–60°*, and this might be corroborated by a statement that Dibbets made about the interdependence of films and photographs. The artist: "I was a great fan of [Eadweard] Muybridge, who I discovered at the beginning of 1968 […]. From that moment, film was for me nothing more than a huge lot of photographs. I made [a] few works out of my films, such as *Louverdrape [Vertical Blinds,* 1971], by having photographs printed from the stills" (Dibbets cited in Cherix 2009, 72). Gert Hoogeveen, head of the audio-visual's department at the Stedelijk Museum, questions the sources for the images forming *Comet Sea 3°–60°* (oral communication to the author, May 2015).

[99] In 1976 the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) of New York organized a William Eggleston exhibition. This was the first one that exclusively displayed colour photographs. Among professional critics, the Eggleston's show generated a great deal of controversy because it presented colour prints and violated the prevailing preference for black-and-white photography. For further reference, see Hiott 2010, 155–65.

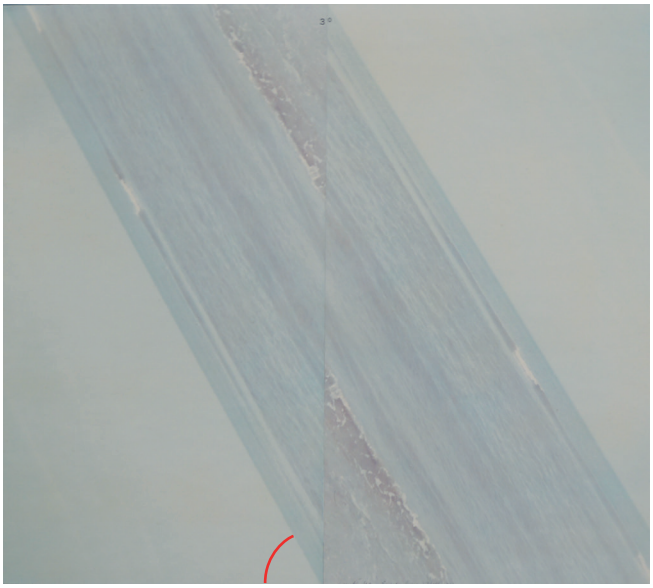


Figure 5 *Comet Sea 3°–60°*, part *3°*. The red arc indicates the angle formed by the photograph's plane and the diagonal formed by the horizon.

Colour photography enabled Dibbets to maintain the link with the surrounding world in a much stronger way than black-and-white images did. The images' departure point is observable reality, and as such it should be recognizable by the public. The sea and the sky are blue, and in that way they should be depicted, Dibbets contended.

In 1973 the artist started to produce a series known as *Comets*, in which he 'recycled' earlier forms and concepts by transporting and transforming them into new structures. Numerous cut-out colour photographs, mounted and framed separately, formed each work of this group. The framed images, hung according to a specific mathematical sequence, created an arc or a comet tail on the wall that it might suggest the earth's curvature; through a specific arrangement, the sum of the photographic images produced a horizon line. The *Comets* are a synthesis in which "the conflict between visual and conceptual is boldly led to a perfect solution" (Vos 1980, n.p., quoted in Verhagen 2014, 95). *Comet Sea* 3°–60° and the *Comets* series elegantly blend the monumentality of a wall-filling installation with Dibbets' fundamental ideas about nature, observation, photography, and abstraction.[100]

Comet Sea 3°–60° is composed of twenty rectangular units with the same width but decreasing height (see Fig. 2). It is a complex work that operates at several levels. As suggested by its title, the 'comet' tail on the wall visually catches the eye, at its first

level, while the second level, the 'sea', is discernible only by a closer examination of the photographs, which depict a tilted seascape. The notations on the separate units, from 3° to 60°, indicate the range of angles formed by the diagonal of the horizon line with the plane of the photograph (Fig. 5).

The angle formed by the diagonal increases each time by three degrees in each successive unit of the work. Thus the sequence is three, six, nine, and so on, up to sixty degrees. In order to 'conceal' or to make the mathematical sequence less obvious, Dibbets reversed the degree annotation written high in the middle of each photograph: part *3°* in reality has an angle of sixty degrees, and conversely, part *60°* has an angle of three degrees. Moreover, two mirror images are placed next to each other, forming a rhomboid. The base of the rhomboid remains constant, while the height decreases; each rhomboid is placed above the previous one in such a way that they form a continuous double seascape.[101]

Comet Sea 3°–60° and its conservation history

From a material point of view, the twenty parts of *Comet Sea 3°–60°* are framed, and each of them contains two identical chromogenic photographs cut, turned 180°, and placed next to each other. Each print's image side has an applied dry-transfer numeric annotation.[102] To fit the thickness of the frames, the photographs were glued onto a brownish cardboard. The pictures are printed on photographic paper, presumably with a polyethylene layer at the back. The exact type of paper employed for the manufacture of the photographs is unknown, since the prints' backs were glued onto the cardboard.

According to Van Oort's report, in 1994 Dibbets decided to scan the original negatives of the work and to store the resulting digital files on a CD-ROM. Preservation issues dictated this decision because the emulsion of the negative had small holes caused by mould or finger stains. To eliminate the damage and permit digitization, the artist allowed a new framing of the negatives and the removal of some clouds in

[100] Other works of the *Comet* series are the *Big Comet 3°–60°*; *Sky/Land/Sky* (1973), in the collection of the Vanabbe Museum, Eindhoven; the *Comet Land/Sky/Land 6°–72°* (1973), in the collection of the Castello di Rivoli, Turin; the *Comet, 6°–72°, Sky-Land-Sky* (1973), in the collection of the Centre Pompidou, Paris; and the *Comet Horizon 6°–72°, Sky/Sea/Sky* (1973), in the collection of the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra. This list is not comprehensive; it records the titles with their different notations, as referred to by the various collecting institutions.

[101] The base of each part measures approximately 59.5 cm, while the height progressively decreases. It starts at 51.3 cm for part *3°* and it ends at 1.6 cm for part *60°*.

[102] Dry-transfer letters are plastic characters with a layer of a pressure-sensitive adhesive on one side. The user burnishes the backing paper with a pen or instrument such as a stylus, causing pressure and the heat of friction to transfer the letters to a new surface from the backing paper.

the depicted sky. Because of these changes, the horizon was more sharply rendered, looking more like a geometric line, while the sky was flatter and showed less contrast.

In 1996, as a consequence of the inherent colour instability of chromogenic photography, the Stedelijk Museum and the artist were faced with extremely faded and discoloured prints. The serious yellowing was attributed to the use back in 1973 of an Agfa® spray.[103] This spray was probably a solvent-based coating and it was supposed to lower the glossiness of the photographic paper as well as give a matte look to the prints (Hill 2006, 365).[104] It was then decided to print new photographs from the scanned digital files, and the artist reproduced the work with Van Oort. The photographs were processed at the De Verbeelding photo lab, in Volendam, the Netherlands, and they were printed on a professional paper, Kodak Ektacolor® II, type 2839 A.[105] The artist did the colour determinations and final colour checking of the new prints.

According to Van Oort's report, the reprinting process was laborious and filled with difficulties. First, the photo lab made several test prints to reach the correct colour that Dibbets wanted. After the artist's final choice, it appeared that the photographic lab did not have enough sheets of the selected paper. Because of emulsion differences among various papers, many proofs were made before one paper came close to the one chosen by the artist. Second, the increased distance of the enlarger in order to print parts 9° and 6° resulted in higher light scattering, which consequently influenced the resulting colours of the prints. This difference affected the connections among the other parts, and therefore many other proofs had to be made to find the correct colour rendering that merged with the other photographs. Third, it appeared that the 1994 digitization of the original negatives to a CD-ROM was incomplete. The negative transfer of part 6° had occurred only partially. To avoid an interruption in the seascape's alignment, it was decided to shift the image a little bit. This minor rearrangement

[103] During an interview in 1997, Dibbets argued that back in the 1970s no mat photographic paper existed. He also stated that he had to use material produced by Agfa® in order to get a mat-looking paper. Unfortunately, all those photographic artworks treated in this way have now completely discoloured (Van den Boogerd 1997, 232).

[104] In the museum documentation, the coating is referred to by the German name Agfa *UV-Lichtschutzlack*, which literally means 'UV light screen lacquer/varnish.' Concerning the composition or ingredients, no other information is available. For further reference, see Weaver 2006, 201–17; Wilhelm and Brower 1993, 145–62.

[105] According to Van Oort's 1996 report, the photo lab employed Kodak Professional Paper Ektacolor® Ultra 11, type 2839 RA for the reprinting. During an Internet search, no mention of this paper was found. However, I have found information on a similar type, named Ultra II. I am assuming that Van Oort made a transcription mistake and the paper used is Ultra II rather than 11. On the back of the actual paper used for the reproduction, the brand name of Kodak Professional Paper is printed. The way Kodak's logo is shown is consistent with the *Ektacolour Paper Backprint Chronology* compiled by J. Michael Keirstead: http://gawainweaver.com/images/uploads/file/Ektacolor%20Backprint%20Chronology.pdf [accessed on 07 April 2017].

changed the waves' position in parts *6°* and *3°*. Last, part *3°* appeared to be too large, and it could not be printed on the paper that the artist had selected after many trial runs. Alternative sheets with a similar emulsion had to be found to match the colour of the other parts (Van Oort 1996, 2).

After the meticulous reprinting process, Van Oort cut the new prints by hand, and these had to have the exact same dimensions as those manufactured in 1973. Subsequently he joined each pair of photographs with a small strip of pressure-sensitive tape.[106] On the image side he applied dry-transfer letters, but he used a different font size: twenty rather than twenty-three points, as in the 1973 version.[107] Further complying with the artist's request, Van Oort substituted a round degree sign for the oval one.[108] The reproduced photographs were placed on top of the 1973 set in the same frame, separated by a layer of museum barrier paper.

Twelve years later — in April 2012 — during the preparations for the reopening of the Stedelijk Museum, Dibbets was invited to examine his works housed in the museum's collection and to comment on the way they looked. During that meeting, the artist expressed his disappointment about the appearance of the *Comet Sea 3°–60°*. He said that the colours of the 1996 version were again too weak. The colours ought to be vibrant and vivid, as only in this way could the arch of the comet tail have a visual impact on the wall. After internal staff discussion including the artistic director, the head of the collection, the curators, and the paper conservators, it was decided to reproduce the work once again. Also in this occasion, Dibbets and Van Oort supervised the reprinting process, the assemblage of the various parts, and the application of the dry-transfer lettering.

The photo lab Eyes on Media, located in Amsterdam, scanned the 1973 original negatives. A Durst Lambda® laser imager printed the digital files as chromogenic photographs on a Kodak Endura® paper.[109] The artist accepted the new photographs as a genuine replacement for the faded prints. Van Oort cut them according to the 1973 dimensions, joined them using small strips of pressure-sensitive tape that has an

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[106] The pressure-sensitive tape used was 3M® brand Magic Tape 810.

[107] Van Oort used Letraset® font Univers 55", type S7994 for both the numbers and the degree sign.

[108] Mecanorma® brand, type 65.12 CLN, with size of 2.7 mm.

[109] In his 2012 report, Van Oort mentioned the Lambda 130 HS as the laser imager employed during the reprinting process. However, during an Internet search, this model could not be found. The producer's website refers to Lambda 130 Plus or to the Lambda 131 HS. It is possible that Van Oort misspelled the machine's model number by accident. To retrieve the technical brochure of the 130 Plus and the 131 HS laser imagers, see http://www.professionecolore.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/lambda130_i.pdf and https://data2.manualslib.com/pdf/5/413/41211-durst/lambda_131_hs.pdf?125ff89c19223c41b47cd4c3596f5005 [both accessed 07 April 2017].

acrylic adhesive layer, and applied the dry-transfer letters using a different font series from those employed in 1973 and 1996.[110] Because of preservation issues, the museum's paper conservation department asked Van Oort to separate the two previous versions from the 2012 photographs, as well as from the frames wooden backing. As a result, the older prints were placed in archival boxes and kept in cool storage, while the new set was framed in the 1973 acrylic frames. Van Oort filled the resulting empty spaces within the frames by adding layers of museum cardboard. Moreover, as a barrier to the frames' wooden backs, he introduced thin sheets of polyethylene and aluminium.

Constituent and contingent features of the three versions

The process of reproducing *Comet Sea 3°–60°*, as it appears from Van Oort's reports, was far from easy and straightforward in both occasions. Because of the incomplete digitization of the analogue negatives in 1994, the artist had to adjust the cropping of the photographic images. Numerous trial proofs had to be made to find a satisfying colour rendering. In the following paragraphs, the visible differences and similarities among the three versions will be closely analysed and discussed as constituent or contingent features. The intent of this classification is to find out which characteristics remain constant in each iteration of the artwork, and which properties the artist has allowed to vary, as well as if there is any overlap between these two groups.

The three versions of the artwork, printed in 1973, 1996, and 2012, respectively, show aspects that truly remained constant, whereas other characteristics varied slightly. Dibbets showed a pragmatic attitude toward practical restrictions encountered during the reprinting process, and he believed that certain changes might positively affect the reprinted versions. The artwork's constituent elements will be analysed first, while its contingent features will be examined at the end of this section.

The constituent features kept in each successive reprinting are the framing of the photographs; the mounting and dimensions of the individual photographs, as well as the artwork in its totality; the printing technique; and the application of dry-transfer lettering.

The acrylic frames manufactured in 1973 are, as already noted, still in use today. The 2012 version of the work is permanently kept inside those frames, which were subsequently enclosed in a wooden crate (Fig. 6). The frames have a transparent glazing at the front, opaque white acrylic at the sides, and a wooden back with a hanging system. These are kept in place by small metal screws along the edges (Fig.

[110] Van Oorts used 3M® conservation and preservation tape, and for dry-transfer letters, the Mecanorma® font series Helvetica medium 22.20.24 N, with Alfac® 2004 for the degree symbol.

7). The frames clearly show signs of wear and tear, such as light scratches in the acrylic, some general yellowing of the plastic, and various labels glued to the back during the artwork's lifetime (Fig. 8). It is my opinion that utilization of the original frames contributes, to a certain extent, to the 'historical' feeling of the work. No one who is unaware of the reprinting would question the artwork's dating to 1973. Nonetheless, this 'added value' is, to my knowledge, unintended. Until now the frames were regarded as satisfactory, and therefore neither the artist nor the museum staff deemed their replacement necessary. This does not imply, however, that the 1973 frames will be kept when they are considered too damaged or worn out. The frames are supposed to protect the photographs and allow the artwork's installation on the wall in a correct and simple manner. They are not supposed to attract attention from the viewers.



Figure 6 *Comet Sea 3°–60°*, stored in its wooden crate. The twenty pieces forming the artwork are framed and stored vertically.

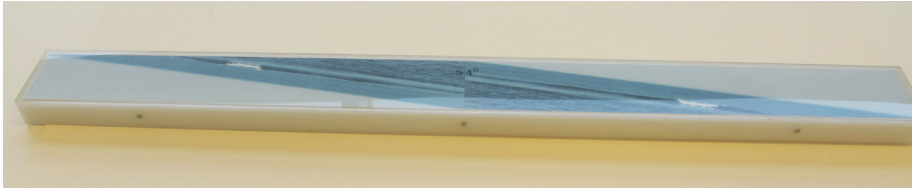


Figure 7 Frame's front and sides.



Figure 8 The frame's wooden back, with hanging system and inventory labels.

If their condition deteriorates to such an extent that they become disturbing, new frames will probably have to replace the original set. These would be manufactured with equivalent materials having the same dimension and look. A hint in this direction was given in 2012, during the last reprinting, when Van Oort argued that a remaking of the frames might soon be appropriate.[111]

Until now the frames have been a constant feature of the artwork. They have persisted for forty years, but they are not regarded as essential to the artwork.[112] Equivalent exemplars with similar materials and appearance may be as suitable as the older set. Thus one might say that the frame 'type' could be considered a constituent feature because it allows a proper installation and display of the work, but these specific frames themselves should be seen as a contingent element because they are allowed to vary to a certain extent.

The dimensions of the photographs and their mounting also remained constant during the reprinting. Both reports show that great care was taken to cut the new photographs according to the exact dimensions of the 1973 version. Van Oort wrote that all photographs were cut by hand. The indication of how to cut them was done by placing the original work on the new prints and, with a small needle, he denoted the corner points (Van Oorts 1996, 2).

In a meeting before the reprinting of 2012, Dibbets made clear that for him, it is very important to respect the dimensions of the work and its assembled nature, and not to use photographic techniques in an anachronistic fashion to the original work. The latter remark does presumably apply to visible elements like the printing techniques of

[111] Oral communication of André van Oort, May 2012.
[112] According to the classification proposed by Ian Geraghty, the *Comet Sea 3°–60°* frames might be regarded as 'supplementary frames.' In chapter four this classification is further described and analysed in relation to the delayed framing of Baldessari's work.

the photographs, but it does not seem to concern the 'invisible' elements of the work, such as the negatives. As a matter of fact, by scanning the original negatives, the artist employed a technique that was not available at the beginning of the 1970s.

However, the dimensions and the assembled nature of the work are important elements in Dibbets' creative process. To obtain photographs with 'wall-impact', Dibbets had to overcome material and technical limitations of the time, such as the unavailability of large-format photographic paper.[113] His answer to these restrictions was to create large objects composed of many smaller units, where the totality of these smaller elements resulted in a wall-filling installation. The artist, referring to the *Comet* series, declared that this type of work originated from a lack of possibilities (Dibbets, Van Adrichem, and De Herder 2003, 41). In other words, he made a virtue out of necessity. He also declared that it is essential to retain the correct dimensions and the assembled nature of the work during the reprinting process. To reproduce the *Comet Sea 3°–60°* as an 'uninterrupted' arch of twelve meters would be anachronistic, since that approach was technically impossible in the 1970s. Such a hypothetical reproduction would thus have to be labelled with another date.[114] For the artist, this larger work would essentially be a different one, since it would depart from the original idea stemming from his creative activity in the 1970s. From Dibbets' statements, it is possible to conclude that format and the assembled nature of the work ought to be viewed as constituent elements, and therefore should be kept during the reproducing process. The anachronistic use of technology and materials will be dealt with in more depth in chapters four and five.

The contingent features — the aspects that have been substituted by others during each reprinting — are the application of a coating on the surface of the 1973 photographs, the photographic paper, the letter type and size of the dry-transfer lettering, the image depicting the seascape, and the way Dibbets signed and dated the three versions.

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[113] About the unavailability of large format photographic paper, Dibbets has commented that back in the 1970s the printing of the photographs on a 40x40 cm paper format was extremely difficult and to print on larger paper was almost impossible. According to him, most people today are oblivious to the technological limitations faced by artists using photography as a medium at that time (Pontzen 1995, 35).

[114] In the *New Colour Studies* series, Dibbets digitally reprinted images he had photographed and printed in the 1970s. In this new series, the artist used the technological developments to his advantage, and this led to the creation of new abstract works. Since this concerns new works and not a reproduction of an existing work, the identifying labels carry another date and state the use of the newer technology. This approach was put into practice during the exhibition 'Jan Dibbets Colour Studies 1976–2014', held at the Stedelijk Museum between May and July 2016. For further reference, see http://stedelijk.nl/tentoonstellingen/jan-dibbets-colour-studies-1976-2014 [accessed 18 July 2016].

The application of the coating was a one-off activity determined by the shiny look of the acrylic frames and the lack of matte photographic paper at the beginning of the 1970s. The *Comet Sea 3°–60°* photographs were necessarily printed on a glossy paper, but they would also get shiny frames. Dibbets was afraid that the combination of these two materials might cause disturbing reflections. To avoid interferences, Dibbets looked for possible solutions, which he found in a new varnish that the Agfa® firm had recently launched on the market. This material promised a matte appearance if sprayed on the surface of glossy photographic prints (Dibbets, Van Adrichem, and De Herder 2003, 44). Dibbets' wish to obtain a matte finish for his photographs resulted in use of the varnish on the 1973 prints, as well as on other photographic works belonging to the *Comet* series.

In 1996 Dibbets and Van Oort concluded that the easily discernible yellowing of *Comet Sea 3°–60°* was caused by the varnish application. Dibbets considered its use a technical mistake, since it had caused an unwelcome colour change. In this regard, the work's constituent element is the matte look of the photographs rather than the specific use of the coating. The varnish was only a method of achieving such an appearance and not the end goal. During both reprinting processes (1996 and 2012), the artist and his assistant looked for photographic papers with a nonglossy finish, and thus the newly reproduced photographs did not need to be treated with a similar matting agent.

For the reproduction of his works, Dibbets generally permitted the use of modern materials. New photographs could be printed on recent photographic paper, easily found on the market at the time of the reprinting, instead of paper sheets that were only available in the 1970s. The artist was not interested in an 'archaeological' usage of the materials — a term intended here as an approach that gives pre-eminence to evidence, or historical value to materials or artefacts. In fact, in 1996, Dibbets selected Kodak Ektacolor® II, Type 2839 A, as the paper for the reprints, whereas in 2012 he chose Kodak Endura® professional paper. As recorded in interviews, the artist acknowledged the inherent instability of colour photography and embraced possible technological developments as improvements that could slow down eventual colour fading. Dibbets regarded colour modification as an undesirable alteration, and consequently, he was always looking for a better solution that diminished this unfavourable aging process. However, the artist also had explicit ideas about the look and feel of the photographic prints. He preferred not to use 'elaborate' photographic techniques or materials such as Cibachrome® because they looked too artificial to him, even if they had, allegedly, a better colour stability.[115] Dibbets' ideas about the way photographs should look like coincided with a 'de-skilling' approach present in conceptual art at the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s.

Conceptual artists employed photography to break ties with painting and sculpture, which at the time were perceived by many as the mainstream artistic practices that had to be disrupted or even overthrown. But in their critique against the art establishment, conceptual artists did not use 'art photography' with its pictorial suavity and technical sophistication, but turned instead to 'amateur photography' and to the materials and techniques intended for the consumer market. The de-skilling of photography was one of the ways that conceptual artists used to reconnect with the medium beyond the worn-out criteria of picture making (Wall 1996, 248). Within this type of photography, technical and material lack of sophistication should thus be viewed as a conscious artistic choice that underscores the conceptual critical discourse. In Dibbets' initial engagement with photography, his unassuming techniques and materials corresponded to a similar deliberate choice, and therefore should be regarded as a significant aspect of his early works. To summarize, on the one hand, the material specificity of the various papers should be considered a contingent element, which is — up to a certain degree — allowed to change. On the other hand, the 'down-to-earth look' plays an important role in Dibbets' artistic and aesthetic research, so it should be considered a constituent feature of the artwork.

With regard to the use of dry-transfer lettering, a similar approach can be detected. The use of this technique might be considered a constituent element, as it was reiterated in each reprinting. However, the specific letter types and fonts are not viewed as essential characteristics of the work. The numbers in the different versions are similar but not identical, as the dimensions and the shapes vary. As Dibbets argued, the technique of rubbing letters or numbers onto a (photographic) surface is obsolete and has almost vanished. He stated that the slight visible differences were not produced on purpose but, since this lettering technique does not exist anymore, he was already satisfied in finding similar letters that he could use (Dibbets, Van Adrichem, and De Herder 2003, 45).

Dibbets made a distinction between a technique and the materials used in that specific technique. As stated previously, he took great care not to employ techniques in a way that was anachronistic to the initial work. Along with this line of thought, it would not have been permissible to apply numbers and degree annotations by means of digital techniques. For Dibbets, the use of dry-transfer lettering is essential because it corresponds to the techniques that were used in the 1970s, the period in which *Comet Sea 3°–60°* saw the light for the first time. This leads to the conclusion that the use of the initial technique should be viewed as a constituent feature, while the numbers

[115] For a technical description of Cibachrome®, see chapter five.

applied to the photographic surface do not necessarily need to be identical and can vary up to a certain degree. During each reprinting, the specific numbers' features have been substituted by others, so the letter types and fonts of these annotations should be considered as contingent properties (Fig. 9).

Margaret Hedstrom and Christopher A. Lee, scholars in the preservation of electronic records, have referred to a similar process during the identification of significant properties of a textual document. Certain features are difficult to classify as constituent or contingent as they may be "decomposed in sub-properties." For example, the property 'font' "can be further decomposed into sub-properties as font type, style, family, size, and colour" (Hedstrom and Lee 2002, 220). According to them, these sub-properties are relevant and worthy of replication if "changes in any of these sub-properties alter the appearance or the meaning of a digital object" (Ibid.). Similarly, for Dibbets, the characteristic dry-transfer lettering of the sub-properties do not fulfil a fundamental role in *Comet Sea 3°–60°*; they can be overlooked, and therefore replaced by other sub-properties. However, not only the types and the sizes of the dry-transfer letters changed; the photographic images were also modified in the two reprinted versions.

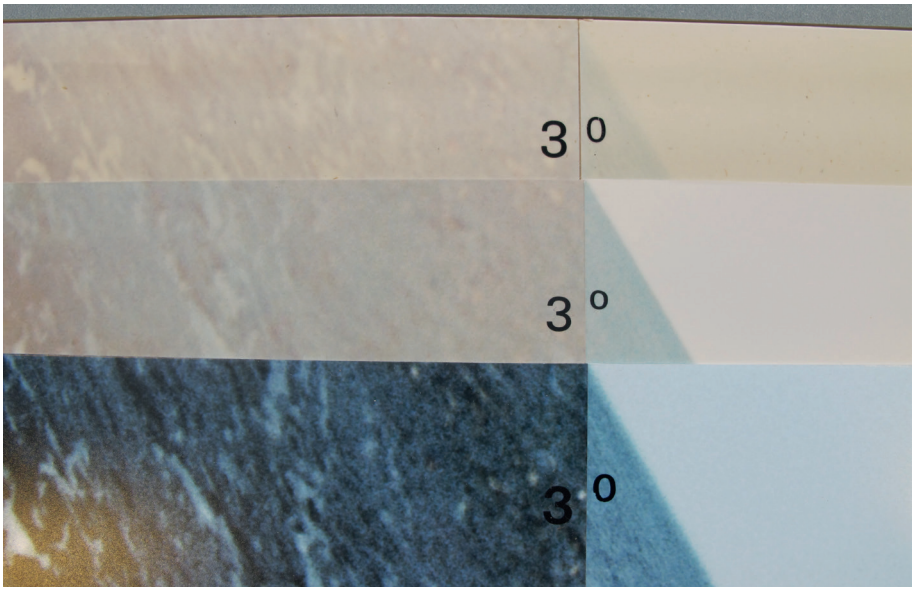


Figure 9 Detail of the three versions: 2012 (bottom), 1996 (middle), and 1973 (top), showing slight changes of the letter types and fonts.

These variations were the result of contingent circumstances: mould and finger stains on the 1973 set, and the partial transposition of the 1994 negatives into digital files.[116] These accidental drawbacks forced Dibbets to remove the clouds in the sky and to change the negatives' framing to avoid a visual interruption in the alignment of the comet's parts. These 'expedients' produced a different wave pattern and a more abstract skyline in the 1996 version. The red arrows shown below (Fig. 10), mark the presence of waves in the 1973 version and their absence in the 1996 version. The red circle indicates the position of the clouds in the 1973 version and pinpoints their absence in the 1996 version.

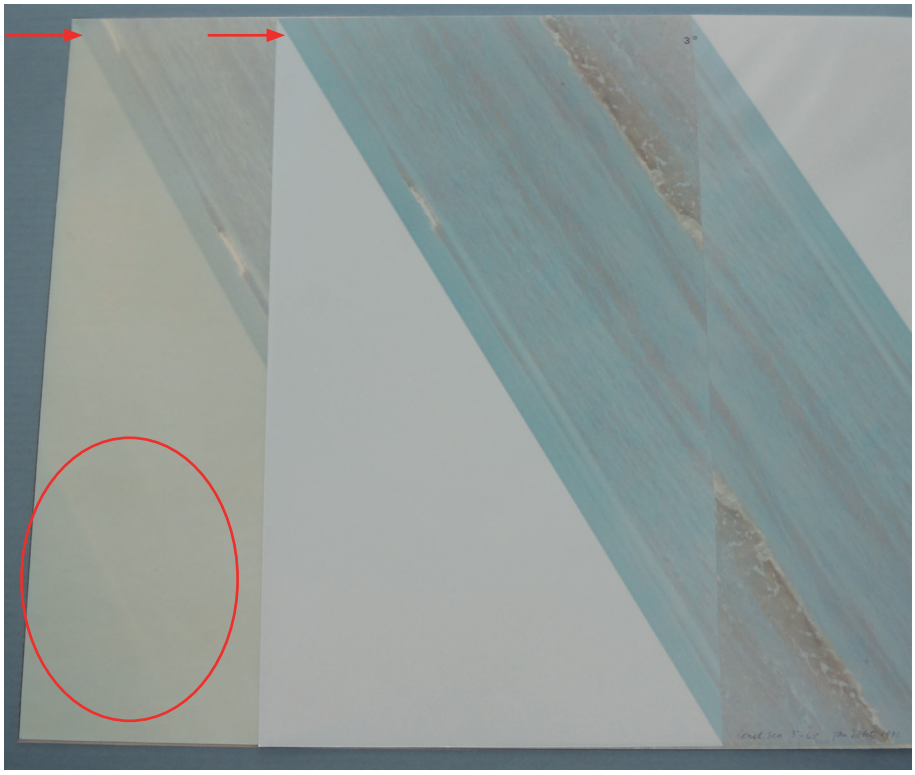


Figure 10 Two versions of part *3°*: 1973 (left), and 1996 (right). The circle indicates the presence of clouds in the sky; the arrows mark the differences in the wave pattern.

[116] In his report, Van Oort supposed that the 1973 negatives had been covered with a mask to avoid light scattering during the digitization process. This might explain the partial transposition of the negatives' images of parts *3°* and *6°* (Van Oort 1996, 2).

These variations resulted from contingent circumstances: Mould stains caused the removal of the clouds and the creation of a more abstract horizon in the 1996 version. Moreover, the negatives' partial transposition in the digital files produced a disruption in the images. To prevent this interruption, the images were moved a bit to the side, which resulted in an altered wave pattern. In 2012, the original negatives were scanned a second time, and the 1996 alterations were not repeated. The 2012 version rejected the changes present in the 1996 one and referred more closely to the 1973 version.

Another element that varies in each version is the way in which the artist signed and dated the works. The difference in signature and dating will be further analysed in the second section of the chapter.

In 2012, the 1973 negatives were scanned a second time, and the 1996 alterations were not repeated. The 2012 version eliminated the 1996 modifications and followed the 1973 version more nearly (Fig. 11). The changes in the *Comet Sea 3°–60°* negatives resulted in visible differences among the three versions and each version showed slight image variations. These alterations are challenging from a theoretical perspective, since they make problematic the convention around multiple autographic objects. As argued in chapter two, Genette defined multiple autographic objects as works that are not unique but are formed by several objects that are "more or less interchangeable from an artistic point of view and that the existence of such works depends on the fact that their 'history of production' includes two stages" (Genette 1997a, 44). The production mode of multiple autographic objects consists of two stages: In the first stage the model is created, then in the second stage several 'identical' objects are produced from the model. Examples of two-stage art forms are sculpture casting, printmaking, and photography, in which the mould, the printing plate, or the negative represents the model and the cast sculptures, the prints, and the photographs are the resulting artefacts in the second stage.

Genette also argued that the identical identity of multiple autographic objects rests upon a convention, intended as a recurrent practice or opinion based upon general consent. It is because of this implicit understanding accepted by society at large that the identical identity among the various versions is agreed upon: in the first place, by following the model in the first stage, and in the second place (and only up to a certain degree), by the material consistency of the various reiterations in the second stage. Variations in the model produce — in the second stage — different kind of artefacts, such as Rembrandt's several reworking of etching plates. In Rembrandt's example, each change is regarded as a stand-alone modification, and is thus recorded as a different state.

Comet Sea 3°–60° becomes problematic in this view. Because of the manipulation of the model (the negative), the 1996 photographic images are different from those

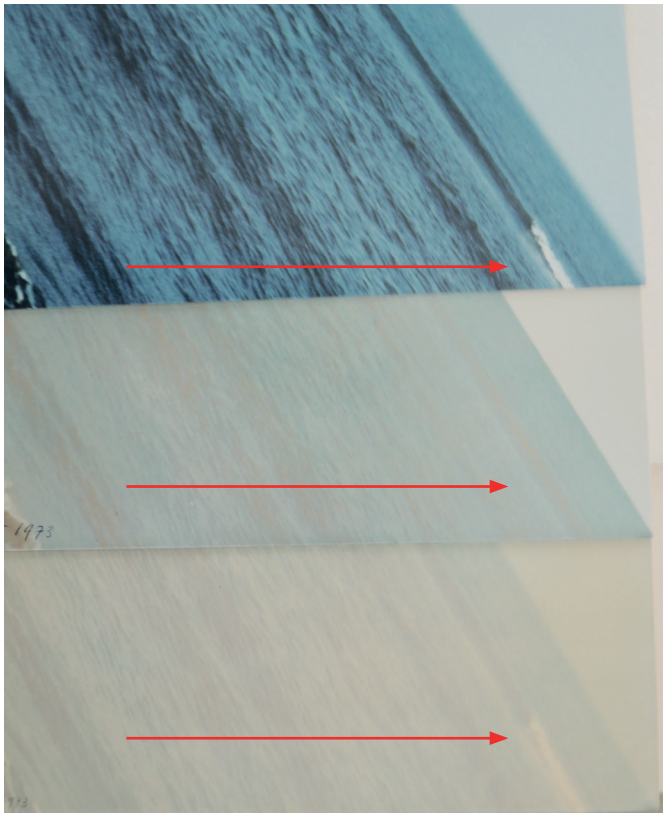


Figure 11 Details of 1973 (bottom), 1996 (middle), and 2012 (top) versions with altered wave patterns.

printed in 1973, producing a different artefact. However, the visual changes were apparently deemed so small that they did not compromise the overall reading of the artwork. In this case, the visual inconsistencies remained almost unnoticed, as there has been no record or documentation questioning the results of the process.[117] It appears that alterations in the first stage do not automatically correspond to acknowledgment of different artefacts in the second stage. Seemingly, the changes' magnitude plays an important role, too. If the modifications are small or 'insignificant', people conventionally tend to overlook them or perceive them as irrelevant.

[117] Van Oort's 1996 report is the one of the few written source that has mentioned the differences, but the report does not make any value judgment about them.

To conclude, we should note that an alteration in the arrangement of the *Comet Sea 3°–60°* did occur. This modification, however, does not involve a reproduction issue, and it theoretically applies to every version of this artwork. The latest building refurbishment of the Stedelijk Museum has changed the overall dimensions of the galleries, and two modifications in the way the work is presented became necessary. In comparison with the previous size, the room's walls are shorter in height, with a retroceding edge at the ceiling side and a retroceding plinth at the floor's edge. The arch formed by the twenty-framed elements is now too large, no longer fitting the altered gallery wall. The first modification concerns the highest two parts, *60°* and *57°*, which are not in contact with the wall anymore, but stick out suspended in mid-air. A wooden frame, invisible from the front, keeps these two elements in place. The other modification involves part *3°*, which, due to the recessed plinth, does not rest on the floor anymore (Fig. 12). Dibbets has given his approval to the museum for this adapted presentation. He specifically requested that part 3° should not rest on the museum's floor, and that the wall-line be considered the departure point for the building of the arch. This change indicates only the transformations that have occurred in the museum building, and consequently it should not be included in the classification of constituent or contingent features.

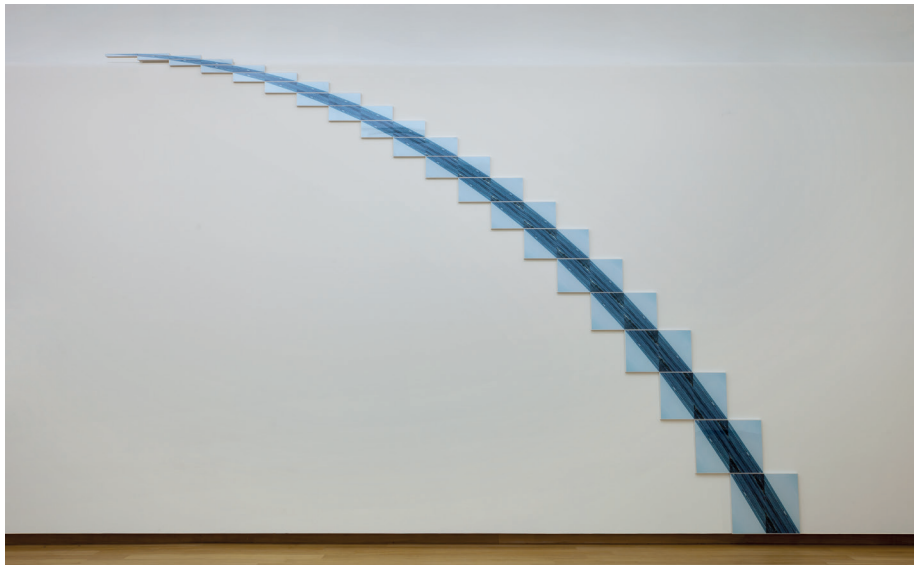


Figure 12 Display view in 2012 of the third version of *Comet Sea 3°–60°* in the refurbished gallery of the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam.

Coexistence of features

The attentive visual examination and subsequent classification of constituent and contingent elements occurred in steps, from full-size to microscopic view. In the first step, the twenty-framed elements forming one version were compared with the corresponding parts of the other two versions. In the second stage, the unframed photographs were assessed with their analogous prints from the other versions. The third phase involved looking at features that can be better observed through a microscope, such as the textures of the photographic papers used or the application of the varnish on the surface of the 1973 version. This comparison made it possible to distinguish between elements present in each version and features that occur just once. Some of the features are distinctively constituent, while other characteristics are clearly contingent. During the visual investigation and the archival research on the artwork's conservation history, it became clear that classification into constituent and contingent is, in practice, not clearly defined and that it presents grey areas. Some characteristics are actually intermediate, and the boundaries between the two categories are fuzzy. In fact, some elements can be viewed at the same time as both constituent and contingent, depending on the scale at which you look at them.

However, the suggested classifications may be regarded as a refinement of the defining properties that characterize a reproduced photographic work. Several scholars have proposed different expressions to describe defining characteristics for various kinds of artworks or documents. For musical works, the philosopher Stephen Davies has used the term "work determinative" elements to describe those instructions that need to be followed and fulfilled if an authentic performance of a work is to result (Davies 2003, 37). For time-based media, Laurenson has introduced the notion of "work-defining properties" as those essential features necessary to establish the identity of a time-based work of art (Laurenson 2006, 12).[118] For digital objects, scholars have introduced the notion of "significant properties" as those "characteristics that must be preserved over time in order to ensure the continued accessibility, usability, and meaning of the objects" (Wilson 2007, 8 cited in Giaretta 2011, 216).[119]

[118] Generally, 'time-based media' refers to works of art that depend on technology in order to be viewed and have duration as a dimension (e.g., five minutes and three seconds). Photography cannot therefore be considered a time-based medium. Over the theoretical aspects of time in photography and that art's 'rivalry' with time-based arts, see Van Gelder and Westgeest 2011, 64–111.

For *Comet Sea 3°–60°* and the other works under study, I carried out the classification of constituent and contingent features in my role of conservator and researcher when the reproduction had already been concluded. The categorization can, however, occur before or during the process, and other persons involved in the reproduction might perform it. In the latter instance, the grouping might help the artist before and during the reproduction process to identify the properties that he or she considers mandatory or optional. The realization that contingency and constituency may coexist invites a sharpening of the identification of work-defining properties. In other words, the systematic naming and careful definition of materials and artistic properties may contribute to the articulation of complex ideas inherently present in a reproduction process. This may be a valuable instrument in guiding decision-making and may increase the awareness of certain choices and circumstances. Through a dialogue with conservators and other museum professionals about these properties, artists may be able to frame the degrees of change allowed for the reproduction of their photographic artworks.

This stance presupposes an artist-centred view, which other scholars have challenged or nuanced (Noel de Tilly 2011, 61–63; Van Saaze 2013). In the case of *Comet Sea 3°–60°*, circumstantial choices and events conditioned the decision-making: Damaged negatives and a shortage of specific photographic paper influenced the final selection and decisions of the artist. The contingency of choices and situations that subsequently affect an artwork's appearance is often inevitable. This uncertainty underlines the difficulty or perhaps even the impossibility of exactly reproducing a photographic artwork, and may enable the presence of differences among the various versions. This insight has brought me to the conclusion that Dibbets' supervision in this instance is mandatory in the reproduction process. In my view it is important that that the artist oversees the possible choices that might influence the artwork's appearance and that he eventually makes the final decisions. This position presupposes that a photograph reprinted without the artist's control cannot be considered a genuine replacement of the original artwork. However, as proposed in chapter two, it is my opinion that a multiple autographic artwork that happens to be reproduced is formed by the totality of its versions, and its identity stems from the connections among the versions. By

[119] The term 'significant properties' was coined by the project CURL Exemplars in Digital Archives, also known as the Cedars Project, which ran from 1988 until 2002. According to the project, the term described the components that were deemed necessary for the long-term preservation of digital objects and the identification of these characteristics was paramount for making informed decisions about collection-management (Cedars Project 2002). Subsequently, the term 'significant properties' was adopted by other researchers such as Margaret Hedstrom (Hedstrom and Lee 2002) and Andrew Wilson (Wilson 2007).

taking this viewpoint, it is possible to acknowledge the visible differences among the various versions and not simply allow the most recent version to supersede them, as conventionally happens. However, it is also important to note that this position argues for the centrality of the artist's continued involvement and, thus, recognizes the artist as the main decision-making authority during the reproduction process.

Furthermore, this theoretical framework is not free of difficulties. Putting it into practice may be problematic, since it may be easier to make a retrospective analysis of the production process than to express the work's defining properties beforehand. It is my conviction, though, that this theoretical lens may be a tool for the parties involved in reproducing photographs to help them take notice of aspects that otherwise would remain overlooked and therefore ignored. It may be a valuable instrument in guiding the decision-making and increase the awareness of certain choices and circumstances. However, since the distinction between constituent and contingent properties is a theoretical one, it is important to have a flexible approach that reacts to external, often unforeseen, circumstances. In this light, the theoretical frame and the practice are complementary and not subordinate to each other. Both elements are necessary to address with the complexity of this conservation strategy, and they allow a blurred categorization, in which the characteristics of contingency and constituency can coexist.

Moreover, when the classification between constituent and contingent features is performed — especially before or during the reproduction process — the order of precedence given to the characteristics could deeply influence the way that future versions might be realised. As Van Saaze as argued, "documentation practices [might] affect what the work is, but also what it can be made into" (Van Saaze 2013, 139). In other words, the practice of documenting cannot be regarded as a 'neutral' activity; it should be viewed as an active, meaning-conferring activity that has long-lasting effects on the existence of the artwork. This awareness should be taken together with the question about who should perform the classification of constituent and contingent features. The artist? The curator? The conservator? Should the result be from a communal effort? In my opinion, a shared approach is helpful in order to deal with the complexities inherent to the reproduction process. As described in chapter one, practitioners in the conservation field are well aware of methodological difficulties concerning the notion of 'artist's intent' as a source of authority in sanctioning conservation practices, as well as the possible biases present in artists' interviews. However, it should be mentioned that, recently, new, perhaps more mature forms of collaboration with artists are emerging. In these partnerships, artists are not only viewed as the repository of information, but also as part of an interdisciplinary research team that has as a communal goal, i.e. the preservation of contemporary artworks.[120]

Perhaps the fundamental question about the classification of constituent and contingent features — performed before or during the reproduction process — is how to consider the reproduction process itself in relation to a photographic artwork. Does the reproduction strive to strictly mimic the first version so that the successive versions are derivative of the first one? In this instance, the 'official' labelling in the constituent or contingent features might trigger a 'freezing' of the artwork. Should it be regarded as an open-ended activity? In this case, the photographic artwork is viewed as a plural work in which various versions are allowed to coexist, and this might imply a greater artistic freedom for the artist during the process. Ultimately, the answer to these questions depends, for the greatest part, on how the artist approaches the reproduction. In *Comet Sea 3°–60°* 's reproduction, Dibbets seemed intuitively to make a distinction between what he regarded as essential (constituent) and what he perceived as less fundamental (contingent), and at the same time to flexibly react to the contingencies encountered in the process. He had, up to a certain degree, predefined ideas about how the reproduction of this work should proceed. But, as will be further illustrated in the following section, with the passing of time the artist also showed a shifting approach toward the various versions of *Comet Sea 3°–60°*.

3.2 Points of discomfort

This section reflects on aspects that can be viewed as points of 'discomfort.' Discomfort indicates here a feeling of uneasiness that something does not fully conform to certain expectations. It analyses Dibbets' attitude regarding, first, the presence of patina in his work; second, the signing of the work; and third, his approach to the double dating on wall labels. In the forty years of existence of *Comet Sea 3°–60°*, the artist has revealed a shifting attitude, and at times a contradictory one that may indicate some discomfort in dealing with the reproduction of his work.

[120] Examples of a collaborative approach in the conservation of contemporary art include the research project known as 'PRATICs of Contemporary Art: The Future', led by a consortium of thirty-three European museums and universities between 2009 and 2011, and the on-going project known as the 'Artist Initiative' started by San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA). The objective of both projects is to develop new insights into art conservation, art historical interpretation, and installation practices, through an intense cooperation with artists. For further information on both projects see ttps://www.incca.org/articles/2011-practics-contemporary-art-future and https://www.sfmoma.org/artists-artworks/research/artist-initiative/ [Both accessed 05 June 2017].

Patina

The main reason that has led to the reproduction of *Comet Sea 3°–60°* is an overall yellowing of the photographs, which is, in Dibbets' perception, an undesirable weathering, a disturbing 'patina' that negatively affects the work's appreciation (Dibbets, Van Adrichem, and De Herder 2003, 44). For Dibbets, it is crucial that photographs maintain a link with the reality they depict. Colour alteration should be avoided when possible, as this may severely interfere with or even interrupt this connection with the physical world. This may be one of the reasons that led to Dibbets' decision to reproduce this work. The Stedelijk Museum acceded to the artist's opinion and agreed in both occasions to the reprinting of the photographs.

In art history and art conservation, the concept of patina is laden with meanings and responses. Numerous books, essays, and controversies have revolved around two opposite visions: On the one hand, patina is viewed as a positive factor that gives more union and harmony to pictures, as argued by (among others) the eighteenth-century painter William Hogarth (Hogarth 1753, reprinted in Bomford and Leonard 2004, 12). On the other hand, it is perceived as a negative interference, disrupting an object's surface.[121] All debates on this topic, whether in the past or in recent times, have revolved around these opposing views, or as stated by the conservator Alessandra Melucco Vaccaro, they "suffer from a confusion that has never been resolved between the natural aspects of patina and the intentional ones" (Melucco Vaccaro 1996, 366–367).

In his essay "The Idea of Patina and the Cleaning of Paintings," the art historian and conservation theorist Paul Philippot summarizes the complexity of the notion of patina by stating, "this is not a physical or chemical, but a *critical* concept" (Philippot 1996b, 373). Art historian Ernst van de Wetering observes that — in general, from a young age — people attain a general knowledge of materials' natural aging and specifically on what the objects' surfaces look like. This acquired understanding provides them with information about the materials, but it also becomes their reference point in judging objects and thus influences their expectations. For instance, they assume that a well-polished shoe will have a glossy surface, but they also associate the shoe's shiny finish with diligence and cleanliness. Van de Wetering argues that an object's surface carries

[121] The notions of patina and its interpretations have contributed to divergent views among art historians as well as conservators. Presumably one of the most famous disputes is the so-called 'National Gallery cleaning controversy,' in which the renowned art scholar Ernst Gombrich questioned the removal of yellowed varnishes by the museum's chief conservator, Helmut Ruhemann. Gombrich interpreted this weathering as a wanted effect, as a patina sought by artists. For further reference on the National Gallery cleaning controversy, see Gombrich 1962, 1963; Kurz 1962.

material as well as cultural information; he also states that patina becomes "a symbol, as a sign that something is old, worthy of respect and genuine; and as with all symbols, a general indication suffices to give the idea" (Van de Wetering 2012, 106). In this sense, patina is more than just a natural aging occurrence, but it can be viewed as a symbol, as a sign of something old. In other words, a surface with a patina confirms the viewers' expectation that he or she is looking at something aged that has altered due to the passage of time, but it also conveys cultural associations, charging this phenomenon with positive or negative implications.

The question of expectations may explain why the surface patina of certain objects is deemed as a desirable effect, while it may ruin the appearance of other items. In this light, it is possible to analyse why, for instance, the surface patina of a nineteenth-century photograph may be perceived as an appropriate phenomenon, while for more contemporary prints, the same observable fact is regarded as a negative condition, detrimental to the visual integrity of the work. But the patina of *Comet Sea 3°–60°* may also be explained in terms proposed by the theory of photography as an indicator of 'doubled indexicality.' Photography theorist Geoffrey Batchen used the idea of doubled indexicality when he analysed an engraved silver locket containing, in one side, a tintype portrait of a man, and in the other side, a lock of human hair. The photograph of the man is a visual trace of him, and his hair is a physical trace, functioning as a synecdoche of the man's whole body. The author argued, "in its combination of hair and photography, my locket has therefore become an indexical sign twice over, two physical traces of the same referent," and he also stated, "by adding a lock of hair to the subject's photograph, the indexical presence of that subject is reiterated and reinforced" (Batchen 2012, 80–81). Thus, in Batchen's view, the presence of the hair lock within the silver locket increased and supported the indexicality of the portrayed man.

In photographic theory, the words 'index' or 'indexical' are used as notions to define the relationship between photography and reality: A photograph does not only represent an image but is also a physical trace or index of that reality.[122] Examples of this causal relationship are smoke — regarded as a trace or index of fire — or a footstep left in the sand as the physical trace of a person. Indexical signs have a particular connection with their own source because they have generally coexisted in the same

[122] It is outside the scope of this study to analyse the different definitions scholars give to the terms 'index' and 'indexicality' within theory of photography. For a short overview between the original meaning of the term index developed by Charles S. Pierce and the various later definitions in photography, see Batchen 2012, 72–89; Sturken and Cartwright 2009, and Van Gelder and Westgeest 2011, 33–40.

place at the same time. Analogue photographs may be experienced as indexical signs because they attest to the instant in which the camera was in the presence of its subject. Many scholars regard the concept of indexicality as the principal hallmark of photography or as the main motive of photography's privileged status in modern culture. This is because, unlike other visual systems of representation, "the camera does more than just see the world, it is also touched by it" (Batchen 2012, 80).

This specific property of photography — of being a direct link with former times — is one of the main sources of the fascination for the medium. Old images mirror how people of the past looked, what kind of clothes and headdresses they wore, the interiors in which they lived, and the streets in which they walked. Images give a verisimilar glimpse of past times, or, as argued by Roland Barthes in his book *Camera Lucida : Reflections on Photography:*

> [Photography] immediately yields up those 'details', which constitute the very raw material of ethnological knowledge. When [sic] William Klein photograph 'Mayday, 1959' in Moscow he teaches me how Russians dress (which after all I don't know): I note a boy's big cloth cap, another's necktie, an old woman's scarf around her head, a youth's haircut, etc. … Photography can tell me this much better than painted portraits. It allows me to accede to an infra-knowledge (Barthes 1981, 28–30).

Thus, photography's link with the past rests on the uniqueness of its indexical relation to the world it images. Or as Batchen writes:

> As a footprint is to a foot, so is a photograph to its referent. Susan Sontag says that the photograph is 'something directly stencilled off the real,' and Rosalind Krauss describes it as 'a kind of deposit of the real itself'. It is as if objects have reached out and touched the surface of a photograph, leaving their own trace, as faithful to the contour of the original object as a death mask is to the face of the newly departed (Batchen 2001, 139).

From this viewpoint, photographs are the visual imprints of the objects pictured, and thus the link with those objects is much stronger than with another system of representation. As photography theorist Barbara Savedoff stated, "the 'authority' of the photograph … [supposedly] resides in the idea that the photographs give evidence of what exists in front of the camera" (Savedoff 2010, 116). Through its indexical value, a photograph may be viewed as a direct link with the past, and a patina of the photographic surface may also be perceived as a visual imprint that testifies to the passage of time.

Seen this way, it may be argued that a photograph with a patina also possesses a double indexicality; this, however, is of a different kind from the one to which Batchen refers. In the example of the engraved silver locket, the photograph and the hair are indexes of the same referent, which is the man depicted in the portrait. In Dibbets' work, the double indexes have a different origin and, therefore, they are traces of two different referents: The photographs are the index of the depicted sea and the sky, while the patina is an index of the time passing. Although the two indexes have distinct sources, they are also connected to each other, inasmuch as the one index may have an influence on the other, and vice versa. Patina and its subsequent cultural associations may, in other words, be affected by the other index present in the photographic prints. When looking at an old nineteenth- or early twentieth-century photograph, the yellowed surface of the print may be regarded as degradation's index of the photographic print — caused by the technique used — and these changes are not experienced as disruptive elements.[123] In this respect, patina may be considered as a physical trace of the photographic surface, as an index of the time passing by. It confirms the viewers' expectation of looking at something aged that has altered due to the passage of time, and this is charged with positive connotations.

In Dibbets' case, the artist charged the patina, as an index of the passage of time, with negative connotations. He once argued that he could consent a patina for black-and-white photographs but for colour photography any kind of patina would be not acceptable (Dibbets, Van Adrichem, and De Herder 2003, 44).

In *Comet Sea 3°–60°*, it is possible to propose that the undesirability of the patina is increased by the iconicity of the depicted subjects of the sea and the sky. In this regard, the artwork complies with the view that a photograph may at the same time be both indexical and iconic, as argued extensively by Clive Scott in his book *The Spoken Image — Photography and Language* (1999) and referred to by photography critic Abigail Solomon-Godeau in her essay compilation *Photography at the Dock* (1991). In the terms developed by the semiotician Charles Sanders Peirce (1839–1914), an index has a causal or spatial contiguity with its subject, and therefore is a record, while an icon does not need to be present to what it represents, but it can be an imaginative reconstruction. Thus, an icon has a relationship of resemblance or imitation rather than of a record. Generally, the indexical element is related to photography and the iconic feature is associated with painting (Scott 1999, 27–28).

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[123] Similarly, colour changes, such as the reddish colour shift typical of the 1960s and 1970s chromogenic prints, are nowadays often perceived as a kind of patina, as an index that indicates past times. In many instances the red tint is not associated with degradation, and many digital camera applications try to mimic this nostalgic look with red filters that give a '1970s vintage look' to modern digital images.

According to Scott, this distinction is inadequate, and both elements may be present within a photograph. To the author, the transition from an indexical to an iconic component occurs without sacrificing the indexical feature and, therefore, a photograph may possess both characteristics at the same time. Scott included three different motives for the presence of both indexical and iconic features in a photograph. First, a photograph is not a record of reality but an image made by the photographer in front of reality. Prior to the moment the photographer releases the camera shutter, he or she has performed a set of judgments, so a photograph is the result of compositional choices, such as subject, angle, proximity, and technical options like camera lens, filters, and types of negatives. Second, each individual photograph moves from being a snapshot into an image because it is removed from the place of its making. Third, with the passage of time, all photographs become more iconic: Each photograph gradually loses its indexical property, since the circumstances of its making are no longer known. For example, a portrait of an individual may gradually become the image of an unknown man or woman (Scott 1999, 32–34).

Dibbets' interest focuses primarily on the manipulative capacity of photography to alter what the viewers see. In *Comet Sea 3°–60°*, the landscape photographs have been manipulated and converted into the depiction of an artificial horizon. The artist started his investigations from the world's physical environment: the elements of the sea and the sky are still recognizable as the departing points and are thus indexical. Dibbets did not alter the depicted sea and sky by manipulating the photographic image, but at the same time, he has schematized the photographs' natural origins and turned them into a pattern by cropping and mounting them as mirror images. Furthermore, by assembling the twenty parts according to a mathematical sequence, he constructed an iconic blue comet on the wall, with no reference to a specific time or place. Thus considered, *Comet Sea 3°–60°* may be viewed both as indexical and iconic: the artist's manipulative action has greatly diminished the indexical value of the photographs because the referent is less identifiable, and at the same time, it has increased the iconic value of the images and the work as a whole.

This shift toward the iconic may be viewed as one of the reasons why the patina in this work is negatively charged. Patina, being an index of the passage of time, contrasts with the timelessness of the constructed horizon. It may be argued that the artist employed photography's property of reproducibility to keep the created work suspended in the present so that it will never recede into the past. In this case, patina is not regarded as a sign of something venerable, genuine, worthy of respect, and thus positively charged, but by accentuating temporality, it becomes something disturbing and distracting. By reprinting the photographs, Dibbets has been able to keep the work in a constant present, not allowing the images to age. Despite the artist's wish to

maintain this work forever 'young,' with no signs of aging, it would even be possible to suggest that the various versions of *Comet Sea 3°–60°* are themselves an index of time's passage. Whenever a new version is made, two opposite effects simultaneously occur: the pleasing illusion of timelessness and a painful reminder of time aging.

Authorized narratives

Each version of *Comet Sea 3°–60°* shows significant differences in the signature, the 'message' written by the artist on the backs of the 1996 and 2012 prints, and the dating. In the 1973 version, Dibbets wrote the title, signature, and date by hand. His writing was placed at the bottom corner at the front of element 3° (Fig. 13). Each of the other nineteen elements contains the artist's initials, JD.

Part *3°* of the 1996 version recorded the same kind of information, following the order and locations as in the work of 1973. However, it presented some minor differences: The writing was done in ballpoint pen ink instead of pencil, and two quotation marks with a slash have been added to the title (see Fig. 13). The other nineteen parts of the work in this version do not have the artist's initials. The greatest change was on the back of part *3°*, in which Dibbets explained the reason for the reproduction and acknowledged the technical assistant's share in the process (Fig. 14). The text, translated into English, reads, "Reconstruction of *Comet Sea* due to colour fading André van Oort and Jan Dibbets, May 1996."[124]

According to the *Van Dale* Dutch dictionary, the Dutch word *reconstructie* has different meanings, but they are all connected with the action or process of restoring something to its original form or of copying something (Van Dale 1999, 2767).[125] The term has a similar meaning to that of the English word 'reconstruction', which signifies the action of constructing or putting [something] together again, especially following damage or destruction, or by way of renovation, but there is a slightly different nuance.[126] The Dutch term has a stronger connection with the act of bringing something back to its original form or shape than does the English word reconstruction. The artist's choice to use this expression might indicate his intention to strictly follow the first version of the work as an example for the 1996 one.

In the 2012 version, the title, signature, and date were written with a green felt-tip pen, and they were not placed on the front anymore, but on the back of part *3°*.

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[124] English translation is by the author. The original Dutch text reads as *"Reconstructie van Comet Sea wegens verkleuring André van Oort en Jan Dibbets, mei 1996."*
[125] The *Van Dale groot woordenboek der Nederlandse taal* is generally considered as the standard work for the Dutch language.
[126] Definition of 'reconstruction' in Oxford English Dictionary (2009).

Additionally, the signature was not written *in extenso* but abbreviated to "jan d." The dating did not mention 2012 as the actual reprinting date, but only the fact that these photographs represented the third version of the work. The year 1973 referred to the artwork's moment of creation (Fig. 15).

The differences in the way the artist signed the three versions might be classified according to the division proposed in chapter two. On the one hand, they may be viewed as contingent features, since the artist uses various graphic media (pencil, black ballpoint pen, and green felt-tip pen), as well as changing positions from the front to the back of part *3°*. On the other hand, they can also be viewed as constituent elements, since they are consistent about the information they convey — namely title, date, and name of the (creating) artist.

In the following subsection, I will argue that the aforementioned differences are important indicators of both the way Dibbets conceives of the creative process and of the artist's shifting attitude toward reproduction. The section is divided into three parts: The first one examines the signature as a device of artistic practice and its use in *Comet Sea 3°–60°*; the second one looks into the museum label that identifies the work, and the third part analyses the artist's statements written on the back of part 3°. All three parts employ the notion of *récits autorisés* developed by the art historian Jean-Marc Poinsot in his book *Quand l'oeuvre a lieu. L'art exposé et ses récits autorisés* (2008).

Poinsot introduced the concept of *récits autorisés*, which in English may be translated as 'authorized narratives.' He defined this notion as a collection of linguistic productions that systematically accompany the artwork or its presentation (Poinsot 2008, 143). According to the author, these elements should not be confused with other inscriptions that are part of the work, and thus cannot be removed from the work without dismantling it.[127] The authorized narratives are auxiliary in the sense that they do not possess any autonomy and they have to remain in the work's sphere. In other words, they are neither works by themselves nor independent discourses, but rather narratives systematically associated with creative production or artistic

[127] Various attempts have been made to categorize writings within a pictorial space. In his article "Inscriptions in Paintings," Mieczysław Wallis described such inscriptions as 'semantic enclaves.' He also proposed a typology in which he identified four major types of writings: The first category describes inscriptions that convey information, such as name labels that identify figures or scenes; the second group indicates speech or dialogue, either among the figures within the painting or statements addressed to the viewer from figures represented; the third class refers to invocations to holy figures; the fourth type consist of artists' statements unconnected with the subject matter of the paintings, such as signatures. According to period and place, semantic enclaves differ in form and perform different functions (Wallis 1973, 1–28). For further reference on the relationship between text and image, see Bowman and Sobel 1990; Ross 2014; and Sparrow 1969.

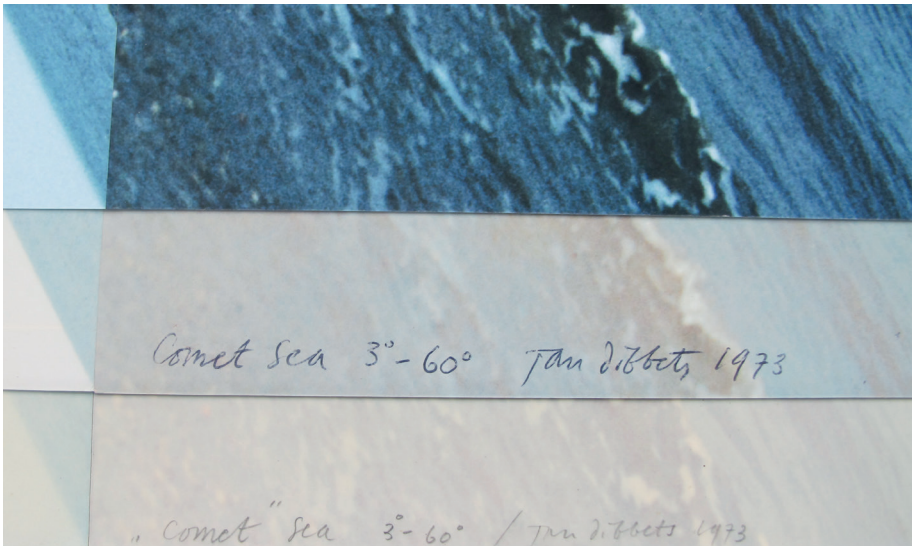


Figure 13 Titles, signatures, and dates. The 1973 version is at the bottom and the 1996 one is above the other version.

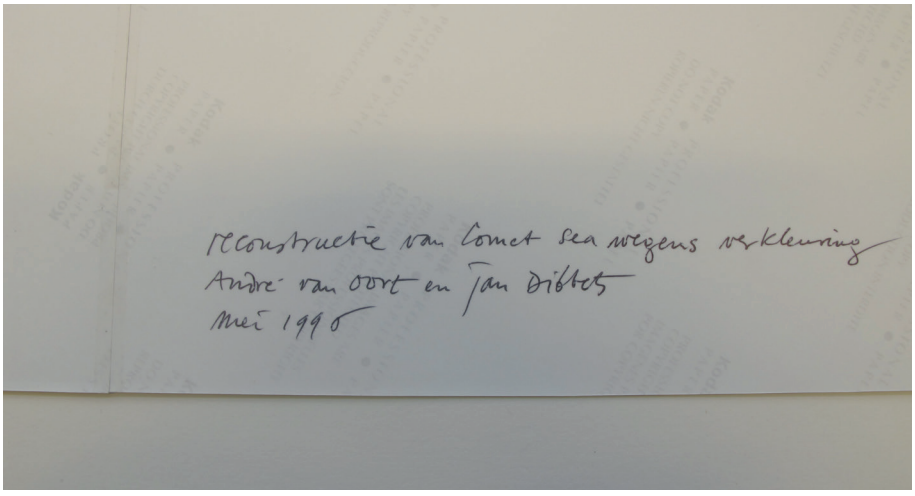


Figure 14 Inscription on the back of part *3°* of the 1996 version, where Dibbets recognized Van Oort's share in the work's reconstruction.

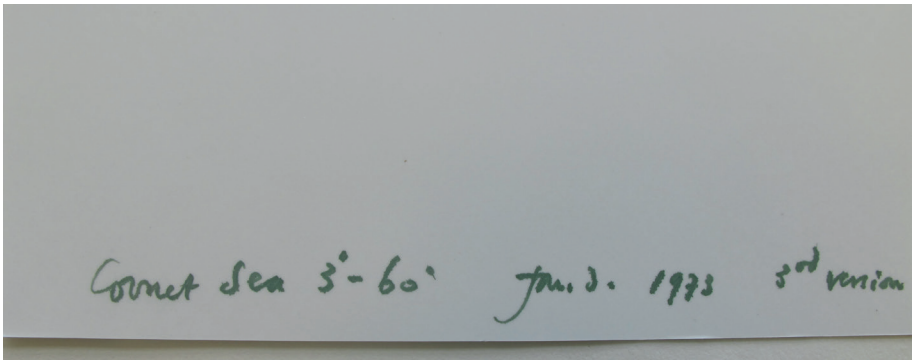


Figure 15 Inscription on the back of the 2012 version.

presentations. Titles, signatures, dates, certificates, statements, descriptions, and notices of installation can be viewed as authorized narratives.[128] A great number of these auxiliary stories have existed for a long time, but their importance, their forms, and their numbers have increased since the end of the 1950s.

According to Poinsot, authorized narratives differ from Genette's analysis of a book's 'paratext' because of their great heterogeneity in type, form, and function. Poinsot argued that the book's paratext has not changed much as time has passed, while the narratives that accompany creative production and artistic presentation in the visual arts have changed immensely (Poinsot 2008, 146). Genette indicated with paratexts those liminal devices and conventions, both within and outside of the book, that form the complex mediation among book, author, publisher, and reader. Examples are titles, forewords, epigraphs, and book jackets, which are analysed according to their function, proximity, and place within the work (Genette and Maclean 1991, 261–72). Due to a dematerializing practice in contemporary art, from this period onward the authorized narratives are filled with new functions that are often indispensable for the 'survival' of the work itself. Catalogues, certificates, descriptions of installation, and other accounts have become vitally important for the perpetuation of contemporary art.

[128] For the purpose of this study, the practice of titling a work of art will not be examined, since this element does not show any significant changes in the various versions of the *Comet Sea 3°–60°*. In fact, only minor alterations such as the addition of punctuation marks are detectable. For further reference on the practice of titling, see Adams 1987; Franklin, Becklen, and Doyle 1993; Fisher 1984; Levinson 1985; Petersen 2006; and Poinsot 2008, especially 218–60. Specifically for this practice in books, see Genette 1997b; and Shevlin 1999.

An authorized narrative has a strong kinship with the artist who produced the work and to be considered as such, such a narrative has to be sanctioned by the artist.[129] In this respect, the extensive documentation on installations or time-based media that conservators usually gather for preservation purposes cannot be regarded as authorized narratives. An exception occurs when the conservator working with the artist produces the documentation. One example of this type of recording is the art installation guidelines developed shortly after the Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst (SMAK), Ghent, acquired the work *ensemble autour de ~~MUR~~* (1998), by Jöelle Tuerlinckx (b. 1958). The artist and the conservation department at the museum jointly wrote the work's guidelines, which therefore fit the definition of an authorized narrative.[130]

Signature as an indicator of discomfort

The signing of a work of art by the creating artist is an old practice that goes back at least to the Middle Ages.[131] According to the majority of scholars who have studied this phenomenon, the practice of signing a painting became generalized and normalized in the nineteenth century. It is in this period that artists started usually to sign their work and to write the signature at the bottom corner of the canvas. In previous times, the customs of signing and not signing coexisted. Moreover, an artist's signature had different shapes, functions, and locations inside and outside of the painting's visual plane.[132] Specialists ascribe the increasing habit of signing in the nineteenth century to two main reasons: On the one hand, the upcoming Romantic idea of the 'Genius' gave prominence to artistic originality and self-expression.[133] The emphasis on individuality and the exceptional nature of the genius contributed to a growing fascination with the

[129] As suggested in chapter two, the production of an artwork within a contemporary artistic practice should be viewed in a broad sense and not be limited to the artist's manual intervention.
[130] For a full description of the joint documentation developed by the conservation department of the SMAK and the artist, see Van Saaze 2013, 131–41.
[131] For the purpose of this study, the analysis of the signature is limited to what conventionally is called two-dimensional art. I feel that photography, generally being a two-dimensional art form, shows more correlations with paintings, prints, and drawings than with sculpture or other three-dimensional works of art.
[132] For a review of the various types of artist signature, see Max J. Friedländer, "On Art and Connoisseurship" (Friedländer 1996, 139–53); the special issue, "L'art de la signature," of *Revue de l'Art,* No. 26 (1974), dedicated to this topic; and especially Jean-Claude Lebensztejn's essay "Esquisse d'une typologie," and the research project of the Scuola Normale di Pisa on the signature in medieval and Renaissance Italian art: "Me Fecit: Repertorio delle opere firmate nell'arte italiana; Medioevo e Rinascimento." For literature references on the practice of signing in the medieval period, see Nagel and Wood 2010, 371.
[133] On the presumed relationship between genius and intellectual property, see Stapleton 2002, especially pp. 31–48.

personalities and lives of the creative individual (Higgins 2005, 3). A signature became the irrefutable notation to express the artist's authorship over a particular work. On the other hand, during the same period, a new organization of the art market emerged, from a commissioned market to a freer and more competitive one. In earlier times, a painting was generally produced for a patron who commissioned a specific artwork, implying a more personal relationship between the commissioner and the artist. But from the nineteenth century onward, paintings were mostly made for an anonymous clientele and traded through art dealers (Galenson and Jensen 2002, 3).[134] In the course of time, the signature has become a sign of guarantee that attempts to certify the authenticity (intended as genuine origin) of the artwork in an open market in which the artist has less control over his/her works and the client does not have a direct contact with the artist (Poinsot 2008, 152). These two aspects, authorship and authenticity, can be viewed as the major reasons behind the disappearance of the nameless painting and the rise of the signing practice from the Romantic era onward (Chastel 1974, 10).

In the twentieth century, to sign a work of art has turned into a standardized practice not only in painting, but also in photography. At the same time, signature became itself a subject of artistic research. On the one hand, certain artists have critically examined the signature's function because it is associated with authorial and commercial conventions. In this regard, the ready-made *Fountain* signed by Duchamp with the pseudonym "R. Mutt" is emblematic for questioning the signature as a mark of a work's authenticity. On the other hand, the signature itself can convert into the artwork's subject, as attested, for instance, by certain paintings of Ben Vautier (b. 1935) or the neon translation of Bruce Nauman's (b. 1941) signature in *My Name as Though It Were Written on the Surface of the Moon* (1968) (Fig. 16).

[134] In this respect, the production of paintings in Bruges and Antwerp during the sixteenth century and in the Netherlands during the seventeenth century should be viewed as great exceptions. For further readings on how the Flemish and Dutch market operated and how the painting studios were organized, see De Marchi and Van Miegroet 1994, and Van den Brink 2001. In his essay "Signature et signe," André Chastel argued that there were great geographical differences regarding signature until the nineteenth century. In Northern Europe, and especially in Germany, the practice of signing appeared quite early, while in the south of Europe, with the exception of Venice, this custom emerged much later (Chastel 1974, 9). A free, competitive market, as well the reproducibility of the medium, fuelled the customary habit of signing prints, which appeared much earlier in time. An emblematic episode for the early birth of the signing practice in printmaking and of the growing importance of an artist's signature can be found at the beginning of the sixteenth century, in the dispute between Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528) and Marcantonio Raimondi (1480–1534). In 1506 Dürer reproached and condemned Raimondi's use of his own monogram in prints, which were not made under his own supervision. For further reference to the topic, see Rinaldi 2009; and Stapleton 2002, especially. 53–56.

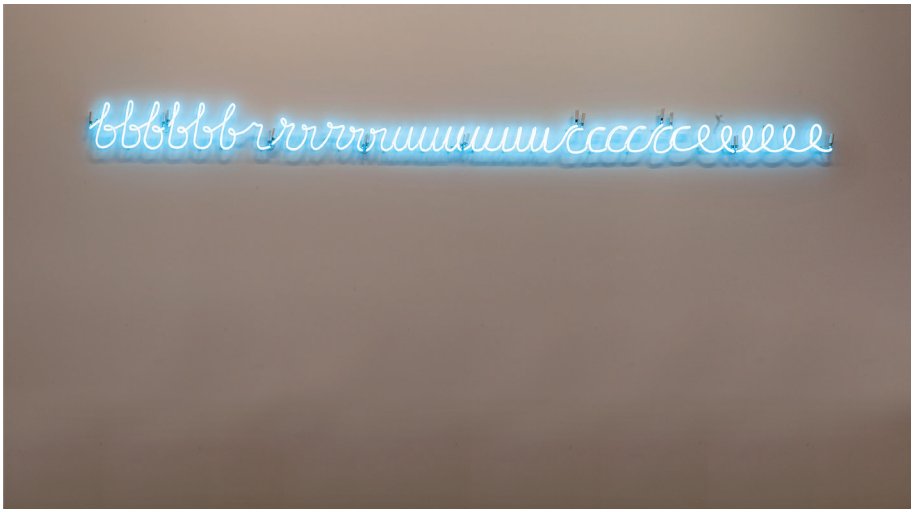


Figure 16 Bruce Nauman, *My Name as Though It Were Written on the Surface of the Moon*, 1968, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, fluorescent light.

Obviously in the Vautier and Nauman examples, and up to certain degree in the case of Duchamp, the signature has ceased to be an authorized narrative and become the artwork itself.[135]

In sum, in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, artists have questioned the signature's role and function by using pseudonyms, collective signing activities, or transforming the signature into the artwork itself. Depending on the context, the artist's signature has received different connotations. Nevertheless, an experimental use has never replaced the 'traditional' one, intended as the sanctioning by the artist who acknowledges a work as his or hers, thus guaranteeing the work's authorship.[136] It may even be possible to argue that signing, as a provocative act, can only exist when the main purpose of placing a signature – as the moment that confirms and sanctions the completion of the artwork – is retained.[137]

[135] The fascination around the artist's signature is also exemplified in the contemporary phenomenon of the museums' merchandise where artists' signatures are applied to t-shirts, coffee mugs, and bags. As an example see https://artmuseum.indiana.edu/about/angles/merchandise.html [accessed 9 June 2015].
[136] It is beyond the scope of this study to examine the phenomenon of the forged signature and its art historical and commercial implications.
[137] On the interesting issue of when the work of art should be viewed as completed, see Becker 2006.

In the Dibbets case study, the signature attests to the genuineness of the three versions. Each reprinted set of photographs is acknowledged by the artist as an authorized version, and each of them becomes part of the plural work *Comet Sea 3°–60°*. In other words, the signatures are a truly authorized narrative with a strong kinship with the artist. By contrast, the differences in signing may be viewed in a descending order: The 1973 version is at the summit, having been signed in the most extensive way; the 1996 one is at an intermediate stage; and the 2012 version is at the bottom, having been partially signed and with the signature being invisible to the viewer. The latest reprint only has the abbreviated artist's signature, 'jan d.,' which has been placed at the back of part *3°*.[138] These changes may imply a sort of uneasiness in defining what the later reprinted photographs are. Are the three versions truly equal or are they in descending order of artistic importance? Does a greater distance in time between the creative phase (1973) and the reprinting moment (2012) suggest a greater discomfort? There are no clear-cut answers to these challenging questions, however, it is possible to emphasize Dibbets' historicizing attitude toward his work. As will be illustrated further in the following sections on the wall label and the inscriptions regarding part 3°, as the work gets older and as the lapse of time between the originating moment and reprinting date increases, the artistic relevance of the first version grows, while the significance of the latest version appears less prominent and not at the same artistic level.

Identification label: The case of Comet Sea 3°–60°

The art historian Luigi Lanzi, in his writing *La Real Galleria Di Firenze accresciuta, e riordinata*, recorded one of the first embryonic uses of museum labels during the reorganization of the Uffizi Gallery in Florence (1782), when the exclusive, princely collection was transformed into a public display. The shift from a private *Wunderkammer* to a public exhibition space corresponds to a general change in the public's approach toward natural specimen and artefacts: from the sixteenth-century's wonderment to an interest in the educational and scientific functions that these objects might fulfil. This change coincided also with an effort to classify materials, periods, and paintings, and to introduce explanatory labels that identified the objects on display (De Benedictis

[138] In her article "Addendum à l'art de la signature: La signature au XXe siècle," Carla Gottlieb indicated that the signature's placement at the back of a painting is a habit that became generalized in the twentieth century. She claimed that this custom, even if not specific to modern times only, may have spread in that period because artists could in that way avoid the compositional problem of how to integrate the signature within the pictorial field (Gottlieb 1976, 71). In the case of *Comet Sea 3°–60°*, though, the signature's placement at the back of the third version does not appear to be dictated by that concern.

1998, 140–141).[139] Since then, labels have been an integral part of the museum apparatus. Museum studies have given a great deal of thought to the different types of labels that exist and to their functions within the museum. In this field, scholars have researched many aspects of labels, such as the public's involvement with and average time spent reading them (McManus 1989); the visitor's engagement with displayed objects when labels are present or not (Atkins et al. 2008); the ambiguity of labels in presenting a unifying, consistent view on the museum's collection (Dewdney, Dibosa, and Walsh 2013, 27); how the complexity of written language operates in the museum practice, and specifically in museum texts (Ravelli 2006); and practical guidelines that help compilers in writing informative, readable labels (Trench 2009).

In the book *Exhibit Labels: An Interpretive Approach*, Beverly Serrell made a distinction in the way museums communicate with their public: At one end of the spectrum there is an 'information-driven paradigm,' and at the other, an 'experience-driven paradigm.' In the information-driven model, the museum acts as an authority, and the labels written under this system are created to convey knowledge to the visitor. Generally, this represents what the curatorial staff finds important in terms of art history or the artist's biographical information. In the experience-driven model, the public plays a more active role, and the museum as an institution is more interested in the engagement the visitors have with the single objects, and with the display of interrelated artefacts. According to Serrell, interpretative labels tell short stories and aim to engage visitors in meaningful ways (Serrell 1996, 21). The author classified labels into interpretative and informative groups. Within the interpretative category, in a descending order of size, she distinguished four main categories: the 'title label' identifies the name of the exhibition; the 'introductory or orientation labels' set up the organization and the tone of the display; the 'section or groups labels' inform visitors about the logic behind groups of objects; and the 'captions' give information about specific objects (Ibid., 22–28). Serrell also made a further distinction in non-interpretive or informative labels for those that provide data in a condensed and factual way. This category is formed by four kinds of writings: the 'identification labels' contain short, minimal details about the artefact, such as name of the maker, date, materials, and techniques used; the 'credit panels' recognize the contribution and effort of all people involved in an exhibition; the 'way-finding signs' help guide the visitors around the museum; and the 'prohibitive signs' tell the public what they are not supposed to do.

[139] Luigi Lanzi, *La Real Galleria di Firenze accresciuta, e riordinata…* http://www.memofonte.it/home/files/pdf/lanzi_realgalleria.pdf [accessed 2 July 2015].

In the following paragraphs, I will discuss the realization of the *Comet Sea 3°–60°* identification label during the preparations for the Stedelijk Museum's reopening exhibition in September 2012. This history shows two important facts: On the one hand, it reveals how Serrell's classification of an identification label as a noninterpretive, factual identifier minimizes and does not take into account the practice of art historical scholarship. Behind each entry (artist's name, title, date of work, and medium), there is, in fact, a great amount of scholarly research, and often years of academic debate. On the other hand, labels are commonly regarded as data compiled and sanctioned by the museum displaying that specific object in its collection. In the case of *Comet Sea 3°–60°*, one might argue that a wall label becomes an authorized narrative according to Poinsot's notion presented in the previous section, since the label has a strong kinship with the artwork's maker. Museum labels are not usually considered authorized narratives because it is the museum staff that generally compiles the data, which is often given by the artist without his or her direct intervention. In this particular case, Dibbets' intervention in the label's dating contributes to a 'blurriness' of the definition. Should the data presented to the public be viewed as a museum label or as an authorized narrative? Does the identification label of *Comet Sea 3°–60°* become a sanctioned narrative due to the artist's request for removal of the double date?

The Stedelijk Museum uses different types of museum labels in its galleries, from title labels to those for the object's identification. According to standard practice, the latter records a minimum of information. When known, the following data are written on the label: artist, title of the artwork or object's classification, date, materials, and technique of the artefact shown. The museum follows a specific procedure: The department of 'documentation and research' is responsible for data regarding the label's first three elements (artist, title or object classification, and date), while the conservation department is concerned with the designation of the work's materials and technique. Conservators study and confirm the object's medium and materials, which are often known through literature or artists' interviews. Their findings are sent to the documentation and research department. There, the staff checks and edits the conservators' conclusion according to the standards the Stedelijk Museum employs. Many consultations between the two departments may occur if difficulties are encountered in defining the medium or technique. After editing, the data go back to the conservation division for a final review, and the conservators enter the material facts into the museum's registration database. When consensus is reached, the wall label with the necessary information is printed from the database.

The realization of the *Comet Sea 3°–60°* identification label followed the same standard procedure, with a close collaboration between the documentation and research unit and the paper conservation department. The standard practice of the

museum is to inform the public if the work on show is a later reproduction or replica, as indicated, for example, in the wall labels of the exhibition 'Zero: Let Us Explore the Stars', held at the Stedelijk Museum between July and November 2015.[140] Nevertheless, the museum was informed about Dibbets' ideas concerning the dating of his reproduced work. During a meeting held at the museum, the artist made clear to the museum staff that no specific mention about the reproduction should be written on the wall label. As a result, the documentation and research unit and the paper conservation department communally agreed about a double dating on the label: the year 1973 for the creating moment of the artwork, and the year 2012 for the reprinting. This was viewed as a kind of compromise in line with the museum's practice to inform, but in this case in a more implicit way. A slash between the two dates with no further clarification (1973/2012) was presented to the public in September 2012.[141] The museum staff believed that in this manner, the factual data were available to the visitors but with as little explanation as possible. The thorny issue of how to classify the newly reprinted version would not be openly stated but the visitors may read the explanation between the lines.

A few weeks after the museum reopened, Dibbets approached the museum and made clear his disagreement with the double dating on *Comet Sea 3°–60°*'s identification label. In his communication with the museum, Dibbets argued that the work's reprinting should be viewed as a restoration treatment.[142] He drew a parallel

[140] In the exhibition 'Zero: Let Us Explore the Stars', the wall labels' communication regarding replicas might have been felt to be less controversial, since from the beginning, the replicas were intended as exhibition copies. On the specific reconstruction of Henk Peeters's *Akwarel*, see Hummelen 2006.

[141] The same notation had previously been agreed upon with the Dutch artist Gerald van Der Kaap about the reproduction of his work *Lalalalalight*, which is included in chapter five of this dissertation. This may have influenced the museum staff in its decision to employ this typographical mark. During the 'The Media in Transition Speaker's Retreat' hosted by the New Art Trust in October 2015, media conservator Martina Haidvogl drew my attention to the practice of double dating employed at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMOMA). She stated that double dating is reserved only for works that have undergone great conceptual changes, whereas the reprinting of photographs is generally openly stated on the wall labels (Martina Haidvogl, oral communication to the author, October 2015).

[142] In his communication, Dibbets referred to the reprinting of colour photography as a restoration. It is important to realize that the Dutch language does not distinguish between restoration and conservation as two different practices with distinct goals, theoretical frameworks, and deontology. Nowadays, Dutch conservation professionals tend to make a distinction similar to the one found in English-speaking countries. However, the profession is still called *restauratie* (literally, restoration). In the account, I intentionally left the term for two reasons: I doubt that Dibbets is aware of the differences in terminology, so he uses restoration in both senses. Also, in my opinion, Dibbets's approach leans more toward the idea of restoration, in the sense of bringing the artwork back to its original, pristine look. This aspect will be further analysed in the subsection "Hidden Messages." For further reference to the evolution and ambiguities of the terms conservation and restoration in various languages see Schädler-Saub 2010, 1–5.

and referred openly to works of art in the collection of the Stedelijk Museum that over the years had been restored. He mentioned the restoration of Barnett Newman's (1905–1970) *Cathedra* (1951), Henri Matisse's (1869–1954) *La perruche et la sirène* (1952), and more generally, to several paintings of Piet Mondrian (1872–1944) and Kazimir Malevich (1928–1935) that had been cleaned.[143] In regard to Matisse's cut-out, Dibbets noted the many times that work had been restored, and that it had even received a completely new paper support.[144] The artist emphasized that all of these works of art had been more or less extensively restored, yet on their labels just their dates of creation appeared. In other words, in none of the other works had the date of the restoration treatment been written on the objects' identification labels. He also brought to the attention Sol LeWitt's (1928–2007) *Wall Drawing #1084* (2003) label, which mistakenly bore two dates on it, and he indicated that the dating of Lawrence Weiner's works was properly done.

Further, Dibbets stated that he completely disagreed on the way the matter had been handled. He argued that everyone knew that faded colour photographs cannot be restored, and therefore the only way to cope with the discoloration was to reprint them. In this regard, Dibbets seemed to agree with art historian Max J. Friedländer, who once stated, "restoration is a necessary evil" (Friedländer 1996, 332). He ended the communication by leaving open for the future the possibility of again reprinting this work, but he also confirmed that *Comet Sea 3°–60°* should be viewed as a unique work of conceptual art.

Interesting elements emerge from the artist's communication with the museum.[145] According to Dibbets, reprinting is a restoration treatment, and as such, there is no need to mention it on a wall label or in other museum writings. The complete material

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[143] Interestingly, Dibbets referred to the conservation of *Cathedra* and expressed a very positive judgment on the way it was performed. *Cathedra* had been treated by the museum's conservators rather than being contracted out, as had happened previously with the contested restoration treatment of Barnett Newman's *Who's Afraid of Red, Yellow and Blue III* (1967). In the latter instance, the contracted conservator presumably overpainted the complete surface of the work, using a paint roller. For a general review of the controversy around *Who's Afraid of Red, Yellow and Blue III*, with reference literature, see Stoner and Rushfield 2012, especially 40.

[144] It is worth mentioning that since its acquisition by the Stedelijk Museum, Matisse's *La perruche et la sirène* has been treated three times. The last two times, André van Oort, who was both paper conservator at the museum and Dibbets's technical assistant, performed the far-reaching treatments. For further reference to the conservation history of the work, see Rummens 2015, 271–281.

[145] Dibbets' communication with the museum can be found in the unpublished archive of the Stedelijk Museum, access to which is limited by legal regulations. As a scholar, I had the chance to consult the documentation and I am grateful to the museum for the permission to do so. I would also like to draw attention to the fact that the conclusions I draw are my own interpretations of the facts.

substitution of the photographic object with other prints is a functional method of dealing with the inexorable fading of colour photographs. Thus, the reprinting practice may be performed in the future. The mentioning of LeWitt and Weiner underscores Dibbets' opinion about his work as conceptual art, generally intended as an artistic manifestation in which the work's physical form is subsidiary to the ideas or concepts behind it (Osborne 2002, 25). In line with this thought, reproduction should be regarded as the re-enactment of the work's fundamental idea. By stating that *Comet Sea 3°–60°* is a unique work, the artist placed 1973 as the only admissible date and overlooked the fact that at the moment, three versions or 'embodiments' exist in the collection of the Stedelijk Museum. This stance presents some conceptual difficulties.

This position conflicts, for instance, with the object's material appearance, since the peculiarities and contingencies of each version are ignored. In fact, no correlation exists between the physical presence of that specific version and the label's date, which refers to the first creating moment. Moreover, visitors may also be misled in what they are seeing at the moment. By reading the identification label, the public assumes that the photographs on display were printed in 1973.

About the theoretical difficulties revolving around wall labels, in his essay "Death by Wall Label" (2008), artist and curator Jon Ippolito problematized the use of wall labels in conceptual art, single performances, and new media works. On the single dating of an artwork, the author remarked:

> Some artists insist, perhaps on the advice of their dealers, on the year of the original work — or even of its conception. As misleading as it may seem to date a plywood box back to 1961 if it was hammered together yesterday, it is equally misleading to cite only the year of a re-fabrication or new variant without reference to its history (Ippolito 2008, n.p.).

Ippolito criticized the reductive museum practice, which condenses every artwork to a single artist, date, medium, dimension, and collection, and in this light he understood why artists tend to want just one date on the label. Having no further explanation on a double date might be equally misleading. He advocated an all-including wall label system that would take into consideration the complexity of modern artworks and have room for crediting the "recreators" in the event of reinstalled works without the direct participation of the artist (Ibid.).

The other difficulty connected with Dibbets' stance is a possible inversion of authority. As previously suggested, a label may be viewed as one of the vehicles that museums employ to exert their knowledge. In the case at hand, the label is the result of the artist's authority rather than the museum's. Dibbets instrumentally used the label

as a fact-making instrument, which only apparently is issued by the museum. Thus, the artist's opinion is conveyed to the viewer through the mediation of the museum's label.[146] Seen from this perspective, the identification label becomes an authorized narrative because it is the artist who sanctions the content written on the label. This indicates the strength of the kinship between the artist and the label rather than the strength of the museum's 'voice.'

Hidden messages

In this final section, two 'hidden messages' that Dibbets has written about the reprinting of the *Comet Sea 3°–60°* will be analysed. The term message indicates an inscription by the artist addressing the viewer that suggests deeper or more sophisticated references or meanings (Ross 2014, 7). The first 'message' is the text written at the back of part *3°* of the 1996 version (see Fig. 13). Dibbets stated here that the work's reconstruction occurred because of fading; he wrote his name and the name of Van Oort, and he added the date May 1996. The second text is written at the back of part *3°* of the 2012 version (see Fig. 14), where Dibbets added next to the year 1973 two words: "3rd version." Both writings can be regarded as hidden messages: They suggest a deeper understanding of the objects they refer to, but at the same time they are hidden, since they are not intended to be viewed. Being written on the back of framed photographs, the reading of the two texts is reserved for museum employees in charge of the work's preservation, or for interested curators and scholars. Moreover, the communication was only visible when the two prints were unframed.[147] Regarding the 2012 message, it is also interesting to focus on the implied messages the artist conveys by leaving out certain writings. With the risk of being speculative, it is possible to detect a shifting in the artist's attitude in how he regards this specific version and its relation with the 1973 one.

[146] Van Saaze, in her account of Nam June Paik's work *One Candle*, also records how by mentioning just one date, the wall label plays an active mediation role in attesting the singularity of the artwork (Van Saaze 2013, 103).

[147] Nowadays due to conservation concerns, the three versions are not placed together in the same frames anymore. In 2012 environmental and preventive conservation concerns dictated the decision of the paper conservation department to remove the 1973 and 1996 versions from the frames and keep them in separate archival boxes. The decision was deemed reasonable because the only way to slow down irreversible color fading is to keep chromogenic photographs in dark, cold storage. Every time that for exhibition purposes a photographic artwork is removed from the repository, the color fading accelerates again. This implies that every time *Comet Sea 3°–60°* is presented to the public, the other versions, which are not visible, also further age and discolour within the frames. Up to the present day, the registration issue has not been resolved.

In his message of 1996, Dibbets acknowledged Van Oort as instrumental for the material reconstruction of the *Comet Sea 3°–60°*.[148] By doing so, the artist recognized Van Oort's involvement with that specific version. It is even possible to argue that Van Oort is invested here with a small share in the work's authorial responsibility, though it should also be emphasized that his involvement is limited to the material embodiment of that specific version. In an interview given around the same time, Dibbets clearly stated the great difference between the creative process and the reproduction practice. According to the artist, these are two completely different actions. He affirmed that he would become crazy sitting there, trying to remake the artwork as faithfully as possible, instead of being engaged in the creative process, while Van Oort, as a conservator, possessed the material knowledge and the mind set to reproduce the work. He also declared that the only stage in which he was actively involved was the determination of the colour during the printing process and the checking afterward (Dibbets, Van Adrichem, and De Herder 2003, 32).

In the 2012 inscription at the back, Van Oort is not mentioned, nor are the reason for the printing and the date of the printing. As in 1996, Van Oort was in charge of cutting, mounting, and applying the dry-transfer letters at the front of the photographs in the 2012 version. With the artist, he also supervised the printing activities at the photo lab. Conservators' actions are never neutral, despite the great efforts they make to avoid imposing themselves and interfering negatively with the objects that they handle. Every kind of conservation, whether it is remedial or preventive conservation or actual restoration, involves interpretation and in this sense "conservators make a personal statement and leave their signature on the objects they treat" (Pye 2007, 130). By removing Van Oort's name, Dibbets seems to efface his acknowledgment of the conservator in the decision-making and in the making of the new version. In this way the artist regains full authorial responsibility over the work while the 'conservator's signature' moves to the background and becomes again invisible.

The removal of the reprinting date at the back of part *3°* can perhaps be seen in this light, in which conservation and restoration are viewed as layers of the object's history that are not worth mentioning, as stated by Dibbets' communication to the museum when requesting the removal of the double date on the museum's identification label.

[148] On 30 November 2001, Sanneke Stigter interviewed André van Oort in the context of the project 'Artists Interviews and Archives' promoted by the Foundation for the Conservation of Contemporary Art (SBMK) between 1998 and 2004. There is an audio recording of the interview available on two CDs in the Stedelijk Museum library. The interview focuses on Van Oort's role during the production process of Dibbets' works and the materials that were used. For further reference about the SBMK project see http://www.sbmk.nl/projects/detail/id/7[Accessed 13 June 2017].

The inscription "3rd version" is an important message that conveyed the artist's shifting ideas about the various versions of the *Comet Sea 3°–60°*. I would argue that, as time passes by, Dibbets tends to historicize the originating moment, which thus grows in significance. As shown before, 1973 is the only date written at the back of part *3°*, while the actual printing moment, the year 2012, is omitted. Moreover, by stating that these photographs are the third version, the artist placed the first version in higher ranking within the hierarchy of the printings. Simultaneously, he retroactively defined the 1996 version as being the second version. The 1973 version remained the reference point that should be regarded as the archetype to consult now and in the future. Dibbets' changing views clearly illustrate how strong the convention is to give predominance to the moment of creation within the art world.

As suggested at the end of chapter two, this perception might undermine the proposed concept of plurality for photographic artworks that exist in more than one version, and would avoid a hierarchy among original and subsequent copies. It is worth noticing that back in 1996, Dibbets did not mention a hierarchical relationship of the reprint with the 1973 version, but only an affiliation with each other. In his message on the back of part *3°*, he explained the reason why the printing occurred, stating that this was done because of colour fading, and that the 1996 version was a reconstruction of the 1973 one. This shift in perception illustrates how as time passes, apparently the reverence for age grows, and the artist starts to give more importance to the 'historical value' of the object. To paraphrase Laurenson's process of formalization, it is possible to distinguish two phases in Dibbets' connection with his artwork — an "early relationship," in which exploration and development are accommodated, and a "mature relationship," in which the work's identity is ascribed to a more established form (Laurenson 2004, 51). In the early relationship, the artist explored and accommodated differences and developments in a more encompassing way. In the mature relationship, Dibbets contained the work's identity in a more conventional manner by giving predominance to 1973 as the creating moment. The relationship between the various 'moments' of a photograph will be discussed in more depth in chapter four.

The inscription "3rd version," the omission of the printing date, and the disappearance of the artist's signature from the front of the work may be viewed as indicators of discomfort.[149] The discomfort increases proportionally with time. The further the distance is between the conceptual birth (1973) and the material birth

[149] During a conversation, Van Oort told me that Dibbets refused to sign the 2012 version on the front. The artist gave his assistant no further explanation. [Van Oort, oral communication to the author, July 2012].

(2012), the greater is the lack of clarity evident in defining what the three versions of *Comet Sea 3°–60°* are. As time passes, it seems as if Dibbets leans more and more toward a conservative view, where the first prints become the original work while the other two versions, by losing importance, slide toward being merely sanctioned copies. Viewed thus, it would even be possible to extend Poinsot's definition of an authorized narrative by including sanctioned (photographic) copies. Like titles, signatures, dates, certificates, statements, descriptions, and notices of installation, the sanctioned copies are auxiliary and do not possess any autonomy, so they are forced to remain within the sphere of the work's first version. The two latter versions are not works by themselves and are not independent discourses, but they are systematically associated with the creative production of the conceptual artwork that took place in 1973.

I believe, however, that this view leaves unrecognized and unacknowledged the observable differences, as described in the artwork's material narrative. In this manner, all the variations in material and images are deemed too small and are consequently overlooked. Perhaps in this case study, the greatest point of discomfort is the dichotomy that occurs between the materiality reasserting itself in each version and the work as a conceptual object.

To summarize, chapter three described the first attempt to put into practice Genette's theoretical framework of constituent and contingent features through a detailed visual examination performed by a conservator. The comparison of the three versions of *Comet Sea 3°–60°* has highlighted the fact that the classification of the material as well artistic characteristics depends on whether these elements are interpreted as constituent or contingent features. The classification is and remains a value judgement. But, despite the subjective component, it is my opinion that it is still a helpful tool in guiding decision-making, as it increases the awareness of certain choices and circumstances. Chapter three also brought to light the conceptual difficulties that may rise with the existence of three versions and how opinions regarding the various versions may change over time. Above all, this chapter has demonstrated how the reproduction of a photographic artwork is far from being straightforward, as many unexpected and unforeseen elements may influence the whole process. The complexity of *Comet Sea 3°–60°* is also evidenced by the intimate relationship a photographic artwork maintains with its negative. As referred to in the previous chapter, Genette, following Goodman's views, considered analogue photography as a multiple autographic art form, since it is the result of a two-stage mode of production: The negative forms the first stage and the photographic print the second one. But he also noted that the production process of casting sculpture might comprise three or even more steps. He argued this by saying:

> Thus the 'two stages' are, in fact, three, and generally even more, since the most frequently used method appears to involve making a clay model and a mould, then a plaster model and a second mould, after which the bronze is poured (Genette 1997a, 46, note 5).

The same complexity applies to Dibbets' work, as the so-called first stage actually includes several passages — the photographic negative and its conversion in 1996 and 2012 to digital files. These 'transfers' may theoretically complicate matters. They might blur the artist's concern to retain the original technique of the work. Moreover, the distinction between analogue and digital becomes less univocal. Is the first stage analogue? Is it digital? Or is it both? As will be further analysed in the next chapter, in the case study on Baldessari, the curatorial staff of the museum initially supported reproduction, but in the end it revered the original form when technical changes, such as digitization, and visible material differences proved too extreme. Both *Comet Sea 3°–60°* and *Virtues and Vices (for Giotto)* have a multifaceted relationship with their negatives, and both artworks make the "creation moment" of photographic images problematic.

4

The Reproduction of *Virtues and Vices (for Giotto)*



This chapter examines the reproduction history of *Virtues and Vices (for Giotto)* (1981) by the American artist John Baldessari (b. 1931), which is currently part of the collection of the Van Abbemuseum (VAM), Eindhoven, in the Netherlands.[150] As in chapter three, the first part of this chapter will engage with the main questions of this research: Are there any detectable dissimilarities among the various versions of photographic artwork, in this case Baldessari's *Virtues and Vices (for Giotto)*? If so, is it possible to define the visible differences by using the classifications of constituent and contingent features? However, unlike chapter three, this chapter focuses on the subjective character of the constituent and contingent classification, which is the result of value judgements by different individuals, and draws attention to the shifting views of the decision-makers over time. The work's conservation history reveals how a living artist, Baldessari, because of his artistic practice, showed little concern for the possibility of duplicating the photographic images by using different materials and techniques. The curatorial staff of the museum also did not have a well-defined stance on the issue: initially, the museum promoted the reproduction of the artwork, but, ultimately, the museum staff ended up respecting the initial photographs, when technical changes and visible material differences proved too extreme. In this case study, the materiality of the photographs reasserted itself, as the staff decided to protect the initially unframed prints by framing them.

This chapter is divided into two sections: the first part (4.1) places the work of art within the context of some of Baldessari's early conceptual works; problematizes the use of found imagery; examines the conservation history of the piece; and applies Genette's theoretical framework combined with the practice of attentive visual investigation. As with Dibbets' piece, the initial photographs and the reproduced ones are visually examined and compared, visible variations are noted, and a categorization between constituent and contingent features is made. In this work, too, there is not always a clear-cut distinction between these features and, in some instances, both categories actually co-exist in the artwork's two versions. At the beginning, the parties involved in the reproduction process gave prominence to certain elements and thus considered them constituent parts of the work of art. But with time and according to new circumstances, their view changed and they started to regard other characteristics as constituent and make others contingent. In this example, Genette's acknowledgement that the number of properties defined as constitutive vary according to circumstances, and that these are dictated by collective cultural norms becomes evident (Genette

[150] Part of this chapter has previously been published (Marchesi 2014).

1997a, 87). This implies that the classification between constituent and contingent elements includes subjective value judgements that may change over time.

The fascinating aspect of this case is the dissimilar attitudes that the creating artist and the curatorial staff had towards the reproduction process. At first, the artist's desire to reproduce the work digitally was rejected by the museum, which gave primacy to the historical object. However, when the artist's opinion was more in line with museum practice — the suggested use of a frame to protect the works — this strategy was eventually adopted. Interestingly, the authority of the artist operated as an important concern for the museum, albeit slightly selectively.

It is important to keep in mind the complicating factor that Baldessari did not have the chance to view and examine the initial photographs when the second set of prints was printed. The artist might have had difficulties in distinguishing constituent and contingent elements in the photographs' material and technical aspects. In a way, it would even be possible to propose that this attitude coincided with Baldessari's conceptual artistic practice, which gives prominence to the photographic image rather than its material aspect. This might have played a role when the artist agreed to reproduce the photographs without seeing the first set of prints.

The second section (4.2) uses the unframed and framed condition of the work as an example of the variability of the constituent-contingent classification. Initially, the unframed condition was considered a constituent feature of the work, but over time the unframed state becomes a contingent element due to the shifting values that the decision-makers had about the work. The section starts by analysing the theoretical implications of a physical frame placed around a two-dimensional artwork. In the work under study, the framing was done despite it creating a significant change in the historical presentation of the work. The artist specified how the photographs should be framed in line with his more recent practice, removing the distinction between different historical periods of his work. However, attention should be drawn to the fact that the framing of *Virtues and Vices (for Giotto)*, as a preventive conservational measure, might also have occurred if the reproduction of the work had been accepted by the museum.

4.1. *Virtues and Vices (for Giotto)* material narrative

Virtues and Vices (for Giotto) (fig. 17) is a series of fourteen black-and-white photographs, displayed on two rows of seven. Each photograph is formed by an image and a word indicating either a virtue or a vice.



Figure 17 John Baldessari, *Virtues and Vices (for Giotto),* 1981, Van Abbemuseum, black and white photographs and dry transfer letters mounted on foamcore.

Virtues and Vices (for Giotto) displays many themes that reoccur in other works by the artist: the employment of photography as raw material for making art, the use of found imagery, the free connection between image and words, and the various level of narratives between the parts and the totality of the piece, in which the individual photographs are stepping stones to a larger meaning. Three early conceptual works by Baldessari are presented here with the aim to better contextualize the artist's general interest in photography and how his approach to the medium might have had an influence on his initial attitude towards the reproduction of *Virtues and Vices (for Giotto)*.

The role of photography in John Baldessari's conceptual works

At the end of the 1960s, Baldessari continuously explored and revised "what exactly the 'art' was in art" and where it resided (Euklund 2009, 23). The artist, thinking back to that period, has claimed:

> Where does art reside? Is it physically there in that painting? Is it my head? Could be a trace memory? Could it be a photo? (Baldessari, Davies, and Hales 1996, 93)

For Baldessari as other Conceptual artists, photography became one of the preferred choices to question the status and the social function of art. [151] Photography was selected for its polymorphic characteristics; it was available, popular and easy (Campany 1999, 127). Above all, it did not possess a 'tainted' association with the aestheticism of Modernism as painting did.[152] Baldessari embarked on a search for new artistic forms and methods of representation. He discarded painting as an artistic

practice perceived as a worn-out aesthetic mode in favour of photographic works. Baldessari was drawn to the documentary capacity of photography to seize the boring, uneventful, and visually uninteresting surroundings of National City, California, where he lived between 1966 and 1970 in relative artistic isolation. He continued his practice of taking snapshots, but he stopped to translate the captured images into paintings. He made no attempt to compose or frame the image; sometimes he shot from the hip or he pointed the camera out of the car window while driving (Avgikos 1996, 19). About this practice, the artist stated:

> So, I went around taking photographs like in *Ballard's ambulance*. Rather than framing them, I just drove around clicking out of the car window not really looking … using life like it really is (Drew 1981, 63)

In the same period, the artist also started to question the conventions of photography and, specifically, the do's and the don'ts of image composition. For example, in so-called photo-text paintings, he defied the basic compositional rules of photography (Berrebi 2014, 138).[153] In this series, he introduced text captions inside the artworks, opposing the convention of putting a cutline beside or below an image, as is generally the case in newspapers, magazines, and in museums. The captions in these works label prosaically, with no aesthetic intentions, the place where a scene was shot and captured by the mechanical eye of the camera and, in a sense, rebelled against the "self-consciously discerning eye of the artist" (Rorimer 1996, 31). Moreover, in Baldessari's mind, the combination of text with the images ought to be viewed as the "lowest common denominator" for art; an arrangement that most people, even those that are not particularly informed about art, might understand as art (Baldessari 1996,

[151] It is important to draw attention to the fact that Baldessari's association with conceptual art has been problematic from the start. Joseph Kosuth (b. 1945), defender of 'pure' conceptual art, mistrusted Baldessari's humour by claiming that his photo-text paintings were "as conceptual cartoons about conceptual art" (Kosuth 1969, 160–161. Cited in Fuchs 2005, 15). Baldessari refused to be placed under the label of conceptual art and years later, reflecting on the term, he declared: "I think it's a rather meaningless term. Something like, what is impressionism? Or what is expression, whatever. It made some sense at the time, but when you try to pin it down, you really can't "excerpts from Baldessari and Knight 1992. However, specialist literature considers Baldessari one of the leading figures of conceptual Art in the United States. For further information, see Osborne 2002, 26–34.

[152] For a general review of conceptual art as a reaction against Modernism, see Osborne 2002. For a review of the theoretical difficulties of embracing photography in the Modernist canon due to its indexical qualities, see Campany 1999.

[153] During his stay in National City in 1966–1970, Baldessari created 18 'phototext paintings'. For an overview of this series see Pardo and Dean, 2012, volume one.

87). To him, pictures with captions were the most accessible form that art could take, being present in catalogues, in coffee table books, in magazines, or in newspapers. By blowing up the images to the size of a painting, by putting them on canvas, and by adding captions, Baldessari made clear to the viewers that they were looking at 'art'.

By using photo-emulsion on canvas, the artist physically transported photographs into the territory of painting.[154] In his mind, people thought of canvas and stretcher bars as synonymous with art. With the employment of these two materials, together with the combination of language and image, there was no longer a need to contextualize the work people were looking at: the object 'automatically' became art. In this sense, the ordinariness of the subject depicted in the work *Econ-o-Wash, 14th and Highland, National City, Calif.* (1967–68) (fig. 18) is counterbalanced using traditional fine art materials.

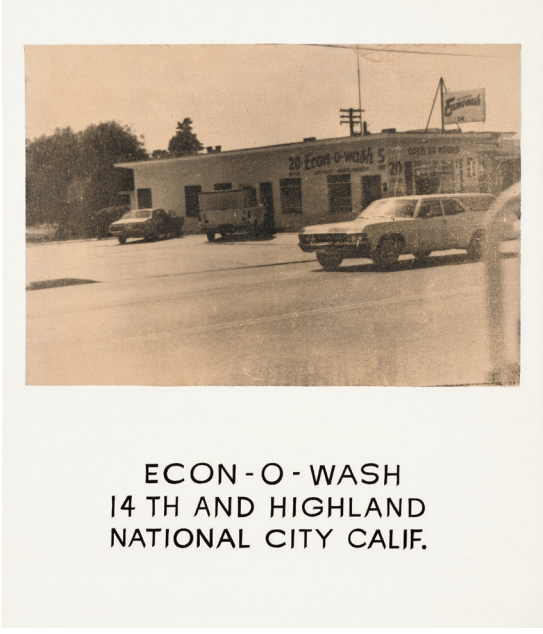


Figure 18 John Baldessari, *Econ-o-Wash, 14th and Highland, National City, Calif.*, 1967–1968, courtesy of John Baldessari, acrylic and photoemulsion on canvas.

[154] For a technical description of how Baldessari made the photo-emulsion canvases see Baldessari, Davies, and Hales. 1996, 98–99.

Baldessari referred to this idea by saying:

> I started brushing liquid emulsion on stretched canvases, thinking that anything on stretcher bars throws out 'art signals', and that the way to close gap between photography and art was to literally print photographs on canvas (Baldessari 2012, 154).

In his subsequent *Commissioned Paintings* series (1969), Baldessari used photography instrumentally and turned it into paintings. The artist started his long-standing investigation on the notion of authorship and the formal hierarchies of authority between images, photographs, paintings, texts, maker, and author. For this series, Baldessari approached amateur artists, whose work he had seen at county fairs, and asked them if they would paint a painting on commission for him. For subject matter, Baldessari gave each painter a dozen slides that he had made for a previous project, in which he had photographed a friend's finger, pointing at various mundane objects.[155] He instructed the painters to choose one of the images and to paint it in a realistic way — pointing finger included — according to a pre-set canvas layout, positioning of the pictorial element, and the written caption. Moreover, Baldessari requested that the painters paint a subject as straight as possible without the aspirations of making art (Roth 1973, n.p.).[156] For example, *Commissioned Painting: A Painting by Anita Storck* (Fig. 19) explicitly points out the difference between the maker and the author: the name of the maker, in this case Anita Storck, is written on the canvas, while Baldessari, the conceptual author of the piece, is identified in the caption below the picture. In the 'Commissioned Paintings' series, Baldessari explored the role of ideas or concepts in the making of art — one of the major themes of conceptual art — but he also questioned the traditional assumption about the need for the artist's touch to legitimate and to elevate that object to the status of art. As the author no longer

[155] The previous project that formed the basis of *Commissioned Paintings* series, was *A person was asked to point* (1969). Here, Baldessari photographed, in a documentary fashion, the hand of his friend — the jazz musician George Nicolaidis — as he pointed at objects. The *Commissioned Painting*s series consisted of fourteen canvases and different painters executed each painting. Both works, together with the later *Choosing series* (1971), formed one of Baldessari's recurring investigations into the act of choosing and selecting as an artistic practice. All these works might be viewed as a critical interpretation of the comment on conceptual art attributed to the painter Al Held (1928–2005), who was reported to have said: "All Conceptual art is just pointing at things" (Al Held cited in Obsorne 2002, 88).

[156] The interview was retrieved online http://x-traonline.org/article/interview-with-john-baldessari-1973/ [accessed 30 March 2017].

corresponds with the maker of the paintings, Baldessari 'demythified' the notion of authorship (Bird and Newman 1999, 4).

In 1970, in his famous *Cremation Project*, Baldessari made a clear statement of his growing feeling of discontent towards painting as *the* art practice. By burning all the paintings he had created between 1953 and 1966, the artist publicly distanced himself from painting and forced himself to wander in other directions, focusing on language, photography, and video. His interest in photography took many forms: a documentary approach by photographing motifs and objects he found interesting in his meanderings, taking visual notes of the outside world, recording series of movements and actions in what he called 'post-studio art', and using pre-existing images and commercial photography. Above all, Baldessari's interest in photography was determined by the conceptual freedom it gave him, rather than a fascination with the aesthetics of the medium:

> The more I got into photography, though, the less I cared about all the preconditions that came along with it. I cared about images, but not about making perfect prints (Baldessari 2012, 155).

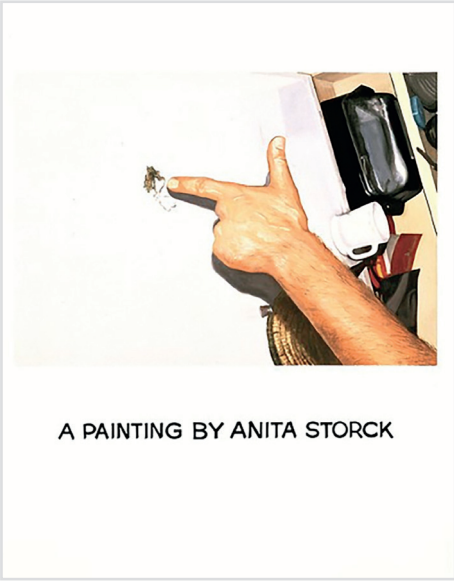


Figure 19 John Baldessari, *Commissioned Painting: A Painting by Anita Storck*, 1969, courtesy of John Baldessari, acryl and oil on canvas.

He also argued that, to him, the photographs' surface looked uniform, with no variation whatsoever, while the only aspect that truly changed was the subject depicted in the photographs. He was more interested in the images and not so much in the aesthetic qualities of the photographic prints. About the technical aspects of photography, the artist has argued:

> The craft part of it didn't interest me at all. Getting the perfect gradation of tone, or making a beautiful print, wasn't an issue. […] I knew what it was to make a fine print, but it didn't interest me; I was just interested in the imagery – in the ideas that the photographs represented (Baldessari in an interview with Aaron Schuman 2009, n. p.).

Baldessari's approach to photography recalls the 'amateurization' attitude present in conceptual art, which often downplayed the importance of the photographic medium and considered de-skilling as a subversive creative act for a talented and skilled artist to imitate a person of limited abilities (Wall 1996, 265). In this context, photography became a convenient tool for recording and presenting ideas or processes, while the aesthetics and the technicalities of the medium lost importance (Berrebi 2014, 145). The next logical step in the process of de-skilling was not to imitate amateur photographers, but to appropriate non-professional images. In line with this attitude, Baldessari was one of the first artists that employed and propagated the use of images made by others. Photographs were primarily used for their value as images. During an interview, the artist quoted the example of a house and stated that he did not care if the photograph pictured a beautiful building, he was only interested in the signifier of the term 'house'.[157] So there was no need for him to shoot the picture as he could as easily use and manipulate found imagery. Baldessari declared: "I was very interested in found photography, and I could talk for hours about that. I would raid dumpsters outside photographic labs" (Baldessari and Welchman 2005, 36. Cited in Eklund 2009, 24).

Discarded 'film stills' turned out to be, for Baldessari, one of the greatest sources of found photography and one the artist's favourite working materials.[158] He would regularly search for this type of photography in specialized shops in Hollywood. In the beginning, the film stills had to be as anonymous and unspecified as possible so that the viewer had no association whatsoever with the images. About film stills, the artist stated:

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[157] Artist interview video, 21 October 2009, 07:42, John Baldessari: Pure Beauty, http://www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/video/john-baldessari-pure-beauty [accessed 08 January 2016].

> I don't want stills from movies that I have seen or when I' m familiar with stars. It has to be really obscure because I don't want any baggage to come with it (Baldessari and Knight 1990, cited in Jones 2009, 54).

But he also affirmed that, after a while, he started to use film stills for the message they conveyed and communicated.

> Originally, these film stills I will get them just because they were found imagery. But a lot of them […] would come from movies and I began to think about it that I could really use people's collective conscious imagery in movies as something I could play with.[159]

The use of rejected film stills fell in line with Baldessari's conceptual artistic practice that strove for a more hands-off approach to art making, in which the artist's role was viewed as conceptualizing — not necessarily executing — the work.

Virtues and Vices (for Giotto)

Virtues and Vices (for Giotto) is a unique series consisting of fourteen silver gelatine photographs printed on baryta paper.[160] Each photograph was originally unframed and glued onto a sheet of foam board of the same dimensions.[161] The photographs are divided into two sections: the image and a white area. Dry transfer letters, in the form

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[158] Film or movie stills are photographs taken on or off the set of a movie or television programme during production. There are different types of stills depending on their purposes: the 'publicity stills' are photographs of the movie taken during production for marketing and publicity uses, the 'promo stills' are posed portraits of actors, crew members or directors, the 'behind-the-scene stills' are movie footage with the set's equipment visible or pictures taken during work pauses on the set, the 'set stills' are documentary records used for the matching of various scenes or for later re-takes. In big film productions, specialized (unit) still photographers are hired to shoot the various types of stills. For further reference see the Movie Stills Database http://www.moviestillsdb.com/ and the Society of Motion Picture Still Photographers http://smpsp.org/ [both accessed 4 January 2016]. Stills photographs fascinated other artists, of whom Cindy Sherman (b. 1954) is probably the most well known. For her famous *Untitled Film Stills series*, Sherman re-staged the stereotypes of (unit) still photography. For further reference see C. Sherman (2003), *The Complete Untitled Film Stills,* New York, Museum of Modern Art and Eklund 2009, 133–143.

[159] Artist interview video, 21 October 2009, 08:26, *John Baldessari: Pure Beauty,* http://www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/video/john-baldessari-pure-beauty [accessed 08 January 2016].

[160] Baryta is an interlayer of barium sulphate (white pigment, $BaSO_4$) located under the photographic emulsion. This layer was introduced at the end of the nineteenth century in order to produce superior surface characteristics of the photographic paper.

[161] Foam board consists generally of three layers — an inner layer of extruded polystyrene foam with outer facing on both side of either white clay coated paper or brown Kraft paper.
It is a strong, lightweight, and easily cut material used for the mounting of photographic prints, works on paper and it also employed as backing in picture framing.

of black capital letters, are applied above or underneath the photographic image.[162] The resulting words on each photograph indicate either a virtue — placed above the image — or a vice — located under the image. The title refers to a work by the Italian painter Giotto di Bondone (born c. 1266–67 and died in 1337) in the Scrovegni chapel at Padua, Italy. Between 1303 and 1305, Giotto decorated the chapel's walls with a cycle of frescoes featuring the life of Christ as the main motif. On the sidewalls, at eye level, he painted fourteen frescoes in grisaille, representing the personified virtues and vices.[163]

Baldessari referred loosely to the fourteenth-century frescoes since he did not literally follow Giotto's representation. In fact, Baldessari conformed to Giotto's virtues sequence, but he complied with the 'Seven Deadly Sins' tradition, rather than Giotto's list of vices. *Virtues and Vices (for Giotto)* should be regarded as an artistic homage to this artist, whom Baldessari so greatly admires. During an interview in 1992, Baldessari expressed his admiration for the Italian old master painter by stating:

> Yeah, but then Giotto and Matisse are my two. I mean, for me it's just like all you need to know about art is right there. If I had to choose one over the other, I'd probably take Giotto, but a lot of incredible things Matisse does with colour just amazes me.[164]

The artist translated the traditional theme of virtues and vices according to the sensitivity and feelings of the contemporary age, which, according to Baldessari, is greatly influenced by psychotherapy. Referring to this particular artwork, he stated:

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[162] For a description of this technique see chapter three.

[163] According to philosopher Douglas P. Lackey, Giotto united the four cardinal virtues — Prudence, Justice, Temperance, and Fortitude — with the three theological virtues — Faith, Hope, and Charity — as described in Saint Paul's 13th chapter of the *First Epistle to the Corinthians* (13, 1–13) and thus following the tradition of Thomas Aquinas *Summa Theologiae* I–II questions 61 and 62. Regarding the vices, the painter departed from the so-called Seven Deadly Sins tradition — Pride, Avarice, Envy, Anger, Lust, Gluttony, and Sloth as he removed Pride, Avarice, Lust, and Gluttony and replaced them with Folly, Inconstancy, Infidelity, and Injustice. Giotto's list of vices, so far as it can be determined, is original to the artist and has no antecedents in philosophical and religious texts (Lackey 2005, 555–556).

[164] Excerpt from *Oral history interview with John Baldessari,* 4–5 Apr. 1992, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution. http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/interviews/oral-history-interview-john-baldessari-11806 [accessed 23 June 2016]. Baldessari's admiration for Giotto is still very much alive. He has even named his dog Giotto as mentioned in the video Supermarché: Henry & Rel, 2011, 03:10, *A Brief History of John Baldessari* https://vimeo.com/50493471, and the interview between John Baldessari and Simon Patterson, 08 October 2009, 1:06:42, *John Baldessari: Talking Art* http://www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/video/john-baldessari-talking-art [both accessed 8 January 2016].

> I started with a series called *Virtues and Vices (for Giotto)*. I liked the idea that one could describe and dissect virtues and vices so exactly back then, whereas now things get so muddy. Could you imagine Dürer doing a study called 'Anxiety' or 'Repression'? I am beginning to think about my inner feelings, my interior life (Baldessari in Van Bruggen 1990, 131).

This work marks Baldessari's growing interest — at the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s — in psychotherapy and Sigmund Freud. Although extracted from its original filmic context, Baldessari used Hollywood movies' imagery to question the relationship between film and the subconscious working of the mind (Jones 2009, 55). About Baldessari' s tapping into the collective unconsciousness by using movie images, fellow conceptual artist Laurence Weiner (b. 1942) once stated:

> John […] understands that art is based on the relationship between human beings and that we, as Americans understand our relationship to the world through various media. We think of any unknown situation is terms of something we've seen at the movies. That is the basis of our normal mass consciousness and how we see the world (Weiner 1984).[165]

Virtues and Vices (for Giotto) is also characteristic of Baldessari's long-standing interest in the relationship between images and language. Like other conceptual artists, Baldessari was very much involved in contemporary human and linguistic sciences and in particular with Ferdinand de Saussure's theoretical model. The Saussurean notion that there is no objective correlation between the signifier — the letters that make up the word — and the signified — the mental concept — had a profound influence on Baldessari's work.[166] The images and the words forming *Virtues and Vices (for Giotto)* often entertain an unstable and arbitrary relationship with each other. Sometimes, the images are a straightforward illustration of the represented virtue or vice as the man, who gobbles shrimps inside his mouth well expresses the vice of gluttony (fig. 20). Other times, the relationship between word and image is more ambiguous. For example, the frightened woman and the man with a maimed face behind the steering wheel are connected with the virtue of fortitude (fig. 21), while the two insects transporting or fighting for an undefined white object are associated with the virtue of charity (fig. 22).

[165] Laurence Weiner statement is quoted in the article "The Boring and the Beautiful" by Hunter Drohojowska-Philip available online http://www.artnet.com/magazineus/reviews/drohojowska-philp/john-baldessari7-14-10.asp [accessed 01 July 2016].
[166] For further reference to Baldessari's relationship between image and text see Fuchs 2005.

In this sense, not every image is semantically united to the applied word.

The work is displayed in two rows, one above the other: one row, high on the wall, presents the series of virtues; the other, close to the ground, stages the sequence of vices. According to the museum record, the pairing between the virtues and the vices took a definite form rather early, following a visual matching made by the artist. In October 2005, during the preparation of the exhibition 'John Baldessari — From Life' at the Carré d'Art in Nîmes (France), a museum courier reported a short conversation with the artist about the display of *Virtues and Vices (for Giotto)*. According to this account, Baldessari could not remember how and when the sequence of the series and the combination between the vices and virtues was established. The courier assumed that the artist had matched the pairs during the work's first installation and, since then, it has remained constant. The pairing follows the sequence: Justice – Lust, Fortitude

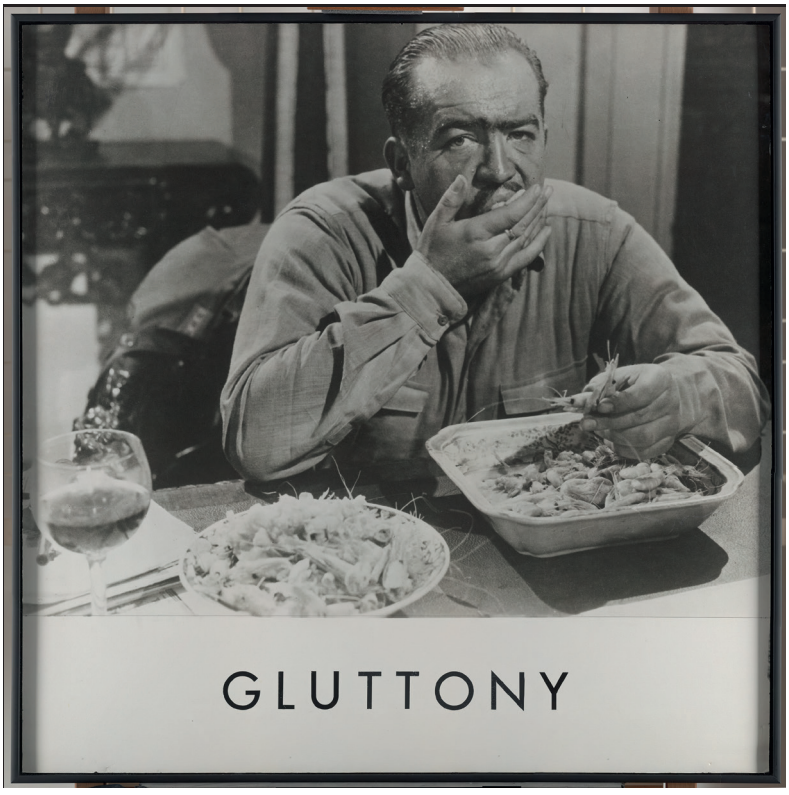


Figure 20 John Baldessari, *Gluttony*, 1981, silver gelatine print with dry transfer letters.

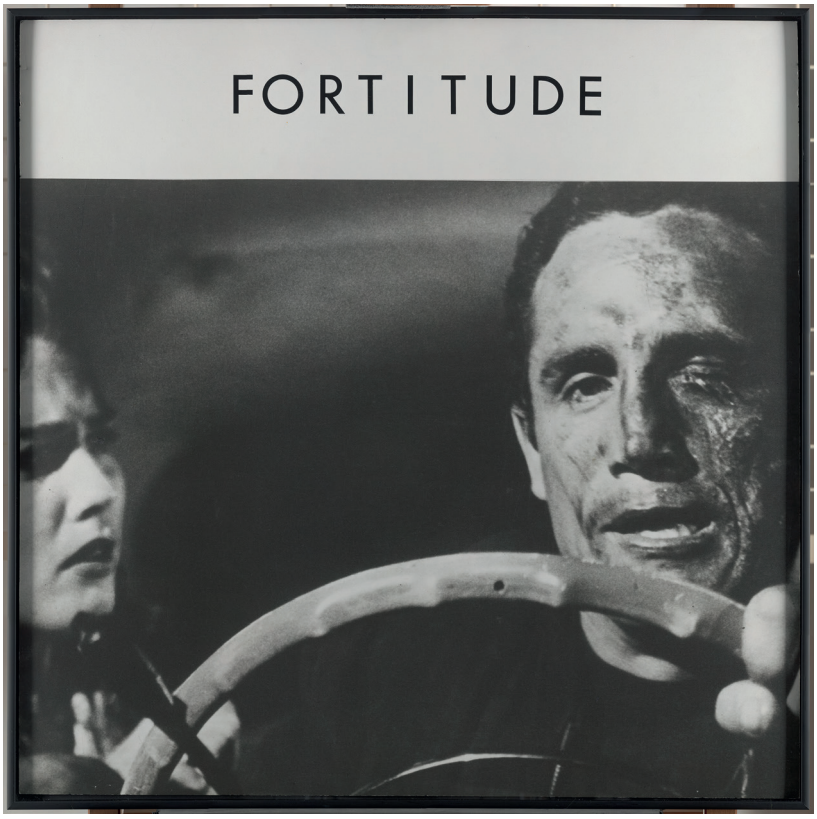


Figure 21 John Baldessari, *Fortitude*, 1981, silver gelatine print with dry transfer letters.

– Pride, Temperance – Avarice, Hope – Sloth, Faith – Envy, Charity – Anger, Prudence – Gluttony.[167]

For the series, Baldessari used found imagery as some of the images that he worked with were film stills of Hollywood movies.[168] He then cropped, enlarged and rearranged the pictures according to his interest in the early 1980s, based on free association of image fragments and texts. The artist employed here, as elsewhere, a strategy of juxtaposition, of a fortuitous relationship between text and image. Each image entertains an arbitrary relation with a word, but the work's title establishes a connection among the photographs, which results in a series. This multi-layered correlation allows a multiple reading of the piece: a single reading of each image and text, a horizontal reading following the virtues' or vices' sequence; a vertical interpretation that follows the pair's arrangement between a virtue and a vice.



Figure 22 John Baldessari, *Charity*, 1981, silver gelatine print with dry transfer letters.

[167] For further reference, see account on *Virtues and Vices (for Giotto)* written during the show preparation of 'John Baldessari – From Life' *at the Carré d'Art* in Nîmes. Unpublished museum record file of the Van Abbemuseum.
Baldessari's pairing does not follow the one described by the Late Antique Latin poet Prudentius in his allegorical poem *Psychomachia* (ca. 410 AD), or the traditional matching between the Seven Holy Virtues and the Seven Deadly Vices, or the Giotto's pairing in the Scrovegni Chapel. This reinforces the idea that Baldessari matched visually rather than thematically, or according to a theological logic.
[168] Some of the 1992-reprinted photographs, which are uncropped, show — along the bottom edge — the captions of various Hollywood movies.

The 'taking moments' of Virtues and Vices (for Giotto)

With his artistic practice of using discarded film stills, Baldessari problematized the notion of analogue photography as an (art) form with a two-stage mode of production in which the negative corresponds to the first stage and the photographic print to the second stage. Genette recognized the possibility of various steps in the first stage by arguing that the production process of cast sculpture might comprise three or even more steps (Genette 1997a, 46). *Virtues and Vices (for Giotto)* represents a complex case, because its first stage also includes several passages: the anonymous still photographers impressed and developed the images, which Baldessari subsequently recaptured by photographing them again.

Generally, in multiple autographic works, the authorship of the work is given to the artist at the beginning of the work 'chain': the design of the matrix is from the hand of the artist, while its translation may be delegated to professional workers. In printmaking, a strict division in the creative labour between the designer of the plate and the engraver or etcher is long established. Tapestry and cast sculpture present a similar distribution of work: it is the artist who draws the sketches or shapes the models with which the intermediate cartoons and moulds are made. It would also be possible to argue that Baldessari's *Commissioned Paintings* series presents a comparable work division: the photographs made by Baldessari serve as models for the painters who actually created the paintings. This series can be viewed in line with the critical approach of twentieth- and twenty-first-century art practice, in which authorship is often based on processes, shaped by the administration and delegation of the making rather than the making itself (Buskirk 2005, 15). But, when Baldessari switches to found imagery, he is no longer at the beginning of the artistic chain but in an intermediate position. He uses pre-existing material that he transforms by cropping the images, or by placing them in a different context, by assembling more pictures together, by adding text or paint. The selection and the modification of this material, according to Baldessari's intent and ideas, generate the work of art.

But by re-photographing film stills, Baldessari also complicated the notion around the 'taking moment' of an image. Batchen coined this term during his investigation of Alfred Stieglitz's (1846–1946) photograph *Paula* (1889) (fig. 23).[169]

The author identified three specific moments in the life of a photographic image: the 'taking moment', the 'making moment' and the 'public moment'. He defined the taking moment as the instant when the image is impressed on the negative; the making moment as the time when the image is printed; and the public moment as the occasion when the image is presented to the outside world and becomes part of the collective visual archive.



Figure 23 Alfred Stieglitz, *Paula*, 1889 (printed ca. 1930), silver gelatine print.

[169] Various institutions have given slightly different titles to this photograph. The Museum of Modern Arts (MoMA) calls it *Sun Rays, Paula, Berlin* following the title given by Beaumont Newall's book *History of Photography* (1982) http://www.moma.org/collection/object.php?object_id=50771 [accessed 15 March 2014]. The George Eastman House reports the name of *Sunlight and Shadows — Paula* following the title given by Rosalinda Krauss in her article "Stieglitz/ 'Equivalents'" (1979) http://www.geh.org/fm/stieglitz/htmlsrc/index.html [accessed 15 March 2014]. The Art Institute of Chicago names it simply *Paula*, as Batchen does in his book, and this is how the photograph is titled in this dissertation http://www.artic.edu/aic/collections/artwork/66284 [accessed 15 March 2014].

Batchen used *Paula* as an example to demonstrate how opinions and appreciation may change and evolve with time. What makes this photograph particularly interesting is the twenty-seven-year gap between the taking and the making moment, and the thirty-two-year interval between the taking and the public moment. Stieglitz impressed this image on a negative most probably in 1889, he printed it for the first time as a silver gelatine print in 1916 and he publicly exhibited in 1921. According to Batchen, the photographer's ideas about *Paula* changed in this long period.[170] Around 1910, Stieglitz came across the European avant-garde and, only after this encounter, did he start to appreciate the abstraction possibilities of the photographic medium. In 1913, his friend Marius de Zayas formulated Stieglitz's revelation theory, in which manipulation of the photographic image is disregarded. This theory helped the photographer to retroactively appreciate his older image *Paula* and thus stimulated him to introduce the photograph in his 1921 retrospective exhibition (Batchen 2001, 86).

But during the lifetime of a photograph, the three different moments — the taking, making and public moments — do not necessarily coincide with each other, as demonstrated by *Paula*'s case. *Paula* does not have a stable moment of origin; but it is capable of having many distinct physical manifestations and, according to Batchen, it is thus not appropriate to treat photographs as "if they are unique objects like paintings or sculptures" (Ibid., 106).

Virtues and Vices (for Giotto) may complicate matters by doubling the taking moment. In fact, for each photograph there are two instants in which the image is impressed on the negative as well as two distinct photographers that release the shutter. In *Paula* or Dibbets' *Comet Sea 3°–60°*, there is a single taking moment and just one creating artist; by contrast, there are two taking moments for each image in *Virtues and Vices (for Giotto)* and, thus, it is even possible to argue that more artists have contributed to the creation of the piece.

On other occasions, this view has led to long lawsuits relating to copyright infringements of the original photographs, as in the famous cases of Andy Warhol's (1928–1987) *Flowers* (1964) and Jeff Koon's *String of Puppies* (1988). In both cases, the photographers claimed legal authorship and therefore ownership of the underlying photographs that two artists had subsequently used for their works (Buskirk 2005, 85). The question remains regarding whether the taking moment of each image forming *Virtues and Vices (for Giotto)* occurs once, i.e. when Baldessari deliberately re-

[170] Batchen raises questions about the dating of *Paula* as a photograph created in 1889, thereby accepting "such retrospective re-creations without comments […] thereby [privileging] the moment of taking over that of making, the private moment over the public, the origin over the journey, the aesthetic decisions over the social" (Batchen 2001, 105–106).

photographed the pre-existing film stills, which he consciously selected and re-worked by drawing cropping lines on their surface (Fig. 24), or twice, since it had already taken place when the still photographers pressed the shutters on the movies set.

In this respect, Baldessari's practice of using film stills may be included in the capacious terms of 'found photography' as well 'appropriation' strategy. Found photography may be described as the infinite range of images that can be lost amid the meaningless masses but which is, in fact, waiting to be rediscovered (Garat 2013); and 'appropriation' may be defined as the artistic practice that deliberately borrows, copies, and alters pre-existing images and objects for the creation of the new works of art.[171] Hence, Baldessari co-opted other artistic material as a base for his works. As the artist argued during an interview, he views images as matter to be employed: "I do not think imagery should be owned, including my own […] it is stuff to use."[172] By doing so, he appropriated and re-contextualized existing Hollywood film stills; he transformed the original photographs through cropping, by adding a text



Figure 24 John Baldessari, *Sloth*, 1992, second version with cropping lines still visible.

that referred to a specific biblical and art historical discourse, by bringing together the initially unconnected single parts, thus creating a whole. In this sense, *Virtues and Vices (for Giotto)* sits in-between the artistic practice of appropriation — intended, since the mid 1980s, as the reproduction by one artist of another's work — and the appropriation of mass communication's visual formats, in this case film still photography, more closely aligned with conceptual art practices.

To conclude, the appropriation strategy by using found imagery underscores Baldessari's interest in the photographic image rather than the aesthetics of the photographic print.

The conservation history of Virtues and Vices (for Giotto) shifting value judgements

For *Virtues and Vices (for Giotto)*, I performed a visual examination — from full-size to microscopic view — informed by the trained professional gaze of a conservator, and I classified its material characteristics according to Genette's categories, constituent and contingent, as I did previously for Dibbets' work. This mapping was carried out in steps: firstly, the fourteen-framed elements forming the first version were compared with the matching photographs of the second set of prints; secondly, the 1981 photographs were unframed; and thirdly, part of the material features such as the texture of the used photographic papers, the condition of the photographs and of the dry transfer lettering, were observed through a microscope. This comparison made it possible to distinguish between elements present in both versions and features that occur only once. Some of the characteristics are distinctly constituent, while other characteristics are clearly contingent. From the visual investigation and the archival research regarding Baldessari's artwork, it became clear that the classification of constituent and contingent is, in practice, less defined. Some characteristics are in fact intermediate

[171] It is outside the scope of this dissertation to analyse appropriation as an artistic practice in the twentieth and twentieth-first centuries. For further reference on appropriation see Evans 2009. It is, however, important to reiterate how Baldessari, in his role as teacher at the California Institute of the Arts (CalArts), encouraged students to study and use all types of reproductions. As a teacher, he played a pivotal role in the education of some of the leading figures of the so-called 'Pictures Generation', such as Barbara Bloom (b. 1951), Troy Brauntuch (b. 1954), Jack Goldstein (1945–2003), and David Salle (b. 1952). This artistic movement heavily relied on appropriation as an artistic practice. The retrospective exhibition — 'The Pictures Generation, 1974–1984', held between April and August 2009 at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York — acknowledged Baldessari's role as artistic predecessor for the movement and displayed some of Baldessari's works. For further reference see Eklund 2009 and http://www.metmuseum.org/press/exhibitions/2009/pictures-generation-of-new-york-contemporary-artists-featured-in-spring-metropolitan-museum-exhibition [accessed 27 June 2016].

[172] Artist interview video, 12 February 2010, 1:18, *John Baldessari: Recycling Images* http://www.art21.org/videos/short-john-baldessari-recycling-images (accessed 22 January 2016).

and the boundaries between the two categories are fuzzy. But, in this particular case study, it is evident that this classification changes with time and is dependent on the stakeholders, who have the power to influence the reproduction process.

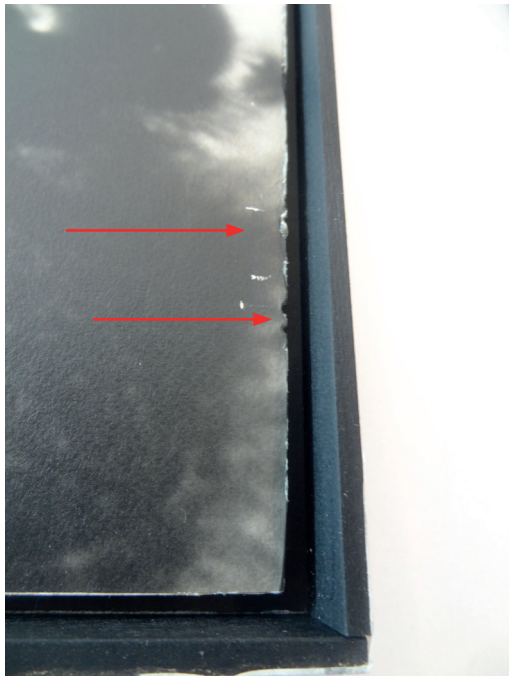


Figure 25 Detail of hole and dents along the edges.

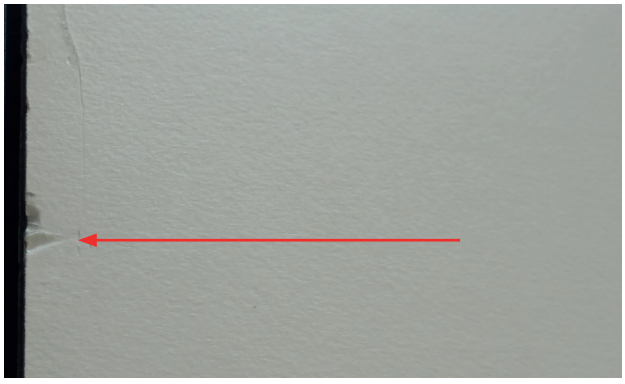


Figure 26 Detail of scratches along an edge.

From a material point of view, the work was initially very sensitive to handling. Because of the mounting on foam board and the absence of a hanging system, the piece's display has proven challenging: the photographs had to be directly nailed to the exhibition gallery's walls. An incorrect handling could easily cause dents and nail marks on the photographs' surface. Indeed, some such marks are still visible along the edges and at the corners of the photographs (fig. 25–26)

Several incidents have injured the surface of the unframed photographs. The first damage goes back to 1984 and 1988. Both incidents occurred during installation activities at two loaning museums. Apparently, the technical staff at the loaning institutions underestimated the fragility of the work and employed inadequate hanging materials, which resulted in marks and holes on several photographs. In both instances, the museum curators of the Van Abbemuseum corresponded with Baldessari and informed him about the damage to his work. In 1984, the curator wrote that a restoration treatment seemed extremely difficult and hardly satisfactory.[173] In the same letter, he suggested the possibility of reprinting the photographs.

In January 1992, a new curator mailed Baldessari to report a second injury. In the letter, the museum keeper listed the various options available to restore the work so that it could be displayed again: to unglue the photographs from the foam boards and attach them to aluminium sheets or to honeycomb aluminium ones, or to reprint the work in the eventuality the photographs' negative was still available. In a subsequent communication, the artist studio informed the museum that the original negatives of the work had been found and that Baldessari was willing to reprint the work. Due to financial constraints, it was agreed that a new set of photographs would be printed in Los Angeles, the artist's home base, directly from the negatives and without comparison to the first set of photographs. The museum, in the Netherlands, would then take care of the cropping and the application of the dry letter transfers on the front. In the following months, as agreed, a second set of photographs was printed under supervision of the artist or artist's studio. The uncropped set was then shipped to the Netherlands. The fact that the reprinting occurred without comparison to the first set of photographs proved to be crucial in the disappointing outcome of the reproduction process, as will be analysed later.

[173] The documentation file present at the Van Abbemuseum does not record further communication between the artists and the museum regarding the initial damage. As mentioned in chapter three, the Dutch language does not make a distinction between restoration and conservation as two different practices with distinct goals and theoretical frameworks. In this dissertation, I generally follow the division common in English-speaking countries. However, I make an exception when the term 'restoration' is used in the original Dutch documents I consulted.

The aspects that truly remained constant in the lifetime of the work are the content of the photographic images, the juxtaposition of text and image, the pairing of the virtues and the vices, and the presentation in two rows. These elements were never called into question, while other features were unintentionally changed during the reprinting, because no actual assessment of the first set of prints was made. When the second set of prints arrived in the Netherlands, the museum staff noticed differences between the two series. The new photographic paper had a different surface: it had a smoother appearance than the impressed texture of the 1981 paper (fig. 27–28).[174] Smooth-surface papers are generally used for prints with a documentary function, as this type of paper is better suited to rendering details with sharpness and clarity, whereas papers with a rough, open structure are mostly employed for more expressive subjects, when a sharper juxtaposition of shadows and highlights is sought (Johnson et al. 2014, 159). It is not known why Baldessari decided to use a smoother paper for the second version of *Virtues and Vices (for Giotto).* Given that the reproduction occurred without any comparison to the first version, it appears that this material characteristic was overlooked. It may also be the case that or the unavailability of this type of paper played a role.The image size of the second version appeared to be larger than the first one, implying a different ratio between the image and the dimension of the photographic paper. An example of this altered correlation is clearly visible from an assessment of the two versions of *Pride*. The 1992 version (fig. 30) shows the cropping lines that should be followed to downscale the photograph to the right dimension. However, especially at the level of the men's heads, the first version of *Pride* (fig. 29) unmistakably indicates a difference in enlargement. In order to match the 1981 paper dimension, the second set of pictures needed larger images and thus the cropping lines become visible. Conversely, in order to match the 1981 image size, the prints had to be cropped smaller. Hence, an exact replication of the image with the same paper dimension was not possible.

[174] It should be noted that the different surface characteristics of the two photographic papers used for the printing of *Virtues and Vices (for Giotto)* are detectable during the actual visual examination, but less so when these are analysed through the comparison of the photographic images as presented here. The best way to photographically document surface texture is by taking close-up raking light images. For more information on this documentation technique see Johnson et al. 2014.

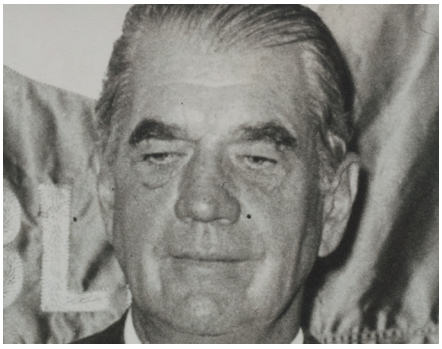


Figure 27 Detail of *Pride*, 1981.

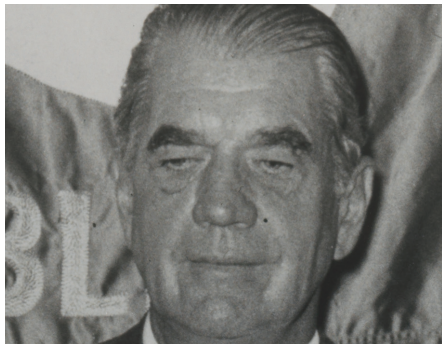


Figure 28 Detail of *Pride*, 1992.



Figure 29 *Pride*, 1981, silver gelatine print with dry transfer letters.



Figure 30 *Pride*, 1992, second version uncropped and without dry transfer lettering.



Figure 31 *Justice*, 1981, silver gelatine print with dry transfer letters.



Figure 32 *Justice*, 1992, second version uncropped and without dry transfer.

The two series also reveal a difference in the tonality of the prints. Some of the newly printed images are darker or lighter than the corresponding image printed in 1981; this variation might indicate a different setup in the darkroom, with longer or shorter exposure (fig. 31–32), which might have had a significant effect on the appearance of the photographs.[175]

According to Genette, the leading characteristic of a two-stage artwork is to have a model, created in the first stage, which may produce several 'identical' objects in the second stage. Variations in the model produce different artefacts in the second stage, and these changes are recorded. In printmaking, for example, it is customary to record possible re-working of the etching plate as a different state. Alterations at the second stage may also lead to different results, but they tend to pass unobserved and unrecorded. As proposed in chapter two, the identicalness of multiple autographic objects is generally agreed upon by convention. *Virtues and Vices (for Giotto),* however, demonstrates how changes at the second stage may be detected, invested with significance, and lead to the rejection of the second version.

[175] The 1992 pictures of *Justice, Prudence, Temperance, and Gluttony* had a lighter tone, while *Envy* and *Pride* resulted darker than their 1981 counterparts.

At the corner of a page in the museum's documentation file, an anonymous, undated, handwritten note states that the responsible curator is not satisfied with the quality of the reprinted photographs.[176] The annotation did not specify the reason for the disappointment and there is no explicit mention of what course of action was taken after the summer of 1992. Even if not fully documented, further records in the museum file implicitly indicate that the difference in the magnification and tonality of the photographs is the main reason for the museum to dismiss the newly printed photographs as a genuine substitution of the earlier version. This implies that the curator considered those elements as constituent features and, as such, as essential characteristics that should be maintained in each rendition of the work. This view led to the dismissal of the second version: the cropping of the photographs' edges and the addition of the texts were never realized, the new set was never completed and it never reached the status of substitution of the 1981 work. The refused prints have been kept, ever since, in the archives of the Van Abbemuseum.

Around 2000, the work's dossier was handed over to a new museum curator and she looked at the option of conserving the photographs. Because of the high costs and the treatment's temporary character, she contacted the artist enquiring again about the possibility of reprinting a new set of photographs. Baldessari was keen to reprint the artwork one more time, but because of technological changes in the field of photography, he suggested digitizing the existing negatives, adding the written text to the digital files, and making inkjet prints of the photographs together with the texts. [177] The curator, after consultation with a freelance photograph conservator, dismissed the artist's proposal due to the technical and material differences that would occur between the two sets of prints. The museum staff then looked into the option of reusing the previously discarded prints and made enquiries in the Netherlands about the availability of dry transfer letters that would match the font and size of the letters used in 1981. Despite extensive research, they were unable to find acceptable letters that could be applied to the surface of the 1992 prints. The ideas for a possible duplication of the artwork were for the moment put on hold, and the 1981 photographs continued to be exhibited.

The study of *Virtues and Vices (for Giotto)* not only problematizes the use of 'anachronistic' materials and techniques, but it also shows how appreciation of the object's materiality shifts over time. During the first years of the life of Baldessari's artwork, curators were mostly worried about the pristine look of the photographs;

[176] Unpublished archive of the Van Abbemuseum.
[177] File in the unpublished archive of the Van Abbemuseum.

with the passage of time, however, surface, tonal, and technical features became increasingly important. As the work got older, its 'historicization' began to take place. When an artwork is recently made and not yet historically recognized, any signs of ageing are unacceptable, but as it becomes older and its value starts to be recognized in the art market and the museum field, signs of ageing become acceptable (Pugliese et al. 2011, 5). This attitude shift can also be described in terms used by the art historian Alois Riegl a century ago: in the beginning, curators gave preference to the 'newness value' of the artwork, but, in the end, they emphasized the object's 'historical value'. In this revaluation process, the artwork becomes a testimony to bygone times and production methods. The predominance of one value over the others shapes the decision-making regarding the artwork (Riegl 1903). As conservator Michael Von der Goltz affirmed, these values are context-bound: decision-making may change with the people involved, as well as with the passage of time (Von der Goltz 2010, 61). The change in attitude can also be described in the terms proposed by the scholars Glenn Wharton and Harvey Molotch, who observed that, initially, the authenticity of materials might be a feature with low status, but, over time, this feature generally gains importance and might reach high status (Wharton and Molotch 2009, 212–214).[178] Both sets of terms show how decision-making is influenced by external factors and how these factors are influenced by the predominance of different values at different moments in time. By imparting a different value, the caretakers give a different meaning to the object and, subsequently, they act according to the value given.

In 2006, during another loan, new damage along the edges of Baldessari's photographs was detected. In 2007, the Van Abbemuseum, encouraged by the artist, decided to frame the original, unframed prints. In 2005, Baldessari suggested protecting the photographs with framing.[179] The museum agreed with the recommendation and proceeded to frame the fourteen black-and-white photographs according to the artist's specification in terms of the frame's profile and colour. Since then, the work has been displayed framed several times, during various exhibitions. The black metal frame has a minimal, neutral, thin profile and the glazing is not in direct contact with the image. The photographs are placed floating inside the black frames and there are no margins.

[178] Wharton and Molotoch prioritize the conservation efforts within an installation by giving a status to elements forming an installation. High-status elements are crucial for the work; without these, the artwork loses meaning. Conversely, low-status elements are considered of secondary or incidental importance. As the authors observe, the prioritization occurs also in general conservation practice.
[179] File unpublished archive Van Abbemuseum.

Since the first reported damage in 1984 and the decision to frame each photograph in 2007, the museum staff approached the conservation of this delicate work of art in different ways and weighing different options, evolving from the idea of reprinting the photographs and ending with the decision to frame each photograph.

The anachronistic use of material and techniques.

From the above overview, it is possible to detect that the curatorial staff did not have a well-defined stand on the reproduction issue, initially promoting possible duplications and ultimately revering the original form when technical changes proved too extreme. In fact, Baldessari's proposal to digitally reprint *Virtues and Vices (for Giotto)* was dismissed and other solutions were preferred instead. What appears to be particularly problematic is the point in time and technology that a reproduction takes place. This appears to determine whether it will be accepted as a genuine replacement of the initial version or perceived as an inaccurate one.

Throughout his long career, Baldessari has followed and adopted the technological advances that have occurred in the photographic field in the last forty years. From 2000 onwards, Baldessari has regularly used digital printing for his works and he has allowed the digitization of some of his prior analogue works. Photographic installations such as *Structure by Color Series: Imperfect Drawing Based on the Shape of a Cone (with Cylinders and Rods)* (1975) or *California Map Project Part 1: California* (1969) have been reprinted as inkjet prints using techniques and materials that were not available when the works were created for the first time.[180] Like Dibbets' use of digital technique for the scanning of the analogue negatives, the Baldessari case as well the Van Der Kaap work, described in chapter five, raise questions about the chronological bearing between photographic techniques and the works under study. In all reproductions of these works, it is possible to discover a tension between the use of a different, and sometimes belated, technique and the originating moment of these pieces.

In the book *Anachronic Renaissance* (2010), the art historians Alexander Nagel and Christopher S. Wood analysed the notion of time in relation to the work of art, focusing on the Renaissance period. The authors introduced the term 'anachronic' as an alternative to 'anachronistic', the latter considered a judgemental term that assumes "every object has its proper location within objective and linear time" and thus a witness of its time (Nagel and Wood 2010, 13).[181] By contrast, the 'anachronic' artefact moves freely, it follows a notion of time not necessarily linear and sequential; rather it

[180] It is important to note that commercial, colour inkjet printing techniques appeared for the first time around 1985 and it took at least another ten years to achieve the first quality colour inkjet printer.

is a time that may be conceived in a cyclical, ramified, or bended way. For the two art historians, a plural temporality is one of the defining characteristics of a work of art, viewed as a "message whose sender and destination are constantly shifting" in time (Ibid., 9). Nagel and Wood proposed a plural temporality to problematize the complex relationship a work of art has with time, a bearing that not only reconstructs the past in a 'forensic' way, but also takes other aspects into consideration, as its capacity to fabricate memories, to compare events across time, to conjure the past as well the future. But an anachronic reading also helps to understand the mechanism behind the substitution of an 'authentic' work of art. Substitutable artefacts are conceived to have a double historicity: on the one hand, they were fabricated in the present or in the recent past; on the other hand, they were valued as if they were old things. In a ritual setting, for example, artefacts could form a chain of acceptable substitutable replicas: copies of painted icons are viewed as surrogates of lost originals or new buildings can reinstate prior structures. In an artistic discourse, copies adequately substituted older works, as was the case for collectors of Greek and Roman antiquities, who, until the nineteenth century, contented themselves with modern replicas.

But copies, in order to become a valid substitution, had to comply with essential features, dictated by taste and shifting ideas. Generally, religious artefacts had to conform to iconographical types of the cult images; but, from the fifteenth century onwards, artistic objects had to respect a stricter observance of the prototype.[182] However, as the authors have argued, one of the conditions that allowed the existence of a double historicity and the substitutional model was a relative ignorance about

[181] The art historian Georges Didi-Huberman has proposed positive approach to anachronism and anachronistic sources a as a useful method in art history (2003, 31–44). In his analysis of Beato Angelico's (1395–1455) frescos of fake marble decoration at the S. Marco convent in Florence, Didi-Huberman questioned the historical method's insistence on using 'euchronistic' sources as the main evidence or authority to be used in art history. He contended that anachronistic sources might more useful for the understanding of Angelico's fresco rather than contemporary documents. Taking into account the risk attached to his proposed practice, the author pleaded for, what he called, a 'heuristic of anachronism'. In Didi-Huberman's view, anachronism should not be seen as a horrible sin as historians tend to qualify it but as "a moment, as a rhythmic pulse of the method, even though it is its moment of syncope, paradoxical and dangerous" (Ibid., 42).

[182] Nagel and Wood regard Netherlandish panel painting as a watershed, after which substitutional transmission becomes problematic and copies could be transformed into forgeries. According to the authors, many false claims were already made in the ancient world, but the implications of such deceptions are not clear. It is in the fifteenth century that substitution was transformed into an accusation of forgery as they have argued: "The Netherlandish panel painters introduced a level of informational density, an accretion of detail, and an insistence on maintenance of just those surface features that were traditionally overlooked or freely adapted in substitutional transmission. An obviously paradigmatic or merely structural relationship to a presumed prototype no longer satisfied developing criteria of visual authentication" (Nagel and Wood 2010, 281).

the production history of artefacts. The material execution of these objects was not regarded as a component of their meanings or functions.

According to the distinction proposed by Nagel and Wood, the material aspects of the works under study may be regarded as anachronistic when judged by a chronological reading of time, or as anachronic when valued by a temporal interpretation that allows plurality and a substitution of the work itself. If the artefacts' material execution is not a component of their meaning or function, then the practice of substitution may be deemed an acceptable practice, and it does not matter if Baldessari's work *Structure by Color Series: Imperfect Drawing Based on the Shape of a Cone (with Cylinders and Rods)* has been substituted with techniques and materials that did not exist when the work was created the first time. The work may then function in a double historicity: on the one hand, the artefact is fabricated in the present or recent past; on the other hand, the artefact's origin lies in the past, and, in this specific case, in 1975. But, if the artefacts' materiality is conceived as meaning-conferring, then substitution as a practice becomes problematic.

As proposed earlier, for conservators, the investigation of how an object has been made with all its material and technical aspects is often a subject of study and a source of knowledge. Generally, conservators and art historians interested in the materiality of works of art assign a great amount of significance and function to material execution. Hence, it is likely that a conservator of photographic material advised the curator of the Van Abbemuseum negatively about a substitution of *Virtues and Vices (for Giotto)* with another technique, stressing the anachronistic use of the inkjet technique. The conservator, because of her profession, had a lot of knowledge about the material execution of this work and substitution became problematic especially when there was no temporal concordance between the proposed new technique (inkjet) and the originating moment of the artwork (1981); or, in Didi-Huberman's words, because there was no 'euchronistic consonance' between these two aspects (Didi-Hubermans 2003, 35). In fact, the conservator seemed to have less of a problem with the idea of making a substitution using analogue printing, in this sense respecting the chronological bearing between the artwork's originating moment and the initial printing technique.

4.2 The frames of *Virtues and Vices (for Giotto)*

This section analyses the use of frames within Baldessari's photographic installations and specifically the 'delayed' framing of *Virtues and Vices (for Giotto),* the latter regarded here as the finishing point of a shifting evaluation process. It poses questions about the unframed condition of the photographs and how this may be meaning-

conferring for the work. It problematizes framing as a preventive conservation activity and how this practice may remove the distinction between different historical periods of Baldessari's work. In general terms, it is possible to detect a tendency to frame the artist's originally unframed photographic works and paintings. At the same time, frames tend to be overlooked by viewers as a physical presence, which forms an ensemble with the pictures.

Finally, taking into account the many meanings that the term 'frame' bears, it should be noted that in this dissertation, 'frame' refers to the physical structure surrounding an artefact, generally a two-dimensional picture such as a painting, a drawing or a photograph. That said, this section also considers the theoretical implications connected with the use of frames.

Frames in the context of John Baldessari's photographic works

One of the first functions generally assigned to a physical frame is the need to protect two-dimensional art. To frame an object — a painting, a drawing or a photographic print — is a simple and straightforward way to protect it. A frame that incorporates a hanging system also allows for an easy and safe way to secure such an object to a wall. A frame is also an ornamental object in its own right (Mitchell and Roberts 1996, 8). However, aside from the practical aspects, a frame prompts a series of questions that have long been raised and addressed by artists, curators and art critics. In his essay "Le cadre de la représentation et quelques-unes des figures", the French art historian Louis Marin argued that a frame has both a decorative function and theoretical defining qualities, and due to this duality it should therefore be considered a parergon.[183] Marin stated:

> [A] frame is a remarkable polysemy between supplement and complement, gratuitous ornament and indispensable mechanism. In a word, an indispensable parergon, a constitutive supplement (Marin 1996, 81).

Due to their complexity, frames have been experienced differently in various historical periods: For example, during Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages, frames were perceived as a unifying factor that holds elements together (Kemp 1996, 14); in terms of Renaissance art, a frame was a liaison between the picture's representation and that

[183] The term 'parergon', as described by Jacques Derrida, refers to something that is both inside and outside the work. For further reference see Derrida, Jacques.1978. "Parergon". In: La *verité* en *peinture*. Paris: Flammarion, 19–168.

which is beyond the frame; and in Academic French sixteenth-century painting, it was seen as a necessary border or rupture between the pictorial space and the disturbance from outside (Duro 1996, 46–47).

From the end of the nineteenth century, artists were increasingly involved in the activity of framing. Famous examples are Georges Seurat's (1859–1891) hand-painted frames, which utilized the same pointillist technique as his paintings in order to add a greater luminosity and suggest the extension of the pictorial space beyond the boundaries set by the frame (fig. 33).

James Abbot McNeill Whistler's (1834–1903) often-designed frames for his paintings, and today the term 'Whistler-style frame' defines a particular range of gilded un-gessoed wood profiles. But even less conspicuous examples like Edgar Degas' (1834–1917) and Camille Pissarro's (1839–1903) white frames show an evolving and increasing interest in how paintings and drawings should be presented.



Figure 33 George Seurat, *Evening, Honfleur*, 1886, Museum of Modern Art, New York, oil on canvas with painted wooden frame.

In his dissertation *The Reconfigured Frame* (2008), Ian Geraghty even suggested that the use of white frames could be considered as an important forerunner of the white-walled gallery:

> Artists such as Edgar Degas and Camille Pissarro started to use white picture frames during the 1870s, and this is where the battle for 'white' as a setting for art was initiated. It was fifty years later that the white-walled gallery started to be accepted as an appropriate backdrop for the display of art. In this respect, the 'white cube' can be seen as an immersive 'extended' version of the impressionists' white picture frame (Geraghty 2008, 283).

With the Modernist era, artistic expressions started to strive for autonomy and isolation. Presentation of works of art became of vital importance. The adoption of the white cube model, adopted in 1929 by the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York, shaped the way modern art was displayed in museums; the alleged liberating aesthetics of white walls was followed by many. Even if the modern art museum as a cultural setting has been heavily criticized from the 1960s onwards, a white-walled gallery remains one of the defining properties for this type of institution. The art historian Christoph Grunenberg stated in his study on the display of modern art museums:

> The white cube as a mode of presentation has demonstrated a surprising longevity, as it continues to be constantly reinvented and transformed to fit the latest developments in contemporary art and the latest museum concepts (Grunenberg 1999, 48).

Because of the blurring of the boundaries between art and real life, physical or conceptual framing has become increasingly indispensable. An inappropriate display can contradict or diminish the anticipated effect as well as the meaning and the interpretation of a work of art. Artists today are increasingly involved in the presentation of their creations due to the shift from 'traditional' art — where the audience is able to read the artworks even if displayed incorrectly — to less pre-defined artistic expressions (Kühne and Kirch 2010, 121–122). Thus, frames are more than just protective or decorative elements around the pictorial plane; they also define conceptual spaces.

In his dissertation, Geraghty grouped frames in contemporary art according to their physical relation to the artworks and to individuals involved in their production, focusing on what he called the 'immediate' frame. Geraghty defined the 'immediate

frame' as physically attached to an artwork that viewers see from the outside and it can be transported together with the artwork from location to location. This type of frame can be either an 'artist' frame, which is designed, conceived or made by the artist himself or a 'post-production' frame, which is added to the artwork without the direct control of the artist. The 'artist' frame can be either an 'intra-compositional' frame — a frame conceived as a part of the work — or regarded as an 'extra-compositional' frame — a frame that is not part of the artwork. The intra-compositional frame, which is per definition an artist's frame, can be further subdivided into three groups: the 'absolute' frame refers to an artwork that can be described in its entirety as a physical frame; the 'intrinsic' frame is considered to be an integral and inseparable part of an artwork in relation to its form, signification and content and, therefore, the removal of such a frame would imply the destruction of the artwork; and the 'supplementary' frame is conceived and developed separately from an artwork, often after its completion — but is still considered to be an important (rather than an essential) part of the work. A work with a supplementary frame can be photographically documented without the presence of a frame, while a work with an intrinsic frame is impossible to document without a frame. On the other side of the spectrum, a 'post-production' frame can only be 'extra-compositional' type and it can also be referred to as a 'disengaged' frame. This sort of frame has more of a practical function rather than a conceptual or artistic purpose and is often perceived as part of the museum/gallery furniture.[184] It can usually be removed or replaced without drastically affecting the content of the artwork. A disengaged frame can still be under the control of the artist, but it is not regarded as part of the artwork or its content (Geraghty 2008, vii–ix and 8–12).

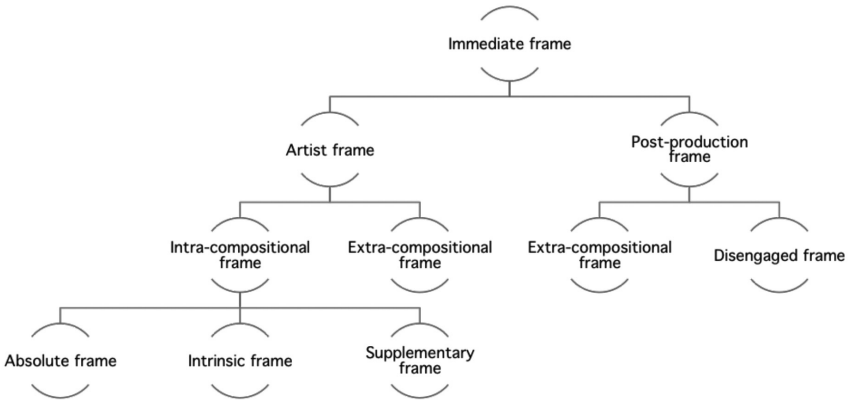


Diagram 2 Outline of the classification proposed by Ian Geraghty.

Following the classification proposed by Geraghty, it is possible to analyse the immediate frames that Baldessari used for his photographic artworks. From the 1980s onwards, frames appeared as a returning element in Baldessari's practice and his preferred choice became a black frame with a minimal profile, which is consistent with the frames that he suggested in 2005 to protect *Virtues and Vices (for Giotto)*. The artist deployed frames in different ways. For example, in *Kiss/Panic* (1984) (fig. 34), he used frames to underline the work's internal unity as well its fragmentation.



Figure 34 John Baldessari, *Kiss/Panic*, 1984, Collection Glenstone, twelve black-and-white framed photographs (one with oil tint).

[184] Frames that aspire to neutrality or invisibility may be called 'gallery/museum-style'. This type of frame is the preferred presentation for valued two-dimensional artworks in galleries and museums of modern and contemporary art and it is in line with the contemporary taste regarding frames According to Geraghty, this particular style is used so frequently that it can be seen as a convention for the display of modern and contemporary art. In his dissertation, Geraghty argued that artists have functionally used the convention of gallery/museum-style frames in order to convey specific meaning to their artworks. See Geraghty 2009, especially pp. 140–149.

The frames form a physical black border within the composition but there is no space between the framed adjacent pictures. This type of framing encourages multiple readings, allowing the viewer to look at the work as a whole, but at the same time, to view the framed images individually. It is even possible to propose that this framing is functional to the artist's greater interest in appropriation, juxtaposition and deconstruction of images. In this light, the black frames in this work may be defined as intrinsic frames.

In other works such as *High Flight* (1986) (fig. 35), the artist did not set the framed pictures against each other, rather he allowed more distance between the parts. He created an irregular-shaped composition giving a sculptural feeling to the whole. With this type of framing, he counterpointed the spatial vicinity of the frames with the presence of the wall behind. In this specific installation, the frames may also be



Figure 35 John Baldessari, *High Flight*, 1986, Museum of Modern Art, New York, seven black-and-white framed photographs with oil tint and vinyl paint.

regarded as intrinsic. Baldessari has employed both framing strategies ever since and they can be found in more recent works, albeit with some variation. [185]

In both practices, the frames can be defined as artist frames since Baldessari was directly involved in the decision-making, even if he did not design conceive or create them. The frames are intrinsic since they are inseparable to the artworks and their removal would imply the work's destruction. Moreover, in both instances, it is impossible or unthinkable to photographically document or perceive the artwork without also depicting the frames.

Before the recurring use of frames in his photocompositions from the 1980s onwards, Baldessari did not generally frame his paintings and he framed or kept unframed his photographs and works on paper. An interesting testimony to the artist's heterogeneous framing practice can be viewed on the online archive of the New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York. The archive shows pictures depicting the exhibition 'John Baldessari: Work 1966–1980'.[186] The photographic documentation gives an idea of how the works were displayed. Paintings on canvas were presented on stretcher bars without frames; photographs were displayed in various ways: with wooden profile frames, with thin metallic or black slates, acrylic 'box frames' and unframed works. It seems plausible to argue that at the time of the 1981 show, Baldessari's practice of framing was eclectic since many of his works had either intrinsic, supplementary, disengaged frames and some were even unframed (as shown in fig. 36–37). However, it is important to note that most of his early photographic installations were displayed unframed, including the works *Alignment Series: Arrows Fly like This, Flowers Grows like This, Airplanes Park like This* (1975) and *A Movie: Directional Piece where People are Looking* (1972–1973) as well his later photo-work *Fugitive Essays (with Caterpillar)* (1980).

In the slightly later exhibition 'John Baldessari: Werken 1966–1981', held at the Van Abbemuseum from 22 May till 21 June 1981, Baldessari showed a similar varied use of framing. Most of his paintings and his photographic installations were displayed unframed, including *Virtues and Vices (for Giotto)*.[187]

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[185] Examples of framing, which contemporarily separates and joins the work, are *Ashputtle* (1982) *Pelicans Staring at Woman with Nose Bleeding* (1984), *Heel* (1986), and *The Overlap Series: Jogger (with Cosmic Event)* (2000–2001). A sculptural display of the framed parts may be found in *Fugitive Essays (with Zebra)* (1980), *Hanging Man with Sunglasses* (1984), and *Three Red Paintings* (1988). Mixed forms between the two types of framing emerged in *Hope (Blue) Supported by a Bed of Oranges (Life): Amid a Context of Allusions* (1991) and *Model (Drawn from Life)* (2000).

[186] The show was held in the museum galleries from 14 March to 28 April 1981. According to the New Museum press release, the exhibition 'John Baldessari: Work 1966–1980' should be considered as the first museum show of the artist. For further reference see: http://archive.newmuseum.org/index.php/Detail/Occurrence/Show/occurrence_id/37 [accessed 16 May 2013].

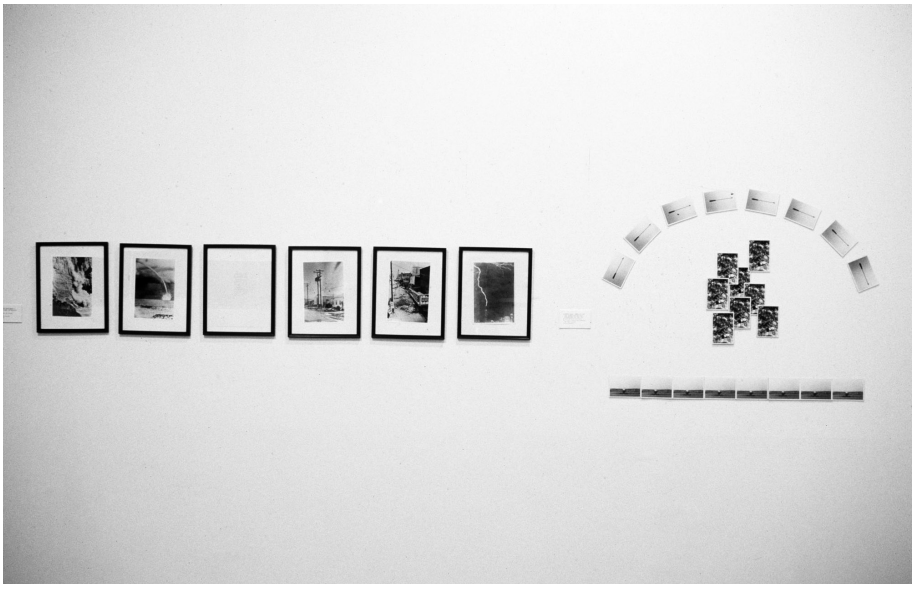


Figure 36 View display at the exhibition 'John Baldessari: Work 1966–1980' held 14 March – 28 April 1981 at the New Museum, New York.

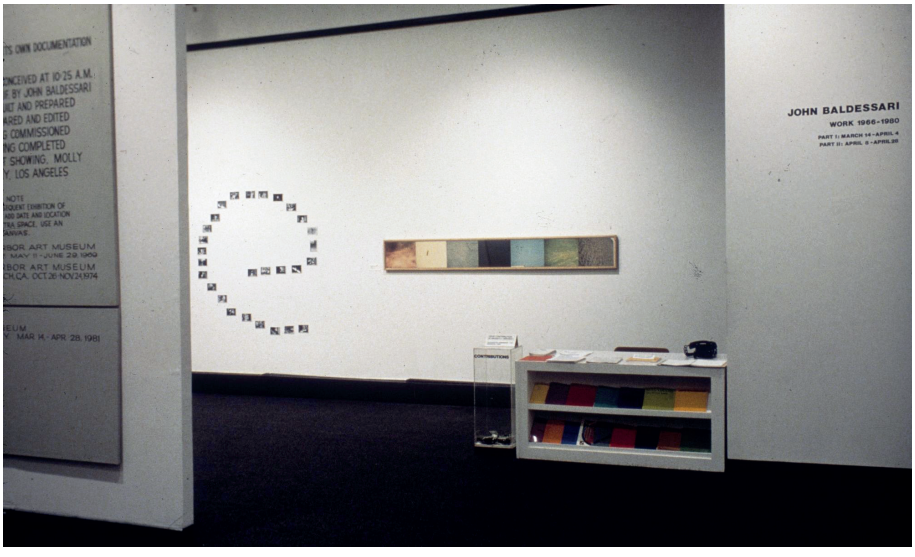


Figure 37 View display at the exhibition 'John Baldessari: Work 1966–1980' held 14 March – 28 April 1981 at the New Museum, New York.

It is important to keep in mind that at the end of the 1960s and during the 1970s — a period marked by conceptual art — frames were perceived as obsolete and many artists preferred to display their works frameless (Geraghty 2008, 63). What makes the framing of *Virtues and Vices (for Giotto)* a complex issue is the fact that the fourteen photographs were initially conceived of and created without frames. It was only in 2007 that these photographs were framed due to conservation issues.

According to Geraghty's classification, at first sight the frames of *Virtues and Vices (for Giotto)* should be considered disengaged frames. This type of frame is artist-controlled and, in this specific case, it was Baldessari who suggested framing the prints as a protective measure, and he indicated what kind of shape and material should be used. Moreover, disengaged frames are not regarded as part of the artwork or its content; they often have aspirations of 'neutrality' or 'invisibility'; and they are often perceived as part of the museum/gallery furniture. But, as Geraghty concluded, a disengaged frame does not imply that this type of frame is void of semiotic content. Certain disengaged frames may, with time, be regarded as having historical or contextual significance, but this does not necessarily alter the artistic implications of the actual work (Geraghty 2008, 12).

In order to better understand the dominant effect that frames — disengaged or not — can have on artworks, it is interesting to analyse a picture taken by a visitor during the exhibition 'John Baldessari: Pure Beauty' at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) in 2010 (Fig. 38).[188]

The image shows four of Baldessari's phototext paintings made in the period 1966–1967.[189] Of the four, only *Wrong* is displayed in its original unframed condition, while the other three works have, at some point, received 'disengaged' wooden frames.[190] By looking at the picture, it is possible to wonder if the wooden frames have an influence

[187] For further reference on the Van Abbemuseum's exhibition see http://vanabbemuseum.nl/collectie-en-context/details/tentoonstelling/?tx_dresolr_pi%5Bsend%5D=repeat&tx_dresolr_pi%5Bfield%5D%5Bsearch%5D=John%20Baldessari&tx_dresolr_pi%5BuidField%5D=CCIDENTIFIER&tx_dresolr_pi%5BuidValue%5D=http%253A%252F%252Flibrary.tue.nl%252Fcsp%252Fwebvanabbe%252FLinkToVubis.csp%253FDataBib%253D3%253A388&tx_dresolr_pi[field][search]= [accessed 20 February 2016].

[188] http://c-monster.net/2010/06/28/john-baldessari/ [accessed 4 May 2013].

[189] The other three works visible in the picture are *The spectactor is compelled to …* , 1967–1968; *Econ-o-Wash …* ,1967–1968; and *Looking East on the 4th and C. …*, 1967–1968.

[190] The work *The Spectator Is Compelled …* was unframed during the exhibition 'John Baldessari: 1966–1980' as attested by the online archive of the New Museum. In 2009, the LACMA's show displayed the same work as a framed piece. http://archive.newmuseum.org/index.php/Detail/Object/Show/object_id/993 [accessed 15 February 2016].



Figure 38 Installation view of the exhibition 'John Baldessari: Pure Beauty' at LACMA, Los Angeles, 27 June – 12 September 2010.

on these conceptual works. Is it the fortuitous difference between the unframed work and the framed pieces that is so disturbing? Or does the framing influence the way a viewer experiences these photographs? Is it plausible to assume that the edges of the unframed works would have dissolved in the white wall behind? The picture taken at LACMA seems to accentuate how the presence of wooden frames might prevent a blurring with the wall behind and how, instead, they accentuate the border, the rupture of the pictorial space.

In his analysis of the modern art museum, Gruneberg argued that many modern and contemporary artworks are made with the white wall in mind. The white wall, the so-called white cube, became the preferred background for artistic creations. Since there was no or little disturbance from outside, the frame lost its function as defender of the pictorial space from external annoyance (Gruneberg 1999). Geraghty also proposed a correlation between the rise of the white cube and the gradual disappearance of the physical frame, which started to retract, to slim down and, in many instances, they completely dematerialized (Geraghty 2008, 63).

In addition to the modernist disappearance of the frame, many conceptual artists also started to reject frames. Frames were typically associated with painting and therefore might impart an object-status to the artworks, something that conceptual artists were trying to avoid. Moreover, frames were viewed as a signifier of prestige, wealth and commercialization; they were thus generally perceived as something old-fashioned and full of meta-values. Consequently, many artists preferred to display their works without any frame or to reduce the physical frame and its impact on the artwork to a minimum by employing anonymous machine-made frames or transparent acrylic boxes. This had the purpose of "avoid[ing] [any] formal or contextual conflict with the object contained" (Rosen 1989, 13).

By looking at the installation view of the phototext paintings at LACMA, one wonders if Baldessari made these works with the white wall in mind and if their unframed status is relevant for the artworks' reading. According to the architectural historian Jonathan Hill, some of Baldessari's series — such as 'Fugitive Essays' — have the white wall literally and metaphorically at the centre of the work. About the work *Baudelaire Meets Poe* (1980) the author argued: "the lack of conventional frame creates a tension between the inside and the outside of the artwork" (Hill 2003, 116). To Hill, the presence of the white wall is as essential for the reading of the work as the relationship between the images' fragments. A similar question remains regarding *Virtues and Vices (for Giotto)*, when the staff of the Van Abbemuseum decided to give up the unframed condition of the work due to conservation issues (fig. 39–40).

The unframed condition of Virtues and Vices (for Giotto)

In her article "Frame", Barbara Savedoff underlined how photographic reproductions in books, magazines, postcards and posters tend to present the 'ideal' view of an artwork, showing art isolated from its presentational setting. She observed how most photographic reproductions are generally made in such a way that they 'shield' the viewers "from potential annoyances and distractions of first-hand encounters"(Savedoff 1999, 346). According to the author, this ideal presentation occurs mostly by eliminating frames around pictures. A clear dichotomy arises between the ideal, isolated, unframed state and the physical presentational context that could lead to risky misunderstandings and disconcerting comparisons. The presence of a frame is regarded as an extraneous, disturbing element that enters the vision field of the viewer. Frames, therefore, ought to be cropped and removed from the visual plane of photographic illustrations.

Interestingly, a similar fate occurs with *Virtues and Vices (for Giotto)*. In fact, most of the exhibition catalogues as well as the website of the Van Abbemuseum depict the work in its 'ideal', unframed condition, rather than its actual physical form.[191] The



Figure 39 Installation view of the unframed *Virtues and Vices (for Giotto)* at the Van Abbemuseum, date unknown.



Figure 40 Installation view of the framed *Virtues and Vices (for Giotto)* at LACMA in 2010.

[191] *John Baldessari: Pure Beauty* (2009), p. 227. Photo credits Peter Cox, Eindhoven.

only photographic documentation of the work in its framed state is to be found on the internet, portraying the installation of the piece during a big retrospective of Baldessari's work held in 2009 and 2010, in the illustration of the catalogue *Under a Big Black Sun* (2012), and in *John Baldessari' Catalogue Raisonné* (2013).[192] The same destiny befalls the majority of Baldessari's work portrayed in catalogues, books or websites, which follow the conventions of art historical literature by removing the disengaged or supplementary frames from the vision's field of the reader. Exceptions to this discourse are his pieces with clear intrinsic frames, where the frames are an inseparable part of the works; or when the illustrations have a documentary function by recording the way the works have been displayed during an exhibition.

The tendency to condemn frames to invisibility has been explicitly noted by Paul Duro in the introduction of the anthology *The Rhetoric of the Frame: Essays on the Boundaries of the Artwork*. Duro argued that:

> We see the artwork, but we do not see the frame. This is true not only of artworks whose frames tend to understatement, as in modernism, but also those that employ the most assertive physical frames, as in the art of the baroque (Duro 1996,1).

This 'blindness' about frames can also be observed within the conservation world. In this field, the framing of two-dimensional objects is a widely accepted and established practice. Framing is often seen as a viable, considered preventive measure that helps conservators to control and manage the environment adjacent to the artwork and therefore affecting the rate of change that the artefact undergoes.[193] Most of the time, framing belongs to the realm of preventive conservation because it does not change the material aspects of the work, and it maintains the artwork in its physical and chemical form, preventing any further deterioration. This opinion leads to the fact that framing is not regarded as a genuine conservation treatment and therefore often remains undocumented.[194] Framing fits well in the definition of *minimal intervention*, so popular in the modern and contemporary conservation discourse. But in his critical enquiry

[192] The large retrospective titled 'John Baldessari: Pure Beauty' was held at Tate Modern, LACMA, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The exhibition Under a 'Big Black Sun' was held at Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA), Los Angeles from 1 October 2011 till 13 February 2012. The homonymous catalogue depicts *Virtues and Vices (for Giotto)* as a framed installation during the 'Pure Beauty' *exhibition* at LACMA and the photo is credited to John Baldessari.

[193] Among the extensive literature on general conservation framing see; Kosek and Angelo 2004; Rayner, Kosek, and Christensen 2005. Specific conservation framing, such as microclimate frames, has gained momentum as an effective way of protecting two-dimensional objects from a detrimental environment see Phibbs, 2002.

on the subject, Muñoz Viñas has argued that minimal intervention is an oxymoron and therefore not achievable: since no intervention can be absolutely minimal and still be an intervention — both terms are inherently contradictory (Muñoz Viñas 2009, 49). What is achievable is to intervene to a certain extent. The extent is determined by the taste, preferences and expectations of empowered decision makers.

The framing of *Virtues and Vices (for Giotto)* can be seen as a preventive conservation treatment according to the predominant taste and the preferences of the decision makers who regard framing as a neutral, receding action that does not affect the content or field of the artwork. To frame an originally unframed artwork apparently looks like an 'innocuous' action, but a frame physically adds materials around, behind and often in front of the object, and it can also add layers of meanings to the artwork. It is a vehicle that suggests status, prestige and importance and is conventionally a sign of 'high' art, or, to use Baldessari's words, a frame "throws out art signals" (Baldessari 2012, 154).

To add black frames around the fourteen photographs of *Virtues and Vices (for Giotto)* could (partially) interrupt the internal dialogue within the series and extra meaning could be accidentally included. The changes are not only perceptible theoretically but they are also felt at an aesthetic level. The 'look and feel' of the fourteen photographs is changed. The addition of a frame and especially of the glazing in front increases the distance between the museum visitors and the artwork. The interposition of a glazing increases the idea of photography as an image, as a window on reality, and decreases the materiality of the photographic work with his physical and hand-made elements, such as the dry transfer letters added to the surface of the prints.[195]

The conservation world tends to consider framing as a neutral, safe action to be favoured instead of more interventional conservation treatment, since it interacts only 'indirectly' with the artwork. Most conservation theories privilege the material authenticity of the object and prefer abstention from unnecessary material intervention.

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[194] This attitude does not apply to the conservation of frames, when frames are the objects to be taken care of. It should be also underlined how framing can have a damaging effect on objects: intimate contact with poor materials, a wrong mounting or a harmful microclimate can be the origin of current and future problems. Framing of artworks should, therefore, be weighed carefully and executed by professionals.

[195] On the concept of photography as a window on reality see Van Gelder and Westgeest, 2011. According to the conservators Kühne and Kirch, the interaction of frames is not limited to the artworks but is extended to the surrounding walls, the architecture and by reflex with the viewer, who is looking at a work of art, but none of these elements operates independently from each other (Kühne and Kirch, 2010, 125).

Nonetheless, it should be stressed that, apart from the above-mentioned options (to reprint from negatives or to frame unframed photographs), another conservation choice exists. The other option, which is the only one that really fits the definition of preventive conservation, is to keep the *Virtues and Vice (for Giotto)* unframed. In order to manage the risk of damage at an acceptable level, though, the artwork should be accompanied by an extensive description of its proper installation and, when it is sent on loan, a trained courier should escort it. This is crucial as the documentation available at the museum has showed that damage occurred when external personnel, who were not sufficiently aware of the work's fragility, hung fourteen photographs.

Conservation has its roots in both natural sciences and the humanities. The choices around conservation go beyond the physical needs of the object because they are linked to the art historical tradition and cultural heritage context. These choices are influenced by the predominance of certain values at different moments in time: by assigning a different value, the caretakers give a different meaning to the object. By analysing the shift in attitudes of the curatorial staff of the Van Abbemuseum between 1981 and 2007, it is possible to reconstruct the different meanings and values that were given to *Virtues and Vices (for Giotto)*. The shifting predominance of specific values influenced the preservation strategies adopted by the curators: from reproduction to framing; yet, both approaches have an impact on the artwork. With a careful assessment of the different conservation options, the empowered decision makers should evaluate and prioritize which value is given predominance: the preservation of the artwork's appearance or the preservation of its authentic materials. The decision should not be dictated by an automatic reaction that to frame an object is a better, safer option. With the addition of frames, the artwork is 'musealized': it is adapted to satisfy museum requirements — to be displayed, stored, and shipped in an easier way (Desvalleés and Mairesse, 2010, 50–52). It is necessary to keep in mind, as art historian Bente Kiilerich stated, "if the unframed condition is a required part of the picture, the very absence of a frame, the nonframe, is not parergonal, but part of the art-work" (Kiilerich 2001, 321). Thus, the unframed condition must be carefully assessed before it is given up.

The in-depth analysis of Baldessari's case study has drawn attention to the lack of concern that the artist had, at least initially, for the materiality of the photographic prints. This 'conceptual' approach might have played a role in the artist's decision to reproduce *Virtues and Vices (for Giotto)* directly from the negatives without the comparison of the first set of prints. It also revealed that, by contrast, the museum staff showed a different approach towards photography by cherishing certain elements that do not necessarily correspond with the artist's opinion. Moreover, the unframed

status of the artwork was given up and it (apparently) shifted from being a constituent feature to a contingent one. Above all, the case study illustrated how the classification between constituent and contingent elements is the result of value judgements that change with time.

In the following chapter, two works by Van Der Kaap will be analysed and here, too, it is possible to detect a 'conceptual' attitude toward photography that gave prominence to the photographic image and its pristine look. In the works under study, the artist deemed the exact correspondence of the materials and techniques among the various versions of minor importance.

5

Dissimilarities in the reproduction of *Lalalalalight* and *Xiada (Girls' dorm), Xiamen*





The chapter examines the reproduction history of two photographic artworks — *Lalalalalight* (1989–1990) and *Xiada (Girls' dorm), Xiamen* (2002) — by the Dutch artist Gerald Van Der Kaap (b. 1959), both of which are currently in the collection of the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam.[196]

The chapter is divided into two sections. The first section places Van Der Kaap's two works in the context of his early oeuvre, examines the reproduction history of the two pieces, and it applies Genette's theoretical framework of constituent and contingent properties during the comparison of the artworks' various versions. It draws particular attention to the contingent nature of the photographic materials and techniques and how this may deeply affect the reproduction process. This part of the chapter engages with the question whether the use of certain material and photographic techniques should be perceived as constituent or contingent features in Van Der Kaap's two works. In other words, to which extent photographic material and techniques play a role in Van Der Kaap's reproduction? As previously discussed, this element has also played a role during the reproduction of Baldessari's *Virtues and Vices (for Giotto)*, when the artist proposed to reprint the photographs as digital rather than analogue prints. Eventually, the worries about the use of an anachronistic technique resulted in the Van Abbemuseum rejecting Baldessari's suggestion. By contrast, in Van Der Kaap's case, the artist and the Stedelijk Museum have agreed to reproduce the two photographic artworks using different techniques and materials. This decision has a significant effect on the material and technical correspondence between the newly printed photographs and the older ones.

The second section analyses the 'afterlife' of the works and what for effect the reproduction has on the initial versions of the two photographic works and their status. As will be illustrated, the substitution of *Lalalalalight* led to a 'disqualification' of the initial version, while the substitution of *Xiada (Girls' dorm), Xiamen* led to the physical destruction of the photograph. This section touches briefly upon the legislation concerning the 'moral rights' of an author and how the influence of moral rights sometimes stretches beyond the law courts.[197] It should be explicitly mentioned that Van Der Kaap never invoked his moral rights during the process and the reproduction of the two works proceeded in full collaboration and without any conflicts or discordance between the various parties. What is suggested here is that the underlying principles of moral rights, which acknowledge an artist's prolonged control over his or her work,

[196] In this dissertation, the title corresponds to the notation the artist wrote on the back of the work and it does not follow the notation used in various catalogues in which the work is named as *Lalala Light* (Imanse et al. 1992, 329; Visser 2007, 518).

even after a change in ownership, might have implicitly played a role in the acceptance — by the museum staff — of the works' disqualification, deaccession and physical elimination.

5.1 *Lalalalalight* and *Xiada (Girls' dorm), Xiamen* material narrative

Lalalalalight (fig. 41) is a silver dye-bleach photograph (115x300 cm) that depicts five times the same image of a blurred landscape: the upper part shows a sky that gradually turns from black to blue, white, yellow and, ultimately, to red; the lower part is an almost black surface on which blurred spots and patterns can be observed.[198]

Xiada (Girls' dorm), Xiamen (fig. 42) is an ink-jet print (191x155.6 cm) that depicts a modern, eight-storey building with greenish doors and windows where a lot of colourful clothing is hung to dry.

Both works have been remanufactured under the direct supervision of the creating artist. A technical failure, in the case of *Lalalalalight,* and a colour mismatch during the printing process in the case of *Xiada (Girls' dorm), Xiamen* were the main reasons that

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[197] It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to analyse the various implications that scholars have given to the word 'author'. Here, the term 'author' indicates a maker of literary, artistic, and scientific works according to the denotation given by the Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works. For further reference see http://wetten.overheid.nl/BWBV0003977/1986-01-30 [accessed 18 October 2016]. As will be discussed further in the section dealing with moral rights, the American legislature only acknowledges moral rights protection with regard to visual arts and excludes literary and scientific works. In this section of the dissertation, the two terms 'author' and 'artist' are used according to the different moral rights regimes to which they belong. In other parts of the text the two terms are used interchangeably as, in this dissertation, moral rights are invoked in relation to visual arts.

[198] Silver dye-bleach is a process based on the selective destruction of dyes (yellow, magenta, cyan); it uses azo dyes, which are significantly more stable than the dyes used in chromogenic photographs. The dyes are also chromolytic, which means that they are preformed and incorporated into the emulsion during manufacture and they are not formed during the processing, as is the case with chromogenic ones. The name silver dye-bleach refers to the fact that the dyes that are not needed for the image are bleached away during processing: for example, in the white areas all dyes are bleached away while in the black areas there is no exposure and thus the full amount of all original dyes is maintained. The delicate manufacturing, the slow process and high costs made silver dye-bleach an expensive material generally sold to professional photographers for artistic applications and it never conquered large market segments. For further reference see Pénichon 2013, 206–220 and http://encyclopedia.jrank.org/articles/pages/1225/Silver-Dye-Bleach-Photography.html [accessed 13 October 2016].
During the 1960s, the firm Ciba-Geigy Corporation commercialized the silver dye-bleach technique. The process was eventually purchased by Ilford, which then changed the name to Ilfochrome. Manufacturer-specific names are Cilchrome® (1963), Cibachrome®, or Ilfochrome® (1991). This technique was commercially available between 1963 and 2000 and is often associated with incredibly stable image production (Lavédrine 2009).

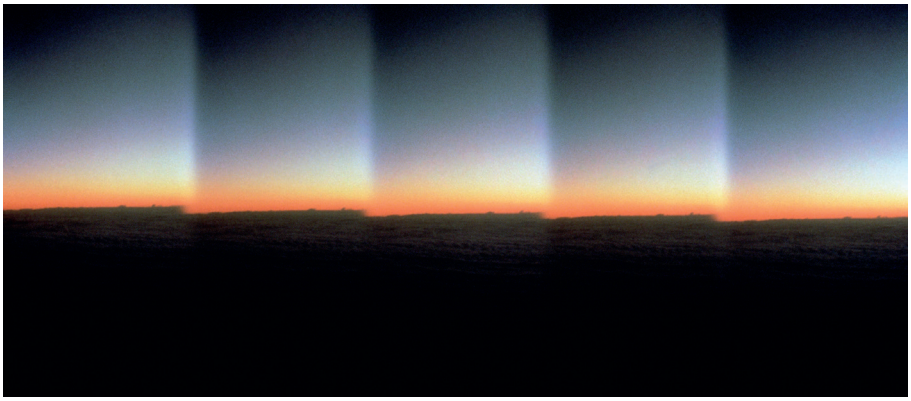


Figure 41 Gerald Van Der Kaap, *Lalalalalight*, 1989–1990, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, first version silver-dye bleach on Forex® board, face-mounted with an acrylic sheet.

initiated the process. It should be noted that the reproduction of *Lalalalalight* and *Xiada (Girls' dorm) Xiamen* fundamentally differ for two main reasons. Firstly, Van Der Kaap decided to produce again *Xiada (Girls' dorm) Xiamen* as he considered the version acquired by the Stedelijk Museum to be a failure, as a result of printing difficulties. The artist did not attempt to reproduce an exact copy of the first photograph; on the contrary, he deliberately made an effort to avoid the accidental colour mismatch in the original. Thus, the reprinting of *Xiada (Girls' dorm) Xiamen* is different from *Lalalalalight* — as well as the other works presented in the dissertation — as it was conceived from the start as an improvement of a print that had unfortunately turned out to be an 'inferior product'. In the other cases discussed in this dissertation, the reproduction process was started with the aim of avoiding visible damage by closely matching the new versions with the previous ones. In these cases, the artists did not try to amend the new versions and, in fact, the differences between the various versions were initially caused by unforeseen contingencies. In this chapter, the term 'reproduction' will refer to the process of manufacturing a new version of *Lalalalalight*, but it will not describe the reprinting of *Xiada (Girls' dorm), Xiamen*. For this work, similar terms, such as reprinting and remaking, will be used. This difference in terminology is designed to underscore the specificity of the process and the theoretical dissimilarities that this case presents compared to the other three.

Secondly, *Xiada (Girls' dorm), Xiamen*, unlike the other works analysed in this research, was not created as a unique work, but as a limited edition of three. This implies a different conceptual approach to photography as the artist, from the outset, allowed



Figure 42 Gerald Van der Kaap, *Xiada (Girls' dorm), Xiamen*, 2002, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam.

the existence of three more or less 'identical' photographs. From this perspective, the photograph, owned by the Stedelijk Museum, is related to the other two prints that form the limited edition. For the purposes of this chapter, the examination of the constituent and contingent features of the work will be limited to the two photographs that entered the collection of the museum. However, attention should be drawn to the fact that, at a theoretical level, the existence of the other two photographs has important repercussions for the application of Genette's theoretical framework.

In order to achieve a full examination of the constituent and contingent features, the comparative analysis should, in principle, be extended to all existing photographs. As the analysis is based on an attentive visual examination, the comparison of an edition is, at the present time, very hard due to practical difficulties. During the course of this research, it has become clear that certain differences are so subtle that is difficult to photographically capture them and compare them without a direct assessment.[199] Until alternative methods are available, the visual examination should preferably occur by direct comparison of the prints. This implies that all the prints forming the edition should be gathered together. In practice, this may be hard to achieve as, generally, collecting institutions or private collectors acquire just one print for their collections and do not purchase the entire edition. This endeavour may also be constrained by limited economic and human resources as well as a possible unwillingness of the various print owners to agree to the visual examination. Prints may be geographically located in different areas and, as a result, costly art transportation may have to be arranged and paid for. Moreover, as there is no agreed limit regarding the number of prints forming a limited edition, an artist is theoretically free to print as many photographs as he or she wants during one print run.[200] In others words, a limited edition may be formed by a great number of photographs, which makes comparative analysis even more difficult. In the case of *Xiada (Girls' dorm), Xiamen* despite my efforts in this direction I was not able to gain access to the other two prints forming the edition.

Lalalalalight and *Xiada (Girls' dorm), Xiamen* display many elements that reoccur in other works by Van Der Kaap, such as the manipulative properties of photography, the

[199] In the near future, it may technologically be possible to capture features such as texture, glossiness, shifts in colour, image, and dimension as scientific research has started to investigate the possibilities of computer-based classification of textures and images (Johnson et al. 2014; Van Noord and Postma 2017). This kind of technology is still in an experimental phase and is not yet accessible. It should not be forgotten that the process involves creating high-resolution images and significant processing capacity is required in order to analyse and compare the prints within an edition.

[200] It should be remarked that in order to ensure a higher economic value for photographic prints and for multiple authographic works in general, from the outset artists limit the number of copies produced during a print run or a cast. A limited edition is thus a self-imposed restriction or a limitation dictated by the demands of the art market. The size of an edition has a direct influence on the economic value of each print and, as a result of this convention, smaller editions have higher market value than bigger ones. For contemporary fine art photographs the size of a limited edition is generally between two and twenty prints, in addition to the artist's proof prints. It is outside the scope of this dissertation to examine the notions of 'unique', 'limited edition' and the mechanisms that regulate the commodification and circulation of artworks. It may suffice to say that to preserve their function as luxury goods, art photography and other multipliable art need to be difficult to acquire and scarce. The art market, by defining the moment and persons involved in the printing and multiplication process, and by giving each variable a different value, sustains this difficulty and shortage. For further general reference see Appadurai 1986; Benhamou and Ginsburgh 2006; Kopytoff 1986.

use of elaborate titles, and the use of silver dye-bleach as one of the artist's preferred photographic techniques. Three early Van Der Kaap works are presented here to better contextualize the artist's approach to photography.

Three early photographic works by Van Der Kaap

Van Der Kaap may be regarded as an eclectic artist whose artistic production reflects very well his wide-ranging interests. In his career, he made photographs, video, installations and composed music; he was one of the first Dutch artists who worked with computers and became a well-known vee-jay, under the name of 00-Kaap.[201] At the beginning of the 1980s, he issued art magazines and he made productions for the illegal TV station *Rabotnik TV* (Visser 2007).

Between the years 1978–1980, Van Der Kaap studied photography at the St. Joost Art School in Breda, the Netherlands. At that time, the training at the academy had a traditional understanding of what photography should be and it mainly trained students in the making of 'reportage' and 'studio' photographs. This interpretation did not meet Van Der Kaap's expectations, as he was interested in making independent 'art' using photography. The divergent interests, together with the teacher's advice, meant that Van Der Kaap decided to prematurely quit the training at the academy (Haveman 1986; Van der Kaap 1997). Van Der Kaap's education might possibly have influenced the way the artist dealt with the reproduction of his works. As will become clear regarding the reproduction of *Lalalalalight*, Van Der Kaap possessed a large technical understanding of photographic techniques and he was very aware of the technical and aesthetic differences between photographic processes: a silver dye-bleach photograph with its own specific features is fundamentally different from a chromogenic print.

It is important to keep in mind that Van Der Kaap has a different background than the other two artists discussed in this dissertation: Baldessari and Dibbets started their careers as painters and, only later, turned to photography as a medium for their artistic and conceptual experimentations.[202] Van Der Kaap, instead, began the other way round: he started with photography and later broadened his artistic range to include other media.

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[201] Some of Van Der Kaap's filmed performances as vee-jay can be viewed online on the artist's personal youtube channel https://www.youtube.com/user/GeraldVanDerKaap [accessed 03 May 2016]. For further reference on Van Der Kaap as a vee-jay see Turco 2010.

[202] Baldessari received his bachelor degree in Art Education at the San Diego State College in 1953 and his master's degree in Painting at Berkeley University in 1957, while Dibbets was trained in 1959–1963 as a drawing teacher at the Tilburg Academy and in 1961–1963 he studied painting at the Design Academy Eindhoven (Baldessari and Knight 1992; Verhagen 2007).

His career began with the project *Fronto – Laudes Fumi et Pulveris* (1980–1981) when he, together with the Dutch photographer Martin Thomas (b. 1956), travelled through various European gardens. The title of this work refers to the Roman orator Marcus Cornelius Fronto (ca. 100–ca. 165) and his small treatise *Laudes Fumi et Pulveris* — which is translated in English as the *Praise of Smoke and Dust*.[203] In Fronto's epistolary treatise, smoke and dust are presented as divinities worthy of admiration even if the majority of the readers would despise them. Similarly, some readers may not appreciate writings that are solely meant to give pleasure and amusement. But despite the levity for Fronto, these texts should, stylistically, be treated as if they were grand and important: stories of gods and heroes should be included, together with high-sounding proverbs, verses, and other sophisticated inventions (Clarke and Berry 1996, 132). In the inversion of the paradoxical eulogy, Fronto — by praising the smoke and the dust — criticized the futility and the lack of ideals of the culture of his own time (Perutelli, Paduano, and Rossi, 2010). He denounced how the content or rhetoric of a literary text had lost any importance; the only thing that mattered was the elegant shape and the conquest of the audience. Rhetoric is not meant to convince but to please; it has become the art of the elegant expression and lost touch with the everyday world. Literary style or form becomes a means to distract readers rather than draw attention to the writing's content.

Van Der Kaap's work *Fronto – Laudes Fumi et Pulveris* comprises twenty silver dye-bleach prints and all the photographs zoom in on unsightly corners and the trash left behind by the visitors of gardens and parks. The glossy prints, showing debris and other insignificant details, are, however, displayed in refined mounts. The professional photographic prints and the elegant mounts are in direct contrast with the subjects of the images. It is thanks to the work's learned title that the underlying theme reveals itself. The allusion to Fronto's paradoxical eulogy calls attention to the fact that form may distract viewers from the content: the ordinariness of the subject is opposed to the sleekness of the presentation; through the elegance and glossiness of the photographic images, viewers may forget the banality of the subject they are looking at (Haveman 1986, 1988; Visser 1996).

One of the works forming this series is *Schönbrunn* (1981), now in the collection of the CODA Museum in Apeldoorn, the Netherlands (fig 43). The photograph depicts a close-up of coloured electric wires in front of wooden branches. The print is placed in a window-mat with a painted leather pattern. Two lines from Karl Kraus' (1874–1936)

[203] Parts of the treaty have been lost and today only the first part is known. The original Latin text may be retrieved at http://latin.packhum.org/loc/1248/9/0#0 [accessed 11 October 2016].

play *Die letzen Tage der Menschheit* (1922) — which is translated in English as *The Last Days of Mankind* — are quoted on two sides of the mat.[204] There is no apparent connection with the quotes and the photograph in the middle. The title refers at the same time to the first word of the quoted line as well as to the place where the picture was taken, namely, the gardens of the Schönbrunn Palace in Vienna.



Figure 43 Gerald Van Der Kaap, *Schönbrunn,* 1981, CODA, Apeldoorn, colour photograph — presumably a silver dye-bleach, window-mat, and paint.

[204] The quote on the left side of the mat comes from act 4, scene 31 of the play and it reads: *"Schönbrunn Arbeitszimmer. Der Kaiser sitz vor dem Schreibtisch und schläft. Ihm zur Seite steht je eine Kammerdiener"*. The English translation reads: "Schönbrunn office. The emperor sits at the desk and sleeps. There is a valet at his side". The quote on the right side comes from act 4, scene 48 and it reads: *"3000 meter hoch. Vier Jahre, Gott, Gott, wazu das alles. Helene, ach wo bist du"*. The English translation reads: "3000 meters high. Four years, God, God why all this. Helene, oh where are you?" (Both translations are by the author).

The *Fronto – Laudes Fumi et Pulveris* project marks the beginning of a working practice that Van Der Kaap would adopt in subsequent years. At first sight, the photographic images may look straightforward and univocal — like *Schönbrunn's* electric wires — but the combination of suggestive titles and the artworks' presentation are generally hints disclosing the works' underlying themes. On other occasions, however, the titles seem to raise more questions than give answers.

One of Van Der Kaap's persistent interests is photography's faculty to transform and manipulate reality into something different without thereby claiming to be genuine (Visser 2007, 516). Van Der Kaap played with the ability of the camera to give objects, materials and textures a seductive and 'beautiful' appearance, either by framing or by adding or removing visual elements thanks to digital photo manipulation (Ibid.). The fascination for constructed, pleasant images may also have played a role in Van Der Kaap's recurrent choice for silver dye-bleach as one of his preferred processes. This technique, which is renowned for its excellent image stability, has striking colour saturation and colour purity, outstanding image sharpness, and distinct glossy surface. As will be discussed later in this text, Van Der Kaap's main reason for using silver dye-bleach was dictated by preservation concerns, but the artist was also well aware of the aesthetic qualities of this process, with its sleek and 'exclusive' look.

In this regard, Van Der Kaap's choice for silver dye-bleach — an expensive and difficult technique to process, mostly used by professional photographers — is in direct contrast with the down-to-earth photography used by conceptual artists in the 1960s and 1970s, such as Dibbets and Baldessari, and more in line with the development of art photography in the 1980s. In this period, artists started to produce large, colourful and expensively framed works (Soutter 2013, 4).

The autobiographic piece *The artist at the age of 7* (1985) in the collection of the Stedelijk Museum is an example of Van Der Kaap's manipulative practice of assembling different visual elements to create a new image (Fig. 44).

The rectangular work is formed by three elements: a shining gold-like border of around ten centimetres that runs along the edges; diagonal green, blue, and red lines against a black background; and almost in the centre, a superimposed black-and-white portrait of a child dressed as a knight, standing on a staircase and holding a toy sword in one of his hands. The effect of a round light beam separates the portrait from the rest of the composition. For this work, the artist combined an old photograph of himself as a child with a detail from one of his first computer pieces.[205] About the making of the piece, the artist stated:



Figure 44 Gerald Van Der Kaap, *The Artist at the Age of 7*, 1985, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, silver dye-bleach on aluminium and face-mounted with acrylic.

[205] Van Der Kaap reused the same image to create a similar work titled *Untitled, 'Self-portrait as a small boy'* (1985). This work, however, is smaller in size 50x40 cm while the SMA piece is 145.5x120.5 cm, it does not have a gold border along the edges, it comes in an edition of four, and it is printed as a chromogenic photograph.

> This is me in my Ivanhoe dress that tries to improve the world and fights against the computer lines. This is actually a detail from one of my first computer works I ever made. A kind of zero work and I then took detail from it and I photographed it.[206]

The Artist at the Age of 7 depicts Van Der Kaap's self-portrait as a child with a made-up computerized background; the resulting constructed image is located at the boundaries of a fictional and a non-fictional reality. Van Der Kaap has regularly played with the ambiguity of the photographic medium: on the one hand, photography is considered as a transcription due to its indexical claim; on the other hand, it is regarded as a construction capable of shaping or manipulating facts and events, even if these are grounded in reality.

Photography's capacity to 'fool' viewers about what they are actually looking at is the subject of *Lalalala Emile* (1988–1989), now in the collection of the Groninger Museum, Groningen (fig. 45).

Lalalala Emile (120 x 306 cm) is a silver dye-bleach print that portrays, at the centre, various landscapes: desert, mountain and grassland. A black background surrounds the five scenes. The images apparently depict living, unspoiled environments in distant countries, but, in reality, they portrayed simulated biotopes on view at the American Museum of Natural History in New York. These are details from the museum's dioramas and, as a result of their de-contextualization, they give the impression that they are shot in actual natural landscapes. The artist wanted to give the impression of a living nature while he, in reality, was photographing dead, fully man-made landscapes made of artificial vegetation.[207]

The title may be considered as the key to interpret this work: the name Emile refers to Jean-Jacques Rousseau's (1712–1778) book Émile *ou De l'éducation* (1762). In his pedagogic novel, Rousseau considered the relation with nature to be beneficial for a child's education rather than as one constrained by social and cultural obligations.

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[206] In 2012, Dutch director Jan Eilander directed a documentary about Van Der Kaap for the series *Hollandse Meester in the 21e eeuw, (Dutch Masters of the 21st century).* The series shows contemporary Dutch artists seen through the eyes of renowned filmmakers. For further reference on the documentary series see http://hollandsemeesters.info/page/home [accessed 09 June 2016]. The recording has been extensively consulted for this dissertation; excerpts have been translated into English and quoted in the text. The Dutch transcriptions can be found in the footnotes, they are referred to as Van Der Kaap communication in Eilander's documentary, and the position of the segments are specified in minutes. The documentary is accessible online http://hollandsemeesters.info/posts/show/7954 [accessed 29 April 2016].
Van Der Kaap line in Eilander's filmed documentary, 2:12–2:41: *"Dat ben ik in mijn Ivanhoe pak, die de wereld probeert te verbeteren en een gevecht aangaat met de computer lijnen. Dit is weer een detail van een van de alleerste computer werken die ik ooit heb gemaakt. Een soort nul werk en dan heb ik toen details van gemaakt, gefotografeerd."*



Figure 45 Gerald Van Der Kaap, *Lalalala Emile*, 1988–1989, Groninger Museum, silver dye-bleach on aluminium and face-mounted with acrylic.

The 'natural education' should be conducted outdoors, in the middle of nature, as the environment strengthens the child's body and soul. This type of education develops the child's physical senses and these will be the most important tools for his future acquisition of knowledge.[208] By alluding to Rousseau's book, Van Der Kaap may have wanted to comment on the problematic relationship humankind has with nature. Dioramas are often viewed as an educational tool for children to understand the natural world, enabling contact with an environment that they may never experience directly (Dale Tunnicliffe and Scheersoi 2009, 2).[209]

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[207] It is interesting to note that the series 'Dioramas' (1976–2012) by Hiroshi Sugimoto (b. 1948) presents a similar theme to Van Der Kaap's *Lalalala Emile*. By 1974, Sugimoto had become fascinated by the dioramas of the American Museum of Natural History in New York and started to photograph them. By focusing the camera on individual dioramas, by excluding educational materials, and by ensuring that no reflections enter the image, Sugimoto is able to 'fool' the viewer, as it looks like the subjects are photographed in their natural habitats. About this series the artist has said: "However fake the subject, once photographed, it is as good as real" for further reference see http://www.sugimotohiroshi.com/diorama.html. Sugimoto's ideas about this series can also be found on a small documentary see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q9GiyPbLYPg [both accessed 31 March 2017].

[208] It is beyond the scope of this study to analyse Rousseau's book *Émile*. For further references see Meld Shell 2001, 272–301; Parry 2001, 247–271.

[209] In 1989, Van Der Kaap participated in the exhibition '*Tristes Tropique/Taboo. A last salute to dying nature*.' The title of the show referred directly to Claude Lévi-Strauss' book, Tristes Tropiques (1955), and the silent film *Tabu* (1931) directed by Frederich Wilhelm Murnau (1888–1931), but indirectly to Jean Baudrillard's book *Amérique* (1986), which linked it back to Lévi-Strauss, and responding to Jean Jacques Rousseau's *Émile*. Baudrillard was one of the organizers of the show together with the artist Günther Förg (1952–2013), the art historian Paul Groot, the artist Peter Klashorst (b. 1957) and Gerald Van Der Kaap (Groot 1989).

Van Der Kaap regards *Lalalala Emile* as a forerunner of *Lalalalalight*.[210] In fact, the two works show thematic and formal similarities: both depict landscapes, they have similar dimensions and they use the same photographic techniques and materials.

Lalalalalight

Lalalalalight is the re-working of an image that Van Der Kaap took from an airplane window and it depicts five times the image of a city's skyline at dusk (fig. 41). From a technical viewpoint, Van Der Kaap shot the image on a 35 mm negative, he then inserted the small format negative into a professional camera known as a 'Forox® camera'; he supposedly exposed the negative five times into a large format positive film.[211] The resulting positive was subsequently projected, through a horizontal enlarger, onto silver dye-bleach paper.[212] By repeating the same image, Van Der Kaap manipulated an existing landscape and created a rhythmic, sequenced image that does not have a direct correlation with the everyday world. *Lalalalalight* becomes a construction made up by the photographer in his studio.

Regarding the technical and material aspects of the photographic print, the artist has declared that his choice for a silver dye-bleach imaging system was primarily determined by its superior dye stability. Silver dye-bleach colours would, in the long term, remain more stable and they would neither discolour, nor fade as quickly as the dyes present in chromogenic prints. Van Der Kaap selected this material primarily due to his concerns for the longevity of his works; thus, preservation issues dictated the choice of this technique, rather than pressing aesthetic reasons**.** However, the artist was very aware of the influence that Cibachrome® paper would have on the work's overall look and dimensions. According to the artist back in the 1990s, a width of 125 cm was the largest size available for silver dye-bleach paper; thus, this technical constraint greatly affected the work's overall appearance. Moreover, in comparison to chromogenic prints, Cibachrome® had a different image contrast and harsher colours

[210] In March 2013, Van Der Kaap was interviewed for documentary purposes by the museum staff about the reproduction of *Lalalalalight* and *Xiada (Girls' dorm), Xiamen*. This interview was filmed and the digital files are kept in the archive of the Stedelijk Museum, which is restrained by author's law regulations. For this dissertation, I made extensive use of the artist interview which is referred in the notes as 'Van Der Kaap artist interview, SMA'.

[211] Van Der Kaap artist interview, SMA.
Forox® is the brand name of a so-called animation or rostrum camera, a specially designed camera used mainly in television production and filmmaking, to animate a still picture or object. A picture of a Forox® camera can be retrieved from http://www.glennview.com/copy.htm [accessed 05 May 2016].

[212] Silver dye-bleach is a direct positive process, meaning that the prints are made by exposing a positive colour transparency, whereas most photographic processes are printed from negatives. For further reference on enlarger's technology see Rose 2007.

and these elements had an effect on the image's rendition.[213]

At first, the name *Lalalalalight* sounds like a tongue twister and it apparently refers only to the sunset light repeated five times in the photographic image.[214] However, the reference Vienna, Wenen, Wien (fig. 46) written by Van Der Kaap on the back of the work hints at the 'taking moment' of the image. The artist took the image in 1989 when he was flying over Vienna.[215] The artist was flying back to the Netherlands having participated in the conference *The New Concept* held at Graz, Austria. In his presentation, Van Der Kaap declared his intention to take a journey around the world for as long as possible. The artist described this journey in the catalogue *Gerald Van Der Kaap: Hover, a Manual*:

> As an ironical Odyssey [this will be] through the financial centres of the world, in order to photographically capture them as a monument, as a summit that each culture, even ours, deserves. A monument, grand and compelling, and at the same time a caricature of itself (Van Der Kaap in Mignot, Beeren, and Van der Kaap 1991, 31).[216]

In this light, the written inscription on the back of the work, 'Vienna, Wenen, Wien' may be regarded as an example of 'authorized narrative'. By mentioning the geographic location where the 'taking moment' took place, Van Der Kaap was able to introduce the ideas associated with the creative production. As an 'authorized narrative', the message on the back of *Lalalalalight* is not an independent discourse, but it is associated with Van Der Kaap's creative process. The artist considered this information so significant for the interpretation of the work that he decided to write down the reference on the back of *Lalalalalight's* second version as well.

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[213] The artist stated that he used the type Cibachrome® II deluxe as he did for *Lalalala Emile*. This type of technology was introduced in the 1980s and this system was an improvement in the rendering of most colours, especially blues, purples, yellows, browns and greens. For further reference on this type of photographic support and the general silver dye-bleach technology see Schellenberg 2007. Specifically on Cibachrome® II see http://graphicsatlas.org/identification/#variations [accessed 22 October 2016].

[214] About the title *Lalalalalight*, no exact reference could be found in the literature or in written interviews with the artist. In my opinion, the repetition of the syllable 'la' forms a rhythmic sequence that may refer to the repetition of the same landscape's image, while 'light' may indicate the light present at the dusk.

[215] Van Der Kaap artist interview, SMA. No reference could be found in the literature and written artist's interviews to the inscription 'Radical Freestyle'.

[216] "*Een ironische Odyssee (zal zijn) langs de financiële centra van de wereld, om deze in fotografische beelden vast te leggen, als een monument, een hoogtepunt, zoals elke cultuur, ook de onze, dat verdient. Een monument, groots en meeslepend, en op hetzelfde moment een karikatuur van zichzelf*" (translation from Dutch to English is by the author).

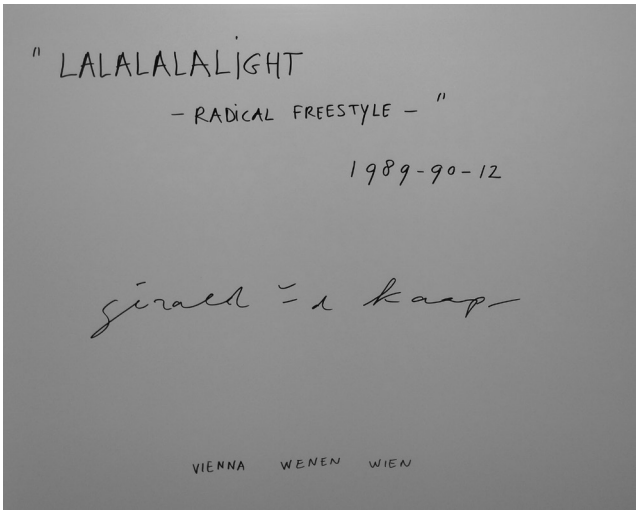


Figure 46 Back of *Lalalalalight* second version with the autograph title, date, signature and reference to Vienna.

Lalalalalight and its conservation history

In 1990, the Stedelijk Museum acquired *Lalalalalight* and — according to an internal memo made during the purchase process — the work entered the museum's collection in good condition with no damage mentioned other than minor scratches on the face-mounting. In 2005, during the exhibition 'Insight – Contemporary Dutch Photography from the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam' held at The Art Institute of Chicago, Van Der Kaap discovered, to his great disappointment, that *Lalalalalight* was showing grey stains along the edges. Somewhere between 1990 and 2005, the acrylic face-mounting had started to detach, causing grey areas along the borders (fig. 47 and 48).

For Van Der Kaap, this damage was extremely disturbing and, in his eyes, it prevented the correct reading of the artwork: *Lalalalalight* was meant to look like a serene landscape. The pristine state embodied the impression of serenity, while a damaged one profoundly compromised the work's message and as far as the artist was concerned, the blemished piece should not be put on display in the museum's galleries.[217] It quickly became clear that the technical failure could not be resolved or mitigated by any kind of treatment and the only possible approach — in order

[217] Van Der Kaap artist interview, SMA.

to reinstate a faultless condition — was to reproduce the work. In the fall of 2011, the museum agreed to the artist's offer to reproduce the work under his own direct supervision.

Van Der Kaap proposed to reprint the image as closely as possible to the first photograph, to stick to the original dimensions of the work, and to respect the overall 'look and feel' of the 1990 version, in particular in terms of matching the colours. He also declared that he had given a lot of thought to the design of *Lalalalalight*'s frame: a frame that leaves the photograph 'free', that does not cover the image, but — at the same time — it gives enough thickness to the object. For the artist, it is the combination of these two elements (photograph and the frame) that creates the artwork. For this reason, the second version had to have the same type of frame, made by the same frame-maker as in 1990.[218] During the reproduction process, Van Der Kaap deliberately made an effort to maintain the pristine condition, dimensions, colours, low-contrast

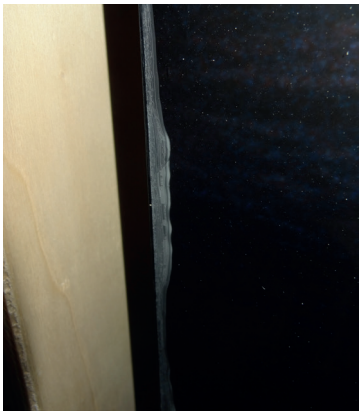


Figure 47 Detail of the damage along the left border of the first version of *Lalalalalight*.

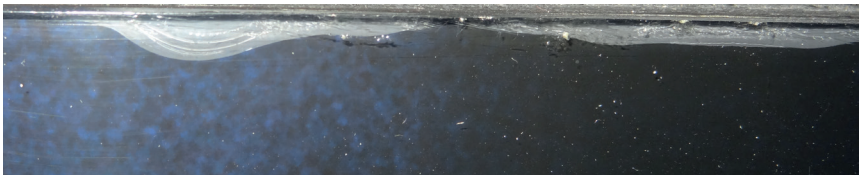


Figure 48 Detail of the damage along the upper border of the first version of *Lalalalalight*.

image and framing. In this light, all these elements may be regarded as constituent properties of the artwork.

Nonetheless, the artist considered the use of certain materials as a provisional aspect of the work: other photographic techniques and materials could therefore substitute the initial ones. Van Der Kaap claimed that preservation issues rather than aesthetic concerns had primarily determined the choice for the silver dye-bleach technology back in the 1990s. Likewise, the back-mounting on Forex® and the way the face-mounting was applied to the photograph's recto played no essential role in this work.[219] The artist did not impart a special significance to these materials and, in this light, they may be categorized as contingent features of the work.

The contingency of the silver dye-bleach technique was not immediately evident and it only became clear during the reproduction process. At the beginning, the artist made an effort to find a photo lab that still used this technique. The silver dye-bleach imaging system, which had enjoyed success among professional photographers through the 1990s, had lost ground to digital photography and became increasingly uncommon in the 2000s. In fact, in 2011, the manufacturer discontinued its production and Van Der Kaap had great difficulties in finding a photo lab that still worked with the silver dye-bleach process and that could guarantee a technical high standard.[220] Due to the technical failure in the first version, Van Der Kaap deliberately chose Grieger, in Düsseldorf, Germany, because of its reputation as one of the best photo labs worldwide and his previous experience in 2002 with the reprinting of *Xiada (Girls' dorm), Xiamen*.[221] Grieger, however, could not provide the techniques and materials Van Der Kaap had used at the end of the 1990s. After consultation, the museum staff and the artist agreed to reprint the second version of *Lalalalalight* with different technologies and materials than those used for the first version. The initial silver-dye bleach was replaced with a chromogenic colour print, the backboard Forex® became Dibond® and the face-mounting at the front was applied according to the Diasec®

[218] On the website of the art gallery Torch in Amsterdam, the captions of Van Der Kaap's later works mention this type of frame as 'Kaapframe'. This reinforces the idea of how the frame is an essential element to the work. http://www.torchgallery.com/gerald-van-der-kaap/moi-non-i-camille-reading-black-.html?scroll=0 [accessed 10 May 2016].

[219] Forex® is the brand name for a rigid plastic sheet made of PVC produced by manufacturer 3A. It has a fine closed-cell structure and it is surface has a smooth matt finish. For further reference see http://www.display.3acomposites.com/en/products/forex/characteristics.html [accessed 03 December 2015].

[220] For more reference on the discontinuation of silver dye-bleach materials see Pénichon 2013, 222.

[221] Renowned photographers such as Andreas Gursky (b. 1955) and Thomas Struth (b. 1954) have also worked with Grieger. For further reference see http://www.grieger-online.de/en/home/ [accessed 05 May 2016].

procedure.[222] Because of these modifications, the two *Lalalalalight* prints have, from a technical and material point of view, little in common.

At the beginning of the process, it was established that the reproduction would occur in various steps. In the first step, Van der Kaap would compare the positive transparency and a colour contact proof employed for the printing of the first version of *Lalalalalight*. These two elements together with the work itself would enable the artist to recalculate the enlargement that had been followed in the printing process of the first version. The second stage would be the scanning of the positive transparency into a digital file. The third phase would be the printing and the finishing of the new photograph at the Grieger photo lab**.** The artist would oversee the printing and the face-mounting, and he would control and approve the colour matching between the contact proof and the new photograph. The last phase would be the framing of the second version in the Netherlands by the same frame-maker that made the frame for the first photograph.

As the reproduction progressed, Van Der Kaap realized that he would need the direct assessment of the existing version of *Lalalalalight* during the printing, in order to reproduce the work as closely as possible. In fact, it became clear that, in 1990, Van Der Kaap had made a range of artistic choices during the printing process that were not fixed in the positive or recorded otherwise: *Lalalalalight*' s image turned out to be smaller than the image captured on the positive and the five repeating landscapes had varying widths. The widths of the repeated images are not constant and, on closer examination, it is possible to detect a difference in the position of the black 'bumps' in the city's skylines, as shown by the red arrows in figure 49. According to the artist, these variations were handmade during the exposure moment and therefore not recorded in the positive.

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[222] Dibond® is a brand name for an aluminium composite panel produced by manufacturer 3A and it is formed by a polyethylene core sandwiched between two cover layers of 0.3 mm aluminium. Dibond® is lightweight and versatile, it possesses high dimensional stability and a flat and even surface. Worldwide, Dibond® had been extensively used for the mounting of photographic prints. For further reference see http://www.display.3acomposites.com/index.html [accessed 03 December 2015]. Diasec® is a patented process used for face mounting photographs. It is the first system that allowed photographs to be bonded directly and permanently to acrylic sheets. Because of the different light penetration and refraction of acrylic glass compared to normal glass, the colours are more brilliant and the image sharper when compared to standard glass in a picture frame. Heinz Sovilla-Brulhart invented the process in 1969. Since the 1980s, Diasec® has become extremely popular among photographers because this method allows photographs to be hung in galleries and museums alongside other large works of art. For further reference see Mustardo 2016; Pénichon and Jürgens 2005; specifically on the preservation issues of this material see Wei 2008; for the aesthetic implications and the development in art photography see Soutter 2013; for general manufacturing information see http://diasec.com/what-s-diasec [accessed 01 May 2016].

Because of these 'variables' and the specificity of the colours, it became clear that it would not be possible to achieve a satisfactory reproduction if the second version was only compared to the small contact proof of the first version. In order to achieve a more accurate correspondence, the museum agreed to send the first version to Düsseldorf. The artist supervised the staff of Grieger during the reproduction of *Lalalalalight*, which was printed on Kodak® Professional Endura Premier Paper then, as planned, it received a secondary support and was face-mounted.[223] The work was framed back in the Netherlands.

This account provides important insights into the difficulties encountered and how these contingencies influenced the whole process. What also becomes clear in this case is that a close correspondence is not attainable without comparison to the first version. In the Baldessari case, it was the impossibility of a comparison that caused a discrepancy in the tonalities of the black-and-white photographs as well as a modification in the enlargements of the second version. These two differences were the main reasons for the curator of the Van Abbemuseum to reject the second version of *Virtues and Vices (for Giotto)* as a genuine substitution of the initial photographs. At first, Van Der Kaap also believed in the possibility of reproducing his work without comparison to the first version, relying solely on the matching of the contact proof. He soon recognized the complexity of the undertaking, however, and the need for a close assessment of both versions during the making of the second photograph. This understanding may



Figure 49 Detail of *Lalalalalight* shows the different widths of the landscapes, by indicating the changing position of the recognizable details in the city's skyline.

[223] For further reference on the photographic paper see http://www.kodak.com/global/en/professional/products/papers/enduraPremier/enduraPremierMain.jhtml?pq-path=2301207 [accessed 05 May 2016].

have important consequences for the reproduction process of photographic works in general. On the one hand, if a close correspondence between the versions is deemed a constituent element, then the preservation of the initial version is paramount for their reproduction. On the other hand, the care and maintenance costs of the initial versions might become a serious issue from a preservation management perspective. To keep more versions of the same artwork might have a significant impact on the available space of cold or cool storage, reducing the possibility of other artworks to be kept in an optimal preservation environment. Moreover, due to the high-energy consumption of these repositories, concerns might rise about the environmental sustainability of this kind of preservation strategy.[224]

Another important insight that became apparent during *Lalalalalight*'s reproduction is that a photographic technique has its own specific material and image qualities. In the work under study, the conversion from silver dye-bleach to chromogenic technology affected the appearance of the work, in particular the image's sharpness and colour intensity. By reproducing the photograph as a chromogenic print, Van Der Kaap had to make an effort to mimic the appearance of the first version by dimming the image resolution and the vibrancy of the colours. Firstly, he looked for a compromise between the vagueness of the city's outline, which in the first version is barely recognizable, and the higher contrast of the image in the chromogenic variant, which discloses more detail in the positive. Secondly, he tried to find a balance by reducing the colours' intensity. Despite his efforts, Van Der Kaap decided to embrace the technological developments of the chromogenic process and, in the end, he accepted an increased resolution. This resulted in greater details being apparent in certain areas and higher colour intensity of the image.[225] As will be argued at the end of this chapter, these deliberate changes may have played a role in the artist's decision to keep the first version for future reference. Van Der Kaap's awareness about the colour instability of chromogenic photographs perhaps made him realize that the existence of a third version in the future could not be excluded. Moreover, due to its superior colour stability, the silver dye-bleach version may, in the long run, function better as a reference, as it is less prone to colour fading.

The autograph dating on the back of the second version (fig. 46) may give important clues to how the artist regards this version. At first sight, the writing '1989–90–12' may

[224] For further reference on sustainable environment management for the preservation of photographic cultural heritage see http://www.ipisustainability.org/ [accessed 03 June 2016].
[225] Van Der Kaap artist interview, SMA.

look rather enigmatic, but it actually refers to the years in which Van Der Kaap worked on the piece: 1989 refers to the 'taking moment' of the image, 90 to the 'making moment' of the photographic work, and 12 entails 2012 and denotes the year in which the second version was made and, in this sense, the second 'making moment'. He regarded the second version not as a bare copy, but as an original expression of a work with an 'extended history' because of the artistic choices he made during the reproduction process.

To summarize, the constituents of *Lalalalalight* are the image's content, the work's dimensions, the frame, the use of the face-mounting as a finishing technique, the presence of a secondary support on the back of the work, the inscriptions on the back indicating the geographical reference of the taking moment as well as the dating of the taking and making moments of the work. The contingent features are the use of silver dye bleach as a printing technique, the materials used for the face-mounting at the front and the secondary support on the back as well as the image's low contrast.

To conclude, the reproduction of this work may raise other fundamental questions from an art historical and a conservation perspective. From an art historical viewpoint, Van Der Kaap used the silver dye-bleach technique as his preferred photographic technique for many years. Several works — like *Fronto – Laudes Fumi et Pulveris* series, *The artist at the age of 7*, *Lalalala Emile* — were printed as Cibachrome® prints. The reproduction of *Lalalalalight* with another technique might interrupt the continuity and the reciprocal relationship that these works have with each other. From a conservation perspective, the initial positive remains the property of the artist. Van Der Kaap contemplates, however, the possibility of bestowing the *Lalalalalight* positive as a 'promised gift' to the Stedelijk Museum. This, together with a written certificate should enable the museum to, if necessary, reproduce the work after the artist's death. For this reason, Van Der Kaap has also documented the entire reproduction process; he gathered all the technical information necessary to reprint a new version. He believes that this is a better option than putting a faded or damaged work on display.

This raises questions about the status of this potential third version if it should occur without the direct supervision of the artist. Would a third version also become a constituent element in the extended history of *Lalalalalight*, as is the case with the second version? Or would this future version remain an 'ordinary' copy, a replica that documents the work? As with all future speculations, it is very difficult to give an answer. A provisional observation, from my own perspective: multiple photographic autographic works like the works under study may be considered as 'plural' photographic works. Plural photographic works are those works that contemplate more than one version during the artist's lifetime, made under his or her direct supervision, and in direct comparison to previous versions. In this way, it is possible to recognize the material

differences and the artistic choices that artists have acknowledged as part of the reproduction process. Depending on the genesis, versions made without the direct supervision of the creating artist might not be part of the plural work or they may maintain a looser kinship with extant versions.

Plurality is not free from practical and conceptual difficulties and the proposed features — made during the artist's lifetime, under his or her direct supervision and with the direct comparison of the previous versions — are by no means univocal and, in some instances, they might raise fundamental questions about the various versions of a plural work. Unclear circumstances may arise as, for example, in cases of senility when one may wonder to what extent the artist's direct supervision is a guarantee that the artist's ideas are communicated in the new version; or artists may, on some occasions, disavow their works or deliberately antedate or postdate their creations. All these situations might influence and complicate the relationship between the various versions and they could even have a negative effect on the practice of an artwork's authentication. Despite these reservations, it is my opinion that the notion of plural work helps to acknowledge the existence of various versions with their specific material differences and artistic choices moving forward from the traditional taxonomy of vintage print, lifetime print and posthumous print.

Xiada (Girls' dorm), Xiamen

Xiada (Girls' dorm), Xiamen is one of the works Van Der Kaap made during a three-month artist-in-residency in 2002 at the campus of the Xiamen University, at Xiamen, China. In the catalogue *Passing the information* (2002), he described the Xiada campus, in these terms:

> Twenty thousand students and they all live on the campus. A whole city district populated by young people only. […] Dormitories everywhere. The student sleep, eight of them in bunks beds in small rooms. […] In the girls' dorm the lights are switched off at 11 pm and you have to be in by midnight. After that the gates are closed. BTW: The gates of the boys' dorm don't close (Van Der Kaap 2002, 5).

As a result of his stay at Xiamen and the artist's fascination for the architecture of the campus, Van Der Kaap made a photographic series portraying the same girls' dormitory building. This image, which forms the basis of *Xiada (Girls' dorm), Xiamen* (2002), shows a modern, eight-storey building with greenish doors and windows. On the left side of the picture, the building continues but only a small portion is visible. Each floor has a long balcony where a lot of colourful clothing is hung to dry. Only three girls are pictured on the balconies: one girl is reading on the sixth floor and the

other two are walking on the first floor (fig. 42). The photograph is more complex than it appears.

At first sight, the picture might look like a documentation of the dormitory as well as a record of the girls' daily life inside and around the building. But the impression of accurate reporting is only a façade, as the reading girl on the sixth floor was added to the image through digital manipulation.[226] In fact, this alteration can be regarded as being in line with Van Der Kaap's conceptual approach toward photography as a medium that manipulates and constructs reality: the reading girl apparently belongs to what the viewer may consider a daily-life scene, but she is actually an 'artistic addition'. Van Der Kaap's artistic practice is based on the manipulation of reality through photography, be it analogue, digital photography or a combination of the two. In 1991, the artist gave an indication of his working procedures:

> Photographs are actually samples of reality. The reality is zero. So I start from the reality. From zero. I then […] scan the photos. […] I make the stencils, I do shading, I smear, I wash, and finally I check for zits. […] Due to the high resolution [of the negative or positive] there is no trace of intervention. […] The perfect illusion. Everyone still has the feeling they are looking at a photograph. At a sample. But that sample is manipulated. It is beyond the reality (Van Der Kaap in Mignot, Beeren, and Van der Kaap 1991, 36).[227]

It is safe to assume that Van Der Kaap strove to a similar artistic result with *Xiada (Girls' dorm), Xiamen*, in which the small detail of the reading girl confuses the distinction between a scene taken from real life and a constructed fictional reality. This work as well as others made during the visit at Xiamen are "situated in the grey zone between reality and fiction"(Vanderbeeken 2002,1).

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[226] Van Der Kaap artist interview, SMA. Initially, Van Der Kaap took the image with an analogue camera, he scanned the analogue negative and, by turning it into a digital file, he was able to digitally rework the image by adding the girl. It is outside the scope of this dissertation to examine digital manipulation and its implication for the notion of indexicality in photography. For further reference see Rosen 2001, especially 301–350.

[227] Translation from Dutch to English is by the author: *"Foto's zijn eigenlijk samples van de werkelijkheid. De werkelijkheid is nul. Ik begin dus vanaf de werkelijkheid. Vanaf nul. Ik scan de foto's […] vervolgens in. […] Ik maak dan stencils, ik doe shading, ik smear, ik wash en tenslotte controleer ik op zits. […] Vanwege de hoge resolutie [van het negatief of van het positief] is geen enkel ingreep terug te vinden. […] De perfecte illusie. Iedereen heeft het gevoel nog steeds naar een foto te kijken. Naar een sample. Maar die sample is gemanipuleerd. Het is voorbij de realiteit."*

Xiada (Girls' dorm), Xiamen and its conservation history

In 2002, the Stedelijk Museum approached Van Der Kaap to acquire one of the three prints forming the limited edition of *Xiada (Girls' dorm), Xiamen*. The artist had already sold numbers one and two and he had still to print number three, so he went to his usual photo lab to print the photograph as a silver dye-bleach print but the lab could no longer provide him with this technique.[228] The photograph could be printed as an inkjet and, despite some hesitation, the artist agreed to print number three of *Xiada (Girls' dorm), Xiamen* edition as an inkjet and this exemplar entered the museum's collection.

After a short period on display in an exhibition, Van Der Kaap acknowledged his great disappointment at the fact that all the colours of this inkjet looked too green. On his own initiative, the artist decided to fix this mismatch and to print the photograph again, this time at the renowned photo lab Grieger in Germany. The second version was not printed as an inkjet, but as a chromogenic photograph and it was offered as a replacement to the museum.

In 2013, Van Der Kaap declared the futility of preserving the 'wrong' print of *Xiada (Girls' dorm), Xiamen*. By comparing the two prints, he stated: "You see there is a great difference. [The second print] is suddenly fresh again. You can simply enjoy looking at all [the details]. The girl still reads a book. Exactly the same photograph."[229] On 19 March 2013, the first version of *Xiada (Girls' dorm), Xiamen* was cut into pieces by the staff of the museum in the presence of the artist and myself.[230] All the pieces, except two parts kept for research purposes, were put into a container and disposed of (fig. 50, 51 and 52).

From this account, it is possible to distil what the artist considered the constituent and contingent features of this work. The constituent properties that were kept in the reprinting process were the photographic image, the work's overall dimensions and the work's presentation (framing, secondary support and face-mounting). These features did not undergo changes and the artist made an effort to preserve them in the second version. The contingent elements were the greenish colour, which was perceived by

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[228] The artwork was purchased as part of the Amsterdam 2001–2002 Municipal Art Purchases – in Dutch known as the Gementeelijke Kunstaankopen – and it was displayed in the exhibition 'Life in a glass house' held in the period between 05 October 2002 and 16 February 2003 at the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam. For further reference on the exhibition see Janssen, Sassen, and Boonman 2002; and http://www.stedelijk.nl/en/exhibitions/life-in-a-glass-house [accessed 07 May 2016].

[229] Van Der Kaap communication in Eilander's documentary, 07:13–07:25 minutes: *"… zie je wel het een heel verschil. Ineens is het weer fris. Je kan gewoon lekker naar alles kijken. Het meisje leest nog steeds een boek. Precies dezelfde foto."*

[230] For the occasion a written agreement was stipulated, which regulated the substitution of the two photographs and the destruction of the old, damaged print.



Figure 50 Gerald Van Der Kaap, *Xiada (Girls' dorm), Xiamen*, 2002, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, first version waiting to be destroyed with a red sign with the Dutch words *ter vernietiging*, which in English means 'for destruction'.

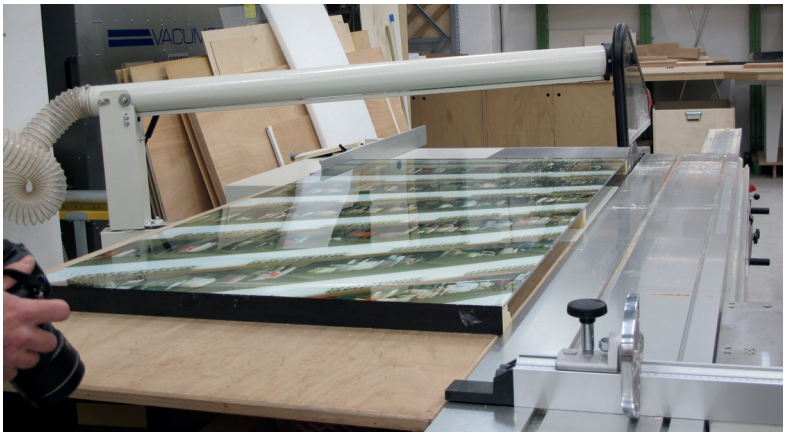


Figure 51 *Xiada (Girls' dorm), Xiamen* in the process of being cut.



Figure 52 The cut pieces of the first version of *Xiada (Girls' dorm), Xiamen* placed in a container.

Van Der Kaap as 'wrong', and the technique that changed from inkjet to chromogenic. The greenish shade covering the image induced the process of reprinting and the artist made an effort to substitute it with a tonality more in accordance with his artistic intentions. The initial choice of inkjet rather than the habitual technique was caused by a contingent event: the discontinuation of the silver dye-bleach process at the photo lab that Van Der Kaap regularly used for the printing of his works. The decision to use chromogenic was also supported by contingency, namely the availability of the materials and the know-how at another photo lab.[231]

This event — similar to the discontinuation of the silver dye-bleach technology in *Lalalalalight*'s reproduction — underlines the dependency that artists and photographers have on the availability of materials and techniques. As in other fields, photography is deeply influenced by technological changes as well as by the demands of the market. Many artists and other professionals experience the disappearance of analogue technology to the advantage of digital technology as a great loss for the

[231] In this regard, the contingency of the inkjet is limited only to this print and it does not concern the other two prints of the limited edition.

imaging culture. The obsolescence of materials and technology is an aspect of great concern and discussion in other areas of conservation, for example in time-based media and film conservation.[232] If reproduction of photographic of the works: at each work's reiteration the initial contingent properties would be substituted by other contingent properties. Reproduction or reprinting as in the case with *Xiada (Girls' dorm), Xiamen* may also open up the possibility for artists to retroactively introduce 'improvements' or adjust their works when they are not satisfied with the results.

To summarize, the constituent features of *Xiada (Girls' dorm), Xiamen* are the image's content, the work's overall dimensions, the frame, the presence of face-mounting as a finishing technique and the presence of a secondary support on the back of the work. The contingent features are the use of an inkjet as a printing technology, the materials used for the face-mounting at the front and for the secondary support on the back, and the greenish cast spread on the photographic image.

Differences and similarities between Lalalalalight and Xiada (Girls' dorm), Xiamen

The differences and the similarities in the reproduction or reprinting processes will be briefly reviewed in this section. The aim of this close reading is to flesh out the diversities that may have led Van Der Kaap to take such a different approach towards the works' first versions: preservation as a reference to the damaged, un-displayable photograph in the case of *Lalalalalight*, and the destruction of the first version by cutting it to pieces in the case of *Xiada (Girls' dorm), Xiamen*.

In terms of the similarities, the most significant correlation is the fact that the same artist made the two photographic artworks and initiated the remanufacturing processes: either on his own initiative with *Xiada (Girls' dorm), Xiamen* or in close collaboration with the museum staff of the Stedelijk Museum for *Lalalalalight*. In both cases, the artist was directly involved in the supervision of the process and he acknowledged the successful outcome and substitution between the versions, emblematically represented by the artist signing the second version of *Xiada (Girls' dorm), Xiamen* in the documentary '*Hollandse Meesters in de 21ste eeuw*'.[233] Moreover, both second versions were printed with a different technique than the one used for the first version.

In terms of the dissimilarities, four elements can be distinguished: the temporal gap between the two processes; the status of the artworks; the nature and extent of

[232] For example, in filmmaking, the action group Savefilm regards the disappearance of analogue film as a great loss for the imaging moving culture and pleads for the preservation of this technology. The group has also started a petition calling on UNESCO to protect and safeguard the medium, the knowledge and the practice of filmmaking, and the protection of film print. For further reference see http://www.savefilm.org/ [accessed 17 October 2016].

the damage; and the intention of the processes. Regarding the time span: Van Der Kaap printed and reprinted *Xiada (Girls' dorm), Xiamen* after a short period while he reproduced *Lalalalalight* twenty-one years after the first printing. In terms of the artistic status of the two works: *Lalalalalight* was initially created as a unique work, whereas, from the outset, *Xiada (Girls' dorm), Xiamen* was printed as a multiple in a limited edition of three photographs. With *Lalalalalight* Van Der Kaap decided, at the beginning, not to exploit the possibility of multiplicity inherent to the photographic medium and preferred to produce just one print, and — only after discernible damage — did the artist decide to use the option of reprinting as a way of reinstating the pristine condition of the work. By contrast, with *Xiada (Girls' dorm), Xiamen*, right from the start the artist exploited photography's ability to produce multiple prints, albeit limited to three photographs. This implies a different use of photography and its capacity as a multipliable medium.

Another important distinction between the two cases is the extent and nature of the damage. Both instances of damage may be regarded as a technical failure. In *Lalalalalight*, the face-mounting was not applied properly to the photograph and, as a result of this defect, years later the acrylic finishing layer started to locally detach itself from the photographic surface. This detaching process created disturbing grey areas along the edges. In *Xiada (Girls' dorm), Xiamen*, the use of inkjet printing was dictated by production constraints and it did not meet the artist's expectations as the work had a greenish cast covering the entire image. About the greenish hue of the first version, Van Der Kaap stated: "It looks just like a faded old photograph whereas, in fact, it is not." [234] Indeed, the artist was dissatisfied right from the start with the printing result. Moreover, in the case of *Lalalalalight*, the technical failure does not compromise the reading of the complete work, while in *Xiada (Girls' dorm), Xiamen* the printing fault does affect the entire photographic image.

Consequently, the differences in nature and extent of the damage in the two works had important repercussions for the way the remanufacturing process was started by the artist. In *Lalalalalight*, the aim of the process was to reprint and to remake the work as close as possible to the initial version, whereas in *Xiada (Girls' dorm), Xiamen*, the target of the process was to amend an initial, unforeseen technical printing problem. In the latter case, the second version intentionally avoids any resemblance to the Stedelijk Museum's initial version and it is conceptually linked to the appearance of the other photographs forming the edition.

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[233] Minutes 07:35–08.09.

[234] Van Der Kaap communication in Eilander's filmed documentary, 08:19–08:21: *"Het lijkt het net zo een verkleurde oude foto terwijl dat eigenlijk dat het niet is."*

In my opinion, three aspects played a distinctive role in Van Der Kaap's wish to keep the first version of *Lalalalalight* as a reference and his request to physically destroy the first version of *Xiada (Girls' dorm), Xiamen*: namely, the temporal gap, the nature of the damage, and the contingent use of ink-jet printing technology. Firstly, the artist seemed more inclined to acknowledge the importance of *Lalalalalight*'s initial print as an embodiment of his artistic intentions, belonging to another moment in his life and career. Secondly, the hiatus in time may also have played a role, as the artwork might become a 'testimony' to a previous time, whereas the second version of *Xiada (Girls' dorm), Xiamen* was printed shortly after the first version. In this instance, there is almost no temporal interruption and the artist perceived the first printing as a technical failure. Thirdly, the nature and the extent of the damage in *Lalalalalight*'s first version is only partial, making it theoretically possible to use it as a future reference. The colourfastness of the Cibachrome® print might give a better rendition of what *Lalalalalight* should look like if the second chromogenic print faded. On the contrary, the damage to *Xiada (Girls' dorm), Xiamen* comprises the whole work, making it 'useless' as a future indication and therefore it was disposed of according to the deaccession guidelines of the museum. Moreover, the other two prints that form the limited edition of three may serve better as a reference than a print the artist considered right from the start as unsatisfactory and disappointing.

To summarize, the similarities between the remanufacturing process of *Lalalalalight* and *Xiada (Girls' dorm), Xiamen* are: in both instances, the artist initiated and supervised the process, he acknowledged the successful outcome by signing the two new versions and, in both cases, a different photographic process substituted the initial imaging system. The differences are: the contingency of inkjet technology for the printing of *Xiada (Girls' dorm), Xiamen*; the temporal gap between the two remanufacturing processes; the status of the artworks — *Lalalalalight* was initially created as a unique work while *Xiada (Girls' dorm), Xiamen* was part of a limited edition of three; the nature of the damage — a mechanical damage in the case of *Lalalalalight*, a mismatch in colour balance for *Xiada (Girls' dorm), Xiamen*; the extent of the damage — limited to the edges in the case of *Lalalalalight*, extended to the entire work in the case of *Xiada (Girls' dorm), Xiamen*; and the aim of the remanufacturing — in the case of *Lalalalalight*, to remain as close possible to the initial version while in *Xiada (Girls' dorm), Xiamen* it intentionally avoids any resemblance to the initial version present in the Stedelijk Museum and it ideally tries to relate to the two other existing photographs that form the limited edition.

One may wonder if the reprinting of *Xiada (Girls' dorm), Xiamen* involved the same mechanism of substitution as occurred in the other three works under study, or

whether the reprinting should be actually regarded as a 'revision' of the edition. The reprinting of the third photograph of the editioned work *Xiada (Girls' dorm), Xiamen* is triggered by a different impulse than in the other three cases; that is to say, it does not substitute a damaged work, but rather replaces a 'failed piece' that was printed in a certain way by accident.[235] By reprinting a new, correct photograph, Van Der Kaap revised or improved the edition and, at the same time, obliterated the faulty version. The different rationale behind the remanufacturing of the two new photographic works may also explain why the first version of *Lalalalalight* had to be preserved and the 'wrong print' of *Xiada (Girls' dorm), Xiamen* had to be disposed of, as will be further examined in the second part of the chapter.

5.2 Moral rights, intentional destruction, and disqualification

The following sections draw attention to the artist's decision regarding the preservation of *Lalalalalight* as a reference in the museum's repository and the physical elimination of *Xiada (Girls' dorm), Xiamen.* It should be recalled that two opposite positions took place more or less simultaneously. The reproduction process of *Lalalalalight* started in the fall of 2011 and it was concluded in the course of 2012, while the obliteration of *Xiada (Girls' dorm), Xiamen* occurred in 2012. Van Der Kaap's different courses of action will be examined from a theoretical perspective, analysing the notions of 'moral rights' and 'disqualification', as a mechanism initiated by the artist to demote a work of art into a reference work, or even into non-art.

Moral rights

There is only room to touch upon the much-theorized and discussed notion of 'moral rights' in this dissertation. Moral rights are based on the assumption that a work of art is regarded as something more than just a material, tangible object. The assignment to artists as the authors of these special, non-monetary moral rights is based on the belief that creative labour is categorically different from other forms of labour. The distinction is said to reside in the intimate relationship between the author's personality and his or her creative work (Merryman, Elsen, and Urice 2007, 422). Moral rights have their

[235] In his book, Genette analyses this impulse, the aim of which is to correct or improve literary texts. According to the author, "an artist always has the right, and, doubtless, the obligation, to revise his work as long as it does not satisfy him, or whenever it no longer satisfies him" (Genette 1997a, 187).

origins in civil law and they are meant to protect the spiritual and personal rights of the author, whereas the author's economic rights are protected in the law concerning copyright.[236] Moral rights stem from the belief that an author, during the process of creation, introduces his or her personality into the work and thus "the author's own personality is bound up in the work" (Gerstenblith 2004, 191).

Moral rights together with copyright defend in first instance the rights of the author and not those of the owner of the artwork or those of society at large. The Dutch law defines an author as the creator of a work of literature, science or art, and author's rights are bundled in the so-called author's law, as will be discussed.[237] The rights of the owner are secured in property laws while the public interest is safeguarded in the international and national legislation that deals with the protection and preservation of cultural heritage.[238] There are occasions when the interests of the various stakeholders do not necessarily coincide and legal conflicts may arise as the owner has the right to use or 'abuse' his or her property, but the author retains certain rights over his or her work even after a change of ownership, and society in general might want to preserve the integrity of cultural heritage even if this goes against the interests of the owner or those of the author.

Around the end of the eighteenth century, the principles of moral rights started to circulate in Europe: France, Germany and the United Kingdom began to recognize, albeit in an embryonic form, author's rights. But it is in the course of the nineteenth century that the protection of individual rights of authorship became a compelling argument. The Romantic ideals had deeply influenced the way society looked upon art and the way it was produced. Creation was no longer perceived as the result of divine inspiration or the diligent mastery of the rules, but rather it was the artist, with his or her tormented inner life, who became the ultimate source for the making of a work of art. In Romantic eyes, authors and artists had become extraordinarily gifted individuals, outsiders that lived at the borders of bourgeois culture, whose creations

[236] Copyright regulations were generally considered in relation to the invention of book printing; however these rights or privileges were normally very short and given to the printers and publishers rather than the author of the book. The British Statute of Queen Anne of 1710 was the first regulation in the Western world to give protection to the author instead of the publishers. For further reference on Renaissance privileges see Stapleton 2002, 31–82; for reference on the difference between copyright and moral rights see Gerstenblith 2004, 85–115.

[237] Attention should be drawn to the fact that in the United States moral rights are confined to visual arts and do not apply to literary works.

[238] The Dutch law for the protection of movable, tangible cultural heritage is called the *Wet tot behoud van het cultuurbezit*, for the original law text sees http://wetten.overheid.nl/BWBR0003659/2015-08-27 [accessed 17 May 2016]. For further reference for general international legislation on cultural heritage see Garrard 2013, specifically on Dutch legislation see Lubina 2009.

had to be protected from the crass realities of society.[239] Romanticism became a new lens through which moral rights have been viewed ever since and these ideals still have a long-standing influence on the way moral rights are interpreted (Sundara Rajan 2011, 111).

By 1928, moral rights were formally enacted into law by the insertion of Article 6bis into the Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Work (1886).[240] Today, 168 countries worldwide have subscribed to the Berne Convention, which is considered the most important agreement on copyright and moral rights matters. However, its protective scope varies greatly with the context and the historical period as nation states may interpret differently what moral rights are, they may give precedence to other interests or laws, and they may give a different degree of protection to movable, unmovable, tangible or intangible works. The ratification of the convention at a national level varied per country: in 1886, only ten states had subscribed, many countries joined decades later — the Netherlands became a member in 1912 — or even a century later as was the case with the United States, which only acknowledged the convention in 1989 and a year later issued its national legislation known as the Visual Artists Right Act (VARA), as an amendment to the copyright law in force.[241]

Moral rights are composite and formed by several rights: the 'right of integrity ' asserts that the work should be respected in its integrity and allows the author to prevent any deformation or mutilation of the work if these changes are derogatory to the author's reputation; the 'right of attribution' — formerly also known as the 'right of paternity' — gives the author the right to claim or disclaim authorship of a work; the 'right of disclosure' is the right of authors to publish or divulge the work, but they also have the right, under certain circumstances, to withhold the work's divulgation by

[239] For further reference on the role of Romantic ideas on moral rights see Hansmann and Santilli 1997; Lorimer 1996; Merryman, Elsen, and Urice 2007, 421–441; Sundara Rajan 2011, 31–110; Tipton 2009.

[240] In the 1886 version of the Berne Convention, moral rights protection may be found at an embryonic stage. It is only with Article 6bis of the Rome Act that the subscribing countries formally recognized moral rights. For further reference on the history development of moral rights as a doctrine see Sundara Rajan 2011; for the history of moral rights in the Netherlands see Kabel and Quaedvlieg 2012.

[241] In 1886, the ten countries that ratified the Berne Convention were: Belgium, France, Germany, Haiti, Italy, Liberia, Spain, Switzerland, Tunisia and the United Kingdom.
For a general review of the differences on moral rights between the countries that follow the civil law system and the countries that follow the common law system see Hansmann and Santilli 1997; Merryman Elsen, and Urice 2007, 421–441; specifically on the historical and philosophical origins of moral rights in France and Germany see Kwall 2010. For specific differences between the American VARA and the moral rights regarding conservation issues see Beunen 2005; Garfinkle et al. 1997; Wharton 2006. For a critical examination of moral rights see Rigamonti 2006.

others; the 'right to withdrawal' gives to the author the right to withdraw under certain circumstances the work from its current owner on payment of an indemnity; the 'right of modification' gives the author the right to modify under certain circumstances his or her creation; and 'the right of resale' gives the author and his or her hereditary successors the right to receive a share of the profits on the second and subsequent sale of the work if an art market professional is the involved in the transaction.[242] As noted, moral rights should theoretically protect the personal interests of the author and be wholly separate from the economic interests of the author. However, the right of resale does have an economic consideration to its basis as the author receives a royalty on any resale of the work (Hope Kuruvilla 2016, 61). It should be noted that the non-economic interests of the author often clash with the economic interests of third parties and therefore disagreements easily arise (Kabel and Quaedvlieg 2012, 310). According to Sundara Rajan, the non-economic ideas informing moral rights rest on the misconception that arts and artists should be "utterly removed from the crass realities of money"; but, in reality the exercise of moral rights may have wide-ranging economic consequences (Sundara Rajan 2011, 41).

The extent of recognition of moral rights as a means to protect the interests of authors and artists varies greatly in various legal systems, but, generally, the right of integrity and the right of attribution are protected in nearly every jurisdiction. Some systems recognize all moral rights — the French system extends the greatest protection by admitting, under certain circumstances, the right of withdrawal, the right of modification and the resale right; other systems acknowledge only a part of the rights. The Dutch legal system recognizes the right of integrity, the right of attribution, the right of modification and, since 2012, the right of resale. The American legislature interprets moral rights in a very narrow way by protecting only visual artists and granting them only the right of attribution and the right of integrity.[243]

In the Dutch legal system, moral rights are an integral part of the so-called Author's law — in Dutch, *Auteurswet* — and this protects the creators or author of literary works, works of art and scientific works.[244] In this system, the 'author's rights' are automatically established at the moment of the work's creation, therefore no formal request is needed in order to obtain authorial rights to the work. The Dutch author law follows the French law system on *droit d'auteur* and it distinguishes between, on the one hand, the economic rights of the author — the so-called *auteursrecht* or *exploitatierechten*

[242] As moral rights have their origins in France, scholars often use the French terminology: *droit de publication* for the right of disclosure, *droit de repentir* for the right of modification, *droit au respect* for the right of integrity, *droit à la paternité* for the right of attribution, and *droit de suite* for the right of resale.

based on the French *droits patrimoniaux* — and on the other hand, the moral rights of the author — in Dutch *morele rechten* or *persoonlijkheidsrechten* based on the *droits moreaux*.[245]

The author's right or copyright regulates the right to divulgate the work, for example by disseminating through mass media, and the right to reproduce or multiply, for example by publishing the work. Except for certain specific circumstances listed in the law, prior permission from the author is needed in order to use the image, to distribute the work's content or to multiply it. For this dissertation, it is interesting to note that one of the exceptions listed in the law is the use of reproduction as a conservation strategy. Article 16n of the Author's law states that libraries, archives and museums have the right to reproduce work in their collections if the reproduction is done with the sole purpose of preservation and with no economic or commercial intentions. Reproduction is also admitted when there is a threat that the work could be lost or when the work is made with technology that could become obsolete in the future. Thus, in these cases, the Dutch law acknowledges reproduction as a mean to preserve a work and gives public institutions the right to reproduce a work without prior authorization of the author.

According to the law, an author retains copyright on a creative work for his or her entire life unless he or she decides to sell or transfer these rights to someone else. After the author's death, copyrights are still legally binding for another seventy years. Copyrights are thus alienable as the author has the possibility to give these rights away.

Moral rights protect the personal rights of the author. These are unalienable whilst the author is alive and they cannot be transferred, even when the author has granted his or her author's rights to someone else.[246] According to Dutch law, at the moment

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[243] Moral rights in the United States covers only limited categories of visual artworks: paintings, sculptures, drawings, prints and still photographs produced for exhibition. Within this group, only single copies or signed and numbered limited editions of 200 or less are actually protected. All the other type of artistic creations such as posters, maps, globes or charts, applied art, motion pictures, books and other publications are excluded by VARA protection.

[244] For the original text of the law see http://wetten.overheid.nl/BWBR0001886/2015-07-01 [accessed 13 May 2016]. For an explanation of the law and its implementation in the Netherlands from a museum perspective see Beunen 2006. In the Netherlands, Neighbouring rights or *Naburig recht* protects the rights of performing artists, music and film producers.

[245] The Dutch system follows the French 'dualist' system that perceives moral rights and economic rights as two distinct types of rights. Continental Europe and specifically Germany has suggested that these two rights are two sides of the same coin and therefore inseparable both in theory and in practice. This interpretation of moral rights is known as 'monism'. For further reference on the differences of the two systems see Sundara Rajan 2011.

[246] According to article 25 (3), an author can renounce to the right of attribution and the right of modification, whereas the right of integrity cannot be waived.

of the author's death the moral rights are not automatically transferred to his or her legal heirs. To do so requires a will in which the author designates a specific person or institution that may exercise those rights after his or her passing away.[247]

In order to enjoy the protection of the author's law, the work needs to be captured by or under the authority of the author into a tangible medium of expression. The recording should be sufficiently stable to be perceived, reproduced or communicated for a period that is more than transitory. In this regard, the Dutch author's law also protects oral communications as they have been communicated to an audience (Spoor, Kerkade, and Visser 2005, 61). On the other hand, the author's law does not protect ideas or concepts, as these are not captured in a tangible form. Moreover, the author's law protects the creative work embodied in the tangible work and not the tangible work as such. In order words, the law does not safeguard, for example, the marble block forming a statue, but it primarily protects the artistic creation embodied in the statue. In order to underscore this distinction between the creation and the physical object, the two elements are sometimes labelled as *corpus mysticum* and *corpus mechanicum*. The two elements are dissociable, as the *corpus mysticum* can exist without the presence of the physical embodiment as the memories of lost works of art may attest (Hirsch Ballin 1970, 78–79).

The right of integrity protects, above all, the author's personality and not the tangible creation. In this reading, the right does not protect artworks from destruction but protects the artist against unwanted modifications as the display of deformed or mutilated work might misrepresent the artist and harm his or her reputation.

Other jurisdictions, like the American one, interpret the right of integrity differently and they protect artworks under certain circumstances from destruction.[248] The American reading underscores the public interest in preserving a nation's culture and destruction is prohibited in the event of artworks of 'recognized stature'.[249] Whether

[247] This is one of the aspects in which the Dutch *morele rechten* do not overlap with the French *droits moreaux*. The Berne Convention does not demand perpetual moral rights in its signatory nations. The French law system has a 'broader' view on the matter since the system recognizes the *droits moreaux* as a right with infinite duration; they do not cease to exist with the author's death or as a result of the passage of time and they pass on to the artist's estate or to the French government. For further reference see Tipton 2009; and Gerstenblith 2004, 188. In the monist interpretation, the duration of moral rights are linked to the duration of economic rights as the two systems are inseparable. This reading is followed in Germany as well in England.

[248] For a critical review of moral rights, their assumptions about authorship as the labour of the solo genius artist, and the protection against destruction regarded as an impediment in contemporary artistic practice see Adler 2009.

[249] Codified under 17 U.S.C § 106A (a) (3) (B). For further reference on the legal implications about the fact that protection against destruction is limited to visual artworks of recognized stature and this reading might involve possible qualitative assessment performed by judges see Bonneau 2013; and Thurston 2005.

or not a work is protected from destruction exemplifies a fundamentally different view about the rationale of moral rights. The United States have been reluctant to recognize moral rights as the continuing rights of the author might conflict with the property rights of the purchaser of the artwork. Copyright laws rather than moral rights laws generally protect artistic creations and these are meant to foster the progress of science and the useful arts. In the American interpretation, copyright laws and, to a certain degree, moral rights are mostly intended to promote and protect the public interest rather than vindicate the artist's individual rights.

To conclude: even if moral rights originate automatically at the moment of creation, this automatism does not imply that the artist's interests are protected above all, as other interests may be deemed more prominent. As the jurisprudence on moral rights demonstrates, in court, judges consider very seriously the interests of others as well, and they weigh up all the interests against each other. Ultimately, there is no certainty that artist's protests will be successful when taken to court as the judges might decide in favour of other parties.

Despite the different interpretations and the different degree of protection that various legal systems recognize, moral rights are continuing rights as they protect the on-going relationship that an author has with his or her creation. In fact, the author's name and reputation has an impact on the work, even after its making and, vice versa, the work's reputation influences that of the author. Because of this unique relationship, moral rights guarantee the author a certain level of control over his or her creation, even after the work itself or the copyright are no longer in his or her possession. From a museum and in particular a conservator's perspective, moral rights are a compelling factor that professionals need to take into consideration in their practice.[250]

Conservators generally acknowledge the underlying principle of a longstanding relationship between artists and their creation. When dealing with living artists that actively express their opinions about their own works, conservators are inclined to honour the artists' interests. This tendency can be a source of anxiety for many, especially when the artist's opinion contradicts other principles that inform conservation practice and ethics, as attested by the numerous articles, books and conference proceedings on this subject.

Concerns especially arise when a conservator has to interpret 'correctly' the physical modification of an artwork. It is important to draw attention to the fact that

[250] As noted, in the French system the moral rights are perpetual, which implies that museums need to respect moral rights forever. Other systems do not share this interpretation as perpetual moral rights, especially as it relates to the right of integrity, ultimately turn into a vehicle for protection of a country's cultural heritage (Rigamonti 2006, 371).

a modification should not be considered by definition as damage, as the opposite might be also true.[251] Several artists are inspired by (material) change, accidents and transformations and thus develop an artistic research based on these modifications. Subsequently, these changes become elements of the artworks and, as such, they should be respected as part of their artistic message. This type of situation also represents one of the possible conflicts of interest between the moral rights of the artists and cultural heritage legislation. This conflict is not likely to occur in the United States as the Visual Artist Rights Act (VARA) legislation deprives the artist of the possibility to use the right of integrity to contest the conservation or preservation of his or her work, unless it comes to modification caused by gross negligence. In short, the VARA protects above all the material work, while European legislation protects the bond between the maker and the creation (Beunen, 2006). However, even in the United States, conservators are encouraged to diligently follow professional guidelines and ethics codes as a road map to decrease the potential of a claim due to violation of moral rights, and when possible to obtain the artist's permission; or, if the artist is no longer living and the work was created in countries where the moral rights do not expire but have infinite duration, to seek the legal heirs' permission (Garfinkle et al. 1997). It should not be forgotten that artists' moral rights might also conflict with the obligations a conservator may have with the owner of the work of art (Neill 1994). Despite possible ethical conflicts, consultation and cooperation with living artists, before and during a conservation treatment, is perceived as correct behaviour and therefore is welcomed by conservators as well as professional organizations.

Underlying principles or the doctrine of moral rights

The underlying principles that inform the notions of moral rights and, specifically, the assumption that a work of art is an expression of the artist's personality, may play a role even when there are no direct legal obligations on the museum. As museums do not exclusively operate in courts of law, but also function in the arena of public opinion, they may be perceptive of the principles expressed under the notions of moral rights, they may thus decide to act accordingly and to extend to artists a great degree of control and influence on their creations. Or, as philosopher K.E. Gover has commented on the controversy between Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (MASS MoCA) and the Swiss artist Christoph Büchel (b. 1966):

[251] For further reference on the difficulties conservators have in interpreting damage as part of the artwork see Volent 1997.

> There is a widespread art world intuition that the creative freedom of the artist should be given virtually absolute precedence in the decisions about the creation, exhibition, and treatment of artworks (Gover 2011, 355).

The decision made by the museum director of the MASS MoCA after the legal dispute on moral rights concerning Büchel's installation *Training Ground for Democracy* is exemplary in this regard.

In short, the legal conflict debated whether the museum had the right to open to the public the installation it had commissioned, paid for and, to a considerable extent, helped to construct, despite the fact the work was not completed by the artist.[252] The legal issue primarily revolved around the question of whether the VARA protection applied to an unfinished work of art or not. In other words, could an assembly of materials, which was not yet recognized by the artist as an accomplished work of art, benefit from moral rights' protection? MASS MoCA claimed that, even if the artist had abandoned the project, the museum had the right to display the assembled materials as it had paid for it. Büchel instead pleaded against the public disclosure of the installation by invoking his moral rights over the work.

The majority of the art world backed the artist's position by claiming it was unacceptable to display an unfinished artwork against the artist's wishes, no matter how much money and time the museum had invested in its production. However, in court, the judge ruled otherwise. In his verdict, the judge stated that since the artwork was unfinished, it did not enjoy the protection of the VARA legislation and therefore the museum had the right to show the assembled materials, as long as it displayed a written disclaimer making clear the artist's disavowal of the work. In his decision, the judge took into consideration the fact that the museum had paid for the majority of the costs and it was heavily involved in the artwork's realization.

Although the museum prevailed in court, after a couple of days the museum's

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[252] For an extensive reconstruction of the implications of the Mass MoCA – Büchel controversy see Gover 2011 and 2012. Gover has pointed out that, on a conceptual level, the positions of the museum and the artist presented difficulties. The museum's stance was awkward as it wanted to display something, but it was unclear what it was presenting to the public as the museum argued that the assembled materials were not art. The artist's position was also problematic as Büchel invoked protection of something that was simultaneously art and not art. On the one hand, the installation was not finished and it did not reflect the artist's wishes, and therefore the artist had disavowed it. On the other hand, despite the disavowal, Büchel was of the opinion he had the right to prevent the installation's display (Gover 2012, 42).
The controversy resonated in the editorials of the art world, see for further reference http://www.nytimes.com/2007/09/16/arts/design/16robe.html; http://archive.boston.com/ae/theater_arts/articles/2007/10/21/dismantled/?page=full [both accessed 22 September 2016].

director decided to uninstall the work and get rid of the materials that had formed *Training Ground for Democracy*.[253] Public opinion has been harsh on the museum throughout the controversy and this may have played an important role in the decision to dismantle the installation.[254]

The controversy between MASS MoCA and Büchel is exemplary of how public opinion may exert pressure on institutions to comply with the underlying principles of moral rights, regardless of whether the moral rights are legally binding in that specific case. In the public eye, cultural and academic institutions are generally more inclined to strictly observe their duties with regard to care and respect. Moreover, in court, judges take note of whether the owner of a work of art is a public organization and this circumstance usually facilitates the successful invoking of moral rights (Kabel and Quaedvlieg 2012, 336–337). Individuals and especially institutions may be susceptible to claims and expectations based on the principles informing moral rights. In this sense, the underlying values can be perceived as a form of 'soft law' that may still shape people's behaviour and professional relations.[255] What is suggested here is that, nowadays, these values might — explicitly or implicitly — influence of what is perceived as an appropriate conduct in museum practice. In fact, there is a critical distinction between the doctrine and the law regarding moral rights. Both have a common origin, but whereas doctrine has an informal character and reflects larger philosophical, cultural and economic assumptions, the law is the crystallization into legal rules of the issues expressed in the doctrine. In other words, the law translates the moral rights doctrine into the precise language of national copyright legislation (Sundara Rajan 2011, 37). Moral rights and the underlying principles forming the moral rights doctrine are more than a strictly legal idea as "they express an aesthetic reality" (Ibid., 39).

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[253] It is important to mention that Büchel lost in 2007 in the US District Court, but prevailed in January 2010 in the US First Circuit of Appeals. The judges ruled that VARA applies to unfinished works of art and, since then, the protection of the VARA has been extended to unfinished artworks. The court's decision can be retrieved at https://www.scribd.com/doc/27801072/Mass-Museum-v-Buchel [accessed 04 October 2016]. For editorials on the revised decision on court of appeal see http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/29/arts/design/29artist.html?ref=design&_r=0 and http://copyrightlitigation.blogspot.nl/2010/01/visual-artists-rights-act-artist-moral.html [both accessed 04 October 2016].

[254] For further reference on the decision to dismantle see http://archive.boston.com/ae/theater_arts/articles/2007/09/25/mass_moca_to_dismantle_disputed_show/ [accessed 04 October 2016].

[255] It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to examine the various meanings given by scholars to the concept of 'soft law'. For the purpose of this study, soft law is intended as "the nonbinding rules or instruments that interpret or inform our understanding of binding legal rules or represent promises that in turn create expectations about future conduct" (Guzman and Meyer 2010, 174). In the art world, soft law abounds and in the last fifty years has greatly increased, for example in the area of historical restitution claims, for further reference see Campfens 2014.

Because of these underlying principles, Van Der Kaap enjoyed (and still enjoys) a degree of control over his work, even after a change of ownership. The Stedelijk Museum acknowledged the artist's protracted influence on his creation and, by respecting the artist's wishes, it allowed the reproduction of the photographic artworks, their substitution with new ones, and it allowed the physical destruction of the 'wrong' version of *Xiada (Girls' dorm), Xiamen*.

Intentional destruction of works of art

The destruction of art is a delicate matter. In most cases, it is perceived as a dramatic event that should be avoided at all costs. Currently, society is generally concerned with the protection and preservation of cultural expressions within the ever-expanding realm of cultural heritage.[256] Negligence in caring for cultural objects is often regarded as an offence or wrongdoing towards the present and future generations; moreover, intentional degradation or elimination of artworks is mostly condemned as a 'capital crime' against humanity.[257] In this view, to intentionally ruin or to physically eliminate works of art is a deviant behaviour departing from what society considers 'normal'. Even during an exceptional circumstance such as an armed conflict, many countries have agreed to respect the cultural heritage of the enemy or occupied countries by making an effort to follow the rules that have been stipulated in the 1954 Hague Convention for the protection of cultural property.[258] The Convention advocates for the notion of a common human heritage and consequently its destruction will affect all mankind as declared in the preamble: "damage to cultural property belonging to any people whatsoever means damage to the cultural heritage of all mankind, since each people makes its contribution to the culture of the world."

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[256] For a critical note on the assumption that cultural heritage should be preserved at any cost and some of the negative cultural and social consequences on preservation see Lowenthal 1989.
[257] It is outside the scope of this dissertation to analyse the phenomenon of religious and political iconoclasm as a specific form of intentional destruction of art. This type of annihilation has been perpetuated since the dawn of humanity and it still practiced. For recent examples of religious and political iconoclasm see Gamboni 1997, 45–138. At the moment of writing, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) is implementing a controversial iconoclastic policy; for further reference to this and its condemnation see http://www.elliottcolla.com/blog/2015/3/5/on-the-iconoclasm-of-isis; http://www.asatheory.org/newsletter/isis-at-the-mosul-museum-material-destruction-and-our-moral-economies-of-the-past [both accessed 03 October 2016].
[258] The Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict with Regulations for the Execution of the Convention was stipulated in 1954 in The Hague, the Netherlands. The convention, also known as the Hague Convention, was the first international agreement to address the protection and preservation of cultural heritage. For a historical and legal discussion on the Hague Convention see Gerstenblith 2004, 529–535. For the text of the Hague Convention see http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=13637&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html [accessed 25 August 2016].

Nevertheless, it is possible to distinguish various opinions regarding the intentional destruction of art: the most widespread judgement is to consider it as something utterly negative.[259] It is perceived as a vandalistic act perpetuated by lunatic individuals and it "can only be understood as an expression of ignorance and incomprehension, a barbaric regression" (Gamboni 1997, 10).[260]

In certain contexts, the intentional destruction of art may, instead, have a positive connotation, when the obliteration is viewed as a practice of renewal. Some artists have perceived the elimination of works as a liberating act in order to pursue other artistic directions, as famously declared by Filippo Tommaso Marinetti (1876–1944) in the *Futurist Manifest* (1909) or as Baldessari publicly did during his *Cremation Project*.[261] Likewise, some artists might consider an intentional destruction part of the creative act as Robert Rauschenberg (1925–2008) famously did by erasing a drawing by Willem de Kooning (1904–1997).[262] Natural decay, self-destruction or destructive processes caused by external forces may, in specific instances, be conceived as an integral part of the artistic creation. In these situations, the destruction of an artwork expresses the artist's intention and therefore it is not regarded as deviant behaviour.[263]

In some circumstances, intentional destruction may be viewed as a necessary evil as it occasionally occurs during urban and industrial development. The extraction of resources or the construction of infrastructure such as roads, bridges or dams may form a threat for monuments and archaeological sites (Burke 2001, n.p.). This type of destruction is a price that society is sometime willing to pay in order to progress, but it is often coupled to virulent criticism.

In other situations, intentional destruction may be recognized as inevitable, when artists decide to destroy their own works because they are unsatisfied with the results, as innumerable painters have done by repainting their canvas and obliterating with new paint the compositions underneath. It is important to draw attention to the fact

[259] For the purpose of this dissertation, the term 'intentional' has the meaning of an action done on purpose or as the result of an intention as described in the Oxford English Dictionary.
[260] For the purpose of this dissertation, I follow Dario Gamboni's distinction between the terms 'iconoclasm' and 'vandalism' and the subsequent 'iconoclast' and 'vandal', which he describes in his detailed study on the destruction of art in the modern and contemporary age. For further reference on the semantic differences between the two words, see Gamboni 1997, 13–19.
[261] For further reference on destroyed, discarded, erased and ephemeral artworks of the last hundred years see the online exhibition 'The Gallery of Lost Art' to be retrieved at http://galleryoflostart.com/ [accessed 20 October 2016].
[262] For further basic reference on Rauschenberg's drawing Erased de Kooning Drawing (1953) see https://www.sfmoma.org/artwork/98.298#artwork-info and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tpCWh3IFtDQ [both accessed 28 December 2016].
[263] For further reading on the intentional destruction as part of the creative act in contemporary art see Brougher, Ferguson, and Gamboni 2013.

that artists are free to eliminate their own works if these are still in their possession; being the rightful owners, they are at liberty to dispose of their own work. But the situation differs when there is a change in the work's ownership. At the moment the artwork is sold, donated or is the result of a commission, the artist cannot dispose of the work at his or her liking anymore and must respect the property rights of the new owner. Thus, by excluding special circumstances as those just described, stringent and surveyed frameworks need to be followed in order to intentionally destroy an artwork without breaking the rules and laws that protect cultural heritage and certainly when it comes to museum's objects as in the case of *Xiada (Girls' dorm), Xiamen* first version. These rules are mandatory, even when the destroyed object will be substituted by another version.

Intentional destruction of Xiada (Girls' dorm), Xiamen first version

Xiada (Girls' dorm), Xiamen was acquired by the Stedelijk Museum in 2002 and from that moment the work became part of a municipal collection. The passage from private to public ownership has generally important repercussions for the way an object is treated, valued and preserved. In most legislatures and ethical codes, museums are required to follow a stricter set of rules and laws for the protection and preservation of the objects in their care than private (art) collectors. Because of this change in ownership, the elimination of an older version of *Xiada (Girls' dorm), Xiamen*, and its substitution with a new photograph needs to be accepted by the museum, which, in turn, must comply with national and international legislation regarding the deaccession of a museum object.[264] The Stedelijk Museum is member of the Dutch Museums Association, *Museumvereniging*, and, as such, the museum's direction and board have to subscribe to the ethical code of the International Council of Museums (ICOM). The ICOM *Code of Ethics for Museums* acknowledges destruction of a museum object as one of the possible outcomes of responsible disposal. Destruction is viewed as the last resort, after other possible choices such as donation, transfer, exchange, sale and repatriation. Museums are encouraged to offer a deaccessioned object to other museums before other actions are undertaken (ICOM 2013, 5). However, deaccession

[264] In the Netherlands, museums that are included in the national museum register — the so-called *Museumregister* — must follow the deaccession guidelines known as *Leidraad for het afstoten van museale objecten* (LAMO). The first set of instructions was compiled in 1999, and revised twice, in 2006 and 2016. Until 2015, the deaccession procedure was an internal one. It is only with the last revision that deaccession has become an external process that can be actively commented on by fellow institutions and third parties — interested outsiders and experts in the field. For further reference see http://www.museumvereniging.nl/Portals/0/6-Publicaties/Bestanden/MV_LAMO_digitaal%20dec%2015_def.pdf [accessed 13 May 2016].

of a museum object is still a controversial practice in many countries and particularly when it contemplates the object's destruction.[265] The Dutch deaccession guidelines for museums label the destruction of a museum object as "the most extreme case of reallocation" and it recommends a period of reflection between the decision and the destruction moment (LAMO 2016, 7).

That said, the guidelines state that an artist cannot invoke the protection of moral rights to stop or avoid the destruction of his or her work. The Dutch author's law does not interpret destruction as an infringement of the right of integrity as the law does not protect the tangible work of art but the creative work embodied in the tangible work. In the case of destruction, no physical traces of the creative work remain and thus the artist's reputation is not at stake. However, when it concerns contemporary art, the guidelines advise involving the creating artist or his or her legal heirs in the destruction process as an artwork's destruction might harm the interests of other parties, especially when it concerns unique works of arts (LAMO 2016, 31). The set of rules gives no advice on how to cope when it is the creating artist that wishes to eliminate his or her work, as in the case of the intentional destruction of the first version of *Xiada (Girls' dorm), Xiamen*.

Van Der Kaap and the museum staff carefully followed a predetermined procedure: a written settlement signed by both parties, a photographic documentation that testified to the destruction, the presence of the artist during the process proved his agreement, and no physical traces of the disqualified version were kept. The artist explicitly requested that the photograph was cut into small pieces so that the fragments would no longer have any artistic or aesthetic qualities and thus any improper circulation would be avoided.

The museum was keen to keep the photograph's elimination a 'private' issue, not accessible to the public eye. During the filming of the documentary about Van Der Kaap and his work, the museum's chief curator agreed to collaborate on the project and allowed the filming to be carried out in the repository with the artist standing in front of the two versions and explaining why the initial version was about to be destroyed. The chief curator categorically denied the possibility of recording the actual physical cutting of the photograph. The main reason for this refusal was the fear of possible 'copycat' actions and thus an increase in vandalism of the museum's artworks, and his fear was not without reason — as is well known, the Stedelijk Museum has previously suffered similar attacks on two Barnett Newman paintings: *Who's afraid of red, yellow*

[265] For further reference on the controversial attitude towards de-accessioning as a museum practice see Howard 2012.

and blue III and *Cathedra* were both slashed with a knife by the same visitor.

As destruction of art is a sensitive matter often paired with high emotions, it might be preferable to physically eliminate an artwork in a 'private' setting or, as the art historian Dario Gamboni has remarked, "if elimination and preservation are two sides of the same coin, then elimination is the dark side, not only in the sense that it may be found depressing, but in the sense that is concealed" (Gamboni 1997, 331). This is certainly true for the destruction of the first version of *Xiada (Girls' dorm), Xiamen*. The museum preferred to keep it hidden in order to avoid setting an example for deranged individuals that might want to try similar actions.

As noted, intentional destruction of an artwork is generally considered by the public opinion as deviant behaviour and within museum management as a last resort in the responsible disposal of a museum object. Traditionally, museums and their staff perceive the preservation of museum objects one of their core activities. This view is clearly summarized in the ICOM *Code of Ethics*, which declares that museums are to "*preserve*, interpret and promote the natural and cultural inheritance of humanity" and they have "the duty to acquire, *preserve* and promote their collections as a contribution to safeguarding the natural, cultural and scientific heritage" (ICOM 2013, 1 and 3. Emphasis added). In this light, intentional destruction of an artwork does not align with the prevailing museum practice, but it is considered as an exception to be used when everything else has failed.[266]

Remarkably, in the case of *Xiada (Girls' dorm), Xiamen*, museum principles fostering preservation did not clash with the decision of intentionally destroying the work's first version. The museum staff, whether involved in the decision-making or in the physical elimination, did not — or only in a faint way — express professional discomfort in facing a situation that theoretically may present conflicting positions. Evidently, the personnel gave primacy to the artist's wish and they were not troubled by the fact that a museum object would be eliminated. Several factors might have contributed to this attitude. Firstly, the destruction does not concern a unique artwork, but one of three photographs forming the limited edition. In the decision-making concerning the deaccession of a museum object, the uniqueness of an object plays an important role. For example, the ICOM *Code of Ethics* states that the renewable or non-renewable character of an object should be taken into account during deaccession decision-making (ICOM 2013, 4). About the destruction of a unique artwork, the Dutch guidelines

[266] For further reference to the notion of alignment as a major factor in facilitating what is deemed desirable museum conduct see Straughn and Gardner 2011.

explicitly warn museums by stating: "when it comes to the destruction of unique work, the owner is expected to consider destruction only when there is a legitimate reason" (LAMO 2016, 41).[267]

Secondly, being a photograph, the work could, in principle, be reprinted and it was possible to substitute the older version with a new one. On the practical side, the considerable dimensions (191x155.6 cm) of *Xiada (Girls' dorm)* may have also facilitated this attitude. Museum storage facilities are limited in space and have high running costs, especially those for the long-term storage of photographs as the parameters for temperature and relative humidity are rather strict.[268] The preservation of both versions would have meant a significant reduction of the available space in the Stedelijk Museum's repository. However, this practical issue cannot be considered as a leading reason in the decision-making process; rather, it should be perceived just as a supplemental one. Van Der Kaap's wish to preserve both versions of *Lalalalalight* was respected by the museum, as will be discussed further on. In this case, the running costs and the limited space available did not prevent the preservation of *Lalalalalight*'s both versions.

Plausibly, the factor that has contributed the most to facilitating the choice among the museum's staff to physically eliminate the first version of *Xiada (Girls' dorm), Xiamen* was the 'artist's sanction'.[269] In fact, Van Der Kaap has explicitly communicated several times his dissatisfaction about the appearance of the first version by claiming that it was wrongly printed and did not match his expectations. Essentially, Van Der Kaap's actions and comments disqualified this version. Consequently, and thanks to the artist's sanction, the controversial decision to deaccession by means of destruction became acceptable for the museum staff. Moreover, at a conceptual level, it is even possible to suggest that the physical destruction of the first version of *Xiada (Girls' dorm), Xiamen* cannot be regarded as an intentional destruction of an artwork as it had been disqualified, and part of its aesthetic qualities were 'withdrawn' by the artist.

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[267] *"Als het gaat om vernietiging van unieke exemplaren, dan wordt van de eigenaar verwacht dat hij slechts overgaat tot vernietiging indien daarvoor een gegronde reden bestaat"* [English translation by the author].

[268] For further reference on long-term storage for analogue and digital photographic prints see the recommendations made by the Image Permanence Institute https://www.imagepermanenceinstitute.org/imaging/storage-guides and http://www.dp3project.org/preservation/storage-recommendations [both accessed 03 October 2016].

[269] For the purpose of the dissertation, an artist's sanction refers to 'observable actions and communication' of the artist (Irvin 2005, 321).

Lalalalalight in 'limbo'

Valuation and devaluation are well-known phenomena in art history, where a modification in taste may have a longstanding effect on the way an artwork is valued. In this light, these processes are viewed as dynamic, context-dependent, social mechanisms (Appadurai 1986; Ashley-Smith 1999; Bourdieu 1993; Thompson 1979). The attribution of positive values (valuation) or negative values (devaluation) to objects occurs only through the involvement of people and it does not exist without a social context. Value is thus not regarded as an inherent property of the objects, but as a judgement made by individuals or communities at a given moment in time. Valuation and devaluation — intended as a gradual increase or decrease of value — are widespread and common mechanisms, when they are understood as historical and collective practices.[270] However, when the valuation and devaluation is the result of a 'sudden' transformation, the two phenomena are generally perceived as something extraordinary, as something that goes beyond what is regular or common. In many cases, a sudden valuation or devaluation is often linked to the artist and his or her authority to promote or demote an object (Gamboni 1997, 313). In this dissertation, to underscore the differences between the two demoting mechanisms, the term 'devaluation' describes the process in which the value of a work of art is reduced or dissolved to something that is perceived as valueless. This course of action usually occurs through a gradual, collective process, whereas the term 'disqualification' expresses an active, generally single-handed removal of required properties or qualities that ends in a change of status. In the end, disqualification may turn out to be devaluation, but this may not necessarily happen.[271]

Since the introduction of the ready-made by Duchamp in 1915, a 'sudden' upgrading of an object is a well-known phenomenon in the artistic practices of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Artistic movements, such as conceptual art, pop art, appropriation art or the more recent digital ready-mades, have all reinterpreted and adopted the ready-made approach to transforming an 'ordinary' object into a work of art. The underlying strategy is to remove an already manufactured object, idea, technology or digital file from its initial setting and to place it into an artistic context. But, in order to convert an 'ordinary' object into a work of art, the artist needs to perform several acts such as the act of selection — the artist chooses one item among many others, designation — the artist establishes that that particular item is a work of

[270] For an overview of the type of values a work of art might possess see Ashley-Smith 1999, 89–90.
[271] For further reference on the semantic differences between the terms ' devalue' and 'disqualify' see http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/devalue and http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/disqualify [both accessed 21 October 2016].

art and he or she assigns his or her authorship to it, and the recontextualization — the artist removes that item from its usual context and places it into an artistic setting and framework. Within this practice, the artist is able to promote that object to the status of work of art, and he or she has the ability to influence how the object is valued.

For many, ready-mades symbolize the ultimate freedom of the artist, who supposedly is free to add values to anything he or she cares to (Groys 2014, 88). Nonetheless, as several scholars have underscored, the acceptance of the ready-made as a work of art can only occur by virtue of a collective acknowledgment and, in particular, of institutions and individuals forming the art field — such as museums, art galleries, art critics and the academic world (Bourdieu 1993; Buskirk 2005; Gamboni 1997; Groys 2014).

If ready-mades are well known examples of a 'sudden' valuation, less frequent is the inverted path, when an artist, or his or her estate, deliberately disqualifies a work. In this process, the act of designation occurs in reverse as the artist has the authority to establish that the item he or she had created should no longer be perceived as an artwork. In this process of disqualification, the artist may also decide whether to retain his or her authorship over the disqualified artwork.

In many cases, disqualification is set in motion by unwanted and unauthorized alterations performed by a third party, as occurred with the sculpture titled *17h's* (1950) by the American sculptor David Smith (1906–1965). An art dealer, owner of the piece, stripped the red coating that had covered the work, without the artist's consent. In response to the unauthorized modification, Smith publicly disclaimed his authorship and disqualified the sculpture to the value of the steel that formed the piece.[272]

In other instances, the artist or the artist's estate may disqualify the artwork but they may retain the authorship on the disqualified object. For example, the American sculptor Robert Morris (b. 1931) by means of his *Statement of Esthetic Withdrawal* (1963) disqualified his other piece *Litanies* (1963) (fig. 53 and 54) to a metal construction by removing his aesthetic qualities.[273] In a notarized document, the artist proclaimed: "The undersigned, ROBERT MORRIS, being the maker of the metal construction entitled LITANIES, described in the annexed Exhibit A, hereby withdraws from said

[272] David Smith declared: "I renounce it [sculpture *17 h's*] as my original work and brand it as a ruin. My name cannot be attributed to it […] I declare its value to be only its weight of 60 lbs. of scrap steel" (Smith, 1960). What makes Smith's case even more complex is the fact that the artist's public condemnation did not prevent — after Smith's death — the systematic stripping of his later open-air sculptures by the executors of his estate, especially by the art critic Clement Greenberg. This case underscores again how the authority of artists over their work greatly depends on the acknowledgment of others. For further reference on the alteration of David Smith's sculptures see Gamboni 1997, 148; Hamil 2011; Krauss 1974; Merryman, Elsen, and Urice 2007, 440–441; Mulholland 2014.

construction all esthetic quality and content and declares that from the date hereof said construction has no such quality and content." The work maintains its authorship, as Morris did not deny that the work was his, but the artist disqualified it from being a work of art to a mere 'metal construction'.

Both Morris' and Smith's cases raise interesting questions about the authority the artists might maintain over their works, even after they have left the artists' possession. But, at a conceptual level Morris' disqualification is particularly thought-provoking as the change of status is not linked to a physical alteration and the appearance of the work has remained the same (Burskirk 2005, 2). Moreover, the disqualification is not the result of an unwanted or unauthorized change as in the Smith's case, but it is the artist that initiates the process of disqualification. Then again, *Litanies* inclusion together with *Statement* into the collection of the MoMA in New York and its public display in the museum galleries show how difficult it can be for an artist to disqualify his own work beyond a statement (Gamboni 1997, 323). This underscores once more how the artist's dictum may be not enough and how disqualification needs the acknowledgment of third parties.

Regarding *Lalalalalight*'s case, another interesting example of an artwork's disqualification with the retention of authorship concerns *Felt Suit* (*Filzanzug*, 1970) by Joseph Beuys (1921–1986), preserved in the archives of Tate, London. A two-piece suit made of grey felt constituted the work, which was made by Beuys in an edition of one hundred identical suits. This specific suit was number forty-five and its damaged state, beyond repair, was the trigger that led to the disqualification of the work: from artwork to archived object (fig. 55).[274] On the question of whether the suit could be displayed in damaged condition, the artist's widow appealed to the moral rights she had over the work as executor of the artist's estate and asserted that it should:

[273] The title *Statement of Esthetic Withdrawal* conforms to the titling given by Buskirk (2005) and Gamboni (1997) and it does not follow the title given by the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) owner of the piece, which calls the piece *Document*. The way MoMA titles the work might underscore the non-art status of the object but at the same time the work is recorded as a work belonging to the department 'Painting and Sculpture'. For further reference see http://www.moma.org/collection/works/79897?locale=en [accessed 17 May 2016].

[274] For more reference see Barker and Bracker 2005 available online http://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/tate-papers/04/beuys-is-dead-long-live-beuys-characterising-volition-longevity-and-decision-making-in-the-work-of-joseph-beuys and http://www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/video/lost-art-joseph-beuys-felt-suit [both accessed 20 October 2016].



Figure 53 Robert Morris, *Litanies*, 1963, Museum of Modern Art, New York, lead over wood with steel key ring, keys, and brass lock.

> Never be shown again in any location, on any occasion and in any context, however constituted, including for the purposes of study. For historical purposes, it should continue to be recorded that the Tate Gallery possesses such a 'Felt Suit'. For that remains an asset of the Tate Gallery (Eva Beuys cited in Barker and Bracker 2005, n. p.).

Eva Beuys' statement together with the 1992 Museums and Galleries Act, which allows English museums to deaccession severely deteriorated works, provided Tate with the legal support for *Felt Suit*'s deaccession as a work of art, which took place in 1995. The damaged suit is, however, still kept as an archived object at Tate and the museum is disinclined to consider the work's destruction. What is particularly interesting in this case is that despite the work being "physically and conceptually" defunct and its demotion to an existence in an archival box, the museum staff together with Beuys' widow concord that the vestiges of *Felt Suit* remain "a powerful homage to an iconic artist, and acknowledge that it continues to function, albeit on an ancillary level" (Ibid.)

Apart from the contingencies belonging to each work of art, these two cases may be viewed as illustrations of 'sudden' disqualification with retention of authorship, initiated by the artist himself, as in the case of Morris' *Statement,* or in the name of the artist, as in the case of Beuys' *Felt Suit.* Both examples raise questions about the degree of authority the artists, personally or through their estates, still possess over

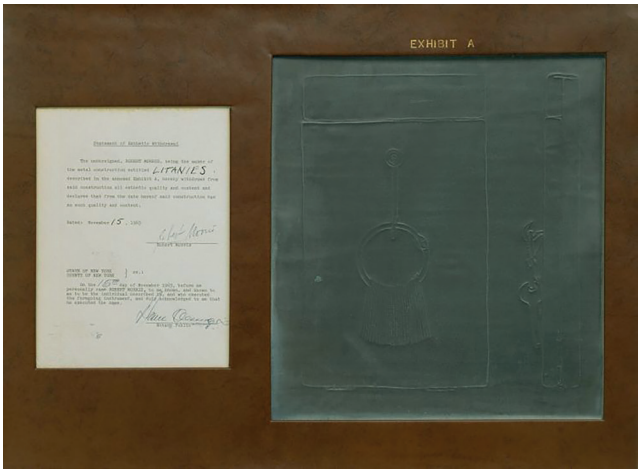


Figure 54 Robert Morris, *Statement of Esthetic Withdrawal*, 1963, Museum of Museum of Modern Art, New York, typed and notarized statement on paper and sheet of lead mounted in imitation leather mat.



Figure 55 Joseph Beuys, *Felt Suit*, 1970. Felt. Edition 27 nr. 45. Tate Archive. Purchased by Tate in 1981, de-accessioned in 1995. Photographed after moth damage.

their creations, even after a change of ownership. They also indicate the possibility of removing certain qualities from an artwork or changing the work's status from artwork to non-art, from artwork to an archived object.

The reproduction process and the substitution of the original *Lalalalalight* with a new one also had far-reaching consequences for the status of the two versions. Although the first version was not deemed suitable for public display, Van Der Kaap saw enough 'potential' in the damaged work and decided that it should be preserved within the museum's collection, but he disqualified as a reference piece for a new version — if a new reproduction is deemed necessary in the future. In the disqualification process, the authorship of Van Der Kaap was never an issue. Both versions of *Lalalalalight* were and are created by Van Der Kaap. Nonetheless, *Lalalalalight'* s first version ended up in a sort of a museum 'limbo' as the photograph is still, up to a certain point, a work of art, but at the same time it is downgraded to 'study' or reference material.

The internal moving of the first version within the museum storage is, in this sense, exemplary and it illustrates the practicalities of the disqualification in terms of museum management.[275] At first, *Lalalalalight* was kept in the cool storage — a costly and limited space specifically appointed for the preservation of colour photographs. When the disqualification by the artist to reference material had taken place, it was moved to a larger, more general area of the depot with less stringent environmental parameters, whilst the second version took its place in the cold storage. Initially, *Lalalalalight'* s first version was kept in the best possible environment the museum could offer; this was done in order to ensure long-term stability and to reduce the risks of undesirable changes in the work's appearance. When *Lalalalalight'* s first version was disqualified and it did not possess the 'higher' status of being a work of art anymore, it was destined to an existence on a 'standard' painting rack. The object will still be well kept, it will still enjoy the museum's high standard for collection housing, but it will not receive the best housing the museum can offer. It is a subtle difference but certainly a telling one.

Also from a preservation perspective, the decision to move *Lalalalalight*'s first version from the cool storage to a controlled room environment is understandable. Silver dye-bleach photographs have far better colour stability than chromogenic ones especially when these are not exposed to light and kept in the dark. In dark conditions, the colours of silver dye-bleach photographs are less prone to fade, even when kept at room temperature and relative humidity of around 50 per cent.[276] From this viewpoint, it is reasonable that the new version, being a chromogenic print, should be kept

[275] About internal movements within the museum building, Gamboni has noted how relegation from the exhibition galleries to storerooms can be sometimes interpreted as a form of devaluation and in the long run it may also become a "euphemized mode of elimination" (Gamboni 1997, 320).

[276] The recommended dark storage conditions for silver dye-bleach prints are temperature below 20° C and humidity between 30 and 50 per cent, while for chromogenic prints a temperature around 2° C at humidity level of 40 per cent is recommended (Pénichon 2013, 205 and 231).

in cooler and drier conditions than the older one, as the silver dye-bleach imaging system is more stable and the colours have a superior dark stability. As the cool storage is limited in size, the museum had to make choices and it gave precedence to the photograph that is more likely to benefit from the cool storage.

About the registration in the museum's database, a unique number records the work *Lalalalalight* but there are, until today, no specific additions or special numbering that identifies the first or the second version. Only the notation of different locations in the repository reminds the museum staff of the existence of two separate objects and their whereabouts within the depot. In a way, *Lalalalalight*'s first version still physically exists but, at a conceptual level, it inhabits a sort of museum 'limbo': it is not yet fully devalued as an archived object, but, at the same, it is also not fully recognized as a work of art.

The reproduction and the disqualification of *Lalalalalight,* and the physical destruction of *Xiada (Girls' dorm), Xiamen* remind us of the authority an artist may still retain over his work, even after it has left the artist's possession, and the impact that his decisions may have on the existence of two museum objects. Although scholars have drawn attention to the fact that the recognition of value is "a social construct dependent on social relationship" (Ashley-Smith 1999, 81) and an object receives the status of work of art "only by virtue of the (collective) belief, which knows and acknowledges it as a work of art" (Bourdieu 1993, 35), the idea that an artist has the capacity to promote objects to art or, vice versa, to demote art to non-art, remains a powerful assumption.

Echoes of this view may be found in the underlying principles informing moral rights as they derive from the belief that an author, during the process of creation, introduces his or her personality into the work and thus "the author's own personality is bound up in the work" (Gerstenblith 2004, 191). As a result of this intimate relationship, artworks are perceived as an expression of the artist's personality and therefore artists can, despite possible changes in ownership, claim a prolonged bond with the artworks they have made. These underlying values can be perceived as a form of 'soft law' that may still shape people's behaviour and relations and these values might — explicitly or implicitly — influence what is perceived as an appropriate conduct in museum practice. In this light, the authority given to the artist on matters regarding his own creations may explain the acceptance of *Xiada (Girls' dorm), Xiamen* 'sanitized' destruction and the disqualification of *Lalalalalight*' s first version by the museum staff.

Concluding remarks

This research started as a practice-based enquiry and it has drawn on real-life events as it studied the reproduction process of four photographic artworks in the setting of two Dutch contemporary art museums. In order to answer the main question, if reproduction can be regarded as a conservation strategy, I examined whether the various versions of the reproduced works were exactly the same or whether they differed from each other. And, where material, technical, and image dissimilarities were observed, it examined the possibility of whether these differences could be classified as constituent or contingent features. The term 'reproduction' defined the practice of substituting damaged photographic artworks with pristine ones. It was argued that reproduction generally does not comply with the material-based approach characteristic of traditional conservation theory and practice, in which materials are regarded as evidence of the past.

By introducing the theoretical framework of Genette, it was discussed that the reproduction of photographic artworks could only take place as the result of a convention. The substitution of one photographic artwork for another may occur if artists, museum staff, and society at large agree to dismiss some features as irrelevant and decide to ignore the fact that, during this process, these characteristics are replaced. In this view, reproduction may be interpreted as a reduction to the essential or constituent features, while other less crucial or contingent features are overlooked. Reproduction is simultaneously a subtractive and an additive practice as a number of properties are removed (subtraction) and replaced, substituted by others (addition). The subtraction and the addition of contingent features make an exact reproduction difficult to achieve.

By using Ginzburg's *paradigma indiziario*, it was argued that for conservators that are traditionally trained it might be problematic to ignore the presence or the absence of contingent features, as these properties give important clues to the way artworks were produced as well as insights into the condition of the works. Many conservators are trained to look and to give meaning through visual assessment to the material characteristics of objects. For these conservators, the material execution of a work is an essential component of the object's function and meaning. Hence, it comes as no surprise that several conservators may feel professional discomfort when a practice of substitution like reproduction is allowed, as this goes against the fundamental principles of traditional conservation ethics. This background of attentive examination, however, can be a source of knowledge, as it may help in the classification of constituent and contingent features of reproduced photographic artworks.

The attentive visual examination approach was mostly evident during the comparative analysis of the different versions of each case study. Every work was minutely described and technical features, physical properties, presentational forms,

and physical traces left behind by usage and time were recorded. While, at times, these accurate descriptions may have come across as tedious accounts of unexciting material details, by looking closely and comparing the versions, it has become clear that every print has its own specific properties, and that during the reproduction process only some of these properties were replicated while others were not. This insight supports my argument that photography is a multipliable medium, as it has the ability to multiply the image but it is unable to exactly replicate the material characteristics of each photographic work.

For the creating artists, the Stedelijk Museum, and the Van Abbemuseum, reproduction was a solution that enabled them to replace damaged or faulty museum objects with new pristine works. The substitution also prevented works of art considered unsuitable for display being presented to the public. By studying the reproduction of the four artworks, it emerged that the stakeholders involved in the decision-making were greatly influenced by the general ideas around photography and its alleged capacity to produce exactly the same photographs. This claim was perhaps most evident in the Baldessari case, where the museum and the artist agreed to reproduce the work without a direct comparison of the initial version. They believed that the reproduction was achievable from a distance: the photographs were printed in Los Angeles and the application of the dry transfer letters would have occurred in the Netherlands without direct supervision of the artist. Oddly enough, or perhaps precisely because of these preconceived ideas on photography's reproducibility, the reproduction ended on a sour note and the museum curators came to value the material aspects of specific prints more than they would ever have expected. As a result of these shifting ideas, the second version failed to reach the same status of the first one and the substitution between the two versions never took place.

The substitution of Dibbets' and Van Der Kaap's works did occur, albeit partially as the first version of each work was retained. The presence of a first version was pivotal for this research as it enabled me to make a comparative analysis of the versions, to tease out the differences, and to distinguish which are the constituent features and which are the contingent ones. However, the initial version heavily influences the way the artists and the museum staff tend to consider the subsequent versions. When the initial version is still available, there is a propensity to value this version more highly than the other ones. This was clearly noticeable in Dibbets' case, where the initial version, despite being deemed unsuitable for display, was still considered the 'original' work. This opinion clearly emerged in the way the artist signed the various versions and the way the work on the wall was dated. Dibbets considered the work's reprinting as a restoration treatment and, as such, there was no need to mention it on the label or other museum writings. It was Dibbets' belief that the material substitution

of a photographic object with other prints is a functional solution to the inexorable fading of colour photographs and that the reproduction of this work, a conceptual piece, should be regarded as the re-enactment of an idea, like LeWitt's and Weiner's works. The reprinting dates of 1996 and especially that of 2012 had to be hidden from the public. What counted most was a strict correspondence to the constituent features present in the 1973 version, while the artist did not want to impart much significance to the contingent features present in subsequent versions.

Van Der Kaap's idea about the dating of the work and what should be written on the wall label greatly differed from Dibbets' opinion. In fact, Van Der Kaap decided to add the reproduction date on the back of the second version of *Lalalalalight*, changing the inscription from '1989–90' into '1989–90–12'. For the artist, the museum label should give information about the work on display, about its technique, the materials used, and the date when the work was created and produced. In the case of *Lalalalalight*, the label should then report the date of the first creation (1989-90) as well as the moment of the second manufacture (2012).[277] Van Der Kaap considered his involvement in the reproduction and the changes made in the second version a valid reason to mention 2012 as part of the work's creative process. By adding the year 2012, Van Der Kaap acknowledged the 'making moment' of the second version as a significant event in the work's life.

For the artist, the first version of *Lalalalalight* still fulfils an important function, even if the work should no longer be put on display. This version retained a reference role for possible new versions in the future and was, therefore, worthy of being preserved in the museum repository. In this case, it is possible to argue that a shift occurred in the way the first version was valued by the artist and the museum staff, as it moved from having the status of an artwork to becoming a reference piece. In this case, too, the substitution was a partial one, as the first version was preserved. It is even possible to suggest that, in the future, a reverse shift might occur and that the first version might 'regain' its status as an artwork. This version was produced in a more durable and stable photographic technique than the second one and therefore it is not unthinkable that, if a colour fading of the second version ever occurred, the relevance of the first version might increase. A similar reversal happened with Dibbets' work: when *Comet Sea 3°–60°* was reproduced a third time, the second version devalued in comparison to the initial one.

The reprinting of *Xiada (Girls' dorm) Xiamen* is, in my opinion, also a partial substitution. This may appear a counterintuitive claim, as the first version was physically

[277] Van Der Kaap artist interview, SMA.

destroyed and fully substituted by the second version. Despite the definitive action of cutting a photographic work to pieces, the first version of *Xiada (Girls' dorm) Xiamen* was not fully substituted by the second version. This case differs from the others as this photograph was created as a limited edition and not as a unique work. The existence of other two initial versions makes the substitution a partial one, as the second version, at least at a theoretical level, closely relates to the properties present in these earlier versions.

This case complicates the relationship among the versions since, right from the start, there are multiple initial versions. The classification of constituent and contingent features is not as well defined as in the other cases, where the works were initially conceived as unique. In a limited edition, the classification should ideally occur by comparing the various photographs that form the edition by means of an attentive visual examination. This approach might, however, be hindered by practicalities that influence the feasibility of the analysis or even obstruct it. As also discussed, *Xiada (Girls' dorm) Xiamen* differs from the other cases as the reprinting took place shortly after the first manufacturing of the failed piece. As a result, it remains unclear when exactly the reprinting took place and what decisions the artists took during the process. Moreover, the museum was confronted with the reprinting as *fait accompli* as it was not involved in the decision-making.

In the end, each artist may have his or her own ideas about the issue of reproducing their photographic artworks. Different artistic investigations as well as the art market may influence the way artists approach the subject. In my experience as a practicing conservator, and by taking into account the possible exceptions, artists are inclined to prefer a pristine work, rather than one that shows the signs of ageing. This attitude may explain why several artists have a 'pragmatic' attitude, adapting photographic materials and techniques to their artistic needs, as is the case for the works under study and as will be elaborated on in the coda.

Baldessari, Dibbets, and Van Der Kaap used photography as a vehicle for their artistic research and they welcomed the fact that photography is a multiple autographic medium and thus capable of producing more than one photograph. By reproducing their works, they were able to preserve and carry their artistic ideas into the future. The three artists used new photographic materials and they adopted, where possible, technological advances. Dibbets made a significant effort to match the new prints to the material of older photographs, but he used digital technology for the scanning of the 1973 analogue negatives. When Baldessari was asked to reprint his work a third time, he made clear to the museum curators that he would print the photographs using digital technology. Baldessari embraced the technological developments that have taken place in the photographic field and, at least in the beginning, he did not

consider these changes an obstacle for the reproduction of *Virtues and Vices (for Giotto)*. Van Der Kaap also decided to use a different photographic technique for the reproduction of *Lalalalalight*, as the silver dye-bleach process he had used at end of the 1990s was no longer available. Ultimately, Van Der Kaap, who was well aware of the technical differences between the silver dye-bleach process and the chromogenic one, preferred the work's pristine condition, rather than presenting to the public something he felt unsuitable for display.

Today, the three artists are, to a greater or lesser extent, using digital photography for their needs. They tend to use the best of two worlds, rather than considering analogue and digital photography as two opposing fronts. As will be described in the coda, other artists are also experimenting with new forms of interactions. In these cases, too, artists are not interested in keeping the different technologies apart, but prefer to use the different technologies to their advantage.

Perhaps what the study of the cases has shown the most is that reproduction of photographic artworks is a highly complex process and its outcome is never certain beforehand. During the unfolding of the process, many predicted and unpredicted decisions had to be taken. The lack of certain materials and techniques, or damage to the negatives has deeply influenced the results. Insights have also changed along the way, as in the case of *Lalalalalight*, when Van Der Kaap realized that the reproduction would not be satisfactory without the comparison of the first version. To be considered successful, reproductions need to comply with a certain number of constituent features. These were not always the same and varied depending on the specificity of the process. At the end of the day, this classification remains a value judgement and, as such, it is a subjective undertaking. The classification is not predetermined and it changes depending on the context, the people involved, and it might shift in time.

Because of the great number of choices and decisions that have to be made, it is my opinion that reproduction intended as a substitution for a photographic artwork can only occur under the supervision of the creating artist. In all the other instances, when the artist is not there to judge, the new work cannot function as a substitution as other individuals will have to take the decisions and, by doing so, they will influence the outcome of the reproduction. In these instances, it is possible to argue that the purpose of the reproduction is a different one as it intends to create a copy, rather than a new version of the work. I am aware that this claim is a personal standpoint and others may have different ideas on the matter. To me, artist involvement should be regarded as a constituent feature in order to legitimize the status of the reproduced photograph as a new version of a plural work. As discussed, the various versions of a plural work need to share a number of constituent features with each other. The number and the type of constituent features may fluctuate depending on the specific

case, but, in general, the authorship, the involvement of the artist in the decision making, the correspondence of the photographic image, and the dimensions of the work should be perceived as constituent features that need to be taken into account in order to achieve a successful substitution. The lack of one of these properties may negatively influence the way the reproduction is valued.

As argued, to consider a photographic work with more than one version a plural work has far-reaching consequences for its preservation and conservation. It means that all the versions are meaningful enough to be preserved and thus old, damaged versions are not to be discarded or physically eliminated. The substitution should be a partial rather than a definitive one. Museums should also be aware that the preservation of plural work demands a lifelong commitment and is a costly matter, as all the versions should be cared for and all the versions face the same restrictions about display and storage as other photographic materials.

This dissertation was broad in its scope, but it focused on the reproduction of four photographic artworks within the institutional setting of Dutch contemporary art museums. Furthermore, it analysed reproduction mostly from a conservator's perspective. There are at least five areas that may benefit from future research: 1) reproduction analysed from a curatorial as well an art historical standpoint would be an interesting complement to this study. 2) It would also be engaging to broaden the field of research to other countries and examine how other museums with other cultural backgrounds and traditions deal with this topic. 3) The effect of digital photography, with its specific uses and conventions, on reproduction would also be an exciting subject for further research. 4) The influence of the art market and what the consequences for the economic value of the various versions might be is a fascinating theme. This raises questions about the reproduction of photographic artworks outside the museum context and how, in different settings, economic factors may have an impact on the way reproduction is practiced. It is not unthinkable that artists as well collectors may be wary of allowing the existence of various versions of the same work. 5) The specific challenges posed by limited editions were briefly touched upon in this dissertation. The complexity of limited editions when these are reproduced is also open to more in-depth investigations.

To conclude, what I have learned most from this research is that material aspects are crucial to photographic artworks and therefore should not be neglected during the decision-making process. However, works of art are more than just their material properties and reproduction may overlook some features. But this practice also represents an opportunity to show to the public artistic elements that may otherwise vanish or be altered. Reproduction may not be the promised fountain of eternal youth that we all long for but, despite all the limitations, it does protract youth for a bit longer.

Coda

In the last phase of the research, three Dutch artists — Wout Berger, Koos Breukel, and Rineke Dijkstra — have come to the Stedelijk Museum and, independently of each other, they have looked at some of their older photographic works, acquired by the museum some years before. Each artist claimed that his or her work had discoloured too much and they strongly discouraged the display of the photographs in the museum's galleries. They all suggested reproducing the works as a solution to these undesirable changes and substituting the old, discoloured photographs for new, pristine prints.

At the moment of writing, the museum staff is in the process of assessing whether the museum is willing to accept or reject this suggestion. In the meantime, for the purpose of this research and for the museum's evaluation, I posed questions to the three artists about the driving force that informs the reproduction of their respective works. This coda is the result of these meetings and it summarizes the discussions made in front of the photographs about a possible reproduction and the logistics involved in the process.[278] All conversations took place in April 2016 at the external repository of the museum.

This coda simply records the ideas that these artists have about the reproduction process, it does not focus on historical contextualization, and there is no analysis of the decision-making; there is also no examination of the possible repercussions that the reproduction may have on the works and the museum. As can be expected, each work of art has its own specific characteristics and each artist has his or her own ideas; however the underlying reasons for reprinting the photographs show similarities with the case studies examined in this dissertation. Despite the fact that the photographs have not yet been reprinted, and thus it is not possible to make a comparison between the various versions, I believe that the discussion of these other works underscores the actuality of the reproduction of photographic artworks as a preservation practice in the museum world and beyond.

[278] The term 'interview' is deliberately avoided in order to prevent the impression that these discussions could be regarded as artist interviews. In the field of conservation of contemporary art, artist interviews are well-established research tool for gathering information and acquiring knowledge about works of art and artist practice. Nowadays, artist interviews follow predetermined formats and guidelines of good practice in order to avoid possible biases and, in most cases, two interviewers pose the questions during the interview. According to the *Guidelines to Good Practice: Artist Interview*, developed by the International Network for the Conservation of Contemporary Art (INCCA), the meetings I had with the three artists may be defined as 'Face to face conservations', which follow less stringent parameters and were conducted by one interviewer. For further reference see INCCA 2016 https://www.incca.org/system/files/field_attachments/2002_incca_guide_to_good_practice_artists_interviews.pdf [accessed 28 March 2017].

In general terms, Berger, Breukel, and Dijkstra share similar approaches to and opinions about digital technology. The artists have suggested the use of digital printing for the reproduction of their damaged works, as they believe that this technique is more stable and reliable. This belief should be treated with caution as a lot of research is being carried out to establish the long-term stability of digital prints.[279] According to specialist literature, digital prints are also susceptible to unwanted changes: most pigment-based inkjets have a better, darker long-term stability than chromogenic materials, but they are also more vulnerable to surface scratches and abrasions. Moreover, dye-based inkjets are more liable to moisture deterioration in high humidity environments than traditional prints (Reilly 2016). All three artists tend to use analogue and digital technologies in a commingled fashion, with no distinct rupture between the two. They all prefer the austerity and directness of analogue negatives, but they all embrace the opportunities and numerous choices that digital printing gives them.

Like Van Der Kaap's *Xiada (Girls' dorm) Xiamen*, the works being considered for reproduction are created as limited editions and, in some instances, the photographic image was printed in different formats. Each format corresponds to a different edition. For example, two limited editions of Dijkstra's work *Kolobrzeg, Poland, July 26, 1992* exist: one edition is formed by six photographs and two artist's proofs with an image size of 94x75 cm, while the other is formed by fifteen photographs with an image size of 35x40 cm.[280] As discussed, a multiple autographic work allows for the coexistence of similar versions, which are conventionally viewed as identical. Differences in preservation and exhibition policy may have a long-lasting effect on the appearance of the various photographic prints. When the reproduction is limited to one or a few versions within the same edition, the inevitable changes in material, printing technique, the possible modifications in formats, and differences in the way the works are displayed, may complicate matters, as these elements can interfere with or even preclude the acceptance of the reproduced works as a substitution of the previous ones. The differences may be too evident to conventionally agree that these groups should be regarded as 'identical'. Works forming a series tend to have a somewhat loser connection to each other than the works within a limited edition.[281]

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[279] Since 2007, the Image Permanence Institute has embarked on one of the most comprehensive research projects on the strengths and vulnerabilities of digital prints technologies. The results of the research are shared with the public on the website Digital Print Preservation Portal, also known as the DP3 Portal. For further reference see http://www.dp3project.org/ [Accessed 28 March 2017].

[280] The photograph at the Stedelijk Museum is part of the edition with an image size of 94x75 cm.

However, changes and modifications may also disrupt their mutual aesthetical or presentational relationship.

Wout Berger

In November 2015, Wout Berger (b. 1942) visited the repository of the Stedelijk Museum to see seventeen of his works, acquired by the museum over the years. He was particularly interested in examining the photograph *Schaatsers (Uitdam)* (1982) (fig. 56).[282] The work was conceived as a limited edition, but Berger does not recall how many prints exactly form the edition.

The chromogenic photograph shows a wide landscape in the winter at sunrise or, more likely, at sunset. In the distance, the sun dimly brightens the sky with a soft orange light and, on the horizon, outlines of the land and the trees are detectable. A group of people is skating on an extended iced surface; the farthest two skaters are sharply rendered, while the closer ones are barely recognizable, appearing like indistinct shadows. In the foreground, the dark grey, almost black, ice clearly shows the marks of the skating.

In the process of creating a new edition of *Schaatsers (Uitdam)*, Berger decided to visit the Stedelijk Museum so that he could look at the work he had produced in 1982. When he saw the print kept at the museum, he realized that the yellow and the cyan dyes had partially faded, while the magenta dye had retained its intensity. This process — very common in analogue chromogenic prints — causes an imbalance in the colours and, as a result of the fading, the photograph has a reddish cast.[283] The same had occurred with the other five photographs in the museum's collection.[284] After this unpleasant 'discovery', Berger discussed with the curator the possibility of reprinting his works, but, until now, he has never reproduced any of his photographs for preservation reasons.

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[281] In general terms, a series can be defined as works of art that share a common theme. Famous examples are the paintings made by Claude Monet (1840–1926) that have the same theme, such as the *Haystacks* series, the *Rouen Cathedral* series, and the *Water Lilies* series. Pieces forming the series do not necessarily have the same format and they are not necessarily framed in the same way. Different types of work, such as drawings, sculptures, paintings, installations and videos, may be part of the same series.

[282] The English translation of the title is *Ice Skaters (Uitdam)*. Uitdam is the name of a small village close to the IJsselmeer lake in the northern part of the Netherlands and it indicates the place where the artist shot the image.



Figure 56 Wout Berger, *Schaatsers (Uitdam)*, 1982, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, chromogenic photographic print.

On 19 April 2016, when discussing the possibility of reproducing his photographs, Berger declared that the condition of the discoloured prints was so disturbing that he discouraged their display as artworks. The photographs should be presented to the public only for educational purposes, as examples revealing the irreversible

[283] The reddish cast present in many chromogenic photographs is the result of what is known in specialist literature as 'dark fading'. Dark fading refers to the degradation of the cyan, yellow, and magenta dyes caused by relatively high temperatures and, to a lesser extent, relatively high humidity levels. This process mainly takes place when photographs are stored in the dark, as light does not play a role in the degradation. As a result of dark fading, photographs show an overall colour shift caused by the fading of the three dyes at different rates. In comparison with the cyan and the yellow dyes, the magenta dye has generally a good stability in the dark and this has an effect on the appearance of chromogenic materials. Cyan and yellow dyes fades away, while the magenta remains the most visible, and this is what gives the photographs a reddish tone. For further reference on dark fading see Wilhelm and Brouwer 1993, 163–210.

[284] The other discoloured photographs are three prints of the work *Tulpen* (1978–1973) — in English *Tulips* — unique numbers: FA 2882, 3.1999-K81954, 3.1999-K81664; *Friesland (Vuur)* (no date) — in English Friesland (Fire) — unique number FA 2884; *Horn Head (Ireland)* (probably 1984 — in English *Horn Head (Ireland)* — unique number FA 2885.

fading of chromogenic photographs. He also added that, should they be substituted with reproductions, these original prints should be kept in the repository as archival documents. Berger underscored the importance of his supervision of the reproduction process. Currently, the artist leaves the printing of his photographs to professionals, but despite this outsourcing, he is the only one who can decide on issues such as the image's transparency and the photograph's colour balance. Berger has noticed that photo labs generally tend to print photographs too dark and this insight makes his involvement in the process paramount, to ensure the rendering of the image's transparency and colour balance according his wishes.

When asked about the constituent elements of his photographs, he argued that the image is the most important element of the work and he makes an effort to print the image in such a way that it looks as natural as possible. He perceives the format of the initial photographs as a constituent element and the production of a work with a different size implies the creation of a new work, as was the case with the second edition of *Schaatsers (Uitdam)* (2015).[285] The artist has decided to make a second edition of this work, as a larger dimension would augment the visibility of the details present in the winter landscape, in particular the ice marks in the foreground. According to Berger, a change in dimension influences the appearance of the photograph and this results in a different work. The artist always wanted to print a large format photograph of this image, but this was technically impossible back in 1982. At that time, he used to print all his photographs, but he did not have the equipment or the know-how to produce large-format photographs.

The artist does not place specific importance on the preserving of initial techniques and materials. In the event of a reproduction, the new work can be manufactured by using the materials and technology available at that moment. Nevertheless, Berger has distinct ideas about the type of materials that should be employed: he prefers matt photographic paper as this gives a softer, quieter look to the image, whereas glossy paper makes it harsher. He has stopped employing the Diasec® face-mounting, as he believes that this method has an impact on the discolouration of his photographs.

Above all, Berger has a pragmatic relationship with photography's technological advances as the analogic and digital worlds are mixed and fused together. In his artist practice, there is no distinct line between these two technologies, but the artist

[285] The 2015 edition is formed from six inkjet photographs + 1 artist proof. The size of the photographs is 100x135 cm and the technique is pigment print on Ilford® Gold fibre silk paper, glued on Dibond® and framed with museum glass. The photo lab De Verbeelding in Purmerend, the Netherlands printed this edition. For further information on this edition see http://www.zerp.nl/wout-berger.html [accessed 28 April 2016].

selectively adopts the method that suits him best. In fact, he embraces the best of both worlds, avoiding any constraints imposed by either system. He still uses analogue negatives as he has more affinity and is more confident with this technology. He chooses analogue negatives for their superior 'plasticity' and their capacity to contain all the image's information. The selected image is then digitally scanned. This is done for two reasons: firstly, to be able to use modern printing technology and, secondly, as a preservation measure. After the scanning, the image is digitally printed. In this way, the artist can judge the photograph by looking at contact sheets, rather than on the monitor of a computer.

Regarding the reproduction of the six discoloured photographs at the Stedelijk Museum, Berger declared that the negatives would guide the way the photographs would be printed. If the condition of the negative were still good, he would print the photographs analogically, while if the condition does not allow it, then the negatives would be scanned and printed using digital technology.

In conclusion, during the first discussion about reproduction, Berger provided insights into what he truly considers the constituent aspects of his photographs: the image, the size, the colour, the transparency and, above all, his presence, in order to make an informed decision about all these elements. Contingent features are the materials and the techniques to be used in order to achieve what he, as the creating artist, deems fundamental for the substitution of the discoloured prints.

Koos Breukel

The Dutch photographer Koos Breukel (b. 1964) initiated a discussion regarding reproduction with the museum staff of the Stedelijk Museum by suggesting a reprint of the photograph *Cosmetic View nr. 3* (2005) (fig. 57), which is kept in the museum's collection. This work is available as a limited edition of ten prints and the museum purchased the fourth one. It depicts a close-up portrait of a boy's face against a grey neutral background. The gaze of the sitter seems asymmetrical, as one eye looks downwards while the other is looking into the camera. The photograph is part of a series of portraits that Breukel made about people with eyesight problems and who had all visited the same oculist. The majority of those portrayed have prosthesis in one eye, while some are blind in both eyes. With these pictures, Breukel seems to investigate the lively connection between senses and prosthesis, between the darkness and the sparkle of an artificial iris, and, in a way, he is reversing the cliché that considers the eyes to be the mirror of the soul (Zwagerman 2006). The *Cosmetic view* series falls within Breukel's larger artistic research and photographing of people that have

suffered some kind of injury and recording how they have managed to cope with either physical or emotional 'wounds'.

On 8 April 2016, when discussing the possible reproduction of *Cosmetic View nr. 3*, Breukel made clear that the main reason for him to reprint this photograph was the discolouration, which made him feel ashamed of the work's appearance. The colours' imbalance, with the fading of the yellow and cyan dyes and retention of the magenta dye, has resulted in a prevalence of reddish tones in the print. Breukel was rather categorical about the way he perceives this alteration: the photograph does not look right anymore as it is completely discoloured and he would feel 'ashamed' if the museum put it on display. He said the 2005 print could be kept in the museum's storage or it could be disposed of.

This is the first time that Breukel had approached a museum with a request to substitute a discoloured photograph. Additionally, the artist also declared that, given enough economic support from institutions or funds, he would like to substitute other discoloured prints at the Stedelijk or other museums.



Figure 57 Koos Breukel, *Cosmetic View nr* 3, 2005, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, chromogenic photographic print.

When asked about the details of the reproduction process, the artist stated that the new picture would be an inkjet printed on baryta Hahnemühle® paper, rather than a chromogenic photograph.[286] He also added that, back in the 2000s, he was not satisfied with the technology available at the time. Breukel has a pragmatic approach — he follows and adopts photographic technological innovations when these become accessible. For Breukel, materials and processes are contingent features prone to changes and advances. If the reproduction process takes place, he will allow technological improvements. Consequently, in particular the colours would be different as they would be better. The image, the dimensions, the frame, and the presence of a mount are instead considered as constituent features that must be kept as close as possible to those in the original photograph. Regarding the mount and the frame, he added that these were specifically chosen for the series *Cosmetic View*. He declared that he normally does not use any special mounting for his pictures, but, in this case, he decided otherwise. In his eyes, these elements are an integral part of the work and, as such, should be treated with extra care.

Rineke Dijkstra

A couple of years ago, the Dutch artist Rineke Dijkstra (b. 1959) approached the Stedelijk Museum suggesting the reproduction and substitution of some of her older photographs kept in the museum's collection. In the past, she had reprinted a number of her works, mainly for two reasons: as exhibition copies for travelling exhibitions and as long-term loans, or to substitute and replace discoloured original prints with new, pristine photographs.[287] For Dijkstra, discolouration cannot be a prevailing element of her photographs as viewers should properly engage with her works, rather than be distracted by the presence of an imbalance in the colours. During the reprinting, the artist aims to remain as close as possible to the original photograph, but she also allows improvements. The image, however, always remains the same as no changes are permitted and thus it should be considered as a constituent feature of the work.

[286] For further reference on Hahnemühle® paper see http://www.hahnemuehle.com/en/hahnemuehle.html [accessed 21 May 2016].

[287] In the past, Dijkstra has decided to reproduce a set of her photographs part of the series *Almerisa*, which were owned by a business company, as these had been displayed for years in direct sunlight and were completely faded. The initial chromogenic photographs have been substituted with inkjets prints on Dibond®.



Figure 58 Rineke Dijkstra, *The Nugent R.C. Highschool, Liverpool, England, November 11, 1994*, 1994, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, chromogenic photographic print.

On 25 April 2016, when discussing the possibility of reproducing some of her works, Dijkstra made clear that she would like to reproduce at least three photographs due to image discolouration: *Kolobrzeg, Poland, July 26, 1992* (1992–1995), *De Panne, Belgium, August 7, 1992* (1992–1995), *The Nugent R.C. Highschool, Liverpool, England, November 11, 1994* (1994).[288]

[288] Unlike traditional portraits, which are titled with the subject's name, Dijkstra's titles follow strict rules: firstly, the name of sitters, if known; secondly the location and country where the image was taken; and thirdly, the date of the taking moment. It may be that there is an interval of years between the photographs' taking and the making moment. Her rules are even stricter for museum labels; each piece of information must be written one under the other.

The first two works are part of a series of twenty photographic works known as *Beach Portraits*, made by Dijkstra between 1992 and 2002. Within this series, each photograph was printed as a limited edition of six and the dimensions of the photographs within the edition may vary. The series is formed by portraits of boys and girls — many of whom are on the brink of adulthood — standing on the beaches of various countries: from the United States to Poland, from Belgium to Ukraine. The monumentality of the photographs, emphasized by the images' low perspective, is counterbalanced by the vulnerability of most of the adolescents, who are inexperienced in posing in front of a photographic camera. The other work is a portrait of a boy from a secondary school in Liverpool, England, in front of a greyish background (fig. 58). The teenager wears a white shirt, a black tie with a red and yellow dash, and green badge pinned on the tie. Also in this series, Dijkstra draws attention to adolescence as a challenging period when the human body changes from childhood to adulthood. In this particular photograph, the boy's face distinctly shows the marks of puberty.

From a material point of view, all three works were printed as chromogenic colour photographs and glued onto aluminium sheets. To avoid any undulation, Dijkstra's big formats are always pasted onto a flat material. Nowadays, the artist uses inkjet on Dibond® as a preferred technique and as material for either the reproduction of older photographs or for the creation of new works.

As a work practice, Dijkstra still employs analogue negatives for the taking moment of her photographs. These are subsequently scanned and the photographs are printed as inkjets from the resulting digital files. The artist likes to photograph with analogue technology as, according to her, this is simpler and more straightforward than digital technology. During the shooting with an analogue camera, she needs only be concerned with the diaphragm and the shutter speed, whereas with a digital camera she has to make many choices, and to take into account too many options. Moreover, the slowness of the process appeals to Dijkstra: for each shoot she needs to reset the camera and this action enhances both her concentration as well as that of the sitter.

Like the other artists described in this coda, Dijkstra employs a commingling of techniques and materials with no definite distinction between analogue and digital technology. She uses whatever technology or material suits her best during the creative process. She believes that the colours and the colour separation of inkjets are superior to those of chromogenic photographs making them more 'intense' than analogue photographs. Generally, Dijkstra spends a lot of time and energy in testing in order to get the 'perfect' colours for her photographs. Dijkstra recalls for example how back in the 1990s the Kodak® 4x5 inch analogue negatives had a different character as the current ones. The former ones were softer in colour and in image's contrast.

The reproduction process from analogue to digital is laborious. As the 'plasticity' of

analogue images is very difficult to replicate in digital prints and due to the difficulties encountered in this 'translation', Dijkstra makes endless tests. From her previous experience of reproducing chromogenic photographs into inkjets, the artist needs to be involved in the process of testing the image's colour and contrast. During our conversation, Dijkstra declared that she is the only person who can define these fundamental characteristics. In this regard, the direct intervention of the artist is a constituent feature, while the materials and the techniques are regarded as contingent properties.

Another constituent feature is the presence of white edges around the photographic images. For Dijkstra, this white boundary fulfils an important artistic function, as it isolates the photograph from the frame and, consequently, the viewer's attention focuses on the entire image and not just on the portrayed figures. The figure becomes too monumental without the white borders as it moves too much to the fore. As a result of this 'movement', the unity of the image's composition is interrupted and the background does not interact with the figures in the foreground. In the event of reproducing the Stedelijk Museum photographs, Dijkstra declared that she would keep the borders, but she is now contemplating the possibility of changing how these are made: in the current versions, the borders correspond with the white cardboard of the window mats, while future versions may have white edges that are part of the photographic images. Attention should be drawn to the fact that this change might produce a different visual effect: the edges would become integral to the image, rather than being a physical element — with its own material properties like thickness, texture, and colour — placed on top of the work.

Furthermore, Dijkstra expressed her wish to change the format of the three photographs, but she also added that this alteration could only take place in consultation with the museum staff. The reason for her to reproduce the photographs larger than the actual size is an increase in their monumentality. In the past, the artist has experimented a lot with different sizes in her efforts to find a balance between the photograph's size and the work's message. An excessive increase of the *Beach Portraits* underscored the vulnerability of the sitters too much. The photographs should be monumental from a distance, but create an intimate relationship with the viewer at a closer look, as the observer should be able to relate to the portrayed figures. The artist also argued that the type of image determines the format: for example, photographs that do not depict vulnerable sitters can bear a larger format. In general, for Dijkstra, photography is a medium that enlarges things: it makes emotions look more intense, it makes elderly people look older. She now believes that the best format for the *Beach Series* is a photograph with the dimension of 167x140,5 cm and with an image size of 130x104,5 cm, rather than the current Stedelijk Museum's photographs that have

a dimension of 120x 100 cm with an image size of 94x75 cm. She also added that a change of format is never a reason to initiate the reproduction activity. Other factors such discolouration or damage of the photographic surface start the process, but when the decision is taken, then the artist might envision some modifications to the work. In the event of the reproduction of these three works, the format of the photographs should be regarded as a contingent property.

Dijkstra's relationship with format during the reproduction of her photographic works greatly differs from those of the other artists examined in this dissertation. All the others have made an effort to replicate the exact dimensions of the initial versions. For them, format — together with the correspondence to the initial image — is a constituent element of their work. For Dibbets and Berger, an alteration in size implies a different work. As discussed, Dibbets disapproves of improvements in this direction, because the use of a bigger format indicates an anachronistic use of the photographic technologies and materials that an artist has at hand. The printing limitations back in the 1970s forced the artist to find alternative solutions, which enabled the creation of wall-filling works such as *Comet Sea 3°–60°*. In Berger's case, the 2015 limited of *Schaatsers (Uitdam)* was achieved by changing, among other things, the dimensions of the photograph. For Berger, a different size indicates the creation of a new work. The majority of the artists studied in this dissertation as well as the staff of the Stedelijk Museum consider format a constituent feature of the work.

The museum had already discussed Dijkstra's proposal to reproduce the three photographs and their possible modification in terms of dimension and printing technique in 2013. At that time, the museum only considered the reprinting of the photographs viable if the initial technique and format was respected. The staff viewed these two elements as indicative of Dijkstra's artistic development and, in the museum's view, the modification of the work's dimensions would erase the artist's struggle to achieve a good balance between the image's size and monumentality. For the museum, it was important to maintain a clear link with the initial works, those that the museum had acquired in 1995 and in 1996.

The envisaged reproduction also brings into question the consistency within a series. The Stedelijk Museum owns another photograph, part of the *Beach Series*: *Hilton Head Island, S.C., USA, June 27, 1992*. This work had already been reprinted around 2005, due to an unexpected and unwanted staining of the initial print. Being printed more recently, this version shows no signs of disturbing discolouration and, for this reason, the artist regards its reproduction less critical than the reproduction of the other works in the series. However, the reproduction of the other two with different techniques, materials, and possibly with a larger format would disrupt the uniformity within the series. Dijkstra declared that there should, ideally, be a consistency of

technique, format, and presentation within a series and, for this reason, she encourages the reproduction of the entire *Beach Series* of the Stedelijk Museum. When asked about the possible inconsistencies arising during a retrospective with photographs from other collections, the artist did not have a clear-cut answer. She suggested the making of fully consistent exhibition copies, as she has previously done for a travelling exhibition in 2005 and 2006.

Dijkstra also has an explicit view about what should happen to the discoloured versions. Generally, at the moment of substitution of the original for the newly reproduced photographs, she demands the restitution of the discarded prints, which are subsequently destroyed in her presence. In the event of the reproduction within a museum setting, she might contemplate the possibility of the original versions being kept as documentation. In this light, it might be possible to suggest a similar course of action as has occurred with Van Der Kaap's case studies: partial removal of the aesthetic qualities and subsequent demotion of status from artwork to archival reference if the work is kept in the museum, or full withdrawal of aesthetic qualities that justify physical elimination of the discarded versions.

In sum, this coda has briefly presented three other fascinating cases in which artists contemplate reproduction as a preservation strategy to counter the fading or the degradation of their own photographs. It also underscored the actuality of reproduction of photographic artworks as a museum practice. It showed several similarities with aspects discussed in the dissertation, but it also emphasized the need for further research, especially regarding digital technology and about the complex relationship that might occur among the various works forming a limited edition.

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Voor altijd jong

De reproductie van fotografische kunstwerken als conserveringsstrategie

In dit proefschrift staan vier case studies centraal waarin zowel kunstenaars als musea reproductie hebben gebruikt om beschadigde kunstwerken te vervangen door nieuwe, ongeschonden exemplaren. Het reproductieproces was niet altijd duidelijk of vanzelfsprekend en de achterliggende principes achter reproductie zijn nauwelijks ter discussie gesteld. In alle case studies werd reproductie gezien als een aanvaardbare praktijk die de inherente instabiliteit van het fotografische medium tegengaat en gebruik maakt van de reproduceerbaarheid van fotografie. Is reproductie een valide conserveringsstrategie voor het behoud van analoge fotografische kunstwerken? Deze vraag kan beschouwd worden als de kern van het onderzoek.

Vijf hoofdstukken vormen het proefschrift. Hoofdstuk 1, *Defining the field*, analyseert de theorieën die een centrale rol hebben gespeeld in het restauratieveld. Van oudsher heeft restauratie zich bezig gehouden met het bewaren van fysieke objecten en het behouden van de informatie die deze voorwerpen bevatten. Uitgebreide of indringende restauratiebehandelingen moesten vermeden worden zodat de materiële kenmerken van kunstwerken of van historische objecten zoveel mogelijk intact zouden blijven. Het 'respect' voor de materiële aspecten van een object heeft voor een lange periode het beroep van de restaurator gekarakteriseerd. Vanaf de jaren zeventig van de twintigste eeuw zijn de traditionele opvattingen over restauratie in een crisis geraakt en zijn nieuwe ideeën ontstaan. 'Immateriële' aspecten, zoals de intentie van de kunstenaar of de waarde die een gemeenschap aan een object geeft, zijn binnen het restauratieveld een steeds grotere rol gaan spelen. In dit licht bezien, worden door de reproductie van fotografische kunstwerken traditionele opvattingen over restauratie (deels) aan de kant gezet. De materiële aspecten van een beschadigd object worden immers niet gerespecteerd, aangezien dit door een ander wordt vervangen. Dit is één van de redenen waarom reproductie binnen het restauratievak vaak wordt beschouwd als een controversiële praktijk.

Hoofdstuk twee, *Reproduction as an act of reduction*, gebruikt het boek *L'Oeuvre de l' art. Immanence et transcendance* (1994) van de Franse literaire theoreticus Gérard Genette en het essay 'Spie di un paradigma indiziario' (1979) van de Italiaanse historicus Carlo Ginzburg om de reproductie van fotografische kunstwerken te problematiseren. Door het theoretische kader van Genette te introduceren wordt in dit hoofdstuk duidelijk dat de reproductie van fotografische kunstwerken alleen kan plaatsvinden als gevolg van conventie. De vervanging van een fotografisch kunstwerk door een ander exemplaar kan plaatsvinden als kunstenaars, museummedewerkers en

de samenleving in het algemeen met elkaar overeen komen dat sommige aspecten van de eerste foto als irrelevant of 'contingent' beschouwd kunnen worden en zij beslissen om geen bezwaar te hebben als deze aspecten in de nieuwe foto door andere eigenschappen worden vervangen. Vanuit dit perspectief kan reproductie beschouwd worden als een reducerende praktijk naar de essentiële of *constituerende* kenmerken van het werk. Alleen deze aspecten blijven behouden in de nieuwe versie van het werk terwijl minder belangrijke of *contingente* eigenschappen bij iedere herhaling van het werk worden vervangen door andere contingente eigenschappen. De verwijdering en de toevoeging van contingente eigenschappen maken het moeilijk om een exacte reproductie te bereiken.

Aan de hand van Ginzburgs tekst wordt geanalyseerd hoe restauratie een kwalitatieve discipline is en hoe restauratoren in principe worden getraind om de specifieke eigenschappen van (kunst)objecten te zien, te onderscheiden en te bestuderen. Deze opleiding staat op gespannen voet met de reductie van een kunstwerk tot de constitutieve elementen, nodig om reproductie als conserveringsstrategie te kunnen accepteren. Voor restauratoren kan het daarom moeilijk zijn om contingente eigenschappen over het hoofd te zien, aangezien deze kenmerken belangrijke aanwijzingen geven over de manier waarop (kunst)werken zijn gemaakt, evenals inzicht in hun conditie. Vandaar dat veel restauratoren een professioneel 'onbehagen' voelen wanneer reproductie is toegestaan als restauratiepraktijk, omdat dit in strijd is met veel van de ethische principes die gevolgd worden in het restauratievak. Het vermogen om materiële eigenschappen te zien en te bestuderen kan echter een bron van kennis zijn, aangezien het kan helpen bij de indeling in constituerende en contigente kenmerken van gereproduceerde kunstwerken.

De hoofdstukken drie tot met vijf bestaan uit vier casestudies. Hoofdstuk drie analyseert het reproductieproces van *Comet Sea 3° - 60°* (1973) van Jan Dibbets in de collectie van het Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam. Hoofdstuk vier onderzoekt de verschuivende perspectieven met betrekking tot de reproductie van *Virtues and Vices (voor Giotto)* (1981) van John Baldessari in de collectie van het Van Abbemuseum. Hoofdstuk vijf richt zich op de reproductie en de nasleep van *Lalalalalight* (1989 – 90) en *Xiada (Girls' Dorm), Xiamen* (2002) van Gerald Van Der Kaap in de collectie van het Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam.

De hoofdstukken drie, vier en vijf hebben een vergelijkbare structuur. Elk is verdeeld in twee secties. Iedere eerste sectie introduceert de kunstenaar vanuit een kunsthistorisch perspectief en analyseert het reproductieproces door de eerste versie van het werk te vergelijken met de daaropvolgende. Elke tweede sectie onderzoekt een aantal aspecten die uitsluitend bij een specifiek reproductieproces horen. Bij het hoofdstuk over Dibbets richt de tweede sectie zich op de datering van het

gereproduceerde werk op het titelkaartje van een museum. Bij het hoofdstuk over Baldessari bespreekt de tweede sectie de maatregel om houten lijsten aan te brengen rondom de veertien foto's die het werk *Virtues and Vices (for Giotto)* vormen. Aan de hand van dit voorbeeld wordt de verschuiving in de loop van de tijd van de essentiële kenmerken van het kunstwerk geanalyseerd. In het hoofdstuk over Van der Kaap analyseert de tweede sectie hoe de onderliggende principes van morele rechten een rol kunnen spelen in de aanvaarding door museummedewerkers van controversiële praktijken zoals de afstoting en de fysieke verwijdering van museale objecten.

In de coda aan het eind van het proefschrift zijn de gesprekken met de kunstenaars Wout Berger, Koos Breukel en Rineke Dijkstra opgenomen. Deze kunstenaars hebben hun gedachten over een mogelijke reproductie van hun fotografische werken met mij willen delen. Daarnaast als appendix wordt een van de twee modellen gepresenteerd die binnen het Science4Arts project 'Photographs and Preservation. How to save photographic artworks for the future?' zijn ontwikkeld. Aangezien het proefschrift reproductie als een mogelijke conserveringsstrategie bespreekt, is het interessant om dit model hier toe te voegen. Het 'Stakeholders Identification Model' is bedoeld als een concreet instrument dat restauratoren en/of andere museummedewerkers kunnen gebruiken om de personen, die in de besluitvorming van een restauratiebehandeling betrokken zijn, te identificeren en te benoemen.

In meer algemene termen behandelt het proefschrift de theoretische uitdagingen die restauratoren ondervinden in hun dagelijkse praktijk. Het onderzoek probeert een brug te slaan tussen praktijk-gerelateerde en theorie-gerelateerde kennis binnen het restauratieveld, en meer specifiek binnen het vak van fotorestauratie. Het doel van dit proefschrift is te reflecteren op de principes die het beroep vormgeven en op het feit dat deze overtuigingen in strijd kunnen zijn met bestaande gewoontes. Ideeën afkomstig uit gerelateerde disciplines zoals kunstgeschiedenis, theorie van fotografie en wetenschapsgeschiedenis kunnen helpen om een beter inzicht te krijgen in wat de vervanging van een analoog fotografisch kunstwerk inhoudt.

Biography

Monica Marchesi (Florence 1971) received in 1992 a diploma in paper conservation at the Istituto per l'Arte e il Restauro of Florence. Between 1994 and 1996, she studied at Leiden University and received the *propedeuse* diplomas in Dutch Studies and in Art History. In the same period, she followed a two-year internship in paper conservation at Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen in Rotterdam. Between 1997 and 2000 she taught paper conservation at several institutions and programs in Italy and Egypt and worked as a freelance paper conservator. In 2000 she was awarded a MA degree in Art History at the University of Florence, with a thesis titled *Center and Periphery: Some Exhibition Examples of Witte de With between 1990 - 1995*. Between 2001 and 2006, she worked at the conservation department of Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen. Since September 2006, she works as a paper conservator at the conservation department of the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam. In 2011 she initiated the research project 'Preservation & Photographs. How to Save Photographic Works of Art for the Future?' together with the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam and Leiden University within the Science4Arts program, funded by the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO). For this project, she developed two documentation models and was responsible for the day to day coordination. In the course of the research, she started her PhD research on the reproduction of photographic artworks. Her research interests lie in conservation history and theory, museum practice, preservation and conservation of paper and photographic artworks. On these topics, she has published articles in (inter)national (peer-reviewed) journals and was (invited) speaker on (inter)national congresses and workshops. Furthermore, she was involved in the organization of the IADA symposium 'If Only I Had Known – Looking Back, Moving Forward' (Amsterdam 2014) and was the co-organizer of the symposium 'Jeff Wall: Photography as an (Hybrid) Art Object' (Amsterdam 2014). She was part of the steering committee of the 'NWO-Science4Arts Symposium' (Amsterdam 2016) and at present she is co-organizing a two-day conference on the materiality of photography (Amsterdam 2018), the closing conference of the project 'Photography and Preservation'.

Appendix
Conservation Stakeholders' Identification Form

One of the goals of the research project 'Photographs and Preservation. How to Save Photographic Artworks for the Future?' was to investigate whether the 'Decision-Making Model for the Conservation and Restoration of Modern and Contemporary Art' (fig. 1) designed by the Foundation for the Conservation of Contemporary Art (SBMK) could be employed for photo-works.[1]

In the 1990s, an interdisciplinary group of conservators with various specialties, art historians, curators, jurists, and philosophers came together to study a number of artworks kept in Dutch public collections. Several case studies were selected, which were considered exemplary of the challenges that conservators, at the time, faced when dealing with the conservation and the preservation of modern and contemporary artworks. During the discussions, the need for guidelines to structure and rationalize the decision-making process concerning conservation issues became apparent (Foundation for the Conservation of Contemporary Art 1999, 164). The resulting Decision-Making Model and the 'Checklist for Weighing Conservation Options' (fig. 2) was developed to help conservators make informed choices about whether to treat or not to treat an artwork, taking into consideration several options. The model was created primarily for modern three-dimensional objects and it proposed seven steps that, ideally, conservators and other decision-makers should follow in the event of a "discrepancy" between the "meaning" of a work and its "physical condition" (Ibid.). If a discrepancy between these two elements was ascertained, then the decision-makers would establish the available options, weigh the pros and cons of each decision, and finally determine the best course of action.

The Photographs and Preservation project reviewed the model and the checklist by analysing the decision-making processes of past conservation treatments concerning photographic artworks. The model was deemed suitable for photographic artworks as it was conceived by its creators as a "decision-making trajectory" (Ibid., 166). The model was, in fact, intended to have a "normative" character rather than a "descriptive" one, and it suggested the steps conservators and other individuals involved in the decision-making should take (Ibid.). Both the model and the conservation options are thus broad in scope and, thanks to their general nature, they can easily be employed for photographic artworks as well other types of modern and contemporary artworks. However, within the project, it was felt that an identification of the involved decision-

[1] The Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO) funded this four-year research project. The project defines 'photo-works' as mixed-media photographic works to which different materials (paint, tape, etc.) have been added or uncommon techniques applied. For further reference see http://www.narcis.nl/research/RecordID/OND1347515/Language/nl [Accessed 28 April 2017].

makers might be an important addition to the existing guidelines. The proposed 'Stakeholders' Identification Form' for photo-works should be therefore viewed as an extension of the Decision-Making Model.

The Stakeholders' Identification Form attempts to systematically organize and determine the individuals that are involved or should ideally be involved in the decision-making concerning a conservation treatment proposal. A treatment may be regarded as one of the possible outcomes of a prior decision-making process, in which a course of action has been selected among several possibilities. In this process, decision-makers identify and choose alternatives, based on their knowledge and judgments. Generally, a treatment is initiated when a group of experts and other stakeholders has reached a consensus about the need to intervene.[2] The form is designed as a tool that might help conservators to identify and categorize the role of the various decision-makers before and during a conservation treatment.

This paper is divided in three sections: the first one introduces the Stakeholders' Identification Form and it explains the parameters used for the identification. The second section shortly describes what a stakeholder is within the field of stakeholder theory. The third part gives background information on the use of stakeholder analysis in the field of conservation and cultural heritage. The Decision-making Model and the Checklist for Weighing Conservation Options are included in the appendix.

Stakeholders' Identification Form

The conservation treatment of an artwork may be viewed as a multidisciplinary decision-making process involving individuals with different expertise. Traditionally, conservators, together with art historians and conservation scientists, have been closely associated with this process; however, in recent times, the cooperation with other decision-makers and professionals from different disciplines has greatly increased. These persons may be referred to as 'stakeholders' or as individuals or groups that have a stake or a vested interest in the conservation treatment's outcome (Mason and Avrami 2000, 21). The number of people included depends on a variety of factors: the type of artwork and its (material) complexity, the work's (art) historical significance, the nature of the proposed treatment, the uncertainty of the treatment's result, and, on a more general level, organizational matters. Before and during conservation

[2] In her book, *Installation Art and the Museum*, Vivian van Saaze has analysed the difficulties that conservators often face during decision-making concerning the conservation of contemporary artworks. She has argued that, despite its increasingly interdisciplinary character, "conservation is still very much a one-person operation with few shared responsibilities in decision-making and treatment" (Saaze 2013, 57).

treatments, various parties are generally consulted and are more or less included in the process by providing knowledge, resources, support, or know-how. Most of the time, however, no attempts are made to systematically identify these individuals and their relationship to the project. This information frequently remains either unwritten or concealed in other documentation regarding the treatment, such as correspondence, oral communication, reports by experts, and technical research documents. Identifying the persons, the groups, and the institutional parties that should be involved in the decision-making process is often critical to the success of the resulting decisions and choices; thus, it is important to know who the stakeholders are.

The relevance and the influence these individuals exert on the decision-making process, however, are not fixed, but rather depend on an artwork's specificity as well the contingency of the process. A living artist, for example, often exercises more influence than other parties. However, in specific settings or conditions, other people may have their say and their opinions may strongly shape the course of action. It is important, then, to incorporate the participation of 'insiders' and 'outsiders', those stakeholders that, respectively, are traditionally included in the conservation decision-making and those who are not (Mason and Avrami 2000, 23). Insiders may be defined as those individuals that are involved in the process "by right or might," such as public officials, owners and, to a certain extent, the experts invited to participate in the process (Mason 2002, 7). Outsiders are all the other parties that "have stakes in the process in question but with little or no leverage on the process" (Ibid.)

The use of the Stakeholders' Identification Form should initially be viewed as a preparatory step or as an information-gathering phase, designed to record and analyse, in an ad hoc way, the people associated with a conservation treatment. It may also foster the transparency in the decision-making by mapping the authorities that have been followed. Within the progression of the Decision-Making Model, the Stakeholder Identification Form should be viewed as a part of the 'discrepancy' phase. At the moment that a discrepancy between the 'meaning' and the 'condition' of an artwork is recognized, and the possible conservation options are taken into consideration, it is important to identify which individuals should be involved and the extent to which they participate in the decision-making. The layout of the form induces it users to systematically determine who should be part of the process, but it also helps not to overlook those individuals that are generally not included.

After the conservation treatment has been completed, the form can be used to establish whether the relevant parties have actively participated in the decision-making or not at the end of the process. Sometimes, it may be that stakeholders should have had an important role, but, due to circumstances, they have not contributed to the process. Or, vice versa, stakeholders that initially were deemed less relevant may have

turned out to be extremely significant for the success of the decision-making process. For this reason, the factors 'influence' and 'interest' are subdivided in two columns: the predicted participation before the process starts and the actual participation in the process.

The managing authority, as the principal decision maker about the treatment, should take the lead and fill in the form. On some occasions, though, new stakeholders can join in the middle of the process and consequently interfere with or influence other parties. If this occurs, the form should be filled in again and it should be modified to include the perspectives of the latest contributors.

The current Stakeholder Identification Form was designed with photo-works in mind. Thus, it was customized to take into account specific stakeholders that could play a role in the decision-making process, such as experts from the photo lab or frame makers. However, with some adjustments, the Stakeholder Identification Form could be used for other types of (contemporary) works of art.

Table 1: Description of the project

Short description of or reference to the artwork:	
Short description of the project:	
Aim of the project:	
Start of the project:	
Compiler 'Stakeholder Identification Form':	
Date of assessment:	
Date of review:	

Table 2: Conservation Stakeholder's Identification Form

Identification stakeholder: (Write down the name of the stakeholder and if applicable the institution and address or email).	**Aspects of interest of the stakeholder**:	**Motivation:** Why a particular stakeholder is involved in the project, process-oriented or content.	**Importance of the project:** Refers to the stakeholder's contribution in order to reach a successful project. (Rank from 5 as highest, to 1 as lowest involvement). This column is subdivided into predicted participation and actual participation.		**Influence on the project:** Refers to the power a stakeholder has on the project. (Rank from 5 as highest, to 1 as lowest power). This column is subdivided into predicted participation and actual participation.	
1. Artist:			Predicted participation	Actual participation	Predicted participation	Actual participation
2. Curator:						
3. Conservator:						
4. Museum director:						
5. Artist's assistant:						
6. Additional expert (please specify area of expertise):						
7. Photo lab:						
8. Frame maker:						
9. Technician:						

Table 2: Conservation Stakeholder's Identification Form

Identification stakeholder: (Write down the name of the stakeholder and if applicable the institution and address or email).	**Aspects of interest of the stakeholder**:	**Motivation:** Why a particular stakeholder is involved in the project, process-oriented or content.	**Importance of the project:** Refers to the stakeholder's contribution in order to reach a successful project. (Rank from 5 as highest, to 1 as lowest involvement). This column is subdivided into predicted participation and actual participation.		**Influence on the project:** Refers to the power a stakeholder has on the project. (Rank from 5 as highest, to 1 as lowest power). This column is subdivided into predicted participation and actual participation.	
10. Gallery:						
11. Heir(s)/Estate:						
12. Private collector:						
13. Legal owner:						
14. Museum visitor:						
15. Sponsor:						
16. Conservation scientist:						
17. Additional stakeholder:						
18. Additional stakeholder:						

Glossary on the terms used in table 2

Stakeholders

Stakeholders may be defined as those individuals who should be taken into account to achieve project goals and whose participation and support are crucial to their success. In this form, the stakeholders are those individuals or organizations that may play a role in the proposed conservation treatment. It is an extensive list, but in many instances only some of the listed stakeholders will be truly involved in the process. The names of the individuals should also be noted.

Aspects of interest

This column lists the areas in which the stakeholders may exert their influence or importance. It leans on the 'Checklist for weighing conservation options' (Figure 2), which records factors that may play a role in the decision-making. The most recurring considerations are: aesthetic, artistic and art-historical factors, artist's opinion, authenticity, historicity, technical or material expertise, technical possibilities or limitations, conservation possibilities or limitations, conservation's ethics, legal or moral rights, legal consequences, financial possibilities or limitations. Each stakeholder may possess one or more aspects of interest.

Importance

It indicates a stakeholder's active involvement and how this contributes in accomplishing a project. This column registers the effective relevance of a stakeholder within a project. A high degree of influence does not always correspond with a high level of importance. In certain circumstances, a stakeholder that has low influence may be of vital importance. For example, an artist's assistant may have less power to influence the decision-making process. However, in a specific instance, his/her involvement may prove to be crucial, because this person can help in the re-creation of certain parts or in the gathering of technical information. The degree of importance is ranked from high to low using a scale from 5 to 1. The score 5 represents the highest degree of importance and 1 the lowest one (the score 5 corresponds to very high importance, 4 to high importance, 3 to medium importance, 2 to low importance and 1 to very low importance). It is advisable to include stakeholders that score highly in terms of importance in order to guarantee the success of a project. The chart's column is subdivided into two sections: on the left side is the predicted participation and the actual participation of the various stakeholders. In this way, it is also possible to determine who has contributed to the decision-making and who, ideally, should have participated in the process.

Influence on the project

Influence refers to the power that a stakeholder has over a project. It is difficult to describe the concept of power unequivocally. Within this context, a party has the power "to impose its will in the relationship" (Mitchel, Agle and Wood 1997, 865). In other words, it is the ability of certain individuals to enforce the outcomes they desire, despite resistance of other parties. The degree of influence is ranked from high to low using a scale from 5 to 1. The score 5 represents the highest degree of influence, while at the other end, 1 records the lowest degree of influence on a project (the score 5 corresponds to very high influence, 4 to high influence, 3 to medium influence, 2 to low influence, and 1 to very low influence). Here, too, the column is subdivided into two sections: on the left side, the predicted participation and the actual participation of the stakeholders.

Stakeholder approach

Project management uses stakeholder analysis as an instrument to identify the individuals and organizations involved in projects and enterprises. In recent decades, several methods of analysis have been developed. However, all these find their origins in stakeholder theory, initially formulated by Robert Edward Freeman in his pivotal book *Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach* (1984). In this book and subsequent articles, Freeman criticizes what he calls 'managerial capitalism'. In this view, the primary function of the corporation is to enhance its economic well-being, as well as to administer the interests of the corporation's owners. Traditionally, the owners are those who hold legal titles and they are known as shareholders or stockholders. The firm thus has binding financial obligations towards them and it puts the owners' needs first (Freeman 1994, 4). Freeman also argues that a corporation, as a legal entity, is obliged to contemplate and is generally constrained by the law (Freeman 2001, 39). Other parties, inside and outside the firm, may also have (legal) rights or stakes: individuals, institutional bodies and groups such as trade unions, communities, financiers, suppliers, employees, and customers. Freeman defines these other parties as stakeholders and he describes them as "stakeholders in an organization [are] (by definition) any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization's objectives" (Freeman 1984, 46). Stakeholders are those who need to be taken into account in achieving project goals and whose participation and support are crucial to their success.

No unequivocal definition of a stakeholder exists in the specialist literature. In their review article, Mitchell, Agle, and Wood make a distinction between 'broad' and

'narrow' characterization. According to the three authors, Freeman's classic definition is one of the broadest classifications and it can include virtually everyone. At the other end of the spectrum, narrow views regard stakeholders as "relevant groups in terms of their direct relevance to the firm's core economic interests" (Mitchell, Agle and Wood 1997, 857). The three scholars also make a distinction between a stakeholder 'approach' and stakeholder 'theory'. One the one hand, a stakeholder approach is described as an attitude within project management and business administration. It expresses a general understanding by corporations and their management about their roles and responsibilities. Nowadays, corporations are aware of their responsibilities and obligations, which go beyond profit maximization. As a result of this awareness, more and more enterprises must include and take into account the interests and claims of non-stockholding groups. On the other hand, stakeholder theory is conceived as an effort "to articulate a fundamental question in a systematic way: which groups are stakeholders deserving or requiring management attention, and which are not?" (Ibid., 855). The theory, therefore, strives to identify, in a rigorous way, which parties should be viewed and considered stakeholders and what parameters are to be used for the identification.

Stakeholder theory also attempts to characterize the principles that enable professionals to narrow down the range of stakeholders involved in a project. This relates to the number of parties involved and the parameters used to define these groups in relation to the stakeholder's definition employed by researchers. In a narrow definition, stakeholders are individuals or groups that possess a contract, legal title, legal rights, or moral rights. By contrast, within the broad category, scholars tend to emphasize that stakeholder's may influence the firm's behaviour "whether or not there are legitimate claims" (Ibid., 862). Generally, the criteria or dimensions used for the definition of stakeholders are: 'power',' influence', 'interest', and 'importance', which are expressed in a range from high to low; 'support' is recorded as being positive, neutral or negative; while 'attitude' is judged in terms of support or obstruction (Bourne and Weaver 2010, 102).[3] All judgements regarding stakeholders are susceptible to change because of the variable relationship that stakeholders have with a project. All designing characteristics are transitory and they can be acquired as well as lost (Mitchell, Agle and Wood 1997, 866).

[3] It is outside the scope of this paper to go through the different identifying criteria. For further reference to the topic see Mitchell, Agle and Wood 1997; Fletcher et al. 2003; Savage et al. 1991; Turner, Grude and Thurloway 2002; Chinyio and Olomolaiye 2010. In order to visualize and understand stakeholders, scholars have started to map the collected data in a so-called stakeholder mapping. For further reference see Bourne and Weaver 2010, 99–120.

To summarize, stakeholder theory employs several different definitions of what a stakeholder is and it uses various parameters to identify them. However, scholars tend to agree on some general aspects. One of those elements is the need to discern and concentrate on the most relevant stakeholders. The challenge is to focus on the 'right stakeholders' as the potential list of individuals or groups will always exceed both the time available for analysis and the capability to map the collected data (Bourne and Weaver 2010, 101). Moreover, one of the greatest challenges in stakeholder's analysis is to replace the subjective perceptions held by people about certain undertakings, the identification and the mapping of the process using objective measures, and making the assessment as transparent as possible. Subjectivity will never completely disappear, but awareness of this inherent bias, clear terminology, and transparent assessment make it possible to establish a process that is comprehensible to others.
The proposed Conservation Stakeholder Identification Form is based on the so-called Influence – Importance Matrix, in which stakeholders are identified based on two variables: 'importance' and 'influence'.[4] Importance indicates the degree to which a stakeholders' active involvement may contribute to the project's accomplishment, while influence refers to the power that a stakeholder has over a project. The rating from 5 to 1 refers to the Stakeholder Circle® methodology in which several variables are given a score: 5 recording the result 'very high' and 1 noting the outcome 'very low' (Bourne 2005).

Stakeholders approach in conservation

In conservation, the term stakeholder is mainly used in the fields of archaeology, cultural and environmental heritage.[5] In these areas, the stakes are many and diverse depending on the individuals, groups, and institutions involved. The commitment of stakeholders is perceived as a way to build shared perspectives and consensus among the involved parties. Different authors have recognized the reluctance of established

[4] Stakeholder analysis commonly identifies stakeholders through a stakeholder matrix. The matrix plots stakeholders against two or more variables. The variables may change depending on the type of matrix used. For a review of the various developed mapping methods see Bourne and Weaver 2010, 99–120.

[5] According to the definition used by the English National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), heritage preservation takes care of a heritage asset, which generally includes "statutory listed buildings, conservation areas, world heritage sites, scheduled ancient monuments, areas of archaeological importance, registered parks and gardens and battlefield as well as non-designated assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing)" Brennan and Tombach 2013, 6.

experts (e.g. archaeologists, conservators, and other researchers) and institutions (e.g. governmental agencies) to invite local communities or their representatives to participate in the decision-making process (Avrami, Mason and De la Torre 2000; Demas 2000; Meyers, Smith and Shaer 2010). But, as archaeologist Martha Demas wrote "one the major pitfalls associated with not inviting stakeholders to participate [is that] they will cause you grief later. […] If you do not make these people part of the solution, they will make themselves part of the problem" (Demas 2000, 32). Nowadays, there is a widespread understanding of the benefits of including stakeholders as they can offer resources, knowledge, and different perspectives to preservation and conservation projects, but mostly, involving these groups will significantly increase the acceptance of and, perhaps, the cooperation with the plans.

The rising role of stakeholders in the areas of archaeology and heritage preservation is often related to the adoption of the Australia ICOMOS *Burra Charter* (1979 and its later revisions in 1999 and 2013) by the Australia International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS). By setting the maintenance of 'cultural significance' as the central goal of heritage conservation, the charter has been perceived by several scholars as a major shift in the theory of conservation (Clark 2001; Erder et al. 2004; Zancheti and Similä 2012; Mayrick and Cadena 2012).[6] The conservation of complex heritage assets not only occurs by taking into account the opinions of informed experts, but must respect the views of social actors (the stakeholders) directly involved with these assets. By doing so, the *Burra Charter* introduced cultural relativism (Zancheti and Similä, 2012). This view regards heritage assets not as static embodiments of culture, but as social constructions that are the result of social processes specific to a certain time and place. Hence, heritage does not possess fixed meanings given by intrinsic values, rather these values shift and are constructed through "conscious decision and unspoken values of particular people and institutions" (Avrami, Mason and De la Torre 2000, 6). This approach altered significantly the role of conservators and managing authorities, as deputy director of the Heritage Lottery Fund, Kate Clark, succinctly argues: "We have had to become facilitators rather than dictators. Site management

[6] The *Burra Charter* (or the Australia ICOMOS *Charter for Places for Cultural Significance)* defines 'cultural significance' as "aesthetic, historic, scientific, social or spiritual value for past, present or future generations. Cultural significance is embodied in the place itself, its fabric, setting, use, associations, meanings, records, related places and related objects." (The *Burra Charter* 1999, art. 1). For a review of the use of the notion 'cultural significance' within the *Burra Charter* see Zancheti et al. 2009. It is outside the scope of this paper to examine the reasons and the context that concurred to the development of the *Burra Charter*. In short, the Charter proposed an alternative to the *Venice Charter* (1964), which was based on a set of traditional ideas about values, stemming from a European background and thus inappropriate to the Australian context (Clark 2001).

planning has become a process of articulating rather than imposing value, of learning to stand back and listen to people" (Clark 2001, 10). This shifting view resulted in various conservation methodologies to help conservators and other stakeholders define why a certain heritage asset is valuable enough to be preserved. All these methods want to identify and articulate why a place, an artefact, a building, or a collection is relevant to (part of) the community. Clear articulation of cultural values is quintessential for the so-called value-led conservation approach.[7]

Several authors associated with the Getty Conservation Institute (GCI) have proposed a 'value-based' methodology in which the identification of the various stakeholders is crucial (Avrami, Mason and De la Torre 2000; De la Torre 1997 and 2002; Meyers et al. 2010; Teutonico and Palumbo 2000). This methodology is viewed as a positive development that actively contributes to the democratization of the heritage field and to the transparency of the decision-making process (De la Torre and Mason 2002, 3). A similar approach also gained momentum in Australia, as demonstrated by the various editions of *Significance, a Guide to Assessing the Significance of Collections* (2001 1st edition; 2009 2nd edition) compiled by the Collections Council of Australia. But as conservation theorist Salvador Muñoz Viñas has argued, the value-led approach is not free of theoretical and practical difficulties. Taking into account the opinions of non-experts may result in a loss of the authority that, traditionally, has been given to the established professionals. Moreover, by considering many different views and stakes, it may become difficult to determine which beliefs should be followed in order to reach a meaningful decision. Since the stakes cannot be objectively quantified, it could be hard to reach an agreement, especially when stakeholders may be proposing conflicting views (Muñoz Viñas 2005, 160–163). The several parties involved in the decision-making may have a different level of authority, since not every stakeholder has the same ability and power to affect the process.

In the case of contemporary art, living artists may exert a relatively large influence: art historian Martha Buskirk has argued that the removal of the 'artist's hand' during the artwork's production process may actually increase the importance of artistic authorship. Since identifying what constitutes the work is increasingly difficult from the physical object, the work of art relies heavily on the presence and the engagement of the artist (Buskirk 2005, 14). Because of this intimate relationship, artists are generally considered as one of the most important, and often even the most relevant stakeholder in the decision-making concerning preservation and conservation issues. This primacy

[7] Muñoz Viñas defines 'value-led conservation' as a theory in which "the guiding criterion is neither meaning nor function, but the set of values people place upon a given object" (Muñoz Viñas 2005, 178).

derives from the artists' personal knowledge about the materials and techniques they used in making their works, as well as the intent that informed their choices. It has also generated specific conservation strategies, such as the artists' involvement in defining the framework and the context in which preservation and conservation should proceed (Van Saaze 2013); and the development of protocols for interviewing the contemporary artist in an effective and correct manner have been drawn up (Beerkens et al. 2012).

The Conservation Stakeholder Identification Form takes into the account the relevance of the living artist in the decision-making process, but it also recognizes the importance and the influence of other parties. The form should be conceived as a stakeholder approach within the conservation field and specifically designed as a helpful tool in the decision-making process during conservation treatment of contemporary photographic artworks. By including and taking into account the interests and claims of different individuals and groups, whether they have actively contributed to the process or not, this form maps and analyses who is involved in the conservation treatment and why someone is relevant to it. Moreover, by articulating and recording choices, this form also contributes to the already existing conservation documentation, by helping future conservators and scholars to understand who made certain decisions and why.

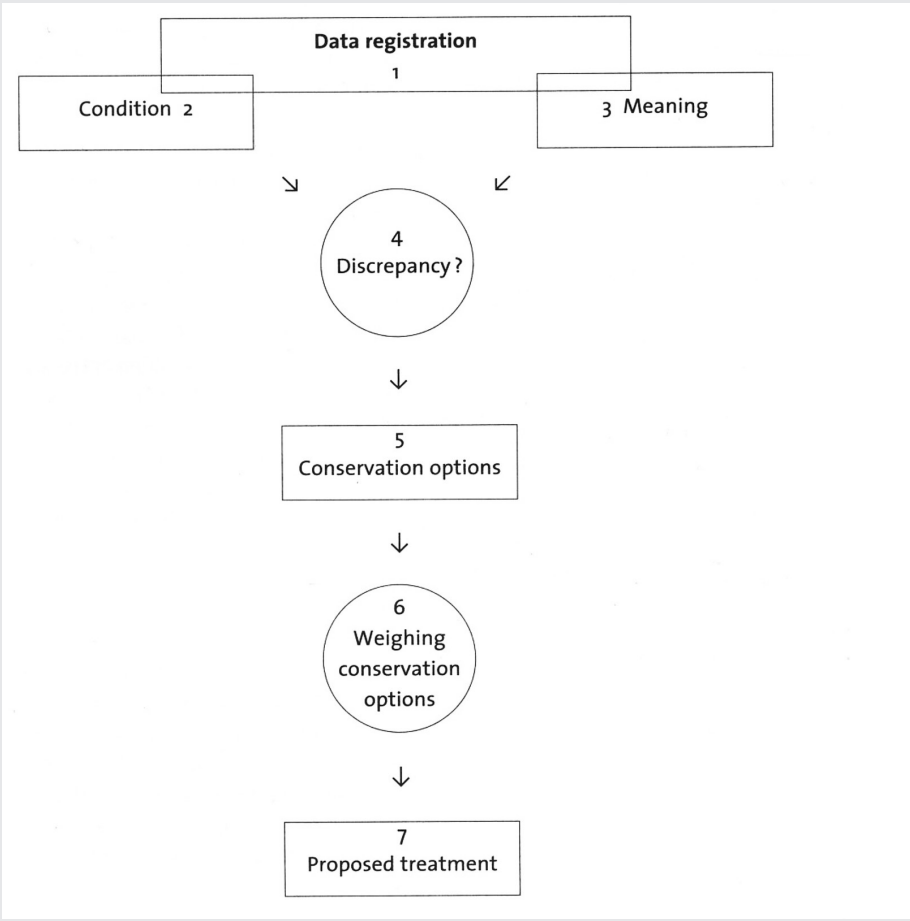


Figure 1 Decision-Making Model for the Conservation and Restoration of Modern and Contemporary Art developed by the Foundation for the Conservation of Modern Art (SBMK).

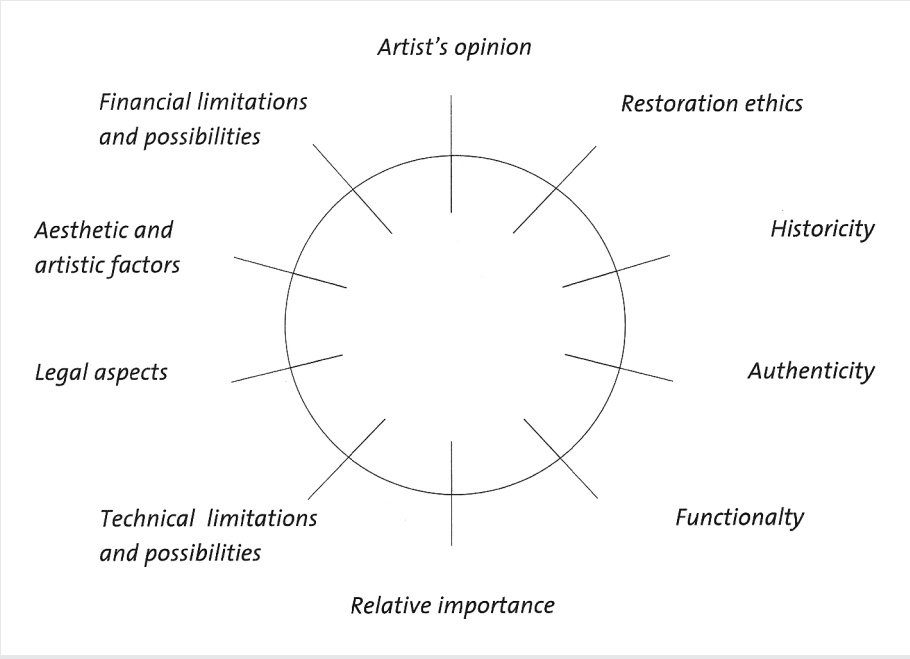


Figure 2 Elaborated detail of diagram decision-making model, weighing conservation options developed by the Foundation for the Conservation of Modern Art (SBMK).

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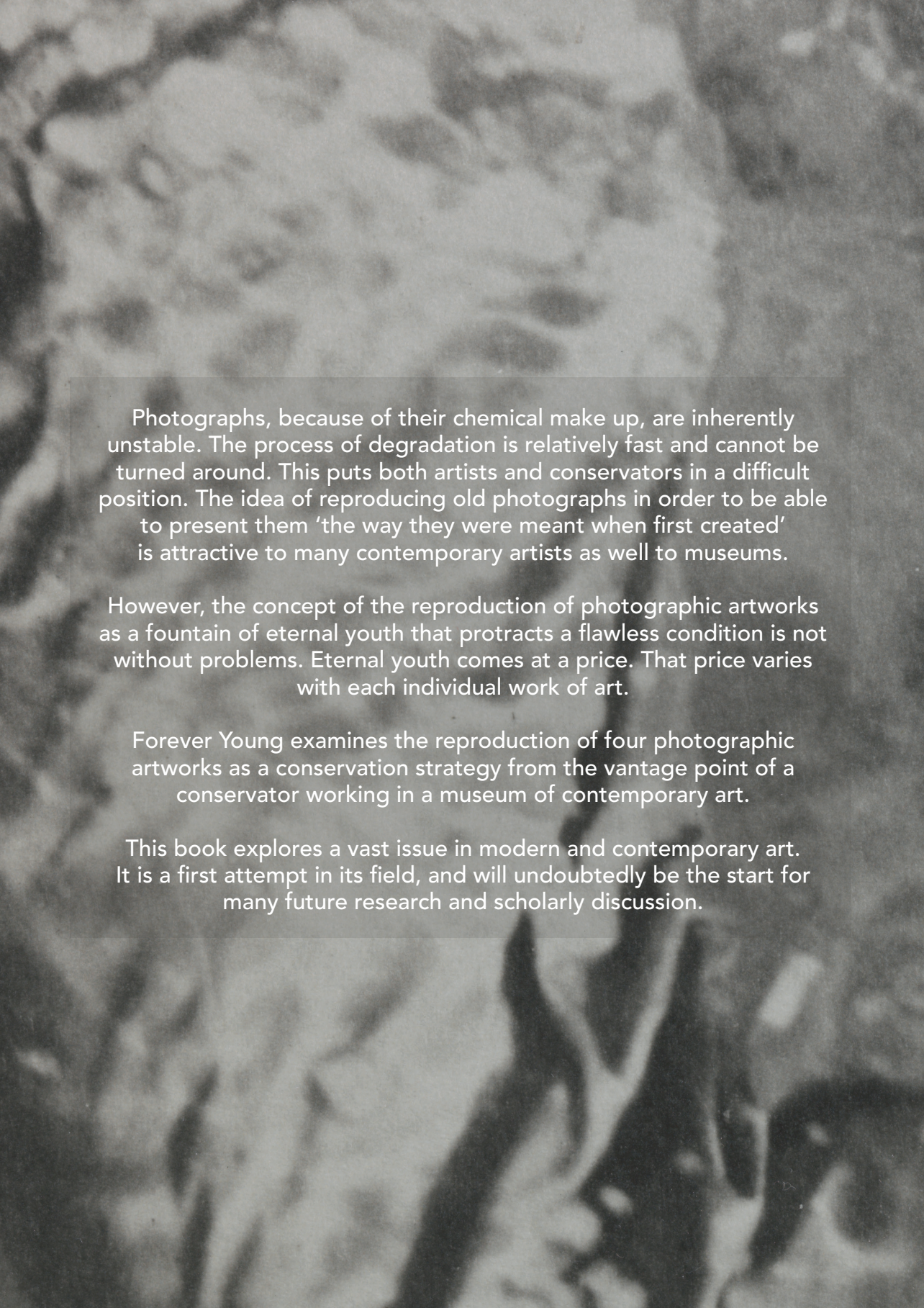
Table of diagrams

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Table 2: Conservation Stakeholders' Identification Form

Figure 1: Decision-Making Model for the Conservation and Restoration of Modern and Contemporary Art developed by the Foundation for the Conservation of Modern Art (SBMK).

Figure 2: Elaborated detail of diagram decision-making model, weighing conservation options developed by the Foundation for the Conservation of Modern Art (SBMK).



Photographs, because of their chemical make up, are inherently unstable. The process of degradation is relatively fast and cannot be turned around. This puts both artists and conservators in a difficult position. The idea of reproducing old photographs in order to be able to present them 'the way they were meant when first created' is attractive to many contemporary artists as well to museums.

However, the concept of the reproduction of photographic artworks as a fountain of eternal youth that protracts a flawless condition is not without problems. Eternal youth comes at a price. That price varies with each individual work of art.

Forever Young examines the reproduction of four photographic artworks as a conservation strategy from the vantage point of a conservator working in a museum of contemporary art.

This book explores a vast issue in modern and contemporary art. It is a first attempt in its field, and will undoubtedly be the start for many future research and scholarly discussion.