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BETWEEN FETISH AND SCORE: THE POSITION OF THE CURATOR OF CONTEMPORARY ART*

On Kunstwollen and expressiveness

The curator of contemporary art is confronted with the task of enabling the public to share in the experience of looking at art works that have not yet been freighted with historical interpretation, while ensuring that future generations will also be able to partake of these works. This article attempts to provide an overview of the theoretical and moral aspects of the complex problems of preserving contemporary art from the viewpoint of the art historian's practice in the museum, and to identify the approaches towards these problems that those responsible for preservation are often tempted to take. An alternative to these approaches is then deliberated, one that aims to do justice to the individual nature of non-traditional, contemporary art objects and the conditions required for optimum experiencing of the work, as well as the codes of ethics that have been developed for conservation and restoration.

As background to this deliberation, first the dilemma between conservation and presentation is outlined followed by the development of conservation theory and ethics. Here, the term contemporary art does not apply to the painting in a frame or the sculpture on a plinth, works that are still being created today, but to all alternative forms of modern-day art. Where traditional art is mentioned it does not imply any value judgement, but only indicates a work made in a traditional form.

The museum's dilemma

The museum is a mass of contradictions. As an institute it originated from opening up to the public collections of artefacts and curiosities belonging to royalty and the aristocracy or to societies of cultured citizens. It is this public access to their collections, which are often as not public property today, that is a distinguishing feature of a museum. At the same time museums are obligated to hand down their collections to future generations. By becoming part of a museum collection, art works are, as it were, preserved in the collective memory of humankind, or at least in that of a specific group.

The two most important duties of a museum, the preservation of a legacy for future generations and the displaying of artefacts to the general public, validate each other, yet they are also in conflict with each other. From a preservation viewpoint, the collection would be better stored in the dark or at least out of the public's reach. In practice, however, within certain acceptably considered boundaries, museum objects are indeed exposed to effects and dangers that irrevocably shorten or directly threaten their survival. Thus the museum is continually faced with the task of seeking compromises between its two main functions.

The development of conservation theory and ethics

One of the results of this search for compromises is known as conservation. The term embraces all those measures that serve to promote the continued survival of an art work. Those measures that directly intervene in the preserved artefacts themselves are termed active conservation. These interventions generally take place after change or damage has been found. Such changes may trigger interventions because the work's preservation is threatened or for other, possibly aesthetic reasons.

When a work becomes unstable or threatens to disintegrate, preservation clearly becomes an issue. Aesthetic reasons, however, are much more subjective. This can be of concern if the art work becomes less presentable due to surface grime or slight discoloration. A third reason to intervene with the state of an object, and again tied in with its appearance, is the desired legibility of a crucial element of the work. For instance, a neon work with lights that no longer function does not tell us the original story.

The objective of conservation work is generally 'to restore'. However, it has transpired that restoration, in the sense of returning a work to an earlier condition, is pure fiction. Generations of art restoration has shown that every intervention adds its own interpretation to the work in question.

Modern Art: Who Cares? (1999), p. 201-209.

As well as being an interpretation of the work, every addition is also determined by the technical possibilities and the general visual 'vocabulary' available at the time of the intervention. For instance, the emergence of *trateggio* retouching would be inconceivable had Pointillism not existed as a means of expression in the same period.[1] Earlier restoration work can nowadays be dated with remarkable accuracy and sometimes even as-cribed to a specific restorer by experts in restoration history. A large part of the work of conservators who handle art works of a certain age thus also involves un-doing earlier restoration work and thereby the interpretations of their predecessors.

In opposition to these continuously changing interpretations – every age looks at the products of previous ages, no matter which, through its own spectacles – the search by art historians for an objective or 'historically accurate' interpretation is constant. In the 1930s the German art historian and theorist, Alois Riegl, defined the idea *Kunstwollen* as the "complex of conditions that produces the art work's particular design".[2] Thus *Kunstwollen* embraces both the artistic intention of the artist as well as all the social factors that have determined the actual genesis of the art work. One can therefore interpret Riegl's *Kunstwollen* as that which one would find if an objective and historically accurate interpretation were possible. Although we still inhabit the same context as the one from which contemporary art springs, paradoxically, and as a consequence of the individual nature of artistic concepts in contemporary art, an objective interpretation, or even one based on consensus, is even less accessible than with the more traditional art forms of the past.

In this sense, art restoration is always 'anachronistic' because it is always determined under the influence of an interpretation of a certain moment. In his Teoria del Restauro (Rome, 1963), the art historian Cesare Brandi formulated the principle that the original material identity of an object should always remain the most important source for ever-changing interpretations. To this he adds the conclusion that the original material should as far as possible be preserved. The practical application of this theory can be found in numerous codes of ethics for day-to-day conservation practice, in which restraint and reversibility of treatment are formulated as the most important principles. These codes of ethics have been drawn up with a view to keeping anachronistic additions to a minimum and to keep them reversible. In order to remain a departure point in the future for ever-changing interpretations, the original material should always remain recognisable despite any later additions.

A later phase in the development of restoration theory describes how an intervention in an art work will not only always bear traces of the interpretation of a certain historical moment, but also how, at that moment, a choice is always made – explicit or otherwise – for particular aspects of the work. Thus, with conservation problems involving an intervention, there is not usually a single, universal solution. A choice always has to be made between various options, each of which only favours certain aspects of the art work. For instance, maintaining the original material may be done at the expense of its original appearance. A specific site - for which a work was originally made – and this applies just as much to a late twentieth-century installation as a sixteenth-century altar piece – can have an intellectual or numinous impact which is lost whenever a work is transferred to another location, or the site itself drastically changes, whether for conservation or other museological reasons.

In 1987, a descriptive model for decision-making processes relating to conservation issues was presented to the Theory and History of Restoration working group of the ICOM (International Council of Museums) Committee for Conservation. This was a circle from the orbit of which vectors point inwards representing various considerations such as authenticity, historicity, aesthetic aspects, functional aspects as well as legal and economic preconditions.[3] This model illustrates how decision making in a conservation process is determined by the importance as- cribed to the various considerations. At the same time the model makes it graphically clear that the outcome of such a process is always a compromise in which there are no gains without losses.

This model breaks with the idea that various options and considerations are quantifiable and can be set off against a system of non-variable norms, which indicate a priori what the result should be. The model emphatically introduces the elements subjectivity, conflict and loss. In every instance, the most desirable solution for a conservation problem will have to be sought and found by weighing the positive and negative implications against each other.

Modern Art: Who Cares? (1999), p. 201-209.

In practice, along with explicit aesthetic and historical considerations, implicit factors also play a part in conservation issues. For example, the fact that completeness and a certain airiness are generally valued in a positive sense in our culture is often taken into account without us always being conscious of it. Besides describing a decision-making process, the ICOM-CC is also intended to reveal these hidden yet telling factors, to clarify the multidisciplinary nature of the question posed, and to give the loss of any value its own place. The ultimate intention is that the model will enable the decision-making process in conservation projects to be more thoroughly considered.

A tragic conflict

From the contribution of the philosopher Renée van de Vall to the theoretical working group of the Conservation of Modern Art project, it appeared that the development in conservation theory outlined above has its parallels in more general theories on problem-solving. For the other members of the group, chiefly conservators and art historians, there was a highly agreeable sense of identification on learning that recent theoretical models and methods developed in philosophy also create a place for the loss incurred when one is forced to make a choice between two 'evils'. There will always be a regrettable loss, no matter which solution is chosen. The philosopher Martha Nussbaum describes these situations as 'tragic conflicts'. Van de Vall revealed the members of the working group to be genuine neo-Aristotelians. After all, Aristotle viewed values as plural and non-commensurable and stated that once a choice is made, an obviously right choice, one would always feel the pain because something is definitely lost forever.[4]

The conservation of non-traditional objects

The conservation issues associated with contemporary non-traditional art objects are not only distinguished by subjectivity, conflict and loss as described in the aforementioned model, but also have far more complex and indiscernible problems than traditional painting and plinth sculpture. There are broadly three reasons for this:

1 The extreme fragility and unpredictable ageing of the often highly unorthodox materials used.
2 The different role of materials and the creation process in the meaning of the work compared with traditional art.
3 The lack of historical distance resulting in an interpretation of the work based on a feasible consensus is not yet possible.

The problems of preservation linked to the type of materials used, which are often both extremely unstable and new so that the ageing process is often unpredictable, spring first to mind. This applies just as much to 'just' technical problems, requiring technical solutions and to which the applied sciences make an important contribution. Much more fundamental, however, is the difference in the role that the creative process and the material have on the meaning of the work. With traditional art the meaning of an object in a material sense is less ambiguous. Material and technique are to a great extent subservient to the meaning of the work, which is chiefly expressed in the form of a representation.[5] The materials of contemporary, non-traditional objects are in that sense not usually subordinate to the meaning contained in a representation. Since the early part of the twentieth century, art has become increasingly conceptual. The material identity of an art work is sometimes declared as being entirely of secondary importance. The extreme consequence of Conceptual Art is that the object is replaceable and that the work, for instance a *Wall Drawing* by Sol LeWitt, can be remade. Conversely, it also happens that materials and techniques convey all manner of meanings so that the object acquires a fetish-type significance. For instance, the large installation Eigentum Himmelreich (Heaven's Property) by the German artist IMI Knoebel – consisting of paintings, drawings and sculptures – contains a part entitled Grosse Palette (Large Palette). In reference to the late Rainer Giese, whom Knoebel saw as a kindred spirit, he incorporated two ladders from the artist's studio.

Finally the expressive power of a work can be directly influenced by the fragility or evanescence of the material. This was the case with a challenging statement in ice called Melting Pot (Los Angeles

1998) by Michel Delacroix, which was made to melt during a three-day conference on the preservation of twentieth-century art.

A major consequence of the changing role material and technique play in the meaning of a work is that, in the case of active conservation procedures which directly intervene with the material quality of the art work, as outlined above, there must be a constant check on what role the material or the affected part plays in the meaning of the work. After all, every intervention can in fact have vital consequences for the meaning. Only once these consequences have been catalogued, can the pros and cons of a proposed conservation procedure be adequately weighed against each other.

In the first instance, it seems illogical that the lack of historical distance to art works should be a stumbling block to this. After all, we live in the same artistic and conceptual context as that in which the work was made. The *Kunstwollen* should therefore still be recognisable and the danger of additional interpretations and anachronisms incurred during conservation treatment kept to a minimum. Although this obviously applies to artefacts that originate from a powerful and alive tradition, a tradition that still acts as a collective artistic concept, it does not apply to contemporary pieces that largely originate from a highly individual artis-tic intent. When these works are similarly defined in terms of Kunstwollen, due in part to highly personal factors, tradition and movement do not have a deducible influence but fulfil the role of a context to which the work relates. Due to its unique origin, the interpretation – certainly in the beginning – cannot be anything other than an individual one.[6] Only when there is an interpretative history of an object is there the possibility of an interpretation based more upon consensus.

To sum up it can be said that with regard to the active conservation of contemporary, non-traditional art objects, treatment directly intervenes in the material, which in itself often conveys meaning. Moreover, there is still no recognisable interpretation embedded in art history, and therefore none which can convey a degree of objectivity for such a work. Because there is no frame of reference to indicate the meaning of the work, the interpretative aspects of materials at stake during a conservation intervention cannot be defined. The gains and losses cannot be made explicit, so that a well-considered weighing up of these aspects, as intended by the model described above, cannot as yet be made.

The temptation of the curator: creating doctrines

Due to the complexity and imperceptiveness of the problems associated with conservation interventions in non-traditional contemporary art objects, it is even more difficult for those responsible to have an overview of the positive and negative effects of certain kinds of treatments than it is with traditional art. Moreover, curators who work with contemporary art often do so through a close personal involvement with the artist as a person and with his or her work. Not infrequently this concerns a work that still has to prove its right to exist, or a work that a curator, in his or her professional capacity, has personally experienced and has participated in the battle to secure a place for it in the annals of art history. At the same time, the purchase of contemporary art for museum collections often takes place in close consultation with the artists themselves. This makes it even more difficult, or virtually impossible, to adopt the attitude of one of Renée van de Vall's Aristotelians who realise the irrevocable loss incurred in making a choice, feel the pain and nonetheless accept responsibility for it.

The anxiety of making possibly reprehensible mistakes increases the desire for a system of graded standards that can simply and without further reflection be applied, i.e. a system of doctrines. In terms of the model described earlier, this means that the various considerations pointing inwards towards the circle would then be prioritised to a certain extent. The result would be that considerations that steer decisions in a different direction would be automatically declared of secondary importance. Guidelines would then be applied according to priority, replacing careful deliberation. Whenever there is the question of a loss of a value, this will by definition be of secondary importance and will therefore not have to be experienced as 'painful'.

Conservation codes of ethics as doctrines

One way of grading the various considerations would be to consider existing conservation codes of ethics as a fixed standard system that can be mechanically applied. Current codes of ethics underline Brandi's viewpoint that, in order to preserve an art work, the existing material object should be saved as far as possible, that conservation interventions in the art work should be kept to a minimum and then only to maintain the work as a material object – as a conveyor of information and as a source for continually changing interpretations. However, limiting intervention to what is needed for material survival will in practice often mean considerable changes to a work's external appearance.

Where Brandi's guidelines are applied without further consideration to non-traditional, contemporary art objects, the question may be asked whether justice is done to the specific nature of these kinds of art works. Much more than with traditional painting and plinth sculpture, whereby a representation is 'read' according to certain codes, contemporary art is about having a direct experience of the work. A museum visitor 'experiences' rather than 'regards' these kinds of works. With Knoebel's ladders in his Eigentum Himmelreich, or with objects from a performance that symbolically represent the original artistic act, ideas and meanings cling to the material itself so that the material object acquires significance as a fetish. But where this is not the case, it is chiefly the external appearance of a work that determines the expressive force of the artistic statement. Thus, where only the maintenance of an art work as a material object is considered, this will be at a substantial cost to the expressive force of much contemporary art. In extreme cases nothing more will remain of the art work other than 'archaeological' documentation, which simply provides information about its earlier existence as an art work.

From this it follows that when conservation ethics intended for traditional art are indiscriminately applied to non-traditional, contemporary art objects they can considerably overreach their objective, which is, to hand down a work to future generations so that they in turn can experience and interpret it on their own terms. So while we indeed preserve the material object as an embodiment of Kunstwollen – and in certain cases the object has meaning as a fetish – we are meanwhile oblivious to the fact that the Kunstwollen can often no longer be 'read'. In this case, we actually ignore the fact that as well as a material authenticity, there is a conceptual authenticity which is chiefly determined by the work's external appearance. For the work to be continually experienced and interpreted anew this also has to be preserved. If in preserving the material object the original appearance is lost, then a future museum-going public – in a different way to interpretative interventions – is nevertheless still prevented from experiencing and interpreting the work in its own particular way. We can ask ourselves whether Manzoni's soiled Achromes or the originally shiny, polished bronzes of Brancusi, which have now acquired the patina of time, are still the same works they were when originally made.

From a careful reading of the codes of ethics, it is also apparent that these codes expressly leave room for a more casuistic approach. The code of practice for the Dutch Art Conservators Association, in relation to the substitution of materials, states that "as much care as possible" should be exercised and that this should take place "only after careful research, and obviously in consultation with the client". Thus, conservation codes of ethics also specifically allow replacement of material after the case has received due deliberation.[7]

The artist's authorised solution

Another frequently recurring way of creating a hierarchical scale for the various considerations is to declare that the artist's opinion is of a higher order than any other consideration. From his or her personal involvement the curator reconciles the identity of the piece – often defined as the integrity of the object – with the artist's views. A proper handling of the work is then equated with following the artist's opinion uncritically.

Obviously, artists are a vital source of all kinds of information on the origins and meaning of their works. Their views on the desirability and consequences of a conservation measure should therefore be assessed and taken into account when decisions are being made. However, the work and the maker are not interchangeable. The interpretation of contemporary art is the task of the art historian. When interpreting much twentieth-century art the iconography of the material used will

itself ultimately prove to be a decisive factor. Elevating the artist as an authority on various questions of preservation is putting the problem and responsibility for a solution where it does not belong. When a curator, due for instance to insufficient historical distance, is unable to interpret an art work properly in order to assess the effects of conservation treatments, this responsibility cannot be simply shifted to the artist. The fact that artists are not the best spokespersons on the meaning of their work is already apparent from their decision to express themselves in an art work in the first place.

Just how pressing the need for an authorised solution from the artist is, becomes evident when we see how far people are prepared to go to stretch the artistic concept of the maker. If the artist is no longer available, a statement about a work – whether made shortly after its inception or later – is often used to solve an unforeseen problem. If an artist has never spoken specifically about the work in question, statements about other works are sought which are then used analogously. If none of these exist, then the artist's 'poetics' can still be extracted from his or her views on art and life in general, followed by an extensive critical interpretation in order to reach a solution for a problem that was unforeseen in this form. After an artist's death, his or her identity is not infrequently extended to the wife, husband or partner, or even a studio assistant. Although these people are often experts on certain aspects of the origin of the work (the partner in an emotional sense; the assistant technically or intuitively), it does not imply in any way that they identify with the artist, and even less so that they are interchangeable with the artist as he or she was at the particular moment in the past when the work was made. They are therefore not necessarily the best qualified to interpret the specific expressiveness of the work and the materials used. Thus, to declare such people as authorities when solving conservation problems is again misplacing the responsibility. A possible effect of this was revealed with the treatment of Barnett Newman's *Who's Afraid of Red, Yellow and Blue III* in the collection of the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam.

From the reaction of artists who, as part of the Conservation of Modern Art project, were asked for suggestions on how to solve conservation problems, it became apparent that they too make a clear distinction between creating a work and the measures required for securing its continued existence. The sculptor Tony Cragg was extremely unambiguous about this. In an interview with Lydia Beerkens and Christiane Berndes elsewhere in this volume, he said that he does not want to involve himself specifically with conservation matters because it is not his job: "The artist makes the art work and does that but once. You can't make the same work again twenty years later."[8] When the working group confronted Dutch artist Krijn Giezen with his disintegrating *Marocco*, he mainly saw this as a new artistic challenge. From this a new art work could emerge that would substitute the old one.

Is it then the case that artists may not change or add anything to a work once it leaves the studio? In my opinion the rationale of allowing artists to solve conservation problems is related to a graded time scale. The artist and the work come together through the artistic intentions in the *Kunstwollen* at the moment that the work comes into being. Afterwards these works take their place in art history and the artists go on to follow their own personal development. When problems arise soon after the purchase of a new work, which is not uncommon, and the artist is immediately asked for a solution, one can assume that the artistic concept and the personality of its maker have still not separated so that the moment of creation can be somewhat extended, as it were. But the greater the distance from that moment, the further away are the artists from the artistic concept. It is therefore impossible for them to still be regarded as part of the *Kunstwollen* of the work.

The solving of problems that were unforeseen when the work was created can also not be regarded as having already been part of the identity of the work as an historic phenomenon. The essential nature of the work with all its possible interpretations was, as far as the artist is concerned, determined at the moment the work was completed. On the other hand, during its lifetime, the work – independent of the artist – can acquire new meanings that were not originally included in the *Kunstwollen*. Interpreting the meaning of art works, including the implication of a conservation procedure to the relevant parts, belongs, as has already been stated, to the domain of the art historian. However, the curator/art historian working with contemporary art is, as such, incapable of suspending the assumptions of the age. It is therefore impossible to reach an objective interpre-

tation of the relevant material aspects and to carefully weigh up the consequences of any intervention. It is precisely for this reason that curators – as the people responsible for conservation – should not frustrate the work of their future colleagues.

The dilemma of the curator of contemporary art

The curator as the person responsible for the continued existence of contemporary art is therefore in an extremely awkward predicament. Not only do curators always have to accept the sense of loss when art works for which they feel a strong and personal attachment receive conservation treatment, but, due to a lack of historical distance, little can as yet be said about the nature and impact of this loss. What the curator would actually like is to preserve the material identity of the art work without this necessarily being at the expense of the appearance and thereby the artistic statement.

Those responsible for preservation who create a hierarchical scale by either declaring the material identity of the art work inviolate and in so doing make the sensory perceivable appearance of secondary importance, or by elevating the artist or a representative (studio assistant or life partner) to an authority on conservation matters, are closing their eyes to this loss. If they do not do this, they face the tragic conflict described by Martha Nussbaum. Curators then find themselves in a situation in which they are forced to choose between two morally undesirable courses of action.

In practice the choice broadly comes down to maintaining the art work as a statement in which the expressive power of the work is the criterion and where everything is done to preserve the external appearance – even at the expense of the original material – or by being extremely careful to intervene in the object in order to retain the original material, because this is the only objective expression of its *Kunstwollen*. Both options are basically undesirable in that each of them violates a valid claim.

Furthermore, in the first instance, only an experience can be reconstructed that recalls or suggests the original one. Viewers that experience the work will be no longer the same as those who saw the work when it was first shown. Moreover, in subsequent presentations of the work increasingly more subjective, interpretative elements will creep in unnoticed, at the expense of the physical art work as an objective source of its *Kunstwollen*.

Conversely, when the expressive power of the external form is deemed subordinate to the material identity, is that which is ultimately preserved an objective document – since subjective additions are avoided. But, in many instances, as the source for an experience, it will only have value in as far as it functions as a fetish. In most cases an essential part of the conceptual authenticity and thus the identity of the work will then be lost.

In practice both approaches are found alongside each other. Depending on how much idealised freight one ascribes to the material used, or to the sensory perceivable appearance, the object is either treated as a fetish, or chosen in order to reconstruct the original appearance, even if this is done at the expense of the original material.

Theatre as truth, material as reference

It was mentioned earlier that much contemporary art is not ‘regarded’ so much as an experience undergone via sensory observation. In other words, the works are similar to visual, rather than literary theatre. What is represented may be static, but it often consists of movement – for example Tinguely’s kinetic objects or Bill Viola’s video art. With certain installations such as *Hok 1* (Cabin 1) by Suchan Kinoshita, museum visitors themselves add an extra dynamic to the work by inverting different-sized hourglasses containing various coloured fluids, in an enclosed space.

It is precisely this theatrical aspect that indicates in which direction a possible solution may be found for the dilemmas outlined above. Theatre as an art form communicates truth by means of illusion. In the theatre this does not happen in the form of an object, but through the visual experience of a presentation, the performance. Aside from pure improvisation, this external phenomenon is usually considered an original artistic product, quite separate from the written aspect of the piece. As a result interpretation has an explicit place.

Modern Art: Who Cares? (1999), p. 201-209.

An essential difference between theatre and contemporary art is that, no matter how theatrical in its outward appearance and literary in its connotations the latter may be, there is no written work to use as a reference for its execution. The material object is the only actual reference. Brandi's rationale that the original material identity of an art work must remain at all times the most important source for continuously changing interpretations therefore remains fully valid. Interventions to the material aspect of an art work in order to remain as close as possible to its original outward appearance whenever it is shown, and thus create the impression of an original experience, is ultimately placing interpretation on top of interpretation. To reproduce the original appearance it will be necessary, whenever this is done via interventions in the object, to fall back increasingly on documentation.

This does not necessarily imply that there is no room for repeating the original appearance of a piece when presenting contemporary art. In order to preserve both the artistic statement and to convey to a future public something of the original experience of the piece, the original appearance should be repeated without damage to the material identity of the art work. This can be done by separating the art work as a visual phenomenon from its material quality. The original art work as a material object can then be consolidated without the presumed original appearance necessarily being the only guiding principle. At the same time, justice can be done to the theatrical nature of the visual experience of much contemporary art by creating exhibition copies in which the main concern is to communicate the artistic statement to the museum public. Then the interpretative aspect – a taboo, undesirable and thus often denied in relation to conservation procedures carried out on the object itself – can have its own explicit place. The original material piece can then be preserved as an objective source of its Kunstwollen and also act as a score for each new execution.

The interpretation of the exhibition copy can also fulfil an interesting role as a commentary on the original work. The public and the art critics can then compare the way in which, for instance, the curator Maria de Corral reinstalls a work with the way the same piece is presented by curators like Harald Szeeman, Lynne Cooke or Rudi Fuchs – just as the conductor Bernard Haitink's interpretation of Mahler's Fourth Symphony can be compared with that of Christopher Hogwood.

The fact that artists sometimes think in terms of a theatre model is borne out by ideas regarding reinstallation within Conceptual and Minimal Art as well as in Arte Povera. The fact that artists then, consciously or otherwise, also come up against the absence of a score is evident from their attempts to define the interpretative margins when their work is being reinstalled. In an unpublished interview with Marianne Brouwer, Sol LeWitt said that while his earlier Wall Drawings could in theory be done by anyone, in the same way anyone can paint a Mondrian, certain of them required specific skills. Concerning the re-executing of several early Wall Drawings in the Netherlands, LeWitt maintained that while various people in that country could be found for the ink drawings, only two Americans could apply the early ones done in pencil. In reply to how the Wall Drawings should be managed after his death, LeWitt replied that the conservators assigned to the works should always be in touch with those who originally did them.[9]

Suchan Kinoshita also leaves little room for interpretation. With a view to replacing certain elements of her *Hok 1*, including the hourglasses which, because of the way they function in this installation have a limited life span, Kinoshita appoints 'godmothers' who take over the responsibility for re-executing the relevant parts. There will come a day, however, when Sol LeWitt's studio assistant is no longer around and the godmothers to Kinochita's work will themselves have to appoint godmothers. If the material object can be seen as quite separate from the art work as a visual phenomenon and as such be treated separately, as proposed in the above, then the creation of such a chain of 'authorities' can be abandoned. For who could conceivably be a better interpreter of the role of the studio assistant or of the godmother than the art work itself?

1 'Entretien avec Marcel Broodthaers – Unterhaltung zwischen Jean Michel Vlaeminckx und Marcel Broodthaers', translated from the French by Antje Quast, in: Marcel Broodthaers: Interviews & Dialogue 1946-1976, Wilfried Dickhoff (ed.), Kiepenhuer & Witsch, 1990, pp. 23-27, quote on p. 23.
2 Exhibition m.u.se.e.d'.a.r.t.cab.ine.t d.es. e.sta.mp.e.s./Département des Aigles (Poèmes industriels.

Tirages Limités et Illimités sur plastique), Librairie St. Germain-des-Prés, Paris, 29 October - 19 November 1968.
3 'Marcel Broodthaers, La Salle Blanche – l'ensemble des Plaques et l'Entrée de l'Exposition', in: Journal 22e Bienal Internacional de Sao Paulo, 1994, states that Broodthaers made thirty-five designs during this period which were developed as positives and negatives, made into plastic reliefs and painted in various colours. Most of the plates are about 85 cm high and 120 cm wide; four plates measure 85 cm x 60 cm and es
Portes du Musée is 220 cm x 180 cm.
4 Behind the Museum 1966-1976, Exhibition catalogue of the former gallery Wide White Space; Brussels, Bonn, Marseille, 1994-1996 (German/English publication), p. 51.
5 Interview with Maria Broodthaers-Gilissen for the project Conservation of Modern Art, held on 12 December 1996 in Brussels.
6 Behind the Museum, see note 4, p. 327 states which works were exhibited in the exhibition 'Marcel Broodthaers' at Le Bailli in Brussels between 25 September and 3 November 1974.
7 See note 2.
8 Catalogue Marcel Broodthaers, Vereniging voor Tentoontellingen van het Paleis voor Schone Kunsten, Brussels, 27 September - 3 November 1974 (Dutch version translated from the French by Marian Verstraeten).
9 See note 5.
10 Stefan Germer, 'Das Jahrhundertding, Ansatze zu einer Theorie und Geschichte des Multiples', in: Das Jahrhundert des Multiple – Von Duchamp bis zur Gegenwart, second edition, Zdenek Felix et al., Stuttgart, 1995, pp. 63-66.
11 See also: Dorothea Zwirner, Marcel Broodthaers, in the series 'Kunstwissenschaftliche Bibliothek', Tape 3, Cologne, 1997, p. 93.
12 See note 1, p. 26.
13 See note 5. According to Maria Gilissen, the man who made the plaques for Broodthaers can tell us nothing more because he has since died.
14 See note 8.
15 Exhibition catalogue Marcel Broodthaers Cinéma, Fundació Antoni Tàpies, Barcelona 17 April-29 June 1997, pp. 126-130.
16 See note 8.

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