

ECCO Professional guidelines I/II/III

General Assembly of European Confederation of Conservator- Restorers' Organisations (ECCO)

Brussels, 11 June 1993

E.C.C.O. Professional Guidelines (I): THE PROFESSION The Conservator-Restorer: The Profession

Brussels, 11 June 1993

Promoted by the European Confederation of Conservator-Restorers' Organisations E.C.C.O. and adopted by its General Assembly (Brussels, 11 June 1993)

Preamble

The objects to which society attributes a particular artistic, historic, documentary, aesthetic, scientific, spiritual or religious value are commonly designated "cultural property"; they constitute a material and cultural heritage to be passed on to forthcoming generations. Since these are entrusted to the care of the Conservator-Restorer by society, he has a responsibility not only to the cultural property but to the owner or legal guardian, the originator or creator, the public and posterity. These conditions serve to safeguard all cultural property, regardless of its owner, age, state of completeness or value.

I. Role of the Conservator-Restorer

The fundamental role of the Conservator-Restorer is the preservation of cultural property for the benefit of present and future generations. The Conservator-Restorer contributes to the understanding of cultural property in respect of its aesthetic and historic significance and its physical integrity.

The Conservator-Restorer undertakes responsibility for and carries out the diagnostic examination, conservation and restoration treatments of cultural property and the documentation of all procedures.

- **Diagnostic Examination:** consists of the determination of the composition and condition of cultural property; the identification, extent and nature of alterations; the evaluation of the causes of deterioration; the determination of the type and extent of treatment needed. It includes the study of relevant documentation.

Conservation:

- a) **Preventive conservation:** consists of indirect action to retard deterioration and prevent damage by creating conditions optimal for the preservation of cultural property as far as is compatible with its social use.

Preventive conservation embodies correct handling and use, transport, storage and display.

b) **Remedial Conservation:** consists mainly of direct action carried out on cultural property with the aim of retarding further deterioration.

- **Restoration:** consists of direct action carried out on damaged or deteriorated cultural property, the aim of which is to facilitate its understanding, while respecting as far as possible its aesthetic, historic and physical integrity.

Furthermore, it is within the Conservator-Restorer's competence to:

- develop conservation-restoration programmes or surveys,
- provide advice and technical assistance for conservation-restoration of cultural property,
- prepare technical reports on cultural property excluding any judgement of their market value,
- conduct research relating to conservation-restoration,
- develop educational programmes and teach conservation- restoration,
- disseminate information gained from examination, treatment or research
- promote a deeper understanding of conservation-restoration.

II. Distinction from Related Fields

The Conservator-Restorer is neither an artist nor a craftsman. Whereas the artist or the craftsman is engaged in creating new objects or in maintaining or repairing objects in a functional sense, the Conservator-Restorer is engaged in the preservation of cultural property.

III. Educational Training

To maintain the standards of the profession, the Conservator-Restorer's professional education and training shall be at the level of a university degree or equivalent.

ECCO Professional Guidelines (II): CODE OF ETHICS

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I. General Principles for the Application of the Code

Article 1. The Code of Ethics embodies the principles, obligations and behaviour which every Conservator-Restorer belonging to a member organisation of E.C.C.O. should strive for in the practice of the profession.

Article 2. The profession of Conservator-Restorer constitutes an activity of public interest and must be practised in observance of all pertinent national and European laws and agreements, particularly with those concerning stolen property.

Article 3. The Conservator-Restorer works directly on cultural property and is personally responsible to the owner and to society. The Conservator-Restorer is entitled to practise without hindrance to his liberty and independence. The Conservator-Restorer has the right in all circumstances to refuse any request which he believes is contrary to the terms or spirit of this Code.

Article 4. Failure to observe the principles, obligations and prohibitions of the Code constitutes unprofessional practice and will bring the profession into disrepute.

II. Obligations towards Cultural Property

Article 5. The Conservator-Restorer shall respect the aesthetic and historic significance and the physical integrity of the cultural property entrusted to his care.

Article 6. The Conservator-Restorer, in collaboration with other professional colleagues involved with cultural property, shall take into account the requirements of its social use while preserving the cultural property.

Article 7. The Conservator-Restorer must work to the highest standards regardless of any opinion of the market value of the cultural property. Although circumstances may limit the extent of a Conservator-Restorer's action, respect for the Code should not be compromised.

Article 8. The Conservator-Restorer should take into account all aspects of preventive conservation before carrying out physical work on the cultural property and should limit the treatment to only that which is necessary.

Article 9. The Conservator-Restorer shall strive to use only products, materials and procedures which, according to the current level of knowledge, will not harm the cultural property, the environment or people. The action itself and the materials used should not interfere, if at all possible, with any future examination, treatment or analysis. They should also be compatible with the materials of the cultural property and be as easily and completely reversible as possible.

Article 10. Documentation of a cultural property should include records of the diagnostic examination, conservation and restoration interventions and other relevant information. This documentation becomes part of the cultural property and must be available for appropriate access.

Article 11. The Conservator-Restorer must undertake only such work as he is competent to carry out. The Conservator-Restorer must neither begin nor continue a treatment which is not in the best interest of the cultural property.

Article 12. The Conservator-Restorer must strive to enrich his knowledge and skills with the constant aim of improving the quality of his professional work.

Article 13. Where necessary or appropriate, the Conservator-Restorer shall consult historians or specialists in scientific analysis and shall participate with them in a full exchange of information.

Article 14. In any emergency where cultural property is in immediate danger the Conservator-Restorer, regardless of his field of specialization, shall render all assistance possible.

Article 15. The Conservator-Restorer shall not remove material from a cultural property unless this is indispensable to its preservation or it substantially interferes with the historic and aesthetic value of the property. Materials which are removed should be conserved, if possible, and the procedure fully documented.

Article 16. When the social use of cultural property is incompatible with its preservation, the Conservator-Restorer shall discuss with the owner or legal custodian, whether making a reproduction of the object would be an appropriate intermediate solution. The Conservator-Restorer shall recommend proper reproduction procedures in order not to damage the original.

III. Obligations to the Owner or Legal Custodian

Article 17. The Conservator-Restorer should inform the owner fully of any action required and specify the most appropriate means of continued care.

Article 18. The Conservator-Restorer is bound by professional confidentiality. In order to make a reference to a specific cultural property he should obtain the consent of its owner or legal custodian.

IV. Obligations to Colleagues and the Profession

Article 19. The Conservator-Restorer must maintain a spirit of respect for the integrity and dignity of colleagues and the profession.

Article 20. The Conservator-Restorer should, within the limits of his knowledge, competence, time and technical means, participate in the training of interns and assistants. The Conservator-Restorer is responsible for supervising the work entrusted to his assistants and interns and has ultimate responsibility for the work undertaken under his supervision.

Article 21. The Conservator-Restorer must contribute to the development of the profession by sharing experience and information.

Article 22. The Conservator-Restorer shall strive to promote a deeper understanding of the profession and a greater awareness of conservation-restoration among other professions and the public.

Article 23. Records concerning conservation-restoration for which the Conservator-Restorer is responsible are his intellectual property (subject to the terms of his contract of employment).

Article 24. Involvement in the commerce of cultural property is not compatible with the activities of the Conservator-Restorer.

Article 25. To maintain the dignity and credibility of the profession, the Conservator-Restorer should employ only appropriate and informative forms of publicity in relation to his work.

Acknowledgments

The European Confederation of Conservator-Restorers' Organisations (E.C.C.O.) has prepared the E.C.C.O. Professional Guidelines based on the study of documents from national and international conservation or non-conservation organisations. The "Conservator-Restorer: a definition of the profession" (ICOM-CC, Copenhagen 1984) was the first document adopted by E.C.C.O..

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E.C.C.O. PROFESSIONAL GUIDELINES (III): BASIC REQUIREMENTS FOR EDUCATION IN CONSERVATION/RESTORATION

September 1994

Professional Guidelines III has been adopted and confirmed by E.C.C.O.

in September 1994.

I. Basic Aims of Education

Education is to be based on the highest ethical norms of the profession aimed at respecting the uniqueness of cultural property and its artistic, historic, scientific, spiritual, or religious significance. After education, graduates should be capable of working responsibly in the field of conservation/restoration of cultural property including the more specialised technical, scientific and artistic aspects. They should be capable of collaboration with all other professions concerned with the preservation of cultural property. Graduates should also be capable of independent research in the field of conservation/restoration and historical techniques. Education is aimed also at developing all other important abilities as stated in the Professional Definition of E.C.C.O..

II. Type of Education

The only reasonable way of training in conservation/restoration is full time education at university level or at an equivalent level, including practical internships.

III. Admission, Duration and Accreditation

Aptitude for the field of conservation/restoration should be determined by an entrance examination. The education should not take less than three years and preferably consist of four years. Both theoretical education and practical training is of high importance, and they should be organised in good balance. After successful completion of a final examination the candidate is awarded a diploma. A reference to the specialities studied should be given.

IV. Practical Training

Practical training must involve the treatment of original objects deemed particularly suitable for didactic purposes. The objects chosen should provide material for a well-documented case study including technical examination, diagnosis and related treatment. From the beginning of their

education, such case studies make the students understand every object as a unique problem in the most practically oriented way. Furthermore, case studies offer the best possibility to integrate all the theoretical, methodological and ethical aspects of conservation/restoration into the practical training. The study and practice of historical techniques of art and the manufacturing processes of art materials are encouraged as they promote greater understanding of the physical, historical and artistic aspects of cultural property.

V. Theoretical Instruction

A balance between science and the humanities is indispensable for theoretical instruction. The theoretical subjects should be determined by the specialisation in the field of conservation/restoration and might include:

- fundamental ethical principles of conservation/restoration,
- science, (e.g. chemistry, physics, biology, mineralogy, colour theory)
- humanities (e.g. history, palaeography, history of art, archaeology, ethnology, philosophy, aesthetics),
- history of materials and artists' techniques including technology and manufacturing processes,
- introduction to the causes of deterioration,
- display and transport of cultural property,
- theory, methods and techniques of preventive and remedial conservation,
- theory, methods and techniques of restoration,
- introduction to the processes involved in making reproductions of art objects,
- methods of scientific documentation of cultural objects including graphic, word processing and photographic techniques,
- introduction of scientific research work,
- introduction to the history and methods of preservation of our cultural heritage, also museology and conservation of monuments and sites, introduction to law and management.