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THE MURRAY PEASE REPORT

The following report on standards of practice and professional relations for conservators was produced by the IIC-American Group Committee on Professional Standards and Procedures under the direction of the late Murray Pease. Other members of the Committee were Mr. R. J. Gettens, Professor Sheldon Keck, Mr. Dudley T. Easby and Mr. Henri G. Courtais.

This first formulation of standards of practice by any group of conservators was adopted by IIC-AG at the fourth annual meeting of the group in New York on June 8, 1963. It was since published in *Studies in Conservation*, Vol. 9, No. 4, August 1964, pp. 116-21.

The primary purpose of this document is to provide accepted criteria against which a specific procedure or operation can be measured when a question as to its adequacy has been raised.

THE MURRAY PEASE REPORT

STANDARDS OF PRACTICE AND PROFESSIONAL
RELATIONSHIPS FOR CONSERVATORS
ADOPTED BY IIC-AG JUNE 8, 1963;
APPROVED FOR LEGAL SUFFICIENCY AUGUST 7, 1963

I. PREAMBLE

The following standards and procedures are approved by IIC-AG as applying to professional practice by conservators, as defined in the Articles of Association of IIC, in the examination and treatment of works of art. Such practice is considered to comprise three categories.

- A. Scientific analytical study of art objects, for such purposes as identifying materials, method of construction, modifications by age or other agencies, and comparison with comparable material, but not as a preliminary to treatment.
- B. Examination and treatment of works of art, whether by private or institutional operators.
- C. Supplying previously developed reference data which may bear on condition, authenticity, authorship or age of specific objects. This can be either by formal publication or private communication.

II. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS OF POLICY

These are broadly applicable to all categories.

- A. *Professional attitude.* It must be axiomatic that all professional actions of a conservator be governed by unswerving respect for the integrity of works of art. Such respect is manifest not only in policies of restoration, but in selection of courses of treatment, in safeguarding against accident, protection against loss, and strict avoidance of misinterpreting technical evidence.
- B. *Contractual relationships.* A sound contractual relationship includes the need for clear understanding, written in cases of private contracts, of the exact work to be done, the basis for charges if any, the extent and substance of reports, including photographs as appropriate, responsibility for insurance coverage deemed adequate for operator, owner and object, provisions for safeguarding objects, method of delivery, and any sub-contracting or re-assignment of work. It is recommended that a lawyer be consulted.

- C. *Assumption of responsibility.* It should be a conservator's responsibility to contract for investigation or treatment only to the limits of his professional competence and facilities. Should he not be trained or equipped for a full scientific study by generally accepted current technical means, any specific limitations must be stated and accepted by both parties from the beginning. Wherever further opinions seem to be required such further opinion or opinions are a necessary part of a comprehensive report. In the same manner a conservator should be held irresponsible if he undertakes to carry out a course of treatment for which he is inadequately trained or equipped.
- D. *Interpretation of evidence.* It is obvious that a scientific investigator has the obligation to present *all* the evidence he has developed about an object commissioned to him for study, favorable or otherwise, and also to supply from his professional knowledge a clear exposition of the significance of each part of the evidence. It will be held improper for him to make outright formal declarations as to age, authenticity and the like (which subsequently might form the basis of a claim or legal action) when each declaration exceeds the logical development of the specific evidence.
- E. *Limitation of reconstruction.* In replacing losses or damage, a conservator can be expected to accord little or much restoration according to a firm previous understanding with the owner or custodian. It is equally clear that he cannot ethically carry this to a point of modifying the known character of the original, whatever the motives for so doing might be.
- F. It shall be considered inconsistent with the professional integrity of conservators in any of the three categories of procedure to engage in the following outside activities:
1. Issuing paid "expertises" or authentications.
 2. Acting as paid or commissioned agent in the selling or purchasing of works of art.
 3. Engaging in such selling or purchasing for personal profit.
 4. Making monetary appraisals of works of art.

III. PROCEDURE FOR INITIATING, CONDUCTING, AND REPORTING IN SCIENTIFIC ANALYTICAL STUDIES OF WORKS OF ART

Whenever it becomes necessary for owners of works of art to request museum or commercial analytical laboratories or private consultants to engage in scientific study of art objects for the purpose of developing data which may bear on condition, au-

thenticity, authorship, or age of a specific object, the following procedure shall be followed by all parties concerned.

- A. *Initiating the study.* The owner of the work of art, or his qualified agent, or a qualified officer of an institution shall send to the examining agency a written request with statements covering the following points as required:
1. The purpose of the study listing any specific questions which, if possible, are in need of answer.
 2. Whether (a) the whole object, or (b) samples from the object are to be made available for study. If samples only are to be sent to the laboratory, the exact location of the samples on the object and the name of the person who took the samples are to be given.
 3. If the whole object is to be sent to the analyst, (a) the legal owner, (b) its value, (c) to what extent it is covered by insurance, (d) by what carrier it is to be sent to the laboratory and returned to the owner, and (e) that the object is to be sent to the investigating laboratory at the owner's risk and expense.
 4. Explicit permission to take samples from the object during examination.
 5. Whether the investigator (a) is merely to report facts and observations, or (b) if the investigator is expected to draw conclusion from the facts.
 6. Whether the laboratory findings are (a) to be kept in strict confidence, or (b) whether the findings, regardless of their nature, can be used by the investigator in formal publications and in oral declarations.
 7. Whether any of the evidence produced is intended for use in legal proceedings.
- B. *Conducting the study.* The analyst or laboratory official on receiving the object shall:
1. Supply a written receipt to the owner verifying its condition and inform the owner how the object will be stored and guarded.
 2. Inform the owner what fees, if any, are to be charged for the analytical services. If there is to be no charge, state that fact explicitly. State also what other charges may be made for photographs, x-rays, spectrograms, and for outside analytical services, and other.
 3. Make a photographic record of the condition of the object.
 4. Keep a careful and detailed written record of all observations and findings, giving dates.

C. *Preparing and submitting the report.* On completion of the investigation the investigator shall:

1. Render to the owner a typewritten report of his findings with conclusion, if conclusions have been requested. The report shall cover methods of test, kind and type of instruments and equipment used, and analytical procedures employed in sufficient detail so that, if the owner wishes, the tests can be repeated and checked on the same object by an independent investigator in another laboratory. If it has been necessary, with the owner's permission, to take samples from the object, give location and amount of each sample.
2. List all other persons who assisted or cooperated in the scientific investigation.
3. List what published works or authorities he has consulted in the course of the study.
4. State what limitations, if any, he may wish to place on the use of the findings. That is, whether or not the findings may be used voluntarily in legal proceedings; whether or not they may be quoted in formal publications or in oral declarations.

IV. PROCEDURE FOR ENGAGING IN AND REPORTING OF EXAMINATION AND TREATMENT OF WORKS OF ART BY PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES OF INSTITUTIONS

A. *Report of examination.* Such reports shall include, in writing the following information.

1. Date of examination and name of examiner.
2. Identification of object with that in report. This may be done by photographs, word descriptions, measurements, and accession numbers.
3. Descriptions of materials, structure and method of fabrication. Physical, chemical and biological identification of materials composing the object. Statement of method of determination employed or reference to published standard method.
4. Record of alteration and deterioration. Locations and extent of physical defects, chemical alteration and its products, previous repairs and compensation. Statement of method of determination sufficiently detailed to permit duplication by another examiner.
5. Deductions or interpretations of observations and analyses. Comments relative to the degree of alteration.

6. Where evidence indicates forgery, every available test which can supply information on materials and structure shall be employed. After thoroughly checking his results the examiner shall recommend consultation with one or two disinterested individuals qualified by scientific or art historical training to review the evidence.

B. *Proposal for treatment.* Before any treatment is undertaken a summary or copy of the examination record shall be supplied to the responsible custodian of the object. This shall be accompanied by:

1. An outline of the proposed treatment.
2. A statement of the results to be expected.
3. An estimate of the probable time required for the treatment.

The official custodian's written approval shall be secured before treatment is begun.

C. *Report of treatment.* Such report shall include:

1. A statement of the procedures followed in the current treatment with exact descriptions of materials and methods, including:
 - (a) The method by which accretion or deterioration products were removed.
 - (b) Method and materials used in correcting distortion in form and shape and in reinforcing, consolidating, stabilizing and protecting structure and surface.
 - (c) Kind, extent and location of compensation employed.
2. Photographs as follows:
 - (a) Condition before treatment with date.
 - (b) Photograph in "actual state" without compensation.
 - (c) Photograph after treatment with date.
 - (d) Photographs as required to supply data about structure, method of fabrication and state of object as revealed during process of treatment. Photographs or diagrams which clarify method of reconstruction or compensation.

V. PROCEDURES SPECIFICALLY APPLYING TO EXAMINATION AND TREATMENT OF WORKS OF ART BY SELF-EMPLOYED PROFESSIONAL CONSERVATORS

These do not differ from those applying to institutional employees except in the fields of contractual relations and assumption of responsibility. Procedures in these fields shall include:

A. *Written proposals stating:*

1. Work to be done, estimated charges, and estimated date of completion.

2. Arrangements for insurance and its specific coverage, method of delivery, and provisions for safeguarding objects.
 3. Any sub-contract or re-assignment of work proposed.
- B. A signed contract by the owner or his authorized agent, which may be a signed copy of the letter of proposal.
- C. It is recommended that a lawyer be consulted as to the adequacy of the contract until such time as a standard form be adopted.

VI. OPERATING SAFETY PROCEDURES FOR CONSERVATORS

A. Safety of personnel.

1. *Radiation.* X-ray installation and operation procedures should conform to approved specifications as described in Eastman Kodak's book, *Radiography in Industry*. Most state labor departments will supply an inspection service to determine the operating safety of radiographic installations.
2. *Toxic vapors.* Adequate exhaust and ventilation should be a part of all laboratory installations where volatile solvents are habitually used. The National Association of Mutual Casualty Companies' *Handbook of Organic Industrial Solvents* covers these requirements in detail. Suitable respirators should be available for special requirements.
3. *Mechanical equipment.* Power tools of all kinds should be provided with adequate light, operating space, and safety guards. Their use should be restricted to properly qualified and authorized persons. Cleanliness should be rigidly enforced. Instruments producing dust, abrasive powders and the like should be equipped with positive exhaust systems, and provided with appropriate respirators for operators.
4. *Corrosive liquids.* Standard laboratory requirements for quantity storage and operating containers of acids, alkalis, and other reagents should be rigidly followed. Only authorized personnel should have access to them.
5. *Fire Hazards.* The building housing the studio or laboratory should conform to Underwriters' requirements in construction. Uses to which other parts of the building may be put should not be of a hazardous nature. Working and storage areas should be of fireproof construction, and equipped with adequate extinguishing apparatus.

B. Safety of art objects.

1. *Vapors.* The same requirements that apply to personnel should be observed.
2. *Protection against theft.* Working and storage areas should be of adequate construction, and capable of systematic locking routine. Only authorized personnel should have access.
3. *Protection against accidental damage.* Working and storage areas should be adequate for safe handling and storage of objects. Individual storage racks for paintings and shelves for three-dimensional objects should be available. Working equipment should include sturdy, well-designed furniture such as tables, easels, horses. Objects should be moved or handled only by experienced persons. Secondary personnel should be of responsible character and adequate training in the handling of works of art. They should not engage in activities for which they have inadequate professional training. Objects should not be removed from the operating or storage building except on due notice and authorization by the owner or custodial institution. Transportation and packing of objects should be by approved agencies and according to established methods.

CODE OF ETHICS FOR ART CONSERVATORS

I. PREAMBLE

Art conservation is a pursuit requiring extensive training and special aptitudes. It places in the hands of the conservator cultural holdings which are of great value and historical significance. To be worthy of this special trust requires a high sense of moral responsibility. The conservator has obligations not only to the work of art, but to its owner or custodian, to his colleagues and his profession and to the public as a whole. The following Code seeks to express principles and practices which will guide the art conservator in the ethical practice of his profession.

II. OBLIGATIONS TO THE WORK OF ART

1. *Respect for Integrity of Object*

All professional actions of a conservator are governed by unswerving respect for the aesthetic, historical and physical integrity of works of art.

2. *Competence and Facilities*

It is a conservator's responsibility to undertake the investigation or treatment of a work of art only within the limits of his professional competence and facilities.

3. *Single Standard*

With every work of art he undertakes to conserve, regardless of his opinion of its value or quality, the conservator should adhere to the highest and most exacting standard of treatment. Although circumstances may limit the extent of treatment, the quality of the treatment is never governed by the quality or value of the object.

4. *Suitability of Treatment*

A conservator does not perform or recommend any treatment which is not appropriate to the preservation or best interests of the work of art. The necessity and quality of the treatment are more important to the professional than his remuneration.

5. *Principle of Reversibility*

The conservator is guided by and endeavors to apply the "principle of reversibility" in his treatments. He avoids the use of materials which may become so intractable that their future removal could endanger the physical safety of the object.

6. *Limitations on Aesthetic Reintegration*

In compensating for damage or loss in a work of art, a conservator can be expected to supply little or much restoration, according to a firm previous understanding with the owner or custodian. It is equally clear that he cannot ethically carry this to a point of deceptively covering or modifying the original—whatever the motives for so doing might be.

7. *Continued Self Education*

It is the duty of every conservator to continue to refresh and enlarge the knowledge and skill of his science and art so that he may be ever ready to give the best treatment circumstances permit.

8. *Auxiliary Personnel*

The conservator has an obligation to protect and preserve the art under his care at all times by supervising and regulating the work of all auxiliary personnel under his professional direction.

III. RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE OWNER OR CUSTODIAN

9. *Contracts*

Contract practice may permit a conservator to enter into an agreement with individuals, institutions, corporations, city, municipal, state and federal governments to provide conservation services, provided that the contract or agreement does not contravene the principles of ethics as laid down or implied in this code.

10. *Changes in Treatment or Fee*

Any changes on the part of the conservator in the contracted planned procedure in treating a work of art, or changes in the fee which has previously been estimated should, unless circumstances intervene, be made known to the owner or custodian and approved before the changes are effected.

11. *Abrogation of Contract*

The conservator should understand that an owner or custodian is free to select, without persuasion or admonition, the services of any conservator of his choice or of more than one conservator simultaneously, and is also at liberty to change from one conservator to another at his own discretion. However after a contract, oral or written, has been made for the treatment of a specific work of art neither the conservator nor the owner may morally withdraw from it except by mutual agreement.

12. *Proper Course of Treatment*

Inasmuch as an owner is rarely competent to judge the conservation requirements of his work of art, the conservator should honestly and sincerely advise what he considers the proper course of treatment.

13. *Report of Examination*

Before performing any treatment on a work of art, the conservator should first make an adequate examination and record of condition.* The conservator is obliged to report his findings and recommendations to the owner or custodian and await instructions from him before proceeding.

14. *Record of Treatment*

A record of treatment* must also be made by the conservator. He has the obligation to record and reveal in detail to the owner or custodian the materials and methods of procedure employed in treating the work of art.

15. *Punctuality and Expedition*

It is the obligation of the conservator to estimate the length of time it will take to complete a treatment and to abide by his contract with reasonable punctuality.

16. *Fees*

Fees for conservation service should be commensurate with the service rendered, having due regard to insure justice to the owner or custodian and to the conservator and respect for the profession.

In determining the amount of the fee, it is proper to consider (1) time and labor required, (2) cost of materials and insurance, (3) novelty and difficulty of the problem, (4) customary charges of others for like services, (5) the risk involved in treating a work of high value, (6) the certainty of compensation, (7) character of the employment—casual or constant client.

An owner's ability to pay cannot justify a charge in excess of the value of the service, although his financial position may influence a lower charge.

Conservators should avoid charges which overestimate their services as well as those which undervalue them.

Because of the variation in the treatment of similar conditions it is impossible to establish with mathematical accuracy a set fee for a particular type of service.

17. *Warrant or Guarantee*

Although the conservator at all times follows the highest standards and, to the best of his knowledge, the most acceptable procedures, to warrant or guarantee the results of a treatment is unprofessional. This is not to be construed that he will not willingly and freely correct defects or unpredicted alterations which, in his opinion, have occurred prematurely following his treatment.

* Standard procedures for engaging in and reporting of examination and treatment of works of art are described in *The Murray Pease Report* (Sections IV and V).

IV. RELATIONS WITH COLLEAGUES AND THE PROFESSION

18. *Contribution to Profession*

A conservator has the obligation to share his knowledge and experience with his colleagues and with serious students. He should show his appreciation and respect to those from whom he has learned and to those who have contributed in the past to the knowledge and art of the profession, by presenting without thought of personal gain such advancements in his techniques of examination and treatment which may be of benefit to the profession.

19. *Intermediaries*

The professional services of a conservator should not be controlled or exploited by any agency personal or corporate which intervenes between client and practitioner. The conservator's responsibilities and qualifications are individual and personal. He should avoid all relations which direct the performance of his duties by or in the interest of such intermediary. This does not preclude his working under the direction of another qualified conservator.

20. *Request for Consultation*

If, for any reason, before or during treatment the owner or custodian desires another opinion on procedure through consultation with another conservator, this should not be regarded as evidence of want of confidence and should be welcomed by the conservator.

21. *Consultation*

No person engaged in the profession of conservation can expect to be expertly informed on all phases of examination, analysis and treatment. In instances of doubt, there should be no hesitation in seeking the advice of other professionals, or in referring the owner to a conservator more experienced in the particular special problems.

22. *Misuse of Reference*

Where clients have been referred for consultation or treatment, the conservator to whom they have been referred should, unless it was obviously otherwise intended, return the client to the original conservator as soon as possible. Efforts, direct or indirect, in any way to encroach upon the professional employment of another conservator are unworthy of the profession of conservation.

23. *Fee Splitting*

The payment of a commission or fee to another conservator or

any other person for the reference of a client is to be condemned as unprofessional. Division of a fee is only acceptable where it is based on a division of service or responsibility.

24. *Comment on Qualifications of another Conservator*

It is unethical for a conservator to volunteer adverse judgment on the qualifications of and procedures rendered by another conservator except as such comment shall be to the mutual benefit of all concerned. In expressing an opinion of a practitioner, either voluntarily or at the request of someone outside the profession, the conservator must always conscientiously consider the iniquity of slander and must scrupulously base his statement on facts of which he has personal knowledge. If his opinion is uncertain or dependent on hearsay, it is more constructive to withhold comment and to recommend instead someone of whom he has no doubt.

V. OBLIGATIONS TO THE PUBLIC

25. *Education of Public*

In his relations with the public, every conservator should accept such opportunity as may be presented to educate the public in the aims, desires and purposes of his profession in order that a better popular understanding of conservation may be established. Such presentations should be in accordance with accepted principles of the time.

26. *Safeguarding Public Interests*

In the interests of the public as well as their own profession, conservators should observe accepted standards and laws, uphold the dignity and honor of the profession and accept its self-imposed disciplines. They should do their part to safeguard the public against illegal or unethical conduct by referring the facts of such delinquency to the appropriate professional committee. Further, it is the right of any conservator to give proper advice when it is requested by those seeking relief against negligent or unethical practices.

27. *Expertises*

Although the results of his examination and treatment of works of art may make it possible for him to contribute knowledge to the history of art and to the verification of the authorship (authenticity) of a work of art, the issuing of paid expertises or authentications may involve conflict of interest, and is not an appropriate or ethical activity for a conservator.

28. *Appraisals*

Because of his intimate contact with and knowledge of tech-

niques of fabrication, and the physical condition of works of art, a conservator is often asked to appraise the monetary value of a work of art. Since this activity might involve conflicts of interest inconsistent with the profession of conservation and since appraising requires other specialized knowledge of market values and techniques of attribution, appraisal for a fee is not recommended, unless the individual holds an approved license.

29. *Art Dealing*

Engagement in the business of selling or purchasing for personal profit, or acting as a paid or commissioned agent in the sale of works of art is not recommended.

30. *Advertising*

It is an accepted principle that the most worthy and effective advertising is the establishment of a well-merited reputation for professional ability and integrity. Solicitation of clients, directly or indirectly by a conservator, a group, institution or organization is unethical. All forms of notices which may be construed as advertising should be avoided except:

1. Use of such sign or signs which in size, character, wording and position reasonably may be required to indicate the entrance and location of the premises in which the practice is performed.

2. Use of professional cards indicating only the name, degree, vocation, office address and telephone number.

3. Use of professional letterhead on stationery, bill and receipt forms.

4. Use of announcements of commencement of practice, change of location or restriction of practice.

5. The judicious distribution of reprints. Indiscriminate mailing of reprints, without sufficient reason, is construed as an attempt to solicit clients or an attempt to bring undue attention to the author. At the same time an author may honor requests for copies of his article.

VI. AMENDMENTS

Amendments or changes in this Code of Ethics must be initiated by petition from at least five members of IIC-AG to the Executive Committee who will direct the Committee on Professional Relations to prepare the amendment for vote. Acceptance into the Code of an amendment will be by two thirds affirmative vote of the membership of IIC-AG.