

ARRE Technical Meeting “Preventive Conservation - Curatorial cleaning”  
Schönbrunn Palace, 17 March - 18 March 2016

## Summary of discussed topics

**I. All the institutions represented at this meeting undertake curatorial cleaning. The cleaning includes the historical interiors as well as historical furnishings and other works of art.**

SPSG (Potsdam)	The cleaning is carried out with the techniques of restorers/ conservators with brushes, special cloths and vacuum cleaner but without any water or other remedies
Palace of Versailles	Scope of the heritage works concerned <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Collections which are covered by the curators (Versailles, Grand Trianon, Petit Trianon...)</li> <li>•Decor (panelling, stucco, parquet), which for restoration purposes are covered by Architecture</li> </ul> Actions: -Dust removal -Monitoring and condition assessment -Small restoration tasks, maintenance
Palace of Compiègne	It includes mostly historical furnishings with textile (eg seats, carpets, chimney screens etc) to avoid moth, as well as other historical furnishings. The curatorial cleaning is mostly dusting with special micro vacuum cleaners and brushes.
Czech National Heritage Institute- Regional Administration of Historic Palaces	Cleaning is done by our staff cleaners under supervision of curators of collections.
The Royal Łazienki Museum	We often use soft brushes and soft, microfiber cleaning cloths. Sometimes we use a vacuum cleaner. These methods are combined, depending on the cleaned material (wood, stone, metal etc.).
Palácio Nacional de Mafra	We usually do some specific tasks when renovating the rooms or rearranging the reserves, with the support of volunteers and staff elements when are available
Parques de Sintra Monte da Lua, S. A	When considering the total number of visitors and the historical period of each building they are very different from each other, hence the difference in cleaning methods, frequency and staff training. After assessing the characteristics of each historical building (National Palace of Sintra, National Palace of Queluz and National Palace of Pena, among other monuments) a cleaning plan is developed. This plan includes historical interiors, furnishings and all objects exhibited. Rooms

	that are not usually visited by the public are also included. As we carry out the cleaning actions we assess the efficiency of the plan and undertake the necessary improvements when and if necessary.
Museum of King Jan III's Palace at Wilanow	Curatorial cleaning is carried out by restorers from the Prevention and Conservation Department.

**II. The frequency and the duration of curatorial cleaning vary from an institution to another according to the opening/closing periods, the dedicated staff and the types of collections.**

Schönbrunn	We do the curatorial cleaning just once a year, but divided into two cycles due to the visitors numbers when the palace is less frequented (autumn and spring). One would have the idea that we clean the palace twice a year. Two cycles (autumn/spring) are planned with weekly modules associated to work load. Textiles are cleaned every two years.
Royal Castle in Warsaw	Each January every year and it takes usually 4 weeks.
SPSG (Potsdam)	Currently there are two unlimited jobs for restorers in our sub company for services (Fridericus Service Company). The two restorers are cleaning the historical objects regularly – in some palaces with lots of visitors once a week in other houses biweekly or once a month. Peak and off-seasons tasks
Chambord	Floors and wooden panels are cleaned every two days, a room after another (80 rooms are open to the public).
Palace of Versailles	In the historic areas where collections are protected by distance barriers: 1. Two employees from the reception and security department are responsible for dust removal and they go round before the palace is open to visitors every day. They were chosen because of the care they take over the collections and they have received some basic training. They focus mainly on dusting the furniture (console tables, marble-top tables, etc.) 2. In parallel, Versailles has developed maintenance contracts with restorers Removing dust from textiles: the contract that has been signed with a group of several restorers (8 approx.) and covers the State Apartments, the apartments of the Dauphin and the Dauphine, the apartments of Madame Victoire and Madame Adélaïde, the King's Inner Apartments, the Petit and Grand Trianon: it corresponds to 84 work sessions in a year every Monday Removing dust from paintings and painted decoration: the contract that has been signed with a group of several restorers (4) covers the State Apartment every Monday Maintenance of clocks: weekly contract with a restorer. He winds the clocks and replaces small parts when necessary. Dust removal from interior sculptures: several Mondays per year Dust removal from porcelain: one session per year
Palace of Compiègne	The curatorial cleaning is undertaken once a year since 2011. It takes about 6 or 7 working days with 3 or 4 people to clean almost every room open to public. Some of these rooms are not cleaned every year (e.g. ballroom or chapel). Historical interiors (textile wall-coverings) or curtains are not cleaned every year, but once in a while if the opportunity arises (e.g. if the curtains need to be taken off for some other reason). Indeed, such pieces (e.g. curtains, textile wall-coverings, canopies) are out of reach: scaffoldings are needed to reach them so

	it takes a lot of extra time / organization / money to clean them.
Czech National Heritage Institute	Daily cleaning of floors and weakly dusting of furniture (staff cleaners) Twice a year general cleaning (staff cleaners in cooperation with guides and curators).
The Royal Łazienki Museum	Each building (Palace on the Isle, Myślewicki Palace, White House and Old Orangery) has a different specificity and conditions. However, cleaning each of them is carried out approximately every six months. Curatorial cleaning takes on average about a week, depending on the building. In special cases (important events, visits of VIP) we undertake cleaning if necessary.
Palácio Nacional de Mafra	There is no regular schedule for curatorial cleaning. We do it when possible and/or urgent and it can last a week or a month.
Parques de Sintra Monte da Lua, S. A.	We have three levels of curatorial cleaning. a. Every day cleaning takes place in each palace aiming the removal of superficial dust in flat surfaces and furniture tops (cabinets, tables, chairs and so on). This dust which becomes very visible after a few days if not cleaned can lead to comments from visitors. b. Weekly or monthly cleaning (depending on the palace) addresses each object in each room. c. Once a year, during the low season, a more detailed cleaning takes place. That is when we move furniture, paintings and other large objects and clean the otherwise inaccessible places.
Museum of King Jan III's Palace at Wilanow	Usually historical furnishings are cleaned frequently. Historical interiors once a year in the winter time, when the palace is closed to public.

### **III. Most of the represented institutions use dedicated databases for recording the historical objects.**

Schönbrunn, Versailles and Het Loo Palaces	They use the same database called TMS The Museum System.
SPSG (Potsdam)	The historical objects are recorded in a table. This table is very detailed; you can find every room in a palace and every object in this room as such as well as important information about the objects like damages and specifics or anomalies. Of course you can find here how and often the objects have to be cleaned.
Chambord and Palace of Compiègne	The objects are recorded in a dedicated database, called Micromusée (used by a wide range of french museums). See attached an example of file. The interiors are not recorded in the database, because they don't have inventory number.
Czech National Heritage Institute	All Historic Houses under our responsibility are listed – both buildings, immovable details of interiors and furnishing.
Royal Castle in Warsaw, The Royal Łazienki Museum and Museum of King Jan III's Palace at Wilanow	The inventory database MONA includes historical information about the objects as well as condition reports with pictures and condition grades.
Parques de Sintra Monte	The historical interior and objects are recorded in our database Matriz

da Lua, S. A.	built for inventory, collections management and research of national collections. It keeps records of historical and technical information, conservation, localization as well as other data. Public on-line version available at <a href="http://www.matriznet.dgpc.pt/">http://www.matriznet.dgpc.pt/</a>
Palácio Nacional de Mafra	There is no dedicated database.

**IV. When curatorial cleaning is carried out, the condition of the interiors/objects is mainly assessed and documented.**

Schönbrunn	Status inspection: written and photographic forms. Damage mapping; overall picture of the current state. Collected data of damages may be used as a basis for a call for proposals for the conservation. Categorization of damages. Actual conditions indicated in the database (three categories A B C).
Royal Castle in Warsaw	During curatorial cleaning conservators and restorers are checking the condition of displayed objects and results of this work is being registered in the conservation report - database.
SPSG (Potsdam)	Yes, the condition of the objects is documented in the sense that new damages will record on a form that include, of course, the localization of the object, explanatory photos and a description.
Palace of Compiègne	No actual condition report for each piece of furniture is made when curatorial cleaning is carried out: it would take a lot of extra time and money. Only a general assessment is made after the cleaning to point out if some pieces need to be treated or restored.
The Royal Łazienki Museum	In the years 2012 – 2015 in our museum was carried out general renovation of several important buildings: Palace on the Isle, Palace Myślewicki Old Orangery and Amphitheatre. In the same period we also carried out conservation of the Royal Collections of paintings, sculptures, furnishing and graphics. So the current state of preservation of our buildings, interiors and objects is very good. However, any damages found during curatorial cleaning are photographed and described.
Palácio Nacional de Mafra	The objects are documented by digital photos and a report of the intervention.
Parques de Sintra Monte da Lua, S. A.	When carrying out the more complex and detailed cleaning actions we take this opportunity to assess the collection and the interiors. This allows us to establish working priorities and to address any ongoing deterioration in an early stage. For some palaces there is a database, but we do not register information every time.
Museum of King Jan III's Palace at Wilanow	Reports with photos and condition reports are systematically included in museum's databases (MONA, GIS, photo databases) Describing conditions report: 1, 2, 3, 4

**V. In most of the institutions, the curatorial cleaning is carried out by in-house staff associated to external personnel.**

Schönbrunn	We do the curatorial cleaning with our in-house cleaning staff under the supervision of an external restorer since ca. 2006. We started curatorial cleaning ca. the year 2000 exclusively with external restorers; since 2004 ongoing our own staff was continuously trained for this purpose so that two years later they did the curatorial cleaning being supervised by a contracted external restorer. Since this time the restorer was also responsible to classify the condition of each room with a historical endowment /each item. So the cleaning is executed with intern and extern staff.
Royal Castle in Warsaw	The curatorial cleaning carries out by conservators, restorers and cleaning personnel as well as technicians' specialists.
SPSG	Currently we have these two restorers in our sub company for services, our in-house restorers and sometimes, in certain cases, external restorers. The historical interior, particularly the paintings or the textiles and the furnishings are principally cleaned by restorers. Only the historical floors of wood and marble are cleaned by the staff of the sub company, the cleaning workers, admittedly with abilities and practical experiences.
Chambord	The curatorial cleaning is carried out by different people: floors and wooden panels by an internal cleaning staff, chandeliers by external personnel, works of art by members of the conservation team and, sometimes, by restorers if necessary.
Czech National Heritage Institute	Cleaning in each House is organized by director of the House – he is coordinating curators, cleaners and other assistants. In special individual cases external professional freelance restorers are commissioned.
The Royal Łazienki Museum	In-house staff is responsible for keeping stone floors and wooden parquets in historical interiors clean. Internal staff also clears historical stone terraces and stairs in front of the buildings. Restorers clean works of arts: furnishings, paintings, sculptures, ceramics, etc. External personnel – professional external firm cleans sculptures and other historical objects (fountains, solar clocks) situated in the garden.
Palácio Nacional de Mafra	Curatorial cleaning is usually done by the curators, with the technical assistance of the National Laboratory of Conservation.
Parques de Sintra Monte da Lua, S. A.	All cleaning follows the plan and is coordinated by the responsible for preventive conservation. a. Cleaning personnel for everyday cleaning b. in-house staff for weekly or monthly cleaning c. restorers supervise the annual cleaning which is carried out by cleaning personnel, in-house staff and restorers depending on the complexity of the objects addressed at each moment.

In-house staff - advantages

Experienced conservators train the new conservators employed (transfer of knowledge).

Cooperation between curators/art historians and conservators/restorers.

A core permanent team is needed for the daily work in order to obtain good maintenance and follow-up, to react in case of issues (like climate), to avoid loss of information.

Advice: recruitment of a staff member in charge of preventive conservation.

### External personnel – advantages

New contractors, new engagement, new ideas

Outsourced person yes but monitored by internal colleagues.

Other scheme → In Potsdam, Outsource Friderikus belongs to the SPSG (high curatorial level)

## **VI. Other topics discussed during the meeting**

- Staff training: importance to develop clear cleaning instructions and staff guidelines  
Close cooperation between cleaning staff (responsible for floor / carpets) and restorers (cleaning historical items, textile)
- Cleaning of furniture – instruments, products, cooperation with professional restorers
- Preventive conservation: importance to develop programmes
- Dust: causes (visitors, surroundings, carpets, heating system), measurements, analyses, solutions
- The preservation of textile and the use of dust cover
- Problems of pets, insects, moths
- How to deal with contaminated areas?
- Climate: how to control it? How to monitor it?  
New air ventilation system/ treatment (Linderhof, Versailles)  
Air conditioning in Royal Castle in Warsaw after reconstruction in 1945: temperature and humidity are stable but it is very expensive. Double windows must be changed regularly.
- Communicate with the visitors: cleaning during opening hours, a way to foster public knowledge on conservation, add explanatory panels...