



Preventive  
Conservation  
in Historic Houses  
and Palace  
Museums:  
Assessment  
Methodologies  
and Applications

SilvanaEditoriale

# **Preventive Conservation in Historic Houses and Palace Museums: Assessment Methodologies and Applications**

Conference of the National Museum of the Palace of Versailles (EPV), the Association of European Royal Residences (ARRE), and the Research Centre of the Palace of Versailles (CRCV)

In collaboration with the International Committee for Historic House Museums (DEMHIST), held at the National Museum of the Palace of Versailles and Trianon

From 29<sup>th</sup> November to 1<sup>st</sup> December 2017

## **Conference Proceedings**

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#### Thanks to

Lorenzo Appolonia, Lionel Arzac, Jean-Vincent Bacquart, Wojciech Bagiński, Jérémie Benoît, Marie-Alice Beziaud, Céline Boissiere, Anne Carasso, Élisabeth Caude, Gabrielle Chadie, Thibault Creste, Stefania De Blasi, Elisabetta Brignoli, Hélène Dalifard, Gaël de Guichen, Ariane de Lestrangle, Festese Devarayar, Françoise Feige, Christophe Fouin, Éric Gall, Thomas Garnier, Roberta Genta, Denis Guillemard, Michelle-Agnoko Gunn, l'équipe du Grand Café d'Orléans, Pierre-Xavier Hans, Nicole Jamieson, Thierry Lamouroux, Marie Leimbacher, Nadège Marzanato, Béatrice Messaoudi, Stefan Michalski, Christian Milet, Marya Nawrocka-Teodorczyk, Marco Nervo, Lucie Nicolas-Vullierme, Clotilde Nouailhat, Agnieszka Pawlak, Amaury Percheron, Arnaud Prêtre, Gérard Robaut, Bertrand Rondot, Valériane Rozé, Béatrice Sarrazin, Béatrix Saule, Didier Saulnier, Emma Scheinmaenn, Violaine Solari, Emilie Sonck, Pauline Tronca, Rémi Watiez, Thierry Webley, Sébastien Zimmerman



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# Implementation of a Global Assessment of Graphic and Photographic Arts

## Abstract

An overall assessment of the graphic and photographic collections of some thirty CMN sites was carried out. The methodology which was used is based on both, lists extracted from the collections' management database and an in situ inspection, one object at a time, of the collections. The prioritisation of the treatments is based on a system of hierarchisation of the alterations, paired with the level of intervention.

## Keywords

Graphic arts, preservation, methodology, hierarchisation.

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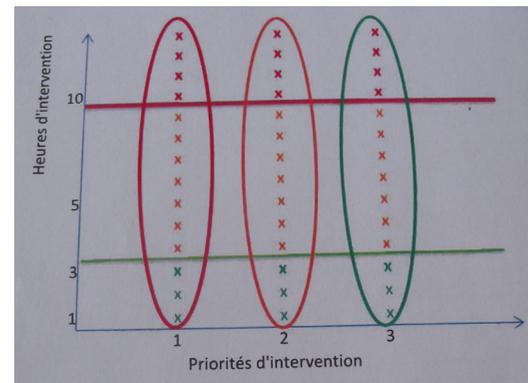
The Centre des Monuments Nationaux has a collection, documentation and an archive of great importance which includes a very wide range of graphic and photographic documents. These graphic documents are very sensitive to environmental conditions, light, inadequate and unstable climate, pollution, poor storage and handling [Merritt and Reilly 2010, p. 67].

Because of this fragility, this collection should not be subjected to permanent exposure. The presence of many glass surfaces in the CMN's monuments is not always in strict accordance with conservation recommendations. Even if some glass surfaces are UV protective, in many cases, these filters are transparent and don't permit the reduction of the level of visible lighting. It is also not easy to implement a rotation policy of the collections, in the affected monuments, for lack of human resources and/or appropriate skills on site. As well as light-related problems, one

	Name	Title	Technical Category	Number
Drawing	887	874	826	921
Print	2145	2141	1250	2616
Photograph	981	924	881	1538
Total	4013	3939	2957	5075

Fig. 1  
Result of the search in the Collection Management Database.

Fig. 2.  
Illustration of the Intervention  
Hierarchisation.



must add biological attacks (fungi and insects) which are linked to the generally natural climate of historical buildings and of an often inadequate conditioning. In order to permanently remedy this situation, the CMN has undertaken to set up a multi-year preservation program.

In order to do this, it is necessary to know the conservation conditions at a given moment. A systematic research of the collections was carried out in the CMN collection management database, *Collectio*. Queries were made by site name, title, denomination and technical categories. The results are given in figure 1. According to the chosen query mode, the result is different. “Titles” and “denomination” are very close. Whereas the “technical category” displays much lower results. This one is then discarded. Lists of works in the collections are extracted for each site and compared to collection works found on site, in the exhibition spaces or in storage. The identification on site is done visually, if not, with a description. A colour code is then set up to easily identify on the list, collection objects which are in the categories of the found, the unseen and the extra thus receiving provisional numbers according to a pre-established protocol. Systematic shots are taken of collection pieces that do not have visuals. The visuals are renamed according to their inventory numbers so as to facilitate their integration to the database. The hierarchisation is done according to the more or less preoccupying nature of the alterations: 1-evolutionary, 2-mechanical, 3-inadequate assembly, which is then crossed with the degree of intervention [Gunn and Nicosia, 2017] expressed by the number of hours, less than 3 hours, more than 3 hours and more than 10 hours, as illustrated in figure 2.

A statistical assessment could thus be drawn for the provisional measures to come: 30% require immediate treatment, 20% in the short term and 50% in the medium and long term.

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