

Technical meeting

Open Storages

Museum of King Jan III's Palace at Wilanów, Poland

22-23 February 2018

Attendees:

- Ayhan AYRILMAZ, Stiftung Preussische Schlösser und Gärten Berlin-Brandenburg, Germany
- Kerstin LAURENZ, Stiftung Preussische Schlösser und Gärten Berlin-Brandenburg, Germany
- Katja MÜLLER, Stiftung Preussische Schlösser und Gärten Berlin-Brandenburg, Germany
- Giulia ZANASI, La Venaria Reale, Italy
- Bogusława KLAT, Royal Castle in Warsaw, Poland
- Gabriela CORDEIRO, National Palace of Mafra, Portugal
- Joana AMARAL, Parques de Sintra-Monte da Lua, Portugal
- Luis SOARES, Parques de Sintra-Monte da Lua, Portugal
- Olga KISLITSYNA, The State Museum Reserve "Peterhof", Russia
- Karolina ALKEMADE, Museum of King Jan III's Palace at Wilanów, Poland
- Wojciech BAGIŃSKI, Museum of King Jan III's Palace at Wilanów, Poland
- Elżbieta GRYGIEL, Museum of King Jan III's Palace at Wilanów, Poland
- Elżbieta MODZELEWSKA, Museum of King Jan III's Palace at Wilanów, Poland
- Konrad MORAWSKI, Museum of King Jan III's Palace at Wilanów, Poland
- Maria NAWROCKA-TEODORCZYK, Museum of King Jan III's Palace at Wilanów, Poland
- Joanna PAPROCKA-GAJEK, Museum of King Jan III's Palace at Wilanów, Poland
- Agnieszka PAWLAK, Museum of King Jan III's Palace at Wilanów, Poland
- Konrad PYZEL, Museum of King Jan III's Palace at Wilanów, Poland
- Włodzimierz GAJEWSKI, PPH MEGA, Poland
- Barbara KOWALEWSKA, Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, Poland
- Adam OPOŃ, INVINETS, Poland
- Hélène LEGRAND, Network of European Royal Residences, France

On the 22nd and 23rd of February 2018, the Technical Meeting of the Network of European Royal Residences on "Open storages" was held at the Museum of King Jan III's Palace at Wilanów.

The technical meeting was a platform for exchange of experience between professionals dealing with the organisation and functioning of museum storages. Architectural designs, methods of displaying exhibits, issues of safety, prevention and conservation, as well as making available collections in storage were discussed in detail.

Thursday, 22 February 2018

The technical meeting started with a presentation of participants' experiences and expectations of the seminar. From the beginning, several issues have been raised as the opening to the public, the security and preservation of the objects, the climatic conditions or the condition of the storages.

On the first day, the case study was presented by Agnieszka Pawlak – deputy head of the Department of Prevention and Conservation, responsible for the project of creating storage spaces available to the public at the Museum of King Jan III's Palace in Wilanów.

The open storage gallery was made available in September 2017 in the Wilanów palace wing known as the Markoniówka (Marconi House), after nearly five years of preparation work. The main goal of the project was to create a space which is not a storage for "less important" and damaged objects, but a foundation for the permanent exhibit and a dynamic space. Exhibits in the new storage space are stored in sealed display cases specially designed for the interior, with stable temperature and humidity. All condition indicators can be tracked with an appropriate computer application.

The second presentation showed the goals of the architectural design of storage spaces open to the public at the Museum of King Jan III's Palace in Wilanów. Professor Barbara Kowalewska (Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw) presented her own designs, which were implemented.

Representatives of companies responsible for carrying out the works related to the exhibition and its safety were invited to participate in the technical meeting. Włodzimierz Gajewski, CEO of PPH MEGA presented the process of designing museum display cases. He explained the necessity to find the right balances between the principles of "security of the objects" and "access for curators", between the objectives of "exhibition" and "storage". Adam Opoń from INVINETS presented an innovative tool for measuring humidity and temperature – ThermoMesh. The mobile system of small sensors transmits data to the computer application in real time, which makes it possible to remotely monitor data in individual interiors and display cases. At the Museum of King Jan III's Palace in Wilanów, the data is accessible to collection curators (art historians), conservators and the Department of Architecture responsible for environment measurements.

During the discussion, attention was drawn to cooperation between contractors, which is key on such large projects. Data analysis methods and alarms in case of unfavourable conditions were discussed (Who analyse the data? When and how react to an alarm?). Olga Kislitsyna (Peterhof) pointed out the need for educational activities in this type of space. The question of the information to provide to the public has been also pointed out. Giulia Zanasi (La Venaria Reale) noted that the solutions used in the Wilanów Palace cannot be used everywhere, due to the structure of historical buildings, which, for example, may have very thin ceilings, unsuitable for heavy loads. Participants also noted the difficulty to select the

objects to exhibit all together due to the different necessary climatic conditions and the variety of objects.

After the theoretical introduction, the participants of the meeting toured the Sculpture Pavilion, which was the first project to combine education with protection of the Wilanów Palace Museum collection. The Sculpture Pavilion is a glazed building resembling the shape of a tent, which enables visitors to view original sculptures from the palace façade (replaced with replicas). There are constant indicators of temperature and air humidity in the building, thanks to which the art works are not at risk from adverse effects of the changing atmospheric conditions.

Next, the technical meeting participants toured the building of the Storage Gallery in the Markoniówka (the level open to the public and closed storage rooms), where they could familiarise themselves with the previously described technical solutions and ask the conservators, curators, designers and contractors specific questions.

After the visit, participants had the opportunity to exchange. During this discussion, it has been pointed out that some problematic of the storages (lack of space, difficulty of access, etc) are inherent to the history and the functions of the royal residences, unlike museums storages which have been built to be functional. In the evening, the guests were invited to dinner – a demonstration of historical reconstruction – prepared by master chef Maciej Nowicki based on recipes from the oldest Polish cookery books from the 17th century.

Friday, 23 February 2018

The second day of the seminar opened with a presentation by Ayhan Ayrimmaz and Kerstin Laurens from Stiftung Preussische Schlösser und Gärten Berlin-Brandenburg, who spoke about the construction of the “Central Depot” in Potsdam. The warehouse is to accommodate the majority of objects currently stored in seven different locations. For the government, which financed the construction, it was important that both the implementation of the project and maintaining its effects be characterised by the most optimal use of funds possible. Ayhan Ayrimmaz presented the goals of the new storage, which is not open to visitors and, what is more, has limited access for museum employees. This is done in order to minimise the risks and maintain optimal climate conditions without excessive use of technology, using technological solutions that ensure self-sufficiency, low energy consumption and safety. A hermetic building with an attractive architectural form was created, allowing for constant conditions inside to be maintained. Changes in humidity and temperature caused by the presence of people in the warehouse will be compensated for automatically, provided that the short duration of stay dictated by the rules is observed. The process of moving the collection to the new storage will start soon, as the warehouse operations are planned to begin in November 2018.

Next, Joana Amaral presented the effects of a project to clean up the storage spaces in the four-palace complex comprising the Parques de Sintra – Monte da Lua, which has been ongoing since 2012. Prior to 2012, the storage spaces did not meet most of the norms essential to storage of artworks, because they were located in historical buildings exposed to

the effects of changing weather conditions, especially high humidity (mountain surroundings, proximity of the ocean, large green areas absorbing moisture). A realistic solution was needed. Therefore, the decision was made to place all objects in plastic boxes, which largely stabilised the environmental conditions. The objects are not visible in the boxes; therefore, each contained has a photo and colour coding indicating the state of preservation. The solutions adopted in the Parques de Sintra – Monte da Lua enabled to optimize space and are a good example of very effective use of possibilities and problem-solving when limited funds are available.

During the discussion, many questions were raised about the functioning of the new warehouse in Potsdam, especially the specific access conditions, which may hinder the work of conservators and curators. Katja Müller (Potsdam) noted that the practical use of the capabilities of the state-of-the-art building is still being explored. The meeting participants expressed their admiration for the creators of the sophisticated building, which, thanks to the use of appropriate materials and limiting the number of technical devices to a minimum, uses very little energy and at the same time is very functional and safe.

The technical meeting ended with a tour of the Wilanów Palace, during which participants had ample opportunities to learn about the history of the former royal residence, as well as conservation studies conducted in recent years and the broad revitalisation programme that uses their results.

