

INSIDE INSTALLATIONS: AN INTRODUCTION

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ABSTRACT

This paper provides a general outline of the project Inside Installations: Preservation and Presentation of Installation Art and will discuss the goals of the project, how it was organized and realized, and the research questions that have been addressed. Attention is paid to crossovers between the project and the International Network for the Conservation of Contemporary Art. Also, a recent international collaboration project is announced.

INSIDE INSTALLATIONS: ORIGINS, BRIEF HISTORY, AND RELATION TO INCCA

Over the past ten years, conservation and presentation issues have been raised for a hybrid art form grouped together as “installation art.” Artists’ installations have become a mainstream art form and are widely acquired by museums worldwide. In their care and conservation, these works raise different questions than those raised by traditional art objects and challenge the daily work of conservators and curators. The Inside Installations project sought out answers to these questions by exploring a variety of practices and ethical assumptions and through the collaborative creation of guidelines by the partners of the project.

The initiative of the European Union research project Inside Installations: Preservation and Presentation of Installation Art came from the founding members of the International Network for the Conservation of Contemporary Art (INCCA) and, throughout the project, there remained a strong relationship with the INCCA group. The first outline of the project was realized during an expert meeting on installation

artworks in 2002 that was organized by the Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage (ICN) together with the Netherlands Institute for Media Art (NIMk). Among the participants at the expert meeting were Jon Ippolito and Caitlin Jones from the Variable Media Network, Jill Sterrett from the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, California, and Pip Laurenson from Tate, London.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Inside Installations was supported by the European Commission's Culture 2000 program and ran for a period of three years (2004–2007). In addition to the ICN, which acted as the main organizer and coordinator, five institutions were also involved as project co-organizers: Tate Modern; Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst (S.M.A.K.), Ghent; Restaurierungszentrum der Landeshauptstadt, Düsseldorf; Foundation for the Conservation of Contemporary Art (SBMK), Hertogenbosch; and the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid. The co-organizers invited partners from their own countries to participate in the project (fig. 1).

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Endorsed by a history of collaboration, three of the co-organizers took up partnerships with existing networks: Restaurierungszentrum Düsseldorf with their colleagues who were already members of the contemporary art working group of the German Conservators Association; The Reina Sofia worked together with the Spanish group of conservators who were members of a contemporary art group of the Spanish IIC; and The Dutch Foundation for the Conservation of Contemporary Art invited its associated contemporary art museums in The Netherlands.

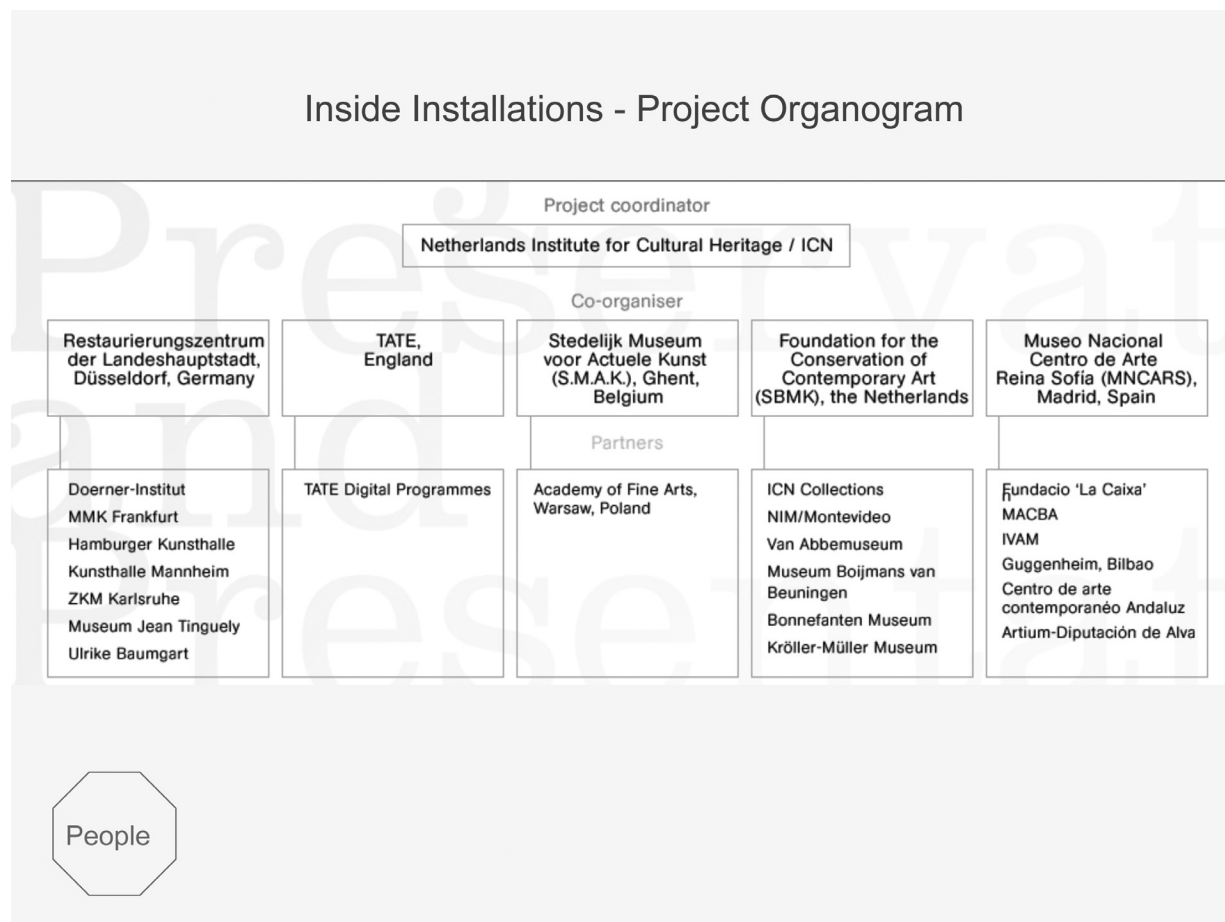


Fig. 1. Inside Installations project organogram.

Tate enlisted their digital programs department as an affiliate in developing several e-learning packages based on case studies and S.M.A.K. liaised with the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw.

RESEARCH MATRIX

These organizers started with an inventory of key challenges evoked by installation artworks. These include:

- Installation artworks are often created for site- and time-specific occasions, which means that re-installations of the work may vary in different contexts
- Installations raise questions for which the participation of the artist is needed
- Artworks often include ephemeral materials, time-based media, or both, such as audio-visual and electronic media which may soon become obsolete, making it very difficult to find standardized solutions for their preservation
- Performance may be included, raising issues of re-enactment and how to document and preserve the theatrical and sensorial aspects of an installation, such as sound, vision, touch, smell and spectator involvement in interactive works

From these challenges, the underlying research question of the project was formulated: “How can we safeguard the expressions of our contemporary visual culture so that they can be experienced by future generations?” The rationale was to connect the research as much as possible to the daily practice of the participants. As a result, the research activities were largely based on case studies on installation works of art in the collections of participating museums. As an applied research project it enabled partners to investigate their own installation works, carry out conservation when needed, draw up guidelines for future preservation and re-installation, and share the results with their partners.

Collaboration and information sharing was pursued in a variety of ways with each case study being presented to and discussed among the larger group during the project’s workshops, sometimes partners collaborated during the case studies, and many participated in the development of good practice by using their case study as research material for designing guidelines and tools. Finally, all participants contributed their case studies to the Inside Installations website available at <http://www.inside-installations.org>. The website fulfills the role as an essential platform for sharing information.

The installation artworks that were selected for case studies were created between 1970 and 2005. An early work, for example, was Panamarenko’s (b. 1940) *Aeromodeller* 00-PL (1969–1971, S.M.A.K.) The project participants choose their own case studies and most of those represented a specific problem or genre (e.g., being an extra-large scale installation, consisting of multiple artifacts, being multi-media, ephemeral, conceptual, unique, or replaceable, etc.). The diversity in materials, media, content, and conservation problems implied that the results were quite specific for each installation. Thus, in order to build a body of useful best practice guidelines and recommendations, it was necessary to design an overarching research method that would gear individual research activities to the leading questions of the project. A solution was found in a matrix structure in which the case studies were categorized as Activity A and five topics of special research categorized as Activity B. Assigned researchers carried out projects within the Activity B topics with the goal that the accumulated results of the case studies would address all five of the Activity B topics (fig. 2).

The following special research topics were assigned:

- B1. Preservation, best practices
- B2. Artists’ participation
- B3. Documentation and archiving strategies
- B4. Theory and semantics
- B5. Knowledge management and information exchange

inside installations

25 partners

50 professionals

A. 33 case studies

B. 15 special studies

5 research areas

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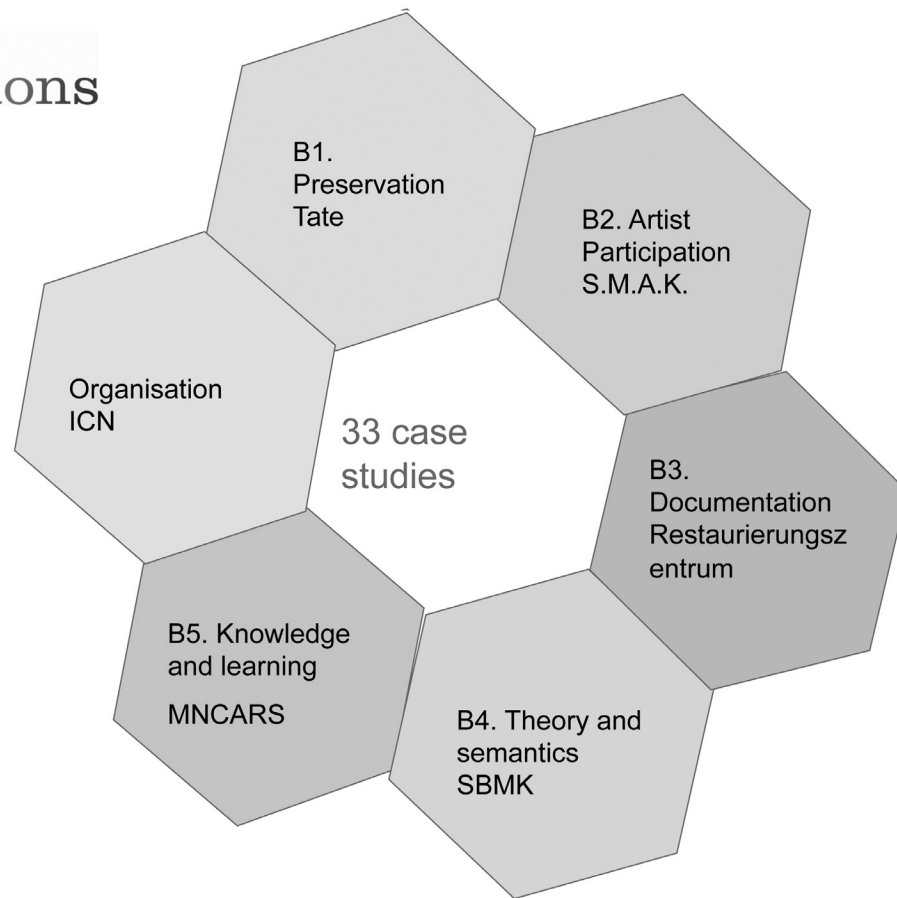


Fig. 2. Research topics of the Inside Installations project.

MEETINGS

In addition to the coordination of their own case studies, each co-organizer was responsible for one of the above-mentioned research topics and for organizing one of the seminars and workshops in the course of the project. In total, the project hosted six general meetings for participants including several parts of the program that were open to a wider public.

The meetings were not only extremely fruitful in terms of knowledge sharing and dissemination, but also contributed largely to community building in this large-scale project (in total, more than 50 conservators, curators, registrars, and technicians participated). The first meeting was hosted by the ICN in Amsterdam in 2004. In the

following three years of the project, meetings were held in Madrid (Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia); Karlsruhe (Center for Art and Media); Ghent (S.M.A.K.); Maastricht (SBMK and Bonnefanten Museum) and London (Tate Modern). In addition to the meetings being an opportunity for the participants to communicate and share their research, external speakers were invited to talk about one of the specific research topics. Lively debate emerged from the crossover discussions between the project participants and “outsiders” (who sometimes became “insiders” by becoming actively involved in the project). At the final meeting at Tate Modern, an evaluation session was held in which the researchers of the individual case studies were posed with questions relating to the five research topics, a process that assisted

in clarifying the results and in identifying the remaining questions of the project.

Many of the public seminars, which were also attended by students, conservators, scholars, etc., are currently accessible through the project website (fig. 3).

RESULTS AND DISSEMINATION

The following are concrete results from the Inside Installations case studies:

- In a case-based approach, 33 installation works of art have been researched, documented, and conserved for the future
- Guidelines and tools have been created, especially those relating to documentation practices

- Reflection on conservation concepts and the shifting of roles of the different caretakers (e.g., conservator, curator, technician, registrar, etc.)
- Information exchange through seminars, workshops, and the website
- Increased collaboration and participation in the INCCA network
- Increased interest in installation art by experts and the public
- Development of the Inside Installations website

The contents of the website illustrate the richness of the project's research results from the 33 case studies and other research activities (fig. 4). One example is an educational package offering an online course on video documentation of video artworks. The course provides



Fig. 3. Snapshots of Inside Installations participants during seminars.

examples of the documentation for a number of video works including those by Thomas Hirschhorn (b. 1957), Fabrizio Plessi (b. 1940), Franz West (b. 1947), and Dennis Oppenheim (1938–2011) as well as offering practical guidelines. In essence, this course walks the visitor through the whole process of documenting a video work of art and has already proved to be a useful instrument for practitioners (figs. 5 and 6). Other examples of educational packages were created by Tate on Bruce Naumann (b. 1941) and Carlos Garaicoa (b. 1967).

CONTEMPORARY ART: WHO CARES?

Another important direct result of Inside Installations was the development of a new project titled PRACTICs of contemporary art (fig.7). PRACTICs stands for the

Future, Practices, Research, Access, Collaboration, and Teaching in Contemporary Art Conservation. Many of the Inside Installations partners expressed their wish to continue collaboration—to share the results of Inside Installations—and to continue research with new partners. PRACTICs, to a large extent, builds on Inside Installations as well as on the INCCA network. As such, it aims to disseminate research results from Inside Installations and to address new themes, such as education. The central goals of PRACTICs are to intensify international collaboration; to evaluate and implement existing knowledge; and to explore and develop new fields of knowledge.

Albert's Ark by **Bill Spinhoven**
 Circle Puppets by **Dennis Oppenheim**
 Clamp by **Franz West**
 Disappearance at Sea by **Tacita Dean**
 Doppelgarage by **Thomas Hirschhorn**
 Ensemble autour de MUR by **Joëlle Tuerlinckx**
 Finestra (Window) by **Ignasi Aballí**
 Flying No.1 New York by **Eulàlia Valldosera**
 Glass (one and three) by **Joseph Kosuth**
 Glauben Sie nicht, daß ich eine Amazone bin by **Ulrike Rosenbach**
 Grass just Grass by **Krzysztof M. Bednarski**
 Interminável by **Artur Barrio**
 Journey to the Edge of the World – The New Republic of St. Kilda by **Ross Sinclair**
 Larger Than life by **Angela De La Cruz**
 Letter to the Censors by **Carlos Garaicoa**

Liquid Time II by **Fabrizio Plessi**
 Los Zorios by **Gilberto Zorio**
 Mapping the Studio II by **Bruce Nauman**
 Maybe the sky is really green and we're just colorblind by **Johan Grimonprez**
 No Ghost Just a Shell by **Pierre Huyghe and Philippe Parreno**
 Notion Motion by **Olafur Eliasson**
 Proyecto para Bilbao by **Jenny Holzer**
 Revolution, a monument for the television revolution by **Jeffrey Shaw**
 The Aeromodeller 00-PL by **Panamarenko**
 The Predator by **Fabián Marcaccio and Greg Lynn**
 The wider the flatter by **Ger van Elk**
 Un pedazo de cielo cristalizado by **Javier Pérez**
 Untitled by **Suchan Kinoshita**
 Voorstelling by **Suchan Kinoshita**

inside
installations

Fig. 4. Overview of the project case studies.



Fig. 5. Screenshot taken from the project website. The research conducted for each case study has been described in detail, providing a rich resource for conservation and further research. www.inside-installations.org.



Fig. 6. Screenshot taken from the project website. This online course focuses on producing and evaluating video documentation of installation artworks for the purpose of conservation. The website contains several e-learning packages. www.inside-installations.org.

PRACTICs

Practices, Research, Access, Collaboration, Teaching in Conservation

6 co-organisers

28 partners

14 countries in Europe and the US

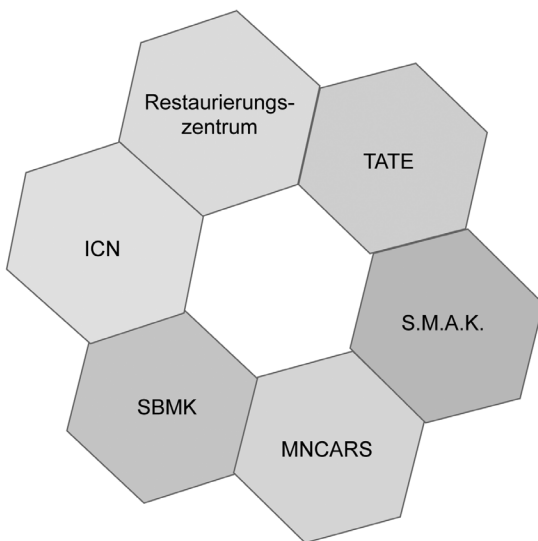


Fig. 7. Participants and organization of PRACTICs of contemporary art.

ICN	University of Amsterdam, Conservation and Restoration
ICN	INCCA North America
ICN	Getty Conservation Institute, Los Angeles
ICN	Museo del novecento, Milan
TATE	Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen
RZ	Academy of Fine Arts, Vienna
RZ	Hamburger Kunsthalle
RZ	Pinokothek der Moderne, Doerner Institut, Munich
RZ	Art-documentation, Bonn
RZ	Zentrum für Kunst und Medien (ZKM), Karlsruhe
RZ	Museum Jean Tinguely, Basel
RZ	Estonian Art Museum, Tallinn
SMAK	Academy of Fine arts, Faculty of Conservation, Warsaw
SBMK	Bonnefantenmuseum, Maastricht
SBMK	Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo
SBMK	Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam
SBMK	Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, Rijeka
SBMK	Netherlands Institute for Media Art (NIMk)/Montevideo, Amsterdam
SBMK	Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam
SBMK	Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven
RS	Artium-Diputación de Alva, Vittoria
RS	Centro Arte Contemporaneo Andaluz, Sevilla
RS	Colección de Arte Contemporáneo Fundación "la Caixa", Barcelona
RS	Guggenheim Museum, Bilbao
RS	Instituto Valenciano de Arte Moderno, Valencia
RS	Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona
RS	University of Porto, Faculty of Arts
RS	Moderna galerija, Ljubljana

Activities of PRACTICs include

- contemporary Art: Who Cares? International symposium, Amsterdam, June 9–11, 2010;
- conservation & The Public, multi-media tours on contemporary art conservation;
- publication of *Inside Installations: Theory and Practice in the Care of Complex Artworks* (Scholte and Wharton 2011);
- expanding INCCA network available at www.incca.org; and
- establishing new INCCA groups such as INCCA Education and INCCA Conservation science.

During the upcoming symposium Contemporary Art: Who Cares? (June 9–11, 2010), the international community will again discuss the current state of affairs in contemporary art conservation and will hopefully set out new directions for future research.

For more information on Inside Installations, go to www.inside-installations.org. Additional information is available from t.scholte@cultureelerfgoed.nl.

For more information on PRACTICs, visit www.incca.org or www.sbmkn.nl.

Additional information is available from info@sbmkn.nl.

NOTES

1. INCCA is a network of professionals connected to the conservation of modern and contemporary art and was established to meet the need for an international platform for knowledge and information exchange. Conservators, curators, scientists, registrars, archivists, art historians, and researchers are among its members. Since its inception in 1999, the network has grown from 23 to more than 150 members (including independents and students) from over 100 organizations in 26 countries.

REFERENCES

- Scholte, T. and G. Wharton. 2011. *Inside installations: theory and practice in the care of complex artworks*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

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