

Active conservation of large-scale Polyurethane foam sculptures

Invitation to symposium , Konserveringscentret, Vejle, Wednesday 22 March 2017

Polyurethane foam has been used by artists since the 1960s. However signs of degradation are frequently seen within 5 years of production. Discolouration and crumbling due to oxidation of polyurethane ethers limits their possibilities for display and increases their need for care.

Although successful treatments were developed in 2010 by the Cultural Heritage Agency in the Netherlands, the toxicity of the polyurethane consolidants renders them impractical for use on objects too large to be treated in a fume hood. The project *Nedbrydning af polyuretan skum I dansk kunst I stor format fra 1960 til I dag*, funded by the Danish Agency for Culture and under the Centre for Art Technological Studies and Conservation (CATS), is a collaborative research venture between the Danish National Gallery (SMK) and National Museum of Denmark (NM), to identify sustainable alternatives to isocyanates in treating PUR foam. Our preliminary results suggest that a selection of aqueous natural and synthetic consolidants show promise.

During this one day symposium, you will be introduced to the chemical and physical properties of polyurethanes, their fabrication and use in artworks, degradation pathways and conservation case histories. The latest research results will be presented, and you are invited to examine and evaluate materials used in the project. Notes will be provided.

Course tutors:

- *Louise Cone*, has worked professionally within the field of contemporary art conservation since 1997 and is presently responsible for conserving the contemporary art and sculpture collection at Statens Museum for Kunst
- *Yvonne Shashoua*, is Senior Research Scientist at the National Museum of Denmark and has specialized in the degradation and conservation of plastics materials since 2000

Registration:

Places are limited, and we have 12 open spots on a first come first served basis. The symposium is free of charge, but participants must provide their own transportation and accommodation. Please mail: louise.cone@smk.dk to register before March 1, 2017.