

SFIIC Non invasive study and research approaches for cultural heritage conservation | Call for papers

Submitted by Marina Herriges on 09 Jan 2025

The first non-invasive examinations of works of art were carried out by the eye of the expert. That of the curator or collection manager, the art historian, the conservator, or the scientist. This in-depth, meticulous observation of cultural object materiality, for conservation purposes, was first carried out as part of condition reports and surveys, for which photographic records progressively replaced freehand sketches. Photographic techniques can thus be considered the first non-invasive examination technology used to objectively characterize the materiality of a work of art.

Since then, non-invasive techniques have continued to progress, enabling us to obtain more information about works of art while minimizing the number of samples, taken for study or research. This evolution of scientific examination towards a minimal invasiveness is in line with the “minimal intervention” deontology of restoration.

The progress of scientific instrumentation, even more powerful and miniaturized, has given us access to new, transportable devices that can be used in situ, for preliminary studies or during restoration work. In recent years, the development of 2D and 3D imaging techniques, field microscopy and non-invasive analyses has created a new scientific environment, contributing to a new paradigm that tends to move the laboratory towards workshops and the works themselves.

The growing use of non-invasive tools and techniques nonetheless raises a number of questions: What are their advantages and limits ? To what extent can they replace or complement laboratory micro-destructive techniques ? How can conservation/restoration professionals access and use the results ? How should we archive and reuse the data they produce ?

This evolution has strongly increased the amount of data available for the scientific documentation of cultural assets, thus enriching the decision-making process for conservation-restoration interventions. Non-destructive techniques sometimes enable us to objectify some subjective perceptions. This raises the question of how these new tools and data interact with our feelings and sensitivities, both literally and figuratively, when examining a work of art.

This congress, organized through the initiative of all the SFIIC working groups, aims to address the conservation and restoration of both movable and immovable heritage, ancient and modern and including a wide range of materials. We therefore invite all heritage professionals to submit papers on this topic. This non-invasive approach, which we understand in the broadest sense, could address issues relating to the knowledge and documentation of works of art, as well as studies and research into their materiality. Submissions could concern a variety of topics: historical, technical & scientific, deontological, etc. Multi-presenter papers (3 maximum), are welcome as they illustrate a process of interdisciplinary reflection and decision making that are dear to the values of SFIIC.

The languages of the congress will be French and English (with simultaneous translation for oral communications). Presentations are expected to last 20 min. A poster session including flash presentation (1

minute/1 diapositive) will also be part of the program.

Please submit your proposals in English or French by clicking on the abstract submission button below. The deadline for abstract submission is February 17th 2025.

More information: <https://sfiic.com/congress-2026-home-page-call-for-paper/>