

# Performing Documentation in the Conservation of Contemporary Art

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Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian

Lisboa, Portugal

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## CALL FOR PAPERS

Contemporary art conservation requires a re-assessment of the distinction between the work and its re-configuration in documentation. Although documentation is crucial for the survival of many contemporary works of art, it is never neutral: all approaches, formats, media and systems have their own inherent affordances and blind spots and always transform what they document. Furthermore, in process-centered, technology-based or performative artworks in particular, we often can no longer make a sharp distinction between an original work and its subsequent documentation or replication: documentation is part of the work's very core. On the other hand, even the most meticulously documented works will need to be re-installed or re-performed regularly in order to survive, because otherwise important tacit know-how will get lost. The role of the artist in this process is central, but contested: what if s/he changes her mind, loses interest or is no longer available? And what if the authorship of the work is distributed over several actors? Also, the role of the conservator has taken new dimensions: conservation responsibilities and tasks are now distributed over a diversity of agents.

Presentations and discussions will evaluate existing documentation techniques and approaches with regard to these fundamental questions and assess their benefits and limitations. Also, the role that less obvious approaches, agents and areas of knowledge can play – especially in the process of documenting process-centered, technology-based and performative works of art – will be strong topics under examination and debate. We encourage proposals that discuss one or more of the following topics in connection with the above mentioned types of artworks:

1. Oral testimony in documentation of tangible and intangible elements in contemporary art;
2. The role of social sciences and humanities in documentation of contemporary art;
3. Documentation in conservation practice;
4. The changing role of archives in documentation of contemporary art;
5. Dissemination of documentation practices: the role of museums, interaction with the public and the use of media technologies.

Authors interested in presenting a paper are invited to submit an abstract of up to 500 words by **15 January 2013** to [performingdocumentation@gmail.com](mailto:performingdocumentation@gmail.com). The work must be original and not previously published. Contributions should be in English and include the contact information for the author(s) (affiliation, address, telephone and e-mail). You will be notified whether or not your paper has been selected by 28 February 2013. Selected authors will be required to submit a draft of 4000 words by 21 May 2013 for review and future publication after the conference.

**Performing Documentation in the Conservation of Contemporary Art** is jointly organized by the research project *Documentation of Contemporary Art* and the Network for Conservation of Contemporary Art Research (NeCCAR)

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