

# The training of a fluctuating staff in the principles of preventive conservation

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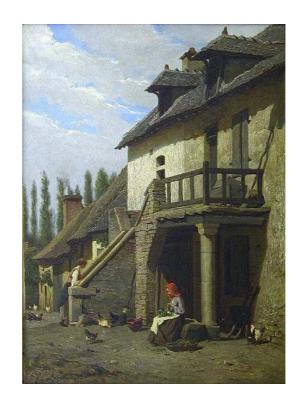
#### I – Presentation of the museum

- -a free drawing school was installed from 1819 in the buildings of the former Ursulines convent.
- -the foundation of the museum arose from the activities of the Historical and Archaeological Societies, the Society of the Friends of the Arts and the Society of Natural History
- -on 15 August 1866 the museum was inaugurated in the premises of the drawing school and organised with a
  - -natural science section
  - -history and fine arts section



- -the name of Vivant Denon was given to it in 1895 associating it with this great man born in Chalon,
- -the museum grew progressively by the construction of a building to join the former drawing school and the building in the Rue Boichot given to the museum after the 2nd World War.





-the archaeological collections include several thousand archaeological and ethnographic objects,

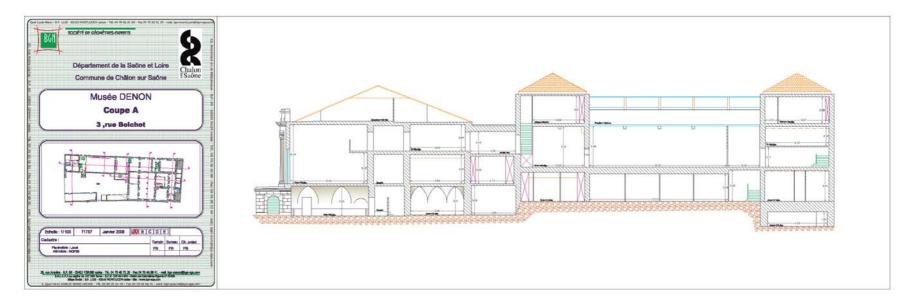
-the fine arts collection arises from an accumulation of works and objects of local interest among which some real masterpieces and remarkable objects stand out.



Exceptional local figures: Vivant Denon, Jules Chevrier, François Chabas...., have allowed the constitution of a fine art collection of approximately 10,000 objects including notably:

- -480 paintings,
- -300 sculptures and sculpted fragments,
- -2700 graphic documents,
- -2400 decorative and ethnographic objects,
- -3000 coins and medals.

## II – The plan for preventive conservation



The reorganisation of the Musée Denon was initiated in 2000 with a view to rationalising the running costs as:

- -the premises are composed of 3 communicating buildings with 7 different levels and 2 buildings in the courtyard,
- -the buildings are old and should be brought up to safety standards,
- -the collections are building up in exhibition spaces and reserves.

# A study for preventive conservation was carried out in 2002

### A. Diagnosis



The building presents visible sanitary problems



# The areas are insufficient to contain the museum's collections

The spaces are difficult to use as they are many, dispersed and not very suitable





- -the collection suffers from conservation problems
- -the climate is not controlled

#### **B.** Recommendations

- -re-organise the collections, improve their conservation,
- -act effectively and for the long term on the immediate environment of the collections,
  - -define an architectural project and create a scientific and cultural programme,
  - -carry out a climatic study which would allow a new arrangement of the spaces and their function (conservation, exhibition, storage....) and would propose climate control solutions,
  - -create of a quarantine zone,
  - -reorganise the reserves : acquisition of storage facilities, materials for wrapping and treatment of collections,
  - -organise staff training in conservation techniques.

# III Carrying out the preventive conservation plan

### Staff training. Two phases:

A. – awareness,

B. – specialisation.

#### A. Awareness

# 2001: introduction to preventive conservation and fire safety

- -measuring and control of climate,
- -maintenance of premises,
- -introduction to the evacuation of works after fire,
- -handling works,
- -elaboration of a work evacuation programme.

#### 2002 : climate measuring training

The anoxia campaign begins: the works are sorted, transported or treated in situ, the importance of inspections

is confirmed



#### 2003:

- introduction to the fabrication of frames,
- de-infestation campaign (417 documents damaged by mould),
- -beginning of the campaign to mend frames and wrap.





### B – **Specialisation** of three staff members 2004 – 2009



The conservators intervene according to their specialist knowledge:

- -train and supervise the staff,
- -prepare and oversee the reorganisation of the reserves
- -keep a global vision of the collections from sorting to wrapping the de-infested and consolidated object.

#### The paintings (480)

Review of condition – insecticide and fungicide treatments – the staff remove dust, fix lugs and hanging systems, fix into frames, mark and make polypropylene pochettes



#### The graphic documents (2700)

- -the works are removed from frames
- -1st sorting according to techniques: drawings, prints, illuminations, miniatures,
- -2nd sorting: drawing techniques and alterations (pulverulent techniques, thick board mounts, acids, alteration of miniatures),
- -Training in dusting prints, in mounting restored works, making conservation pochettes

# -works classed by technique, format, artist, inventory number, supervised by the restorer





#### The Objects

- -sorted by material
- -logic of the collection conserved for retrospective inventory



#### The sculptures

- -large, heavy stone items, in inappropriate exhibition settings have been treated twice with biocides.
- -the sculptures of more modest formats mostly in plaster or clay have been arranged in 3 special reserves.



#### The frames

- -global evaluation campaign,
- -introduction to the specific deterioration of gilded wood,
- -establishing a conservation restoration programme,
- -training in dust removal, re-fixing of small elements of stucco, small re-touching in watercolour.





IAQ2010, Chalon-sur-Saône, 21 April 2010

## IV Continuing prevention

From 2001 to 2009, 83 days of training, more than 6000 objects treated and wrapped, 9 reserve and storage spaces created.

#### **Today we must:**

- -maintain the inspection of collections, pay attention daily to climatic variations during moves, exhibitions or maintenance and ensure that climate measuring and control instruments are maintained.
- -continue the training of new, and reinforce that of old, reception and security staff.
- -for specialised staff: improve the level of technical ability and update regularly the knowledge gained. The presence of conservators is essential to ensure analysis, recommendations and control.
- -carry out a preventive conservation plan for the archaeological collections.

## Thank you for your attention!