

## **Laudatio for Agnes Brokerhof ICCROM Award 2023**

Nominated by Robert Waller

Seconded by Bart Ankersmit, Jean Tétreault, José Luiz Pederzoli, Anna Bülow

It is with great pleasure that on behalf of ICCROM, we have the honour of introducing the winner of the 2023 ICCROM Award, Agnes Brokerhof. Ms Brokerhof, a Dutch national, following her BSc in biochemistry, MSc in Analytical chemistry and BA in art history, and a research fellowship at CSIRO, completed the ICCROM course: Scientific Principles of Conservation in Rome. She is and has been working for the Cultural Heritage Laboratory of the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands and is an internationally active and widely respected conservation scientist who has been a key contributor to many ICCROM initiatives.

This award is a recognition of the significant contributions that Agnes has made to numerous ICCROM programs and projects in the field of cultural heritage conservation, in the Netherlands and internationally.

As a conservation scientist and teacher, Agnes Brokerhof has dedicated her entire career to the conservation and management of all forms of cultural heritage worldwide. Her diverse experience includes roles as both a Visiting Fellow and, later, Visiting Scientist at CSIRO, Stored Grain Research Laboratory, Canberra, as well as a progression of roles in institutions in the Netherlands including the National Service for Monuments Care, Central Research Laboratory for Art and Science, Netherlands Institute for Cultural Heritage (ICN), Royal Dutch Army – CIMIC, and Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands (RCE).

The overview that follows maps some of her many contributions to the cultural heritage sector. Her contributions to conservation theory, science, and practice have spanned a great diversity of sizes and types of heritage, from built heritage, through natural science and humanities collections, to contemporary art. Over these ranges, all Agnes's work has been marked by commitment to truth and rigorous science, to evidence-based critical thinking, and to respect for diverse, pluralistic values. Agnes has a strong focus on the practicality and applicability of scientific methods and knowledge aiming to empower those that manage heritage collections. She has generously shared her knowledge and skills through lectures, teaching, and publications. ICCROM has benefitted both directly through Agnes' contributions to ICCROM projects as well as through her generally elevating the field of cultural heritage conservation globally.

In 1992, Agnes attended the Scientific Principles in Conservation course in ICCROM. With her natural leadership, she organized tours for the participants around Rome during weekends. During classes, she was well respected by the participants and teachers alike. That would prove not surprising as she went on to be universally appreciated and respected within the field of heritage management.

The emphasis of her work always lies in finding practical and cost-effective solutions for real-life problems in heritage conservation and management, developing new knowledge and methods to support heritage institutions in doing their work more effectively and efficiently. Her contribution to the heritage field varies widely, from value-based decision making to the development of a plastic heat treatment tent to treat pest infected objects in underdeveloped countries. This is a characteristic that makes Ms Brokerhof's work of such great and extraordinary value to ICCROM in serving its varied client countries.

Agnes' wide-ranging expertise, commitment, pragmatism, and creativity have been instrumental for supporting ICCROM to design and successfully implement key capacity building activities over the

last 20 years, with particular focus on heritage collections. This includes curriculum development and teaching for the following international courses: 'Sharing Conservation Decisions' (Rome, 2002, 2004, 2006), 'Preventive Conservation' (Ottawa, 2003), 'Reducing Risks to Collections' (Rome 2005, Ottawa 2006, Sibiu 2007), 'Reducing Risks to Cultural Heritage' (distance learning course in 2011), 'Conservation of textiles in Southeast Asian Collections' (Leiden, 2005) and 'First Aid to Cultural Heritage in Times of Crisis' (Amsterdam, 2015). In particular, the 'Reducing Risks' courses have been pivotal to transform (movable) heritage conservation and management internationally by introducing, promoting and enabling value-based risk management for cultural heritage.

Agnes has also participated and provided invaluable inputs to several high-impact international meetings organized by ICCROM: 'Sharing Conservation Decisions Seminar' (Rome, 2011), 'Forum on Conservation Science' (Rome, 2013) and 'Evaluating the Outcomes of Heritage Science Think-tank meeting' (Rome, 2015). The outputs of these meetings provided a comprehensive and critical reference/resource for the heritage sector to take stock of the situation concerning conservation decision-making and heritage/conservation science, and to better position itself for the future.

In addition to ICCROM, Agnes has been a regular and important contributor to the International Institute for Conservation (IIC), the International Council of Museums - Committee for Conservation (ICOM-CC), and the Society for the Preservation of Natural History Collections (SPNHC). She has been a reviewer for several international journals including *Studies in Conservation* for many years, authored or coauthored more than 70 professional papers or publications including the books:

- Unravelling Textiles: A Handbook for the Preservation of Textile Collections
- Buggy biz: integrated pest management in collections
- Control of fungi and insects in objects and collections of cultural value
- Risk Management for Collections
- Assessing Museum Collections - Collection valuation in six steps

Due to her warm, open, and outgoing personality, and her readiness to, and apparent pleasure in, promoting the work of her colleagues and acquaintances, she is a ready mentor to, and champion of, emerging professionals. Agnes is always ready to let her own flames ignite those of emerging colleagues then step into the background to let them shine.

Now, it is our pleasure to invite Agnes forward to the podium and to shine herself before us and accept her ICCROM 2023 Award from the President of the 33<sup>rd</sup> session of ICCROM's General Assembly, Mr Ola Wetterberg.

CL/Central Research Laboratory for Objects of Art and Science in Amsterdam

Australian Museum in Sydney where I worked for a while at the Materials Conservation department

CSIRO's Stored Grain Research Laboratory in Canberra

Central Lab, Amsterdam

Dutch museums

Natural History and Ethnographic collections

ICOM-CC/International Council of Museums – Conservation Committee's Natural History Working Group and SPNHC.