

PhD in Technical Art History

University Delft University of Technology, The Netherlands
Faculty/department Mechanical, Maritime and Materials Engineering
Level Master degree
Maximum employment Maximum of 38 hours per week (1 FTE)
Duration of contract 4 years full-time or 5 years part-time
Salary scale €2042 to €2612 per month gross

Mechanical, Maritime and Materials Engineering

The 3ME Faculty of the Delft University of Technology trains committed engineering students, PhD candidates and post-doctoral researchers in groundbreaking scientific research in the fields of mechanical, maritime and materials engineering. 3ME is the epitome of a dynamic, innovative faculty, with a European scope that contributes demonstrable economic and social benefits.

Materials in Art and Archeology

Within the Department of Materials Science, the 'Materials in Art and Archeology' section develops and applies ground-breaking, analytical concepts for studying objects from cultural heritage. Our expertise centres on the elemental and structural characterisation of materials in support of technical art history and conservation of art work. We have close collaboration with (inter)nationally leading partners in the worlds of art, archaeology and science and bridge the gap between the sciences and the humanities in both education and research.

Job description

The candidate will work in the NWO-funded Innovational Research Incentives Scheme Vidi project: From Isolation to Coherence: an Integrated Technical, Visual and Historical Study of 17th and 18th Century Dutch Painting Ensembles. This project investigates 17th and 18th century Dutch paintings that were commissioned for a specific location, as part of a large, decorative ensemble. Together with architectural elements, plasterwork and woodcarvings, these paintings on walls, ceiling and mantelpiece formed a coherent whole. These historical interiors offer a unique insight into the intentions of the patron and their visual realization by the artist(s). We investigate for the first time the materials, production and history of treatment of these paintings and their visual and cultural-historical aspects. We work with an interdisciplinary team that combines art technological and (art) historical research. The Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands (RCE) is a partner in the project.

The PhD candidate will work on the technical and stylistic developments in the so-called 'behangselschilderkunst' – the field of painted wall-hangings. In the 17th century, well-to-do citizens in the Netherlands decorated their homes mainly with easel paintings. Over the course of the 17th century, there also developed in the Netherlands a trend to decorate houses with huge paintings that largely or entirely covered the walls. In contrast to easel paintings, which as a rule served a merely decorative function, these painted wall-hangings were mainly produced for a specific location, with their iconography and formal aspects (use of colour, light incidence, composition, perspective) attuned to the architecture and function of that chosen location. This change of function had radical stylistic consequences. The enlarged

scale and altered function of the paintings – from ‘independent image’ to ‘inclusive decor’ – also demanded material-technical adaptations from the painters. One thinks of the need for other priming layers and new ways of stretching the canvases, as well as faster and cheaper painting techniques. The aim of the PhD research project is to investigate these material-technical and stylistic developments. This will involve several case studies on location, in close collaboration with the other members of the project.



Requirements

Applicants should have the following qualifications:

- A Master's degree in the Conservation and Restoration of Paintings, or Conservation and Restoration of Historic Interiors, from a conservation training programme that conforms to ECCO/ENCoRE professional qualifications
- BA or MA degree in Art History.
- The candidate should have a proven ability (on the MA level) to carry out material-technical research and to link these scientific investigations to art historical research.
- We prefer a candidate with demonstrable knowledge of historical painting techniques and of the history of Dutch art and interiors of the 17th and 18th centuries.
- Ability to closely collaborate with the conservation scientist in the team.
- Affinity for art technological source research.
- Good social and organisational skills.
- Ability to work in an interdisciplinary team: a 'team player'.
- (Passive) knowledge of the Dutch language.

Conditions of employment

The candidate will work both at TU Delft and at the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands (RCE; Amsterdam).

TU Delft offers an attractive benefits package, including a flexible work week, free high-speed Internet access from home (with contracts of two years or longer), and the option of assembling a customised compensation and benefits package (the 'IKA'). Salary and benefits are in accordance with the Collective Labour Agreement for Dutch Universities.

Information and application

For more information about this position, please contact Dr. M.H. van Eikema Hommes, e-mail: m.h.vaneikemahommes@tudelft.nl.

To apply, please send the following materials:

- 1) a detailed CV,
- 2) a letter of application,
- 3) your grades,
- 4) a summary of your MA thesis and list of publications (if any),
- 5) the names and contact data of three professional references, written in English.

Please e-mail your application materials by 14 May 2012 to: application-3mE@tudelft.nl.

When applying for this position, please refer to vacancy number 3ME12-13.