

**GUEST LECTURE WEDNESDAY 17 OCTOBER  
DCR MEETING ROOM, 14:00-15:30**

**“Effects of the Oil Paintings Restoration Treatment: The Pettenkofer-Process”**

By Dr Sibylle Schmitt

Dr Schmitt will present a lecture covering her doctoral research on paintings which have been treated by the Pettenkofer process (“Regeneration”) which involved the use of copaiba balsam. Over 140 works of art in nine museums mostly in Germany, in London and The Hague, were identified as having been exposed to this popular treatment. Although the treatment was invented in 1860, it was in constant use as late as the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Information from archives and treatment reports were correlated to the actual condition of 40 of these regenerated paintings. Microscopic investigations determined that many of them exhibit characteristic severe damages with a significant number still containing evidence of copaiba balsam.

Reconstructions of the treatment to test the effect of the Pettenkofer process were performed, resulting in typical damages. Dr Schmitt developed a recognition-chart and a first approach to create a terminology of characteristic defects caused by the application of copaiba balsam to dried oil paint. Using this tool the phenomena observed in oil paintings can now be recognized and classified. Details of a selection of the copaiba balsam effects will be presented to demonstrate the relevant phenomena and discuss the proposed descriptive terminology.



**BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE**

After a decade of practical training in several German Museums and Departments for the Care of Cultural Heritage, Sibylle Schmitt then completed her conservation training at Staatliche Kunstakademie Stuttgart in 1988. Having passed six years as a freelancer in Bavaria and two appointments at Restaurierungszentrum Düsseldorf and Wallraf-Richartz-Museum in Cologne, she was awarded a full time position at Kölnisches Stadtmuseum in 1994. Between 1995 – 2000 she joined the MOLART-Research-Program as a part time researcher. In 2016 she passed her PhD examination on “The Effects of the Pettenkofer Process”. An online-publication is foreseen for 2019.