Learning Outside the Classroom

Mastering the Basics of Scientific Research and the Conservation-Restoration Documentation

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Through the compulsory course METHODS OF RESEARCH AND DOCUMENTATION IN CONSERVATION-RESTORATION first-year students are introduced to the methodology of scientific and practical research. They learn how to use scientific literature and to write seminars, scientific and professional papers. The major part of the course, however, is devoted to conservation-restoration documentation, from writing condition reports to interviewing contemporary artists. The course includes lectures, practical work, student presentations and group discussions. It also includes visits to libraries, museums and galleries, and this poster presents outcomes of those outside-the-classroom activities. The Artist in the Classroom project, through which students learn how to document information on contemporary artists’ materials and techniques, is also presented.

University Library of Split: Documentation has to be preserved, too!
During the visit to the University Library in Split we learned how to search for library material in the card and online catalogues. More importantly, we learned how to use and cite library materials in our papers.

A visit to the Preservation and Digitization Department was especially interesting. The head of the department explained that there are many causes of paper degradation. We learned about the harmful effects of high humidity, temperature and light. We also learned that, over time, the acidity of paper increases. This made us wonder what will happen to documentation in printed form in the future... It has to be preserved, as well! Perhaps existing records could be converted into a digital format. At the Preservation and Digitization Department we observed how this is done with old newspapers.

City Museum of Split: Introduction to museum documentation
The visit to the City Museum of Split was very informative. The museum educator gave us a guided tour of the collections. We learned that her job is to improve visitors’ understanding and appreciation of the museum collection and temporary exhibitions. We find public outreach very important in our profession, as well, because we need to raise awareness about the need to protect and preserve cultural heritage.

We had a short lecture on museum documentation. We learned that most Croatian museums use special software to record information about the materials and techniques he uses, their meaning, his creative process and the ideas embodied in his artworks. We were especially interested in learning how Viktor sees the future of his artworks, i.e. how they should be displayed and preserved.

The interview was recorded and we produced a transcript. Transcribing the interview was a demanding job, but we knew that this information will be of great use to future conservators-restorers, curators, art historians and other researchers.