

with Venetian turpentine and a closely woven canvas (*demi-toile*), followed by a layer of red glue with Venetian turpentine, and then the transfer canvas, which was in two pieces and attached with glue.³⁷

This 'traditional' technique of treating damaged panels was used until the twentieth century, only gradually falling out of favour.³⁸ Writing in 1851, Déon found more reasons to justify the transfer technique than Emile Rostain writing over one hundred years later.³⁹ Although the transfer technique had been questioned by some critics early on, and certainly by the twentieth century was undertaken only as a last resort, during the nineteenth century transfers were accepted, even desired.⁴⁰ In Russia many panels were transferred as a prophylactic measure, not because they required such treatment, but simply to preserve them in the 'best possible state'.⁴¹

The second half of the twentieth century, like the second half of the eighteenth century, was a period of intense activity in the restoration profession, with many new materials evolving into new techniques.⁴² The transfer technique was also improved upon, although more significant were the better facilities and better lighting which allowed the available materials and techniques to be used with more precision, and with the avoidance of the obvious dangers related to unsophisticated equipment – for example, using hot irons with no thermostats.

Thus, if one goes by written accounts of restoration, until the 1970s the transfer technique, and indeed most restoration techniques, were not dissimilar to those used in the eighteenth century or even before. There is, however, a difference between what is written down and what is actually done. For example, the use of paper in the transfer process was not recorded in the written texts, but that it was used in eighteenth-century transfers was discovered in 1958 during the transfer of Sebastiano del Piombo's *Raising of Lazarus* at the National Gallery.⁴³ Since then the use of paper has been documented on several transferred paintings. Fine silk embedded in the mixture of glue and flour

more sporadically until 1950. See Bergeon *et al.*, *op. cit.* (note 1), for a history of the panel workers employed by the Louvre during the twentieth century.

³⁹ E. Rostain: *Rentoilage et transposition des tableaux*, Puteaux 1981, pp.93–121, for transfers. Emile Rostain and his studio, working in the Louvre in the 1950s, were considered to have mastered the transfer technique.

⁴⁰ François-Xavier de Burtin (1748–1818), in his *Traité théorique et pratique des connaissances qui sont nécessaires à tout amateur de tableaux*. . . , Brussels 1808, wrote that the transfer technique was well known in Paris.

⁴¹ Marconi, *op. cit.* (note 31); and M. Nikogosyan: 'The Restoration of paintings at the Imperial Hermitage (Saint-Petersburg) at the beginning of the 19th century', *CeRO Art, Conservation, exposition, Restauration d'Objets d'Art* 4/3/2015 <http://ceroart.revues.org/2344> (accessed 2nd April 2015).

⁴² At the beginning of the twentieth century a technique was devised of leaving a thin layer of the original panel support which was then backed with another panel.

paste, which was applied directly to the reverse of the paint film together with a residue of original ground, was also found on paintings transferred by Hacquin. This also makes the layer structure inherently more fragile.

There are further difficulties in clarifying the technique even when a written restoration report exists; for example, there are numerous mentions of a 'gaze' being used in the transfers. One might suppose that these refer to a similar material, however, the variations in the materials shown in the samples retained by the Centre de Recherche et de Restauration des Musées de France (C2RMF) illustrate that there are numerous possibilities⁴⁴ – and this shows clearly the importance of these small scraps of evidence that might in themselves seem insignificant. With imprecisions of vocabulary in the reports as well as so many variables in the procedure and in the range of materials, even by the same restorer in the same studio, generalisations about the procedure are difficult, and one is forced to conclude that each transfer, as each individual painting, is unique.

In conclusion, it is important to appreciate that works of art change with time – often as a result of factors inherent in the artist's choice of materials and technique as well as due to interventions. In this instance we have considered the transfer process, which leads to unalterable changes – perhaps the most obvious being the change in the craquelure system of the paint layer. But changes in the appearance of a painting have multiple physical and chemical causes, some influenced by interference, others caused by the passage of time. And subtle changes of many kinds can have a profound effect on how we view and interpret a work of art.⁴⁵ The transfer procedure has been a controversial chapter in the history of painting conservation that has intrigued both professionals and amateurs (amateur in the eighteenth-century sense of the word) and has so brought painting conservation, and the ameliorations and alterations to a work of art that it instigates, into the awareness of a wider public – and that can only be positive.

During and after the 1950s there were many more deviations from the 'traditional' method of transfer. For example, marine-grade plywood with a flat aesthetic, i.e. non-functional, cradle was used for semi-transfers in the 1950s, and in the 1970s resin-impregnated fibreglass and fibreglass fabric with an aluminium honeycomb core were often chosen for the support (as being even more stable than canvas) using Beva 371 and/or epoxy resin as the adhesive.

⁴³ It was more problematic to turn over the painting when the paint layer was held not by strong canvas but only by tissue paper facing on the front and another layer of paper on the reverse; see Dunkerton and Howard, *op. cit.* (note 7), p.30.

⁴⁴ 'Gaze' can be translated as gauze, thin cloth or canvas; the fabric referred to could be linen, cotton, fine jute or other material with a thread thickness and thread count variable from extremely fine and loosely woven to strong and tightly woven.

⁴⁵ For more examples of the changes in the appearance of a painting due to its age and the history of its conservation, see P. Taylor: *Condition: the Ageing of Art*, London 2015.

Obituary

Edith Hoffmann (1907–2016)

THE ART HISTORIAN and unofficial wartime Editor of this Magazine, Edith Hoffmann, died in Jerusalem on 4th January 2016 at the age of 108. She was born in Vienna on 24th July 1907, the daughter of the Bohemian poet, journalist and diplomat Camill Hoffmann. She spent her childhood in Hellerau, near Dresden,

then moved with her family to Berlin in 1920 when her father was appointed by President Tomáš G. Masaryk to the position of press and cultural attaché at the Czechoslovak legation in Germany. Edith Hoffmann studied art history in Berlin, Vienna and Munich, completing her doctorate in 1934 under the supervision of Wilhelm Pinder in Munich with a thesis on 'The depiction of the citizen in German painting in the eighteenth century'.

In 1934 Camill Hoffmann encouraged his daughter to move to London where she worked as a volunteer in the Print Room at the British Museum for four years. An encounter with the British art historian and critic Herbert Read proved decisive

for her future career. She assisted in preparing the exhibition *Twentieth-Century German Art* held in the New Burlington Galleries in 1938. Hoffmann was fully aware of the risks artists faced under the Third Reich, and she urged the exhibition's British organisers not to write directly to artists who had remained in Germany, as it could have put them in danger. Numerous works, branded as 'degenerate' by the Nazis, could be found in private collections in Germany. With Hoffmann's assistance, some of them were lent to the London show. In her correspondence with the art historian Cordula Frowein in the early 1980s, Hoffmann recalled the problems she had in organising the exhibition: 'You can hardly imagine how difficult it was to interest "respectable people" in it: 1) because most English people either didn't know modern German art or found it atrocious, 2) because no one wanted to get their fingers burnt'. In order to help save persecuted artists, Hoffmann joined the Artists' Refugee Committee (ARC), founded in November 1938 at 47 Downshire Hill, the Hampstead home of Fred Uhlman, a German-Jewish lawyer, artist and writer. Its purpose was to rescue members of the Prague-based Oskar-Kokoschka-Bund (OKB), a group of German artists exiled in that city, who – with the German occupation of Czechoslovakia imminent – urgently needed help. The ARC also did a great deal to help these artists (over twenty in number, among them Theo Balden and Heinz Worner – Kokoschka himself had arrived in October 1938) once they reached Britain.

Hoffmann's parents were still in Prague. She saw her father for the last time in London in October 1938 while her mother was packing up in Berlin in order to move to Prague. When she asked her parents, both of Jewish descent, to come to England, her father – who had by then retired – replied: 'What are the Germans going to do to an old man sitting in a library in Prague?'. Four years later, he and his wife were deported to Theresienstadt. They were murdered in Auschwitz in 1944.

According to Edith Hoffmann's own record of her association with *The Burlington Magazine*,¹ she became its Editorial Assistant in 1938, when Herbert Read was the Editor. Her interview for the job, however, had been conducted by Tancred Borenius, then a member of the Magazine's Consultative Committee. Although Hoffmann learned her editorial skills from Read, as well as a great deal about the English language, she worked mostly for Borenius, after Read's successor, A.C. Sewter, who had been appointed at the outset of the War, left in October 1940. Borenius had long been the Magazine's *eminence grise*, and he became Honorary Acting Editor, enthusiastically editing and contributing to the Magazine.

The strain of the war years took their toll. The Magazine became thinner as paper became more difficult to acquire. Many of its contributors had been called up. Borenius succumbed to depression, came less and less to the office and, when he did, he looked at a few papers, spoke to no one and soon left. In these difficult times, 'Hoffmann became the first woman to be in charge of the Magazine, albeit in unofficial capacity'.² For two years no Editor is listed in the pages of the Magazine, and the staff were advised to consult Ellis Waterhouse or Herbert

Read whenever necessary. Hoffmann remained the mainstay of the Magazine. In 1946 she was promoted to Assistant Editor, in which post she remained until 1950. Above and beyond this she wrote more than 150 articles for *The Burlington Magazine* over a period of more than six decades, most of them reviews of exhibitions and books. Her main interest lay in German Expressionism, and later Symbolism.

In 1947, the year that Benedict Nicolson took over as the *Burlington's* Editor, Hoffman published her book *Kokoschka: Life and Work*. Herbert Read had given her an introduction to the publishers Faber & Faber. She had first met the artist when she was ten, in her parents' house in Hellerau, and she retained ties of friendship with him until his death in 1980. As early as 1917, Hoffmann's father had published two articles on Kokoschka's work as a portraitist and dramatist. The idea of writing a book about Kokoschka came to Hoffmann while visiting the artist in Prague in early 1937, and she set about the project with enthusiasm. Kokoschka escaped to England in 1938 and Hoffmann began interviewing him in July 1940. Initially their meetings took place in the Strand Palace Hotel in London, and they continued to work together during the bombing.

It was not easy to do research during the War. The Nazis had confiscated many works of art, so the whereabouts of several of Kokoschka's paintings were unknown. In 2008, the Kokoschka specialist Heinz Spielmann paid homage to Hoffmann's achievements: 'She was one of the art historians who took an early, methodical interest in Kokoschka's art. The monograph she wrote and published after the end of the Second World War – *Kokoschka: Life and Work* – was a pioneering act that seems all the more remarkable today when one considers the extremely difficult conditions under which it had to be written, cut off as she was from important sources'.³

When Kokoschka expressed a wish to paint Winston Churchill's portrait in 1941, Hoffmann got Borenius involved who, since 1919, had been the official representative of Finland in London. He now brought his diplomatic connections into play and on 25th August 1941 wrote to Churchill's private secretary, John Colville, recommending Kokoschka as 'the greatest painter alive'. But the Prime Minister was occupied with the daily matters of war and the painting was never realised. It was with Hoffmann's assistance that Kokoschka was able to publish one of his most important articles on art in *The Burlington Magazine* in November 1942, entitled 'An approach to the baroque art of Czechoslovakia'.

In 1951 Edith Hoffmann left London with her husband, the Israeli lawyer, journalist and diplomat Eliezer Yapou, and they lived variously in Tel-Aviv, Brussels, New York, Jerusalem, Amsterdam, South Africa, Paris and finally Jerusalem once more. Despite the many moves and the daily demands of diplomatic life Hoffmann continued her research, making regular contributions to art-historical magazines such as *Apollo*, *Art News* and *Studio* as well as articles in *The Listener*, the *Manchester Guardian*, *The New Statesman*, *Twentieth Century* and the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, as well as *The Burlington Magazine*.

RÉGINE BONNEFOIT

¹ See THE BURLINGTON MAGAZINE 128 (1986), pp.478–80.

² B. Pezzini: 'Edith Hoffmann, the first unofficial woman Editor of "The Burlington Magazine"', burlingtonindex.wordpress.com (8th January 2014).

³ H. Spielmann: '1934–1938 Prag. Begegnungen mit Freunden und Weggefährten', in A. Hoerschelmann, ed.: *Oskar Kokoschka. Exil und neue Heimat. 1934–1938*, Ostfildern 2008, pp.55–60, esp. p.59.