Expression imposed or superposed. Reintegration of paper-based artifacts according to the custodian’s needs

Magdalena Grenda  
research assistant at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, Poland  
paper conservatorWarsaw Rising Museum, Warsaw, Poland  
freelance

the expression of the conservator  
expression that serves to enhance the meaning
what do contemporary theory of conservation and contemporary conservation treatment methodology say about conservation?
interpretation
intervention that might affect the object’s appearance and structure
secures the values of the artifacts’ custodians

negotiatory mediation
value-led conservation
functional conservation
highly adaptive social conversation

NOW conservation is described with terms that were not used before

different articulations, one of which inevitably prevails, because otherwise it would be impossible to complete the treatment

Anonymous photographs, not dated, private owner. Left: reconstruction by adding (retouching)  
right: reintegration by reducing (removing the deposits)

The first Polish stamp, issued in 1860, private owner  
The shape of the perforation was reconstructed according to very detailed instructions of the owner

The photographs from the second half of 20th century, the Rediscovered Music Foundation (private). The curators requested minimal intervention which they understood as securing irregular losses with „neutral” infills, with no retouching.

Stefan Norblin, film poster Bezimienni bohaterowie  
owner: Poster Museum in Warsaw, 1932.  
The poster was heavily damaged. The conservator negotiated with the owner to use rettocco as a reintegration method compromising the fact of big losses and the history of the object. The object was prepared to be exhibited.

Work of Teresa Gierzyńska, Czy takie byt siostry?, 1976  
The work was prepared for the exhibition in a private gallery, Pola Magnetyczne in Warsaw.  
The rettocco retouch was done according to artist’s request to reconstruct the damage in the upper right corner.

Conclusions

satisfying different curators’ needs implies different treatment decisions. one object can possibly be treated in several ways, giving different outcomes.

contemporary theory of conservation and conservation treatment methodology entitle different solutions conforming different approaches to the image of the artifact, whether it is a historic evidence or an artwork.

Decision-making requires flexibility and understanding to the complexity of values of the object. The values have to be fully recognized and appreciated before initiating intervention of a conservation treatment.

more: Magdalena Grenda at Academia.edu and LinkedIn, grenda.magdalena@gmail.com