

### **Purpose and goal of the project**

Restauratoren Nederland (RN) is the professional organization for professionals working in the field of the restoration, conservation and preservation of cultural heritage. RN is working on a project to develop Professional and Competency Profiles.

At this moment, the professional field is not well-defined as there are various profiles active and practitioners in the profession employing many titles with diverse tasks, competencies and abilities (skills). This situation provides no clarity for the professionals themselves, their employers, concerned institutions and governing bodies, nor for other interested parties.

RN wants to define and limit the field of specialization and the professions therein in an unequivocal manner. This will then form the basis for profiles (both within and outside the field) and further professionalization and professional recognition (certification). It can also serve to diminish the confusion surrounding the titles and terms used for the professions in the field. RN wants to correlate job titles and job descriptions one to one. The profiles form a substantial part of the professional standards of RN.

By introducing clarity and eliminating ambiguity, the profiles will contribute to the quality of the practice of the profession in the field of the preservation of cultural heritage. They will not only give direction to initial training programs, but also to continuing education, presentation and professionalization of the profession and the professionals. The profiles are intended for the Netherlands and also for Flanders. Existing profiles address a few specific professions. They can be included under the umbrella of these new – generic – profiles.

RN invests in the development, but the project is primarily made possible by the Commission cultural treaty Flanders Netherlands and the National Archive (The Hague).

### **Phase 1**

Between mid- 2006 and early 2007 a group of active professionals from the Netherlands and Flanders worked on the 1st phase of the project: the professional (tasks) profiles: tasks, competencies and responsibilities were unambiguously identified. A series of characteristics and criteria make a clear distinction between three professions. A review board, also from the Netherlands and Flanders, critically reviewed the results and agreed with them. Remarks from the review board were collected through interviews and processed. Three professions were distinguished with the following names: Restorer (NL) *resp.* Conservator-Restorer (FL); Restoration-Conservation Technician (NL) *resp.* Conservation-Restoration Technician (FL); Conservation Assistant (NL and FL).

### **Phase 2**

In the period from fall 2007 until spring 2008 work was concentrated on phase 2 – the development of the associated competencies (or requirements of ability). These make the picture complete, so that in the end, three complete professional-and competency-profiles exist. Again, we worked with a work group and a review board. The work group consisted of professionals working in one of the three professions and from the Netherlands and Flanders. The review board consisted of a number of authoritative experts from Flanders and the Netherlands. The project has now been completed.

## **The Domain of the Profession**

The Professional- and Competency-Profiles (P&C-profiles) cover the professional field of restoration, conservation and preservation of cultural heritage (as defined by E.C.C.O.). Also it covers the professions of the professionals which actually carry out the activities – as main professional activities – within one or more of these three professional domains.

In the vision of the formulators, though the object is central, the intrinsic characteristics of the object are not the only consideration. Both its immediate and larger surrounding must also be taken into consideration. This network of relationships is not stable. It forms a dynamic force-field which the professional takes into account.

Particularly the Conservator takes into account all relationships and factors in this force-field during all phases of a treatment. The restoration of an object influences the relationship between object and surrounding (or force-field) and creates a new balance. The force-field and the object itself yield heritage definition, heritage content and heritage values. We view restoration as a cyclical process of object- and surroundings-analysis and one which gives meaning and value. The professional works in an interdisciplinary team with other specialists.

This is the first time that these three professions and their mutual consistency are being described in the Netherlands and Flanders.

## **Professional- and Competency-Profiles**

Every profession distinguishes itself from the other professions by means of a demarcated package of tasks etc. and abilities (competencies). In the professional field of restoration, conservation and preservation three professions can be identified on the basis of the employed criteria. The criteria which we have developed are descriptive criteria, which through their mutual consistency characterize each of the three professions. The criteria concern the contents and competencies required of each profession.

Criteria such as (among others):

- o Core activities
- o Hands-on / hands-off
- o Repertory
- o Autonomy
- o Treatment extent
- o Responsibility
- o Methods and techniques
- o Direction (given / received)

These will be applied to the following task domains in order to discriminate among the three professions and their make up:

- o Research and description
- o Proposal and advice
- o Treatment
- o Documentation
- o Management
- o Presentation (public relations) and professionalization
- o Management
- o Quality control and ethics

The criteria will also be used to discriminate the competencies among the three.  
We identify the following competencies:

- o Context orientation/ Recognition skills
- o Diagnostics skill
- o Research skills
- o Judgment/ Evaluation skills
- o Decision-making skills
- o Treatment skills
- o Social- and communications skills
- o Management and entrepreneurial skills
- o Learning ability/ Innovation
- o Ability to excel in the profession

The profiles are published complete with all background information.

#### **Composition of the work groups**

Lisette van Baars (Private Furniture Conservator)  
Bernadette van Beek (Private Paper Conservator and Educator)  
Astrid van den Berg (Private Painting Conservator)  
Jaap van der Burg (Senior Consultant)  
Peter van Denzen (Co-worker micro filming)  
Elke van Herck (Paper Conservator)  
Paul Knolle (Public Institution, Head of Collections and Curator)  
Monica Schwarze (Conservation Assistant)  
Ted Steemers (Public Institution, Head of Restoration and Conservation)

#### **Composition of the review board**

Maja Bollebakker (Paper Conservator) Zeeuws Archief Middelburg  
Casper de Bonth (Commercial Enterprise/ Educator) Nieuwkuijk NL  
Pim Brinkman (Lecturer) Hogeschool Utrecht  
Gerrit de Bruin (Senior Advisor Preservation) Nationaal Archief Den Haag  
Joost Caen (Educator) Hogeschool Antwerpen  
Dorothee Cannegieter (Director) Rijksmuseum Twenthe Enschede  
Michael van Gampen (Private Conservator / board member E.C.C.O. and APROA/BRK) Brussels  
Wim Hoeben (Head of Department) Rijksmuseum Amsterdam  
Riet Jeurissen (Educator) Xios Hogeschool Limburg Hasselt  
Nathalie Laquière (Educator) Hogeschool Antwerpen  
Suzanne Maarschalkerweerd (Training Program for Conservation and Restoration) Universiteit van Amsterdam  
Charlotte van Rappard Cultural Heritage Inspection Amsterdam  
Martijn de Ruijter (Educator) Reinwardt Academie Amsterdam  
Annick Schramme (Educator / Researcher) Universiteit Antwerpen  
Leon Smets (Cultural Biography Flanders) Berchem  
Theo Thomassen (Directeur) Reinwardt Academie Amsterdam  
Jan de Vries (Director, Training Program for Conservation and Restoration) Universiteit van Amsterdam  
Lieve Watteeuw (Private Researcher/ Conservator) Gent  
Sandra Weerdenburg (Modern Sculpture conservator) Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam

**Steering Committee**

The Steering Committee consisted of the Director (Suzanne Maarschalkerweerd, later Willemien 't Hooft) and Chairman of the Board of RN (Maïke Walraven, later Liesbeth Keijser). The Steering Committee was the board of commission.

**Project Directors**

The Project Direction was manned by Janine van Reekum for her material expertise and Thijs Laeven as expert on professional- and competency Profiles in the Cultural Heritage sector. The Directors extend their utmost thanks to all above mentioned institutions and persons.