

## **Report from the desk of Peter Rath**

### **16th Yearly Meeting of the European Society Light and Glass in Maastricht, 20th till 23rd of August 2015**

At the invitation of our member Pascal Mestrom, who has his studio in Maastricht and following the decision of the Assembly from the previous year, the Society met in the historic and magnificent Old Town of Maastricht with 32 participants and other guests, sponsors and members of the press from nine countries in a particularly constructive annual meeting. The illustrated program booklet with summaries of the lectures was an appropriate addition to this important meeting in the UNESCO Year of Light.

The Board met on Wednesday, 19th August in the evening at the Hotel Beez to discuss the agenda, reports and upcoming program.

Thursday, August 20, 2015 in the meeting room of the cinema "Lumière" on the Bogaardenstraat we were welcomed by President Dr. Helena Koenigsmarková and our hosting organizer Pascal Mestrom.

**Peter Rath**, Vienna, Lecture: "The Chandelier – an artwork, neglected by museums, universities and architects" on the need for representative, healthy illumination of rooms by planning the shadows, by pulsating slow movements and subtle colour change effects. There is a lack of knowledge and evaluation of the chandelier as a historical artwork in museums, lack of education about light itself rather merely lamp design in the universities and lack of commitment by architects in the presentation of the spaces they create. The Society "Light & Glass" is the platform for a paradigm shift in the representational lighting of tomorrow.

**Rob van Beek**, Bergen op Zoom, Senior Architect for the Government Building Agency "Ro-Architekten" spoke about a theme addressed in his book "Electric Light in Historic Interiors". In the aftermath of the phasing out of the incandescent bulb from 2009 – 2016, Mr. van Beek has made a study of the replacements available in LED technology. After a detailed description of the variety of products and a review of such by those responsible for historic buildings, Beek concludes that there is currently no standardized replacement for the old Edison bulb. The LED lamp cannot produce the same quality of light and the manufacturers and sellers of LED technique misrepresent their products with their advertising by making false statements. One example are the claims of efficiency which neglect to take in to account the energy required to produce and dispose of the bulbs and are only based on mere usage. A very practice-oriented, honest and useful presentation from a professional.

Following the lectures the group visited the new showroom of Pascal Mestrom in the nearby Tongersestraat.

Friday, August 21st 2015, It is decided that the official assembly of the Society will be postponed until another day. The meeting protocol transactions are detailed in a separate document posting. The day continues with more lectures in the meeting room after the introduction of the daily program.

**Olivier Perrin**, Zurich, a lighting restorer, presents the 'Filament LED' lightbulb, which he describes as one of the only developments in bulbs with fixtures since the success of the Edison light bulb in 1880. This high-tech product was at first only offered by small companies but with its success, large companies such as Philips, Osram and Sylvania have also added it to their program. Mr. Perrin describes in lay-man terms in the second part of his presentation the problems with the colour representation – RA values in comparison to daylight.

Furthermore problems with the new bulbs regarding Phosphor and disposal, with plastics vs. ceramics, with heating/cooling, switching and the price situation.  
His lecture is aimed at those questions necessary to ask to counter false advertising.

**Siegrun Appelt**, Vienna. As an artist, Ms. Appelt has years of experience with her extraordinary light projects and exhibitions involving light. Since 2011 she has been working, often as part of a team, on her forward-looking project "Slow Light" - an investigation of an aesthetic, energy-saving symbiosis between light and darkness. Her wealth of experience with the new technical possibilities of artificial lighting and its shadows, always with the aim of discovering new scientific and emotional methods for improving ways of meeting our human needs, make her one of the leading interpreters of future developments of lighting both in interiors and in the great outdoors.

A recently completed project "Wachau", involving the illumination of buildings along the Danube River, and a symposium in Melk are important events this year and deserve a Europe-wide recognition. Her presentation should most definitely be published.

**Dr. Jaroslav Svacha**, Novy Bor, with Alzbeta Suvova present a fascinating show of the lighting objects from the Chief Designer Jaroslav Bajvl for the Chandelier producer Preciosa in collaboration with his company TGK. He shows the development from an individual chandelier to an architectural Light-Art object, using all the possibilities of modern technology. Their specialty is the bending of flat glass as well as fusing, layering and mounting sometimes enormous glass parts for astounding projects which Preciosa carries out world-wide. These tasks have led Svacha to an investment in an electric oven which is capable of projects in a large format. Light sculptures in Moscow, in China an object with over 700 plates of glass, a "cone-spiral" in Dubai, gold leaf surfaces, complicated molded glass elements that are then heated, bent and twisted into shape, Nanotechnology for the surfaces. The work is carried out by a team of specialists in the Northern Bohemian glass region.

**Mag. Paul Schuster**, Curator Schloss Eggenburg, Universalmuseum Joanneum, Graz. Mr. Schuster talks about "The Eggenburg Palace in Baroque Light". The turbulent history of the building and its owner and the lack of electrification, all result in an incredible experience today when one strolls through its candle-lit rooms. The 26 original baroque interiors are still decorated with all its original reflective details, including zinc-plated wrought iron chandeliers, sconces and Girandoles.

The impression of the very low-placed, sparkling chandeliers mounted with heavy crystal hangings, the reflective stone floors, the dark windows, walls and ceilings decorated with gold, is a unique opportunity for a study of Baroque lighting culture, an example to today's architects of how a space can be made to touch the human senses.

The presentation was honored by great attention from all parties present. A possible annual meeting in Eggenberg on the occasion of the next "Biennale" would be particularly welcomed by the society.

**Dr. Vera Henkelmann**, Eschweiler, conducts research on "Light-bearers" from the Middle Ages. In her Lecture "Virgin Mary Chandeliers from the Middle-Ages" she speaks about the complexity of the meaning of such chandeliers for the liturgy, for salvation, piety and the requiem of its donors and as a representational object of these benefactors. The connection of symbolic light surrounding the Madonna with rays is in each case important. The presentation shows how even very early there was such a diverse function of light, the light carrier and later the crystal chandelier in culture and politics in Europe; it was not merely a practical utensil.

Saturday, 22nd August 2015; In the Cinema hall "Lumière" the Lectures continue after an introduction from Pascal Mestrom.

**Ulrike Milde**, museologist B.A. Leipzig, spoke about "Frederick's wall sconces - Masterpieces of Prussian Bronze". From an original inventory of about 700 sconces, which were prepared under Frederick II of Prussia, around 500 pieces are still in existence. Her research included the documentation in words and pictures, sorting the wall sconces into groups according to type based on the wall mounts of individual models as well as by the various construction methods. This analysis enabled a historical positioning in the Prussian Palaces including the creation of a new hanging concept.

**Bettina Schneider**, participating glass conservator, Prussian Palaces and Gardens Foundation Berlin-Brandenburg (SPSG) gives a lecture on:

"The restoration of an exceptional Glass-arm table candelabra from 1830: research, restoration and re-construction"

The restoration of this special object of glass art, the manufacturer of which has not yet been determined, would not have been possible without cooperation between different departments and professions. These ranged from the researchers to traditional craftsmen. The historical value and provenance were researched. The missing parts were made in Novy Bor. Currently the candelabra restoration is being completed in the restoration workshop of SPSG by Ms. Schneider. Thereafter this extraordinary candelabra can return after more than 70 years absence to its original place in the ballroom of the Peacock Island Castle in Berlin. This it adorned for more than 100 years before it was removed in 1945 as war booty to Russia and in 1958 in individual parts, broken and incomplete it was returned back to Potsdam.

**Allard de Graaf**, Eindhoven, of the EVA Historic Lighting Group, speaks with great commitment about the individual production of special LED candle lamps. He describes the current standards and norms, the advantages and disadvantages arising from the new technology in practice and of the use of the lamp base and fittings, on pricing a high-quality product vs. others and profitability in practice. His presentation under strikes and supplements the same points raised in the presentations by Mr. van Beek and Mr. Perrin. The entire group was extremely animated by the presentation and many got involved in the practical test of these new models in various combinations. The new fittings appear very promising for museums as well as private households that wish to imitate the effect of candle light.

**John Smith**, London, speaks about the early development of the English glass-arm chandelier starting at the end of the 17th Century. At this time they were not yet made of lead crystal and had smooth arms and optically blown center pieces (Sir Christopher Wren 1677). Further he covers the high point of the cut-glass chandelier, from 1732 made in lead glass, including the chandeliers of Waterford starting in 1786, the chandeliers and fountains from the company F&C Osler from 1807 (which Mr. Smith covered once in more detail in a lecture held in Istanbul). Osler also supplied chandeliers and furniture of crystal glass for India, even having a chandelier factory in Calcutta.

John Smith, with his many years of experience in the antique business, along with Robert Charleston is one of the foremost experts on English glass chandeliers.

**Regis Mathieu**, Gargas en Provence, describes his atelier for restoring and reproducing classic chandeliers as well as the design and production of modern lighting pieces in his renovated former paint factory. Aside from the atelier, he is convinced that craftsmen have a duty to collect typical original pieces. His "Musée Mathieu" in Provence is open to the public with its own program and in Paris he has opened a showroom on the Rue Brouelle. Mr.

Matthieu has generously invited the Society to hold the next Yearly Meeting on his premises in France.

**Martin Akkerman**, Amsterdam, as an expert on historical jewelry, Mr. Akkerman's lecture "Chandeliers & Diamonds – Light & Sparkle" addresses the influence that the design of jewelry and lighting forms had on one another. Already in the 17th Century one saw in the old paintings the similarity in design between pieces of jewelry and girandoles/candelabras, for example with three or five distinctive pearls creating a similar form to that of a candelabrum. From mourning jewelry made of glass in the 19th C. to the modern pieces created by artists that use chandelier shapes in their designs, these girandole forms have been constantly repeated. The chandeliers in the San Francisco Opera or the New York Met are also examples of jewelry-like lighting pieces.

He points out how notable that it is that 85% of jewelry shops are adorned by crystal chandeliers, the presentation of jewelry is simply suited to such festive lighting.

**Käthe Klappenbach**, Potsdam, makes an impression with her lecture "The Light of Power", about light and means of lighting at the court in receiving rooms and for daily use. There was a constantly increasing need for light and then habituation on overly-lit rooms. An experiment was documented in film, showing a concert room of Frederick II in the New Palace in Potsdam lit with candles. This experience was repeated during a conference in March 2015 in Graz at the Eggenburg Palace. The difference in the importance of the various lighting pieces, wall lamps, table lamps, and lanterns was examined. The most important discovery was that the light emanating from the chandeliers primary purpose was to light themselves and therefore they served more as a symbol than as illumination. Mrs. Klappenbach explains the relation between lux (lx) and luxury, the enormous cost of illumination and the huge sums that the Prussian King Frederick II spent on his rock crystal chandeliers. The Brandenburg-Prussian glassworks in Zechlin which produced chandelier trimmings in the style of the rock crystal decoration was of particular importance. The former art/prestige object "chandelier" was reduced to a useful lighting piece with the introduction of electricity after approx. 1900 and their former value, intrinsic and material, forgotten.

Mrs. Klappenbach has now begun to work on a second edition of her work on chandeliers in the Prussian Palaces.

Fredrik Molenschot, Netherlands, works since 2005 as part of the team "Studio Molen" as an artist and sculptor with light, both for interior and exterior placement. This includes such pieces as enormous molded brass objects fitted with interior lighting and curving aluminum tubes with light-glass elements. Molenschot offers Architects interesting sculptural objects which fill otherwise empty spaces and creates unusual light solutions with his pieces.

**Frank C. Möller**, Hamburg, speaks as an art dealer who takes part in the TEFAF on "A Search for the Unknown Architect", about the chandeliers and vases of the bronze factory Werner & Mieth, grounded in 1792. He points to the fact that K.F. Schinkel is likely to have been responsible for many more designs than he was given credit for and tries to answer the question of who were the architects of the early designs from before 1800. In order to answer this question, he shows various, mostly unknown designs for individually constructed chandeliers with looping arms and supporting rings in the form of stars as well as vases of opal white glass with fine brass or bronze decoration – these being mostly from Silesian and imported in approx. 1797/88 from Bohemia. These were usually a part of complicated, mythological themed room and table decoration. Up until recently, researchers had assumed on the grounds of a complaint letter to the guild in 1794, that the designer named in the letter, H.C. Genelli was the designer of such pieces. The difficulty with the guild could indeed be the reason that the name of the unknown designer was struck from the registers at a very early

date. Other letters discovered, along with precise comparisons with recently discovered drawings and sketches from Berlin architects show that the person searched for was not H.C. Genelli but likely the teacher from K.F. Schinkel (1781-1841), Friedrich Gilly (1772-1800). Therefore Schinkel, summarizes Möller, followed his teacher Gilly as the designer from Werner & Mieth – not Genelli.

**Caterina Tognon**, Venice, spoke as a gallery owner specialized in contemporary glass art about “Lamps with Glass”. She describes an iron-mesh frame covered with small, cornucopia like, blown glass parts which was then completed with colourful decorative ornaments, flowers and candle tubes to make a typical early Murano chandelier.

In contrast to a chandelier with glass, is the glass-arm chandelier, in which only the central rod with its supporting plate for the arms are made of metal. The glass arms are set into metal sleeves which are then mounted in the supporting plate.

The Society has gained an important member in Caterina Tognon who is engaged in the research of historic Italian lighting culture – an area in which there has been little research.

Sunday, August 23 2015 The Board meets with the remaining members for a final discussion: The final costs of the meeting are reviewed; the protocol and report will be prepared by Peter Rath.

The next Yearly Meeting in 2016 will likely be in Gargas, probably in June at the atelier of Regis Mathieu, possibly 2017 in Eggenburg and then in 2018 in Prague.

The Society plans to continue to conduct research in their regions such as inventories (see Alanté Valtaite, Vilnius with her dissertation), furthermore Olivier Perrin will continue with the work on a “dictionary” of chandelier terminology. It was suggested that at least a portion of the lectures be published on the Light and Glass website.

**The organizer and host of this year’s event, Pascal Mestrom, was given a special Thank-You for his exemplary work and valuable contribution to the Society. A present was awarded in thanks from the Society for the special hospitality shown by both Mr. Mestrom and his partner, Neeltje.**

Translation from German by Christina Perrin