

CHAPTERS ON THE CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION OF PLASTICS II

This publication presents the current problem of synthetic materials in the collections of cultural institutions, their physical condition, and selected methods for preserving and protecting them. It does so by giving a summary of the activities of the Plastics working group at the Czech Association of Museums and Galleries' Commission of Conservator-Restorers in 2019 and 2020. The Plastics working group has brought together experts from museums, galleries, archives, libraries and universities from across the country since 2014 in order to share information and co-operate in looking after modern synthetic materials, materials whose numbers are continuing to rise in collections.

The first chapter of this collective monograph describes the museum artefacts in the collections of the Museum of Decorative Arts in Prague. It is followed by a paper focused on investigating the physical conditions of books with PVC covers in the depositories of the National Library of the Czech Republic. A large section of the monograph is focused on the research and conservation of book covers made of PVC, something experts from the Czech National Library have been working on as part of a NAKI (National and Cultural Identity programme) project. The SurveNIR system was used for analysis and identification of types of plastic material used in book bindings. Another core issue is the degradation of plastics in collections, with chapters focused on assessing the extent of book binding PVC sheet damage, and describing the damage to books with PVC covers. This is followed by a presentation of specific restoration or conservation interventions on specific artefacts. Presentations are given of the restoration investigation of the *Chair* artefact from Kateřina Vincourová's *Sunday* set of works, the conservation and restoration of David Černý's kinetic sculpture, *Thief*, and finally the cleaning and bonding of books with PVC covers. The final chapter summarises the conditions for appropriate long-term storage of plastic artefacts with the objective of extending their lifetimes. It introduces ways of storing selected artefacts made of synthetic materials as practised by the Prague City Museum, and can provide inspiration to other institutions. It also presents specific approaches to storing cinematographic films in film archives and preventive care and storing books with PVC covers, again using the example of the National Library of the Czech Republic. The final section summarises the results of testing suitable and stable materials for the long-term storage of books with cellulose nitrate covers. In their practice, conservators and restorers will be sure to appreciate this monograph and its chapters based on the implementation of specific interventions and testing recommendations for looking after cultural heritage artefacts made of plastics in order to extend the lifetime of these modern objects.