

NOIRoeS project: Total study of the historical and technical background of Soulages' paintings to define the conservation strategy

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Pauline Helou-de la Grandière, Shadé ALAO AFOLABI, Marouane Ben Jelloul, Serge X. Cohen, Lionel Simonot, et al.. NOIRoeS project: Total study of the historical and technical background of Soulages' paintings to define the conservation strategy. 5th international conference on Innovation in Art Research and Technology, Jun 2022, Paris, France. hal-04294449

HAL Id: hal-04294449

https://hal.science/hal-04294449

Submitted on 19 Nov 2023

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5th International Conference on Innovation in Art Research and Technology

28 Jun-1 Jul 2022 Paris

NOIRœS project: Total study of the historical and technical background of Soulages' paintings to define the conservation strategy

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Base NOIRœS







→ Date of creation





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Issues in paintings around 1959 and 1960

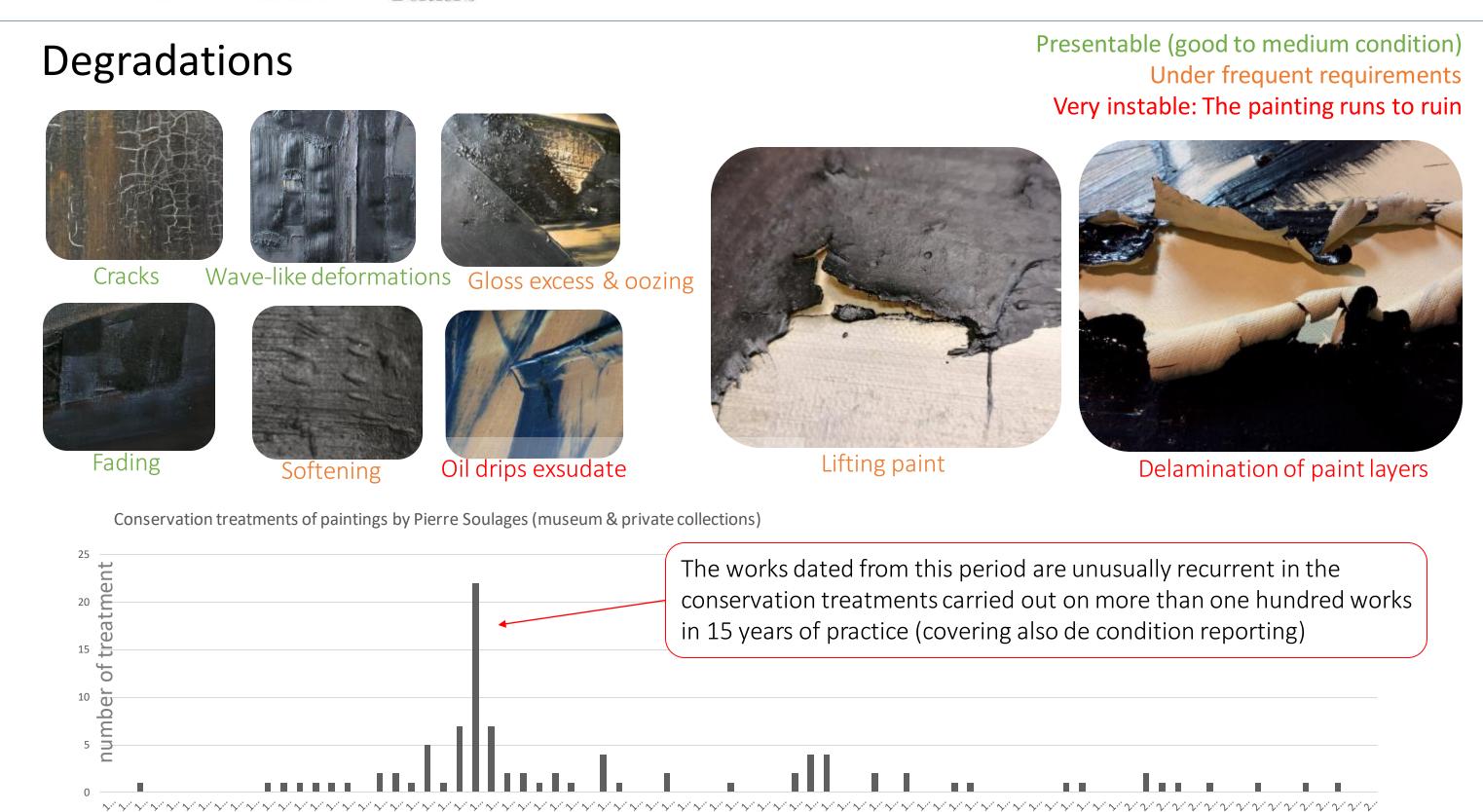
As other paintings of the second School of Paris, some works by Pierre Soulages from 1959-1960 present peculiar degradations which consist of cleavages, softening of the medium, bleaching or discolorations of the surface and drops which ooze from the impasto. In the worth cases, the paintings run to a dramatic condition, that could be consider as ruins.

A Montparnasse Disease*:

This issue concerns other painters in the 1950s: Jean-Paul Riopelle, Karel Appel, de Kooning, Georges Mathieu, Zao Wou Ki, etc., all abstract painters from CoBRA and the Second School of Paris. The common points between the works of these artists are:

- a similar colorman in Montparnasse large formats, with a similar technique with wet in wet oil media
- works exhibited and ported very early, as soon as they dry to the touch.

Be carefull: Only a few paintings are concern by this issue and the major part of the works are in very good condition.

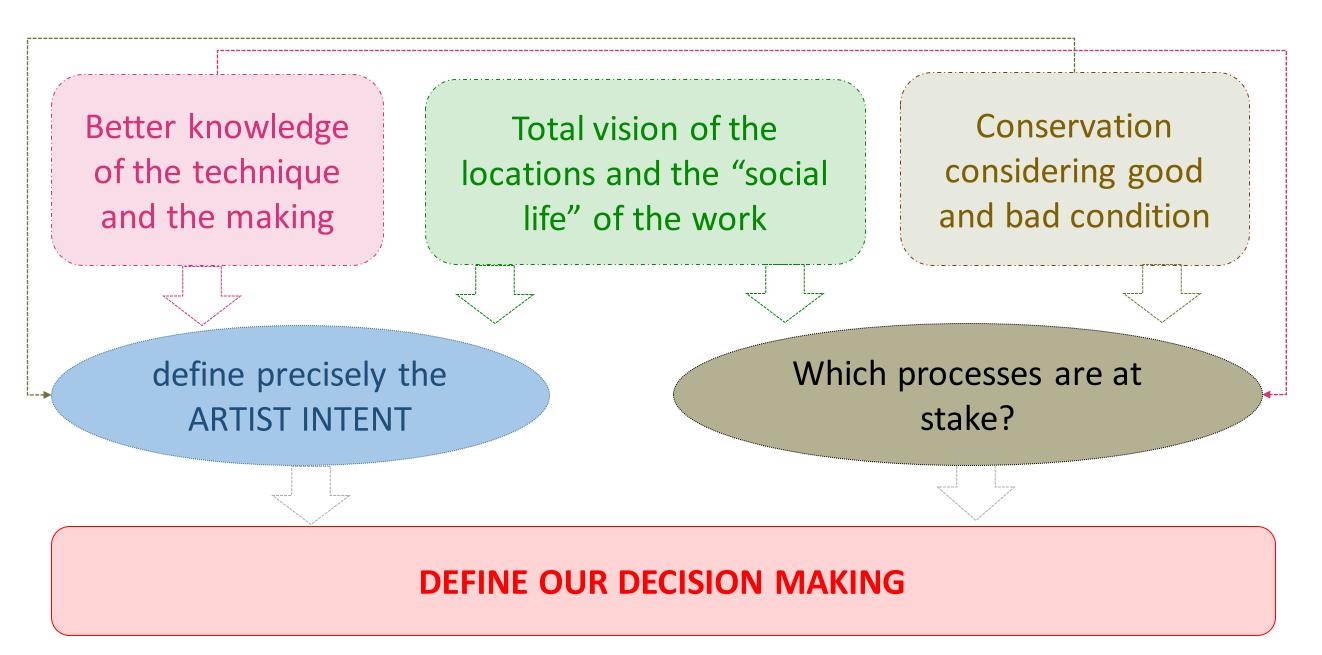


Ph.D led-practice project NOIRœS**

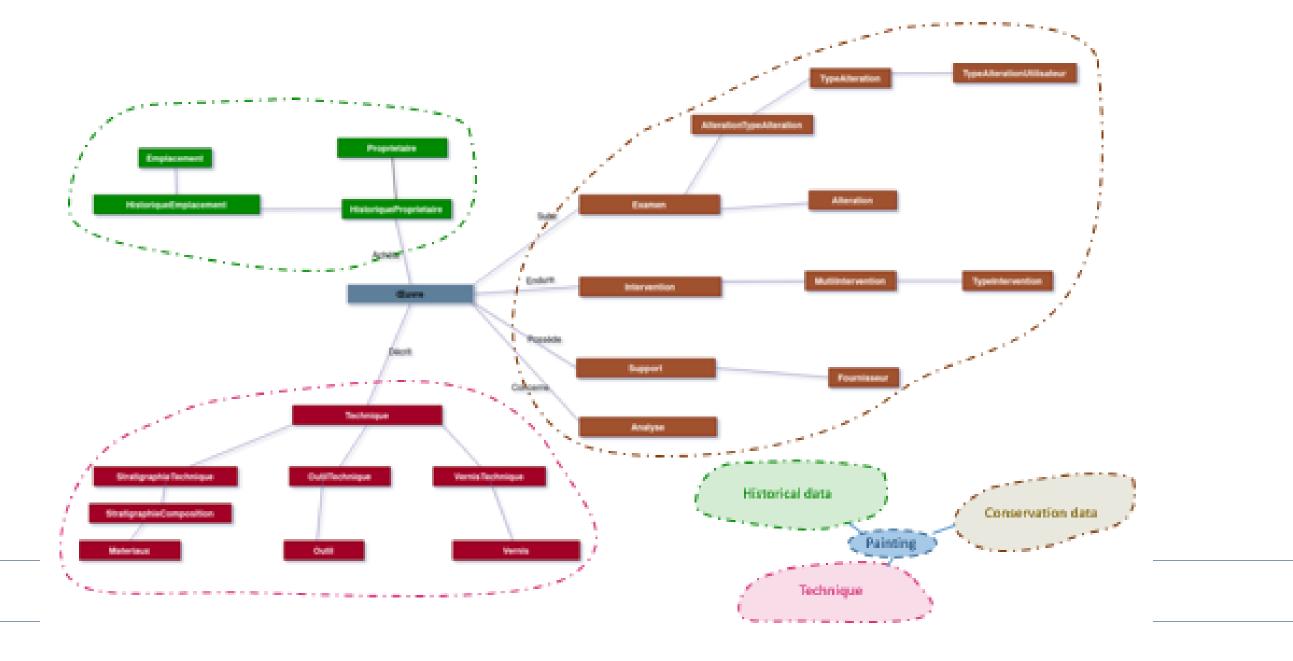
**Nouveaux Outils Interdisciplinaires pour la Restauration des œuvres de Soulages. PhD presented by Pauline de La Grandière, directed by Thierry Sarmant, co-supervised by Mathieu Thoury and Lionel Simonot. The Ph.D is supported by the Ecole Universitaire de recherche PSGS HCH Humanities, Creation, Heritage, Investissement d'Avenir ANR-17-EURE-0021, Cy-Paris Université

With the scope to well define our decision making for the conservation of the paintings suffering from those instable issues, the PhD "NOIRœS" proposes to reevaluate conservation processes: A thorough interdisciplinary approach brings together physicists and optics engineers to develop new tools taking into account the reflections of the works, among others.

One of the themes addressed is the consideration of all the data related to the complete corpus of works of the period (and not just one work as usual) in order to understand how their "social life" and their materiality have affected their evolution over time. Then, the quality of the aggregation and structuring of heterogeneous historical information is important.



420 Peinture 200 x 162 cm, 14 mars 1960 What is the trigger between a very private collection (auction Tajan 2019, Paris) good condition work and a very bad one, painted in the same week? 2019 : Pauline de La Grandière (dusting **419** Peinture 162 x 200 cm, 12 mars 1960 Current condition: very poor Sara Hildén Foundation. Tampere, Finlande non on-porous priming Layer 0 : commercial ground 1995, Kirsti Harva : handwritten note bout exudation from the paint layer Han Layer 2 : black + brown resence of ink could be involved in the drying defect, from their experience on other Soulages. Marty said that consolidation is not durable. Kirsti esellschaft, Hanovre, Folkwang Museum, removed the drips with dried cotton s 1996, Siukku Nurminen : "black paint doesn't dry" / "paint is lifting with the ground(x4)": See pictures (not found). 1997-1998: "bad conditions", cracks in black impastoes, could contain tar/asphalte. URGENT" -2010, Ritta Fager (digital photographies : Reporting the evolution : the lifting of paint layer creates bubbles from the shiny -2016 : Pauline de La Grandière

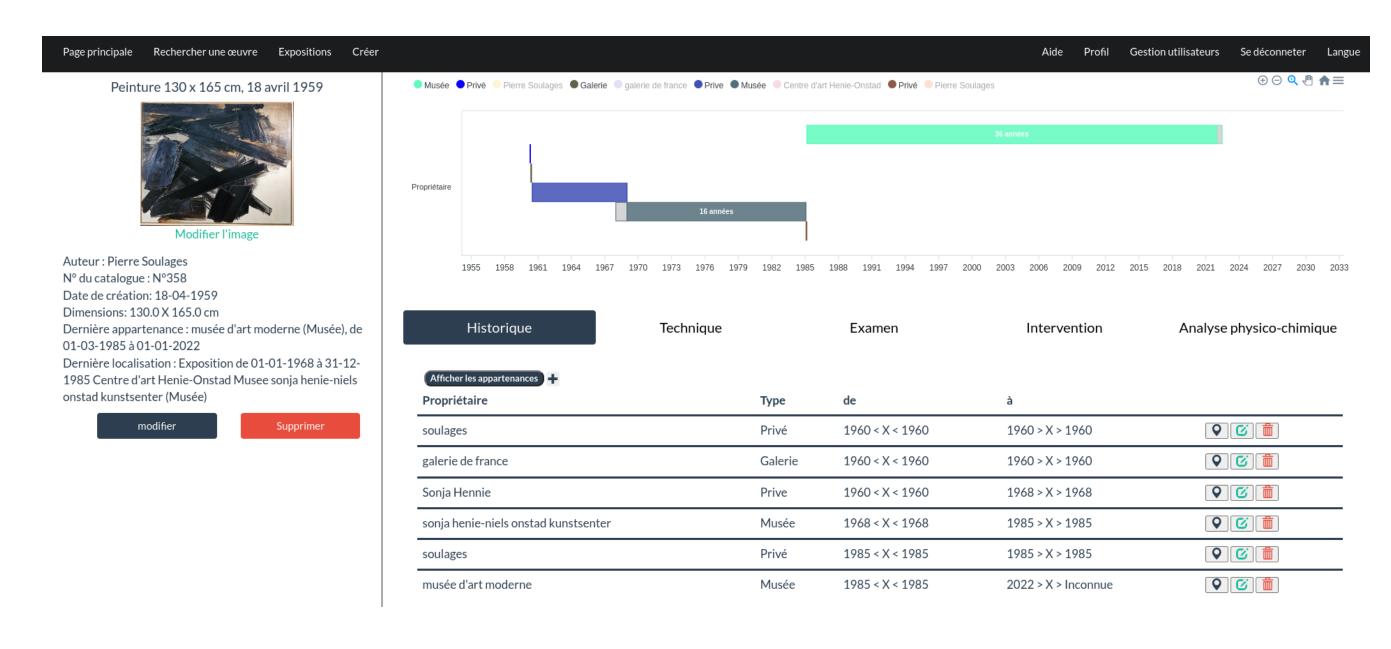


Building a data base

The heterogeneous information to aggregate and organise concerns the artist's practice, such as the materials choice and use, and the historical background of the painting: its drying condition, the succession of ownerships, storage period and loans for each painting and the conservation treatments.

A database backed information system is developed to structure the data and ensure its exploitation, both through the implementation of intelligible and interactive data representation and through the implementation of APIs (Application Programming Interface) allowing for the automated exploitation of data. The "data model" of this information system was the subject of a master's degree course followed by Shadé Alao-Afolabi, entitled Base-NOIRœS, which aimed first of all to establish precisely the typologies of data to be include in the information system, to propose a database structure suitable for organizing this information, and then, covering part of the model, to implement an interface for entering and exploiting the data.

Class diagram used for visualizing, describing, and documenting different aspects of a system and for constructing executable code of the software application.



Screenshot of the data entry for "Owners & collections" of a work

Learning about a holistic approach and define a conservation strategy

These data are complemented by a study of the works at the macroscale (by developing new imaging probes, with luminescence and gloss measurements) and at the microsccale (using synchrotron and laboratory micro-imaging approaches, from infrared to X-rays) to extract informative physico-chemical evidence on the alteration processes at play, and provide signatures of the early stages of alteration. We hope

with this "hollistic" approach to better understand the phenomenon in order to advise the appropriate conservation conditions to slow down the ongoing phenomenon, and to propose interventions that respect above all the artistic intention that Pierre Soulages envisioned, in order to allow future generations to see a work of Pierre Soulages as it was proposed in the 1960s.