



Deutsche Gesellschaft
für Kunststoffgeschichte e.V.

Dear dgkg Members, Friends, and Supporters (m/f/d),

With respect to the salutation in our last 'Rundbrief' (newsletter) in German, it was brought to our attention that simple 'gendering' without including 'diverse' is still discriminatory. Therefore, we are returning to the generic masculine with the addition of (m/f/d), analogous to our Federal Constitutional Court ruling regarding job advertisements. This slightly more elegant textual variant will now be used explicitly in our salutation, but applies to the entire newsletter as well. Perhaps it will be possible to dispense with it at some point, when the (German) generic masculine is perceived as gender-neutral - like in English.

dgkg: reports, information

Honorary membership

Ms. **Julia Greven**, Cologne, was appointed honorary member as a result of a board resolution. The ceremonial presentation of the certificate took place on 09 October in Berlin. In accepting her membership, Ms. Greven described her father and his passion for collecting plastics. R. Keller presented the honorary gift, a unique bowl made of recycled PE by the artist and designer Gerhard Bär, Berlin. G. Lattermann then described some selected 'highlights' of the Greven collection of about 3000 objects, parts of them already displayed in our showcases. These were donated to the dgkg and handed over to DOMA (Documentation Centre for Material History, Berlin) on permanent loan.

On the same occasion, K. Gerech and A. Schulz (students of HTW University Berlin) presented the DOMA stock of antiquarian books on plastics and their historical development (approx. 3000 volumes). Listed and arranged on shelves according to subject area.

Board: Prof. Dr. Dr.h.c. Günter Lattermann (Chair), Prof. Ruth Keller (Deputy Chair), Dietmar Linke, Dipl.-Rest., M.A. (Treasurer), Maja Ossig Dipl.-Rest. (Secretary), Prof. Dr.-Ing. Christian Bonten, PD Dr. Stefan Poser.

Vereinsregister beim Amtsgericht Bayreuth VR 1523; Gemeinnützigkeit anerkannt vom Finanzamt Bayreuth, Aktz.: 208/107/60290 K05

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Fig. 1: Certificate of Honorary Membership for Julia Greven



Fig. 2: from left: G. Lattermann, J. Greven (with award of honour), R. Keller (Fig.: A. Schulz).



Fig. 3: from left: H. Weinzierl (Erkner), D. Linke, J. Greven, G. Lattermann (Fig.: A. Schulz).



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Membership

As new members we greet and extend a warm welcome to:

Fenna Yola Tykwer, Staatsarchiv Hamburg; individual member.

Anna Schulz, master's thesis in the Conservation and Restoration of Modern Materials and Technical Cultural Objects MMTK programme, HTW Berlin; student member.

Activities

11th General Assembly GA

- The 11th dgkg-GA took place online on 22 October. This format proved to be successful given a doubling in the number of participants. D. Linke reported that dgkg currently has 51 members, that its cash position is good, and the cash audit (many thanks to Mr. Taubert) was followed by the discharge of the old board, which was re-elected en bloc for the next two years.
- To date, dgkg has spent approx. € 2000 on student assistants to record and classify its library, which currently contains approx. 3000 volumes, the Brög and Kölsch archives, and the collection objects (Bakelite Collection Greven, approx. 3000; Celluloid Collection Brög approx. 220; Rubber Collection Lüttich approx. 200). A further € 800 have been budgeted.
- A printing supplement is to be granted for an exposé prepared by Prof. M. Otto, Cottbus University of Technology BTU, G. Lattermann, and master students of BTU. During the 20/21 winter semester and 21 summer semester, architectural designs for the re-use of abandoned, historic industrial buildings in Berlin and Brandenburg were developed.
- The next GM is to be held in Hamburg in 2023. An excursion is planned to the Museum der Arbeit (with rubber collection), and Hamburger Kunsthalle – contemporary art collection (with plastics art).

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20th Board Meeting BM

- Afterwards, the 20th dgkg BM took place online.

In General

Current and future

Projects

- **Tim Bechthold** (dgkg member) Die Neue Sammlung, Munich and **Friederike Waentig** (dgkg member) CICS Cologne Institute of Conservation Science, have been involved in the project "GDR Plastics in Design" since April 2021. Other partners: Getty Conservation Institute (GCI), Los Angeles, USA and The Wende Museum, Culver City, USA.

<https://dnstdm.de/ddr-kunststoffe-im-design/>

Lectures, seminars, conferences

- **Tim Bechthold** (dgkg member) International **Future Talks 021** 08 -10 November 2021; online: **"Smart Solutions in the Conservation of the Modern"**.
"The seventh international conference FUTURE TALKS 021 focuses on intelligent solutions in the development, production, and the preservation of modern design and contemporary art."

future-talks-021.de/main_frontend.php

- **Eisenbibliothek**, Schlatt, Switzerland, (institutional dgkg member): 12 - 13 November 2021: **42nd Conference for the History of Technology**, **"Raw Materials. Natural Resources in History"**.
(Bio-)Polymer-historical lectures:
"Rubber and the challenges of global markets, 1900-1960";
"The technical use of hen's eggs".

www.eisenbibliothek.ch/de/events/tgt/next.html#

- **Technisches Museum Wien**
13 November 2021:
“Plastic Fantastic? Recyclable, synthetic, problematic material”
Activity guide: Plastic can be found in every household. What is plastic actually made of? And what happens to plastic after we have used it?
www.technischesmuseum.at/event/plastik_fantastik_wertstoff_kunststoff_problemstoff?No=00085726&Event_No=576
- **The Mark-Twain House and Museum, Hartford, CT, USA**
17 November 2021, CET 14:00 – 15:00
(CT 7:00 pm – 8:00 pm)
Free Online panel conversation:
“Bakelite, Leo Baekeland & the legacy of plastics”
Panellists:
Dr. Joris Mercelis, Dept. of History of Science and Technology, Johns Hopkins University.
Hugh Karraker, great-grandson of Leo Baekeland.
Bud Mikhitarian, author and film-maker.
Dr. Jeffrey L. Meikle, moderator.

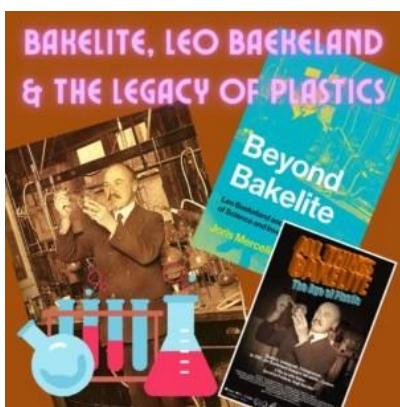


Fig 4: Bakelite, Leo Baekeland & The Legacy of Plastics

<https://marktwainhouse.org/event/bakelite-leo-baekeland-the-legacy-of-plastics-a-panel-conversation>

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Günter Lattermann, HTW Berlin

02 December 2021, Seminar,
“Historical Polymer Materials - *Hipoms*”, HTW Berlin, Prof. Dr. Susanne Kähler, Museum Studies / Museum Management.

Exhibitions

- **ADI Design Museum, Milan**
25 May – 25 Nov. 2021
Special exhibition:
“**Giulio Castelli: The Entrepreneurial Culture of the Design System**”
Life and work of the founder of Kartell. Furnishing objects made of plastics were offered from 1949. This made an important contribution to the development of Italian design and gave the design industry a whole new reach.

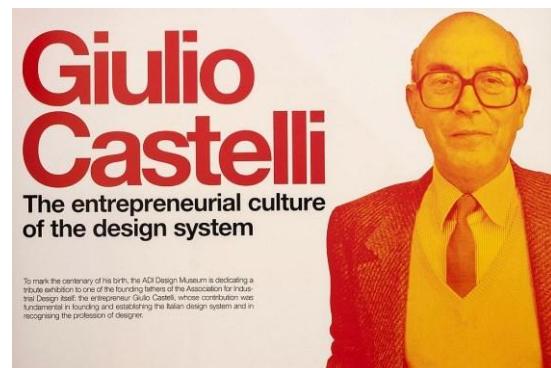


Fig. 5: Giulio Castelli, homage to the life and work of the founder of Kartell.

The exhibition is taking place in conjunction with the opening of the new ADI Design Museum.

www.kartell.com/US/de/news/giulio-castelli-unternehmenskultur-in-der-designbranche-ausstellung-geöffnet-von-juli-bis-november/wp_6455

- **Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg**
04 September 2021 – 09 January 2022:

OIL. The beauty and horror of the petroleum age.

The exhibition looks back at the period of oil modernity, which has lasted for around 100 years. One fundamental theme is deep dichotomy: petrol and paraffin, plastic, asphalt, and synthetic fibres.

<https://www.kunstmuseum.de/ausstellung/oil-schoenheit-und-schrecken-des-erdölzeitalters/>

- **Grassi Museum, Leipzig**
05 May – 05 September 2022:

“Jewellery & Image”

On display are pieces of jewellery from the 20th and 21st century made of rubber, charcoal, natural materials, plastic, and other materials.

<https://www.grassimak.de/museum/sonderausstellungen/schmuck-image/>



Fig.6: Broach, PC, Svenja John, **dgkg** member (Grassi Museum, Leipzig)

- The **Plastics Heritage Congress of the PHEA (Plastics Heritage European Association)** in Naples is to be postponed until **2022** due to the coronavirus. It will take place in person and will still be organised by the PLART Foundation, which hosts the Naples Plastics Museum.

<http://www.fondazioneplart.it/>

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Miscellaneous

Literature

- **Lioba Keller-Drescher** (ed.), *Vier Vitrinen - Tausend Möglichkeiten (Four Showcases – a thousand possibilities)* 114 pages, numerous illustrations. 2021 € 10,00, incl. postage (within Germany).



Fig.7: Catalogue front page (WWU / Lisa Schöne)

The catalogue on the Bakelite Collection with many contributions on the history and use of the first synthetic plastic is the result of a teaching and research project at the Institute for Cultural Anthropology / European Ethnology under the direction of Prof. Dr. Lioba Keller-Drescher.

<https://www.unimuenster.de/Kustodie/service/publikationen.html>

- **Benjamin Kemper**
Degradation of Historical Cellulose Acetate: Effects of external influences using the example of glass figures and suggestions for their preservation, Dissertation TU Dresden, 2021, Co-supervisor: Prof. Dr. Brigitte Voit, **dgkg** member.

<https://dnb.info/1232105449/34>

- **Susan Lambert** (ed.), [PHS, coop. **dgkg** member]
Provocative Plastics – Their Value in Design and Material Culture
Palgrave Macmillan (Springer Nature), Basingstoke 2021, € 125.26
Plastics has now been our most used materials over fifty years. This book adopts a new approach, exploring plastics' contri-



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bution from two perspectives: as a medium for making and their value in societal use. The book is essential reading for anyone interested in the Arts and Humanities, especially Design and Design History, and cultural, material, and social history.

<https://www.springerprofessional.de/provocative-plastics/18748324>

- **Kay Meiners [dgkg member]**

Material für eine neue Zeit (Material for a new age – Product design from Pollopas).
Niggli Verlag, Salenstein 2021, € 34,-
Plastic has fallen into disrepute, as a negative symbol of environmental destruction and a society of waste. Yet there was a time when plastics were considered symbols of progress. From the last years of the Weimar Republic until the Second World War, household goods made of "pollopas" in particular were modern objects for a young and tech-savvy elite and at the same time harbingers of a new consumer society, as it went on to develop in the 1950s.

<https://www.niggli.ch/Produkt/material-fur-eine-neue-zeit/>

- **“Natural Polymers in Heritage”**

Special Issue in the open access journal ‘**Polymers**’.

Article submission by 31 January, 2022.

There is a large group of natural polymers that are of great significance in heritage: cellulosic materials such as paper, cotton, and wood; proteinaceous materials such as silk, wool, and parchment etc; as well as modified natural polymers such as cellulose nitrate and acetate. There are large collections of these materials in archives, libraries, museums, and galleries. The study of their stability is a significant topic of interest to the management and understanding of these collections. During their degradation, reaction products are formed

that need to be monitored and their influence on heritage objects and environments is an important research issue as well. As a consequence, based on scientific research, preventive conservation guidelines can be established.

<https://www.apache-project.eu/special-issue-natural-polymers-in-heritage-january-31-2022/>

In conclusion

Once again, we would be grateful for:

- sharing this newsletter online in interested circles.
- contacting G. Lattermann as early as possible if you like your plastics relevant activity/event to be announced in the next Christmas newsletter.
- future support of our work on and with historic polymeric materials, e.g. by recruiting new individual (€ 30,- p.a.) and institutional **members** (250,- € p.a.) and/or your (tax-deductible) **donation** to the **dgkg**.

Most readers will probably agree with the initiative

,TecPart e.V. – Plastic against coronavirus’:

“Containing the Covid 19 pandemic is the first order of the day, and plastics processors in particular can make a significant contribution in this area. Their...much needed...products...such as masks, gloves, face shields, transport boxes, but also plastic tools and other essential materials...are of strategic importance in the fight against coronavirus and hence more important than ever!

Of course, this also applies to disposable **plastic syringes** and shots (jabs).



Fig.8: Drinks in times of coronavirus.
(Text varies. Fig.: de.toonpool.com).

Good health and well-being to one and all,
and autumn greetings!

Yours faithfully,

Günter Lattermann and Ruth Keller