

## **Session synopsis**

What is 'technique' in the visual and decorative arts? And how is 'technique' transmitted? Those are the central questions of ARTECHNE, a five-year project supported by the European Research Council, and led by Sven Dupré, that started at Utrecht University and the University of Amsterdam in September 2015. ARTECHNE is the acronym of the project. Its full title is "Technique in the Arts: Concepts, Practices, Expertise, 1500-1950". To answer these questions an interdisciplinary team of researchers with a background in history of art, science and technology, based at the Descartes Center for the History and Philosophy of the Sciences and the Humanities in Utrecht works together with conservators and conservation scientists at the Atelier Building in Amsterdam. This is where the University of Amsterdam,

the Rijksmuseum and the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands gathers its expertise in the conservation and preservation of art objects; it is home to the recently established Netherlands Institute for Conservation, Art and Science (NICAS). One aim of the ARTECHNE Project is to write the history of the conservation studios or laboratories and the research uniting conservation, art history and science in the Atelier Building. Another aim is understanding the textual culture of the early modern workshop and the role of recipes in practices. Together with conservation and restoration specialists at the Atelier Building, the ARTECHNE undertakes the experimental reconstruction of historical recipes to open the black box of the transmission of technique in the visual and decorative arts.