



Plastics

Looking at the Future and Learning from the Past

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- This book presents a record of the current perceptions and considerations of plastics in art

This volume of post prints of a conference held at the Victoria and Albert Museum, is a record of current perceptions and considerations of plastics within museum collections. Artist's concepts of plastic as a medium and their views of ageing and decay challenge museum ethics. The dichotomy between an artist's intent and engagement with their contemporary culture and longevity has resulted in many different resolutions. The balance between using and preserving 'plastic' artwork is a fine and delicate line of compromise, and the complex enigma of how to identify which of the many synthetic polymers, mass-produced 'plastics' within collections are formed from remains, as yet, unsolved. Now, through experience, observation and research, museums are developing collecting policies, recording techniques and preservation strategies which take pragmatic and utilitarian approaches, differentiating between stable and unstable plastics on the grounds of many aspects including age, color and design.