## ISSUE 386: Functional Identity of E24 Physical Man Made Thing

**DECISION**: The sig reviewed MD’s new definition of E24 Physical Man Made Thing and overall accepted it as a working definitions (it has undergone minor modifications too).

**HW**: CEO was assigned to rephrase the definition, taking into account discussion that followed.

The new working definition can be found below:

### E24 Physical Man-Made Thing

Subclass of: E18 Physical Thing

E71 Man-Made Thing

Superclass of: E22 Man-Made Object

E25 Man-Made Feature

E78 Collection

Scope Note: This class comprises all persistent physical items that are purposely created by human activity. This class comprises, besides others, man-made objects, such as a swords, and man-made features, such as rock art. For example, a “cup and ring” carving on bedrock is regarded as instance of E24 Physical Man-Made Thing.

Instances of man-made thing may be the result of modifying pre-existing physical things, preserving larger parts or most of the original matter and structure, which poses the question if they are new or even man-made, in particular in natural history collections. Therefore, the respective interventions of production made on such original material should be obvious and sufficient to regard that the product has a new, distinct identity and intended function and is man-made. Substantial continuity of the previous matter and structure in the new product can be documented by describing the production process also as instance of E81 Transformation.

Whereas interventions of conservation and repair are not regarded to produce a new man-made thing, the results of preparation of natural history specimen that substantially change their natural or original state should be regarded as physical man-made things, including the uncovering of petrified biological features from a solid piece of stone. On the other side, scribbling a museum number on a natural object should not regarded to make it man-made. This notwithstanding, parts, sections, segments, or features of a physical man-made thing may continue to be non-man-made and preserved during the production process, such as the uncovered traces of the Archaeopterix in the Natural History Museum of Vienna, predating the prepared object.

Instances of this class may act as carriers of instances of E73 Information Object.

The discussion points made regarding this proposed definition are summarized below:

There was a question whether buildings count as instances of E24 Physical Man Made Things. MD replied that the phrasing “besides others” (this class comprises, besides others, man-made objects, such as swords …) allows for other things aside the ones mentioned to be captured by the definition. (aka buildings too)

It was mentioned (CEO) that the 3rd paragraph overshadows the 2nd, rendering it superfluous and making the scope note extremely lengthy. In a sense it is impossible to enumerate all kinds of physical man made things, so maybe some things might be excluded from the definition.

**DECISION**: a new issue is to start, regarding adding building descriptions in the scope note.

Comment by MD: reworking the definition should take into account that really avant-garde exhibitions at the Tate for instance are not to be considered as instances of physical man-made things but rather as performances –assuming that their object is installations that have no robust identity criteria.