

Practical Applications of Lascaux Acrylic Dispersions in Paper Conservation

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores new applications for Lascaux dispersions in paper conservation. Combining the proper ratio of Lascaux 360HV and 498HV with pigments can be successfully used as a toned fill material, as described through two treatments: a convex photo button with a cellulose nitrate coating that was severely split and sprung open with a substantial gap after mending; and a friable graphite drawing on extremely brittle, oil-impregnated paper. Both objects presented numerous treatment challenges due to the hydrophobic nature of the supports in addition to their slick surface quality. In both case studies, the supports were rigid with no flexibility or malleability to allow manipulation to bring the edges of the breaks together. Therefore, the slight elasticity of the Lascaux is beneficial if the supports were to experience dimensional changes. In addition to providing strength, this fill technique is also aesthetically pleasing. The fills can be smoothed with the appropriate heat application through silicon release paper to harmonize with the shiny cellulose nitrate coating of a photo button, and further toned to blend with a modeled paper support. The heat required to smooth the Lascaux fill is within the temperature range considered safe for cellulose nitrate. The Lascaux fills offer a secondary function to reinforce a mended support from the front. Because the Lascaux is cast onto polyester film and dried, the fill material precludes the formation of tidelines or discoloration caused by lateral movement of water or solvents that would otherwise be trapped between the cellulose nitrate coating and the metal backing of the photo button. The fill material can be mechanically separated from an object's surface with low heat or minimal solvent on a swab. These techniques are efficient, neat, easy to use and will undoubtedly offer practical solutions to a wide range of complex objects.

BIOGRAPHY

Samantha Sheesley is a Paper Conservator at the Conservation Center for Art and Historic Artifacts, USA. Before joining the permanent staff at CCAHA, Samantha worked as a conservation intern in the visible Lunder Conservation Center at the Smithsonian American Art Museum in Washington, DC; the Museum of Modern Art in New York City; the Benaki Museum in Athens, Greece; the Philadelphia Museum of Art; and the Belmont Hills Art Conservation Studio outside of Philadelphia. Samantha received her M.A. with a certificate of advanced studies in Art Conservation with a specialization in Paper Conservation from Buffalo State College. Before studying conservation in Buffalo, Samantha received her B.F.A. from Temple University's Tyler School of Art with a major in Sculpture and a minor in Art History.

Samantha has an interest in modern materials and contemporary art, which lead to her research and application of artist interviews as a tool for diligent conservation practice. She has presented select papers at various conferences throughout the US, including annual meetings for: the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works, the Washington Conservation Guild, the Friends of Dard Hunter, and the Association of North American Graduate Programs in the Conservation of Cultural Property.

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