

K0284 - Examination summary, 1992

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART
PAINTING CONSERVATION DEPARTMENT

EXAMINATION REPORT November 10, 1992

Circle of Giorgione
Venus and Cupid in a Landscape
painting on wood panel
1919.1.142 Samuel H. Kress Collection

DIMENSIONS: H. 11.6 cm (4 5/16") W. 20.3 cm (8")
H. 11.9 cm (4 11/16") W. 20.6 cm (8 1/4")
original support
with cradle strips

SUMMARY

The painting is executed on a thin piece of horizontal grain poplar, now cradled. The dovetailing visible at the right and left edges indicates the painting was part of a box or chest of drawers. A key-hole shaped filled loss in the top center of the painting, visible in the x-radiograph, supports this thesis. The panel was primed with white gesso (est.). The design was worked out in the underdrawing stage, with major changes visible in the arms, heads and clothing of the two main figures, and minor changes visible in the background (see "construction" and attached photo of underdrawing). The oil-bound (est.) paint layer is applied in a series of thin glazes, with pastose paint visible in highlights and the white flowers in the foreground. The painting is covered with a thick, glossy, and somewhat yellowed natural resin varnish.

CONSTRUCTION

The painting is executed on a single piece of horizontal grain 0.5 cm (1/4")-thick poplar (confirmed by wood analysis). The panel is dovetailed on both the right and left edges, suggesting the painted panel formed the front of a piece of furniture, perhaps a drawer front, or the front side of a jewel basket. It does not appear to be a lid, as suggested in Fern Shapley's catalogue, because it could not lift up if the dovetailed joints were attached to other pieces of wood at the sides. A 1.3 cm x 0.7 cm key-shaped filled loss in the center, above and between the heads of the figures, looks as if a keyhole may have once existed there. Remnants of unstained poplar from the left side plank (confirmed by wood analysis) are still visible in the dovetailed joints on the left side of the panel. The panel has been cradled.

The support was prepared with a smooth, white, moderately thick priming estimated to be gesso. Examination with Kodak's thermal imaging camera system, an improvement over infrared vidicon, revealed extensive underdrawing and design changes. All

IDENTIFIER

DOC14508

ARCHIVAL ITEM TYPE

Conservation Report

CREATOR

National Gallery of Art, Washington, District of Columbia

DATE

1992

CITATION

National Gallery of Art, Painting Conservation Department Records

1 RELATED ART OBJECT



K284

Circle of Giorgione

Venus and Cupid in a Landscape

National Gallery of Art, Washington, District of Columbia

RECORD LINK

KRESS COLLECTION DIGITAL ARCHIVE

<https://kress.nga.gov/Detail/archival/DOC14508>