

K1547 - Condition and restoration record, 1949

RESTORATION RECORD

Kress No. 1547 August 16, 1949

PAOLO DI GIOVANNI FEI: Assumption of the Virgin.

Measurements: Painting including frame - Length 24 1/2"
Width 20"

Painting alone - Length 20 1/2"
Width 15 1/2"

Since the frame is attached to the outer part of the original panel, the condition extends under the frame. (This condition was done by the Fildes Studio).

At the time of purchase, this painting was covered with a very old brown coating which consisted of wax drippings and smoke from altar candles, as well as dirt, dust, and grime. On the suggestion of Mr. RUSH S. Kress, it was decided that this very thick wax coating should be removed and the painting cleaned by Professor Modestini.

In the process of cleaning, Professor Modestini first applied a coat of poultice which remained on for three days. Then a coat of 20% soda ash was added. After twelve hours, it was then possible to remove the brown wax coating completely with the use of distilled turpentine. This wax coating seems to have acted as a preservative for the paint. The paint was found to be in an excellent state of preservation. With the brown coating gone the colors appear very brilliant and vivid.

However, the parts which were originally blue were made from lapis-lazuli pigment and with the past 500 years they had turned green. Before a solution made from various acids (acetic, tartaric, and citric) was used to change these colors (through chemical action) to their original shades of blue.

With the exception of a few brush strokes in various places, the only restoration necessary was the filling in of a few small chipped places on the upper left corner of the frame, and covering them with gold-leaf.

As a final step, the figures and objects were covered with a very weak solution of Restorant picture varnish and turpentine.

An interesting observation noted after the cleaning, is the pentimento (or parts of the original drawing) which can be seen above the right shoulder of the Virgin.

From Kress File

IDENTIFIER

DOC15627

ARCHIVAL ITEM TYPE

Condition and Restoration Records

CREATOR

Samuel H. Kress Foundation, New York, New York

DATE

1949

CITATION

National Gallery of Art, Painting Conservation Department Records

1 RELATED ART OBJECT

K1547

Paolo di Giovanni Fei

The Assumption of the Virgin with Busts of the Archangel Gabriel and the Virgin of the Annunciation

National Gallery of Art, Washington, District of Columbia

RECORD LINK

KRESS COLLECTION DIGITAL ARCHIVE

<https://kress.nga.gov/Detail/archival/DOC15627>