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Examination and Treatment Report

26 January 2022

Owner/Agent: *Omitted*

Examiner: Josephine Ren
Supervisor: Linnaea Saunders
Artist: James W. Reid (British-American, 1933 - 2016)
Title: Anemones in a Napoleon III Pitcher
Date: 1967
Medium and Support: Oil on canvas
Dimensions: 39 ⅝ in H x 24 ¾ in W x 1 ½ in D (Framed)
Signature: "Reid" in white paint in upper right corner

Frame:
Narrow wood frame (½ in W) with mitered corners, gilding on the front, and colored with a dark brown stain on the sides. There is a T-shaped galvanized metal hanging device secured to the narrow strip frame at top center.

Legends/Labels/Stamps:
Pressure-activated adhesive backed label on non-original paper backing with printed inscription: "Anemones in a Napoleon III Pitcher / James Reid / 1967". The numbers "24" and "39" enclosed by dotted ovals are impressed into the stretcher, indicating the dimensions of each respective stretcher member.

Inscriptions:
"3048" is inscribed on the top member of the stretcher using black marker, and on the reverse of paper backing using graphite. "24 x 39" is inscribed on the reverse of the canvas in the upper right quadrant using a dark blue paint, indicating the dimensions of the stretcher. "24 x 39" is also written in graphite on the lower left edge of the primed face of the canvas, which is folded over the stretcher and visible from the reverse.

Conservation History:
The painting does not appear to have been treated before. The frame is original to the painting.

Construction:
The painting was made on a coarse weave linen canvas support attached to a five-membered stretcher. The four primary stretcher members are joined by mitered mortise and tenon joints at the corners, which are reinforced by wire nails. There is one horizontal crossbar at the center attached to the stretcher via lap joints and tacked in stapled and small nails, as visible from the left end of the crossbar. None of the eight original keys are present. Eyehooks are attached to the left and right members of the stretcher in the upper half; the wire has been removed.

The primary support is a coarse, open-weave linen canvas with no glue or sizing layer. The top edge is an unprimed selvage indicated by two lines of red fiber. The weft is in horizontal orientation, as evidenced by the selvage. The left edge of the painting may have been cropped, as thicker applications of paint are present on the foldover edge.

The canvas was prepared with a white ground; it is unclear whether the canvas was prepared commercially or by the artist. The ground layer extends to the cut edges of the canvas. There appears to be areas of paint along the cut edges of the canvas that are visible on the foldover edges. A dark blue color was used as an underlying tone for the vase and upper three quarters of the composition.

No underdrawing is discernible under normal illumination or ultraviolet fluorescence.

The paint layer is thickly applied and has heavy impasto throughout. The paint appears to be applied by brush and palette knife. The film quality varies throughout and is both paste and rich vehicular. Examination under ultraviolet fluorescence reveals the presence of two different red pigments, as one fluoresces in an orange color indicating a lake pigment.

There is no overall varnish layer. There are areas of a thicker, glossier varnish or paint medium noted in the following locations: the uppermost flower, the centers of all of the flowers, and throughout the flower arrangement where there is heavy impasto. The uppermost flower has a drip of this coating running vertically downward. These areas of varnish or medium fluoresce white-green under ultraviolet fluorescence, and are either applied over or incorporated into the paint layer.

Condition:
The painting is in moderate condition overall. There is no significant surface grime or coating present. Primary condition concerns include areas of loss in the paint layer.

The stretcher is stable. A paper backing was attached to the reverse of the painting and has been removed; part of it is adhered to the crossbar using an unidentified adhesive. The stretcher and frame are planar and structurally secure. There are strips of a thin, fine-weave, commercially-primed linen canvas placed between the canvas and the stretcher in all four corners. These wrap around the outer edges of the stretcher and may be present as reinforcement to the original.

The painting was not unframed for this examination. In general, the canvas appears well-secured to the stretcher. The canvas is slightly loose overall, and has minor deformations and an underlying undulation related to the weight of the thick build-up of paint.

On the reverse of the canvas support, there are several large strips of masking tape along the edges of the canvas in an attempt to secure the foldover edges to the stretcher. Most of the tape strips have lifted from the stretcher, and remain adhered only to the canvas. One strip of tape has fallen between the canvas and stretcher in the lower left corner. There are three areas of yellowed adhesive residue along the lower edge, likely caused by previously applied masking tape. There are two areas of paint stains of a scumbled, dark purple and red color in the upper right quadrant adjacent to the right stretcher member.

The largest area of loss in the paint layer is in the foot of the flower pitcher, along the lower right edge. The paint adjacent to this loss is cracked and actively flaking. Another two areas of loss are in the middle of the pitcher's body by the left edge. There is a loss in the red background adjacent to the pitcher's foot, left end. Two small losses are in the lower left corner of the painting. There is some cracking in certain areas, most notably in the red flowers and in the pitcher body.

The frame has areas of loss in the gilding in the lower left and right corners and in the center of the lower edge. The lower edge center of the gilding also has some slight cracking. The non-original paper backing was adhered to the reverse of the frame using an unidentified adhesive.

Recommendations for Treatment: It is recommended that the areas of loss be consolidated, filled, and inpainted in order to visually reintegrate them with the paint surface. Loose pieces of masking tape will be removed from the reverse. A modified backing board will be secured to provide structural support for the canvas.

Treatment Proposal:

1. Photograph before, during, and after treatment.
2. Remove acidic and damaged paper backing, T-shaped metal hanging device, and eyehooks.
3. Surface-clean reverse of the canvas and secondary support using a HEPA-filtered vacuum and cosmetic sponges.
4. Mechanically remove loose strips of masking tape from the reverse.
5. Lightly surface-clean overall face of the painting using dry and/or aqueous methods.
6. Consolidate areas of cracking and actively flaking paint using an appropriate adhesive.
7. Fill areas of loss with an appropriate conservation-grade material.
8. Inpaint fills with conservation-grade colors and medium to match the gloss of the paint layer.
9. Prepare acid-free backing board with polyester batting insert to provide support for the canvas.

10. Secure modified backing board to reverse of the stretcher using appropriate hardware, including D-rings.
11. Process photo-documentation.
12. Prepare final treatment report.

Treatment:

1. Photographed before, during, and after treatment.
2. Removed acidic paper backing, T-shaped metal hanging device, and eyehooks. Cut out original adhesive-backed label that was adhered to paper backing.
3. Surface-cleaned reverse of the canvas and secondary support using a HEPA-filtered Miele vacuum and cosmetic sponges.
4. Mechanically removed all strips of masking tape from the reverse.
5. Lightly surface-cleaned overall face of the painting using a soft goat-haired hake brush.
6. Tested sensitivity of paint layers prior to consolidation using pH-adjusted water solutions formulated for oil paintings, adjusted to pH levels of 5.5 and 6.5. Also tested to evaluate the need for grime removal using aqueous methods. Red paint layers in the bottom half were found to be sensitive to water.
7. Locally humidified areas of cracking and actively flaking paint in preparation for consolidation.
8. Initially consolidated selected areas of cracking with 10% Aquazol 200 in ethanol.
9. Consolidated all areas of cracking and flaking paint using 10% Aquazol 500 in 50:50 water and ethanol.
10. Applied heat to lifting areas of paint in consolidated areas using a hot air blower tool, and immediately set down paint layer using a silicone-tipped shaper tool.
11. Placed Hollytex, blotter, and weights over consolidated areas and left overnight.
12. Filled areas of loss with Modostuc White filler.
13. Textured fills using a microspatula and dental tools.
14. Inpainted fills using Gamblin Conservation Colors diluted with isopropanol.
15. Prepared a two-part acid-free backing board with polyester batting inserts to provide support for the canvas. Non-resin polyester batting was adhered to the board using velcro tape, and covered with Hollytex adhered using 3M double-sided tape.
16. Secured two-part backing board to reverse of the stretcher using flat head screws, screws with finishing washers, and D-rings.
17. Humidified and flattened original label.
18. Secured original label to the reverse of the backing board in a mylar sleeve attached with 3M double-sided tape.
19. Processed photo-documentation.

Front, Before Treatment. Normal illumination (left) and raking illumination (right).

Front, During Treatment (left) and After Treatment (right).

Back, Before Treatment (left) and During Treatment (right).

Back, After Treatment.

Annotated areas of loss before treatment (left) and after treatment (right).

Area 1, Detail,
Before Treatment.

Area 1, Detail,
During Treatment.

Area 1, Detail,
After Treatment.

Area 2, Detail
Before Treatment.

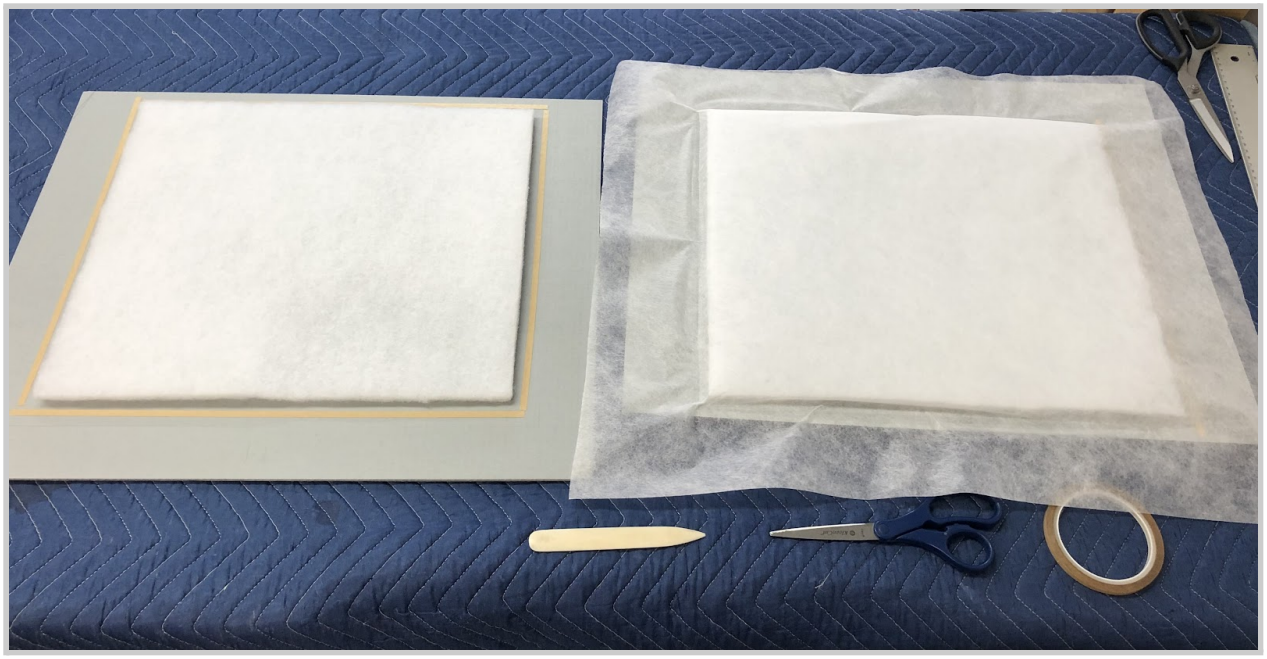
Area 2, Detail
During Treatment.

Area 2, Detail
After Treatment.

Area 3, Detail, Before Treatment.

Area 3, Detail, During Treatment.

Area 3, Detail, After Treatment.



Process of creating two-part backing board with polyester batting inserts to support the canvas.

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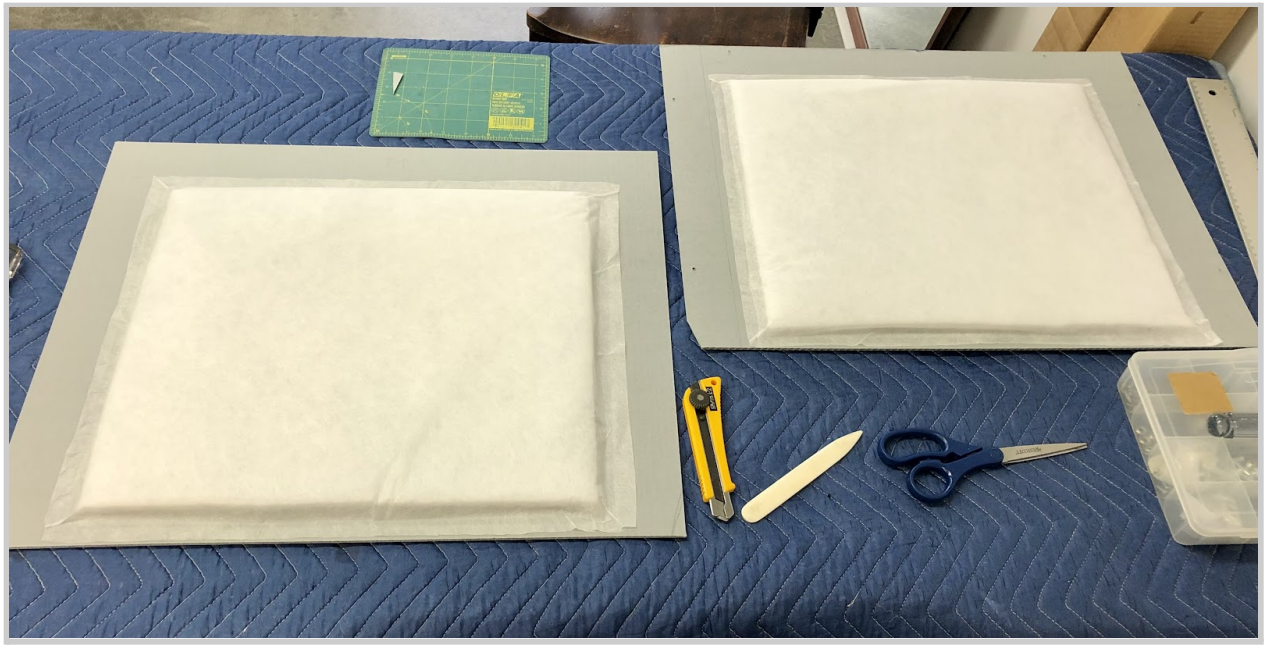
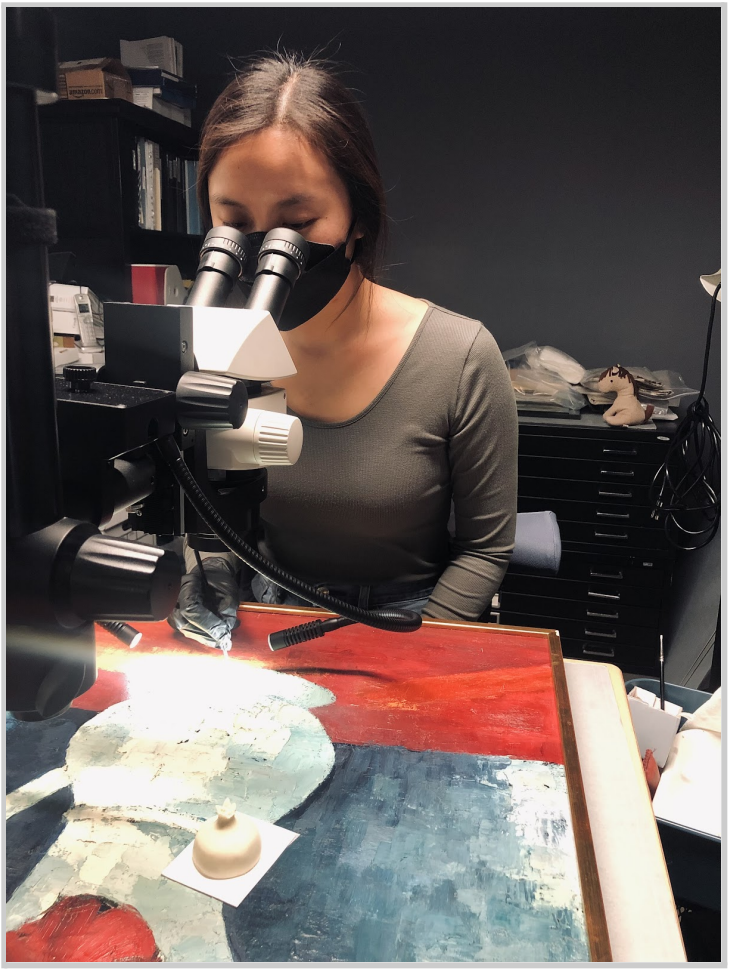


Completed two-part backing board modified with polyester batting inserts.



Consolidating an area of loss with the assistance of a microscope. Image: Linnaea Saunders

Area of loss and flaking paint prior to treatment under magnification.