

EXAMINATION REPORT AND PROPOSED CONSERVATION

ROBERT WINTHROP CHANLER PANEL

Prepared for: Gina Wouters, Director
Planting Fields Museum and State Historic Park
1395 Planting Fields Road
Oyster Bay, NY 11771
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Prepared by: Rosa Lowinger, Conservator
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Date of Examination: In person: October 17, 2024;
revisited in photos October, 2025

Date of Report: October 22, 2025



RLA Conservation is pleased to submit the following examination report to Gina Wouters, Executive Director, for a gilded and painted panel located at Planting Fields Museum in Oyster Bay Long Island. The work was examined in person by Rosa Lowinger on October 17 2024 and revisited in photographs for the purpose of preparing this assessment in October 2025.

Artist:	Robert Winthrop Chanler
Title:	<i>Untitled</i>
Date:	1924
Materials:	Oil gilded and painted wood composite panel
Overall Dimensions:	19 1/2" x 24" x ca. 1"
Signature:	Back, lower proper left.

DESCRIPTION & CONDITION:

This artwork by Robert Winthrop Chanler in a single component three-dimensional painted and gilded wooden panel set into a wood frame. The panel appears to be a wood composite with veneer finish on both the recto and verso. A signature is located on the verso, and the words 'Chanler Die Creation' on the back indicate that the artist used hardened dies to press, mold and shape the embossed/ raised design of the panel that gives it its sculptural relief quality.

The technique used is typical for Chanler and appears to involve applying a thin preparatory layer of the veneers—either white ground or red bole—over which transparent washes of gold pigment were

applied. Red bole, a traditional underlayer for oil gilding, is visible where the design layers have lifted or flaked away. This suggests that the panel was oil gilded.

The panel is in overall structurally stable condition, however the surface exhibits severe deep cracking that runs vertically along the wood grain, as well as incipient lifting, flaking and detachment of the decorative finishes. Of greatest concern is lifting and cleaving of the design layer from the backing and within layers of the applied finishes. This cracking and separation poses as significant threat to the design layer, particularly because it has produced widespread tenting, or lifting of the surface, that can be dislodged easily. Extant losses within the decorative layers were likely pervasive in the past, but many have been inpainted which suggests there may have been a consolidation campaign in the past. Several zones, especially along the bottom edge, show active lifting and fragmentation. The veneer on the back has split and begun to lift away from the support parallel to the plane of the surface. This is particularly evident at the lower proper left corner. Abrasion is visible on this back surface as well, likely caused by the panel projecting slightly beyond the depth of the frame along the back. This places it in direct contact with the wall when displayed and subjects it to abrasion.

There is clear evidence of previous retouching with modern gold-toned paints. These areas of retouching have darkened over time and do not match surrounding areas. No fills are visible beneath these overpaints, which makes them shallower than the surrounding areas, and in some places the new paints are over the original gilding. A few older repairs, especially along the left margin, remain intact. Minor drip accretions are present near the center-left of the panel. The presence of more recent paint losses, which have not been subject to repair, indicates that ongoing instability is present. There appears to be a thin natural resin varnish coating the entire surface of the panel.

There is no evidence of mold, water staining, insect or rodent damage, or blanching that suggests exposure to moisture. That said, it is important to consider future storage and display of the panel in terms of the environmental conditions of the space.

The composition of the wood frame is not known, however it is a dark cherry-tone in color. It is not clear if this is an original frame. Slight separation is visible at several joints, consistent with age. This is most noticeable at the upper right corner.

The panel is lightly covered with dust and dirt. No significant accretions or oily grime were noted.

TREATMENT OBSERVATIONS AND OBJECTIVE: This panel requires widespread surface consolidation to arrest ongoing lifting and paint loss within the design layers. Stabilization will possibly require a two-fold approach to consolidation, to deal both with surface flaking and deeper detachment of the decorative design from the support. Following stabilization, surface cleaning will be carried out. To the extent allowable by the project scope and budget, previously retouched passages will be removed and replaced and/ or toned and filled to provide a more aesthetic and integrated appearance. Consideration should

also be given to either replacing or modifying the current frame to ensure full protection of the panel's verso during handling and display.

PROPOSED TREATMENT:

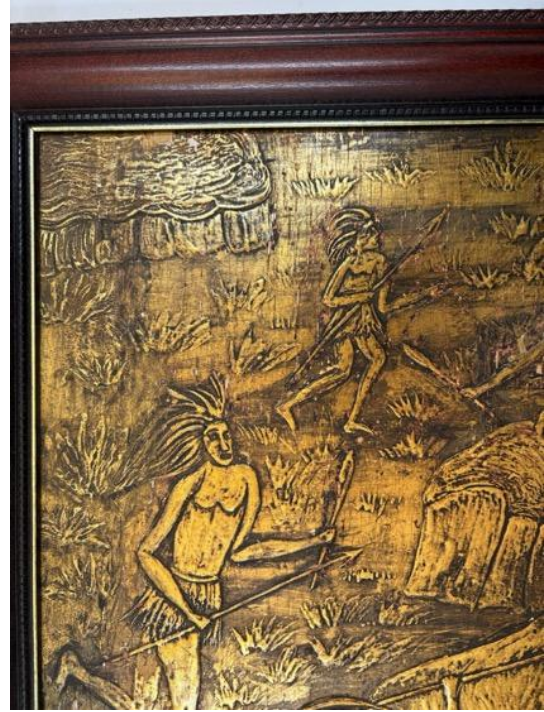
1. Document the treatment with a written report and high-resolution digital photographs. Provide a Dropbox link to all treatment images.
2. Unframe the work to access all portions, if possible to do without damage.
3. Test solubility of surface to determine materials that can be used for consolidation.
4. Test consolidants, based on the solubility parameters.
5. Begin consolidation process using gentle heat, possible humidity and appropriate consolidants. The materials to be considered include: Paraloid B-72 in alcohol (particularly for thicker areas of detachment), Lascaux 498, fish glue, Aquazol 200, or other materials, as found to be required. Use a heated spatula as needed.
6. Clean excess consolidant with the appropriate solvent.
7. Dry-clean all the surfaces to remove loose particulate matter and dust with Artist's choice® polyethylene cosmetic sponges.
8. Damp clean with distilled water or appropriate organic solvent to remove dirt and grime.
9. Remove overpaint with appropriate solvents.
10. Continue with additional consolidation as needed.
11. Fill depressions where decorative material has been lost either with a conservation-grade putty such as Modostuc or Flügger, or *Jin Shofu* high purified Japanese wheat adhesive, applied with brushes and a bone spatula and *Sekishu thick* Japanese paper.
12. Retouch areas of paint loss or old retouching, as allowable using GOLDEN MSA Conservation Paints, and GOLDEN fluid acrylics and/or reversible water-based varnishes by Golden mixed with mica powders. Some gilding may be done as allowable under budget.
13. As needed, consider the application (either locally or overall) of a conservation grade reversible varnish, such as an appropriate type of Golden varnish, to unify the surface sheen and protect the finish.

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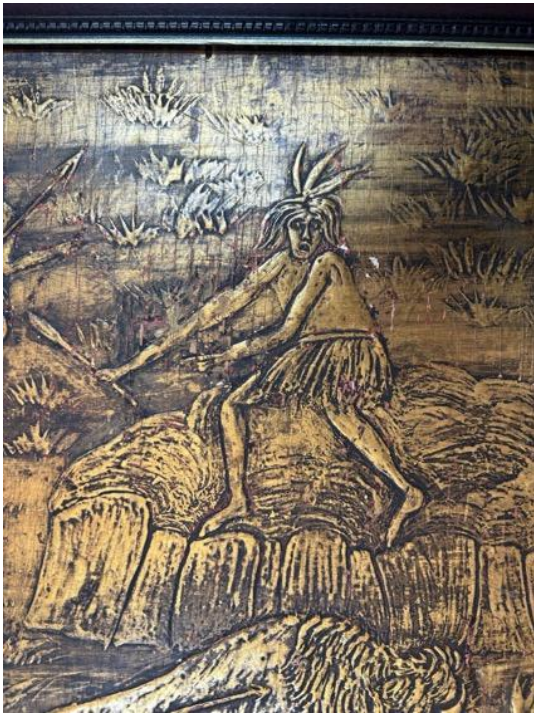
SELECT CONDITION PHOTOGRAPHS — PROVIDED BY CLIENT:



Detail of losses that extend to the wood substrate



Detail of embossing design





Detail of surface embossing with select losses and cracks

Signature and frame border

DISPLAY RECOMMENDATIONS:

- We recommend either replacing the frame, or if it is found to be integral to the work, consider a backing to protect the surface.
- Avoid fluctuating temperatures or humidity conditions.
- Handling must be done carefully and without stressing the hinged areas during installation. We recommend that two people move it at all times.
- Any handling should be done using gloves to prevent transferring oils or dirt to the surface.

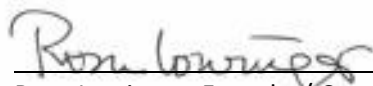
PROPOSED TREATMENT COSTS:

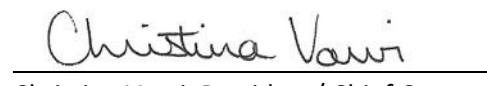
Conservators:	40 hours @ \$170.00 per hour*	\$7,500.00
Materials:	included	
Shipping:	Estimated/ or allow travel time	\$4,000.00
Technician Assistance:	40 hours @ \$100.00 per hour	\$4,000.00
TOTAL COST		\$14,800.00

Costs are inclusive of labor, materials, documentation, and mileage. Any scope of work not expressly outlined above is excluded. **Costs do not include transportation of the object to or from RLA's Miami studio. A list of qualified art handlers can be provided upon request.**

*Note: this constitutes a discounted rate for RLA's conservators.

Prepared By:


Rosa Lowinger, Founder/ Conservator


Christina Varvi, President/ Chief Conservator

PLEASE NOTE: THIS PROPOSAL IS THE INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY OF RLA CONSERVATION OF ART & ARCHITECTURE AND MAY NOT BE SHARED WITH ANY OTHER PARTIES OR INDIVIDUALS WITHOUT THE EXPRESS WRITTEN PERMISSION OF RLA CONSERVATION OF ART & ARCHITECTURE OR USED TO CREATE A REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) TO SOLICIT WORK FROM ANOTHER CONSERVATION FIRM.



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Accepted by:

(sign name)

(print name)

(title & agency)

(date)

CLIENT: PLANTING FIELDS MUSEUM
PROJECT: CHANLER PANEL

OWNERSHIP: The Owner /Authorized Agent agrees that they are the owner or authorized agent of the owner of the object(s). RLA does not undertake to give any opinion on the value, style or authenticity of the object(s).

USE OF DOCUMENTATION MATERIALS: The Owner agrees that RLA may use photographs, drawings, and written documents made in the performance of the proposed services for educational purposes. If such materials are also not to be used for promotional or advertising purposes, initial here: _____. In all cases, RLA will keep the Owner's identity confidential.

FINE ARTS INSURANCE: The subject property must be insured either under RLA's fine arts insurance policy or the owner's insurance policy. RLA carries a fine art insurance policy covering all artwork and artifacts in our possession during examination and treatment. A dollar value must be declared by the owner or the owner's authorized agent for all subject property. Subject property with stated value of \$100,000 or less will not be assessed an additional administrative surcharge. Subject property with stated value exceeding \$100,000 will be assessed an administrative surcharge of \$0.80 per \$100 of stated value above \$100,000 (per annum, prorated to the actual time the object is in our possession). Stated value of subject property: \$_____.

It is agreed that in the event of FIRE, THEFT, or OTHER PERIL AS COVERED BY RLA'S POLICY, adjustment will be made on the basis of the current fair market value.

The surcharge for an item valued at more than \$100,000 will be waived if the client provides RLA with a certificate of insurance issued by the owner's insurance carrier, naming RLA Conservation as additional insured, and including a waiver of subrogation.

Please check here if you wish to provide your own coverage _____. If the owner provides coverage, then RLA, its employees, agents, servants and their families and heirs will be held harmless for any loss or damage which might occur while the property is in the care or possession of RLA or while in transit, and this Agreement shall constitute a release of RLA from any liability in connection with the subject property. RLA will accept no responsibility for any error or deficiency in information furnished to the Owner's insurers or for any lapses in coverage.

The Owner agrees to indemnify and hold RLA, its employees, agents, servants and their families and heirs harmless from any and all claims or judgments arising out of the care or work performed except for in cases of gross negligence and willful destruction. This includes all third-party suits. All future claims which may hereafter arise against RLA, its employees, agents, servants and their families and heirs based on the performance of professional services are hereby waived.

PROPERTY DAMAGE AND BODILY INJURY INSURANCE: RLA's Business Policy provides \$1,000,000 combined single limit. Each Occurrence Limit - \$1,000,000.



STATEMENT OF FEES: This is a fixed cost proposal, unless otherwise expressly stated above. A service charge of 1.5% per month will be made on charges not paid within 30 days. Owner agrees to pay for any additional authorized conservation work at the following rate: \$175/hr (\$1400/day) plus the cost of materials and any subcontractors work (+18% for overhead and profit).

CHANGES IN TREATMENT: It is understood and agreed that the treatment may be halted or modified should new problems arise. After consultation with the Owner or Authorized Agent, a new estimate may be given if the problems are more complex and the treatment more time-consuming than originally estimated.

If any action at law or in equity is brought to enforce or interpret the provisions of this agreement, the prevailing party shall be entitled to reasonable attorney's fees in addition to any other relief to which s/he may be entitled. This agreement supersedes any and all other agreements, either oral or in writing between the parties hereto with respect to the subject matter hereto, and no other agreement, statement or promise relating to the subject matter of this agreement which is not contained herein shall be valid or binding. The validity of this agreement and of any of its terms or provisions, as well as the rights and duties of the parties hereunder, shall be governed by the laws of the State of California.

In the event of danger or threat of danger to the work(s) of art arising from flood, fire, earthquake, war, insurrection or riot, or any cause of a similar nature, RLA will be free to determine the course to be followed with respect to the moving and storing of the work(s) of art, and any such determination shall be final and shall not subject RLA, its employees, agents, servants and their families and heirs to any liability.