



# ACdR Conservation LLC.

## Art Conservation de Rigueur et Anoxia Abatement Solutions

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*\*All work is photo documented from start to finish, we use only conservation safe materials and supplies, and all treatments are approached in a manner to be ethically responsible, to stabilize and preserve objects for our global cultural heritage and to be reversible and non-permanent for future study.*

### Portrait of Young Ella Withers

2020.1.1

**Condition Assessment:** At our initial on-site condition assessment and examination of the painting, we could clearly see right away that the entire face of the painting had many layers of waxy tissue paper sheets firmly adhered to the front face surface of the artwork. This was an inappropriate material to use for fine art packing, and should never have been used as a lining material in direct contact with a painting surface whether an oil painting or acrylic. This type of packing tissue paper is generally used for packing textiles, dishes, and ceramics into boxes. This was a most unfortunate situation that has required an extensive conservation treatment protocol to recover the artwork from this misinformed, or negligent and damaging mishandling. Any artwork being prepped for overseas, or a long transit from state to state wherein the climate and humidity will spike and swing up and down during the journey – necessitates a lining material such as tyvek, silicone release paper or glassine, that will not stick or adhere to a surface that may become tacky from heat and humidity. And better yet and large collared box carton with polyethylene sheeting keeping anything from touching the surface at all.

During our initial on-site assessment we tested several areas along the left side, to remove the adhered tissue. We used 5.0 and 6.5 pH adjusted H<sub>2</sub>O with sodium hydroxide and 10% glacial acetic acid at 6000 $\mu$ S. We found three different pigment colors were immediately color fast, water soluble and bleeding onto our cotton swabs. This is why we recommended a non-aqueous cleaning approach to safely remove the tissue. The artist did not use any binders or painting mediums in mixing his pigments – as they appeared to be squeezed raw out of the tube, and thus water soluble. This is why it is also very important to put a protective finishing varnish layer over the entire surface, to seal the raw pigments, as they are vulnerable exposed to the environment.

What we found upon further assessment at our conservation studios was that much of the tissue paper fibers and cellulose material had actually melted into the pigment layers, imbedded into the multi-dimensional surfaces and left impressions of the crinkled paper, altering the soft plasticized acrylic surfaces. This made our task of removing the paper and these minute particles much more difficult, arduous and time consuming. Especially in consideration of the fact that particular pigments were highly water soluble, soft, and solvent sensitive. Our approach was limited. We were quite challenged to put our chemistry and conservation science expertise to the test with analytical research, and multiple sample area testing along the side edges to achieve the final and best outcomes that were our final and successful results utilizing the Modular Cleaning Program.

## Conservation Treatment Summary

step 1 **Humidification Encapsulation:** To begin working we safely lifted and removed the many layers of individual waxy tissue wrapping paper sheets. We first re-introduce controlled humidification, with an encapsulation of the entire painting in a custom fabricated bubble chamber. Initially the tissue paper was firmly stuck into the pigment surfaces, and when torn away or lifted was leaving behind layers of paper residue film, and fibers still imbedded in the surface pigments. There were also issues of the paper have left crinkled impressions in the softened acrylic paint surfaces.

We gently and slowly exposed the canvas to a controlled and minimal amount of humidity, in order to gently soften the stiff acrylic pigment layers. To achieve this we fabricated a bubble to encapsulate the entire stretched canvas framed artwork and slowly introduced a higher relative humidity over the course of 2.5 days.

step 2 **Non-Aqueous Surface Cleaning to Remove the Tissue Paper:** The surface areas on the canvas verso of the painting with tissues adhered were treated with a cyclomethicone D4 solution and velvisil plus gel applied with a soft sable hair brush – then the tissues paper layers were gently mechanically removed by hand with small tweezers, cotton and small sponge tipped swabs.

step 3 **Micro-Hepa Vacuuming:** Next the entire painting was carefully vacuumed on both the recto and verso. A comprehensive and detailed micro-hepa vacuuming of all surfaces was undertaken. We mechanically removed any and all accumulated acidic dust, debris and other environmental pollutant particulate matter. This aided in neutralizing the acidic pH back towards an alkaline scale of 11.4 - 12.8 prior to secondary surface cleaning. \*With repeated vacuuming as we clean various detailed areas...

step 4 **Surface Cleaning:** Our cleaning tests proceeded with a series of pH adjusted solutions of deionized H<sub>2</sub>O between 5.0 - 6.5 / 6000 $\mu$ S calibrated conductivity with EDTA, citric acid, MES as chelators and ecosurf as surfactant on 25% solution with 50% D4 solution cyclomethicone. We worked within these variables depending on the color fastness of each pigment to achieve the removal of the paper fibers.

The pigment surface once revealed, given the high relief texture had quite a bit of cleaning issues to resolve, beyond the usual general terms, that needed to be addressed with mechanical cleaning. The artwork had actually accumulated a lot of surface debris, grime, soiling or other residues that needed to be cleared. We did a gentle swab surface cleaning with several specialty surfactant and detergent formulary solutions, rinsed and cleared from the surface with pH adjusted distilled de-ionized H<sub>2</sub>O 6.5 with a conductivity of 6000 $\mu$ S.

Solution + Arid Dry + Hepa-Vac + Solution w/Brush + Blotting + Hepa-Vac

step 5 **Consolidation, In-fills, and Re-Touching:** There were numerous areas of pigment losses where tissue that had strongly adhered to the painted surface took surface layers of pigments flakes away with it, or areas where the tissue fibers were so deeply imbedded into the pigment layers, that in order to remove them, original pigments was lost. These areas necessitated in-filling with clear acrylic gesso primer, barrier layer and then re-touching with conservation safe and reversible high gloss Golden QOR aquasol impregnated water color pigments. We accurately color matched all of the artist original colors.

step 6 **UV Protective Finishing Varnish:** To complete and protect the cleaned painting surface, we have applied two full layers a UV finishing varnish, hand brushing application to the entire pigmented surface. This will act as a protective barrier skin over the previously damaged pigments, preventing potential future losses of fractured pigments layers that may lift or buckle away from the heavy weight of the pigment on the substrate – especially since the canvas has so much loose flexing. We have custom mixed the finishing varnish to match the original sheen/luster of the artwork.

Combined Rate Fee for Time, Services and Materials

Actual Time **110+** hours SubTotal

**Connect Art International:** We use a trusted and well respected fine art shipping and handling company, used by many of our regional museums and professional art galleries for all of our coordinated on-site pick-ups, to wrap, pack and prep the artwork for round trip transport and delivery to and from our San Francisco ACdR conservation studios, and back to the client residence following completion of the treatment.

\*Please Note: For in depth-comprehensive conservation treatment protocols, the normal turn around timing is 4 to 10 months (though some projects may take considerably longer, or shorter). This is the compilation of numerous factors, such as inherent rest and requisite drying time in between treatment stages, and the fact that we work on many concurrent client projects in the studios together in a multidisciplinary approach. No one singular object has our undivided attention beginning to end. All projects progress in a steady stream of confluence simultaneously and in a progressive que and line of standing order of arrival ( first projects to arrive at the studios, first to be served et cetera...and we then work new projects into the line-up as they arrive). We will send periodic progress updates (if requested by the client), including conservation photo documentation images, via email correspondence, throughout the treatment protocol. Please Don't hesitate to contact us at any time with any question you may have, we are happy to speak with you, and discuss any issue or concerns. We encourage you to visit our studios by appointment to view the treatment in-progress, as it is always a great learning opportunity. We can offer temporary and interim safe art storage after treatment is completed, please inquire for rates and charges. Please also note: all Conservation Treatment Recommendations are preliminary estimate proposals, actual hours for various treatment phases/steps may vary and/or take longer than initially anticipated, and we may encounter unforeseen complications, or other comprehensive factors. In which case the final Conservation Treatment Summary report and billing invoice will reflect any necessary revisions from estimated to actual time, services, materials and equipment expenses – including adjustments to set limited hours in discounted combined rate fees.

Insurance coverage during shipping/transportation from the residence and returned to the residence will be covered by the Insured's insurance company. In addition, all items being treated will be covered by the Insured's insurance company. ACdR LLC., and all associated staff will be blameless, held harmless and not liable except in case of gross negligence. The Insured must sign off on this when work is approved. If being processed as an insurance claim, the insurance company (adjuster) must also sign off on this document.

**Late fees and penalties for billing invoices assessed after 90 days past due at 12% annual interest.**



All work is performed according to the Code of Ethics, Guidelines, and Standards of Practice of the  
American Institute for the Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (AIC)  
The International Institute of Conservation (IIC)

AIC Conservator in Private Practice (CIPP) \* ICOM-CC \* Western Association of Art Conservation (WAAC)  
Board of Directors Bay Area Art Conservation Guild (BAACG)