

**National Gallery of Art
Painting Conservation Department**

AFTER TREATMENT REPORT

July 23, 2007

A. Lucas Cranach the Elder

A Prince of Saxony c. 1517

Oil (estimated) on linden panel

1947.6.1 (896) Ralph and Mary Booth Collection

DIMENSIONS: H. 43.7 cm (17 1/4") W. 34.4 cm (13 1/2")

B. Lucas Cranach the Elder

A Princess of Saxony c. 1517

Oil (estimated) on linden panel

1947.6.2 (897) Ralph and Mary Booth Collection

DIMENSIONS: H. 43.4 cm (17 1/8") W. 34.4 cm (13 1/2")

SUMMARY

This report should be read in conjunction with the EXAMINATION REPORTS AND TREATMENT PROPOSALS of 21 October 2005 and 18 April 1989.

Both paintings were examined using infrared reflectography (IRR)¹. The prince painting shows some very faint lines in his right hand and incised lines are visible with the unaided eye in his right sleeve.

The princess painting shows some sketch lines in the hands and in the red stripes of her bodice. Also the location of the lips and eyes are marked with some fine black lines.

Some pigments were identified using polarized light microscopy (PLM)². The orange fills on both paintings were identified as red lead with circa ten percent lead white addition. The black backgrounds in both paintings were made with carbon black (bone black?). The mid-tone in the prince's sleeve consists of vermilion and lead white. The same pigment mixture was found in the decoration on top of this layer. This is in contrast to the decoration on the

¹ Both paintings were examined with FLIR/ Indigo Alpha VisGaAs camera with H filter 0.5 - 1.7 microns (50mm lens) on July 13th 2006 and the prince painting was re-examined August 24th 2006.

² Both paintings were sampled on 07/12/2006 and then mounted. See the conservation files for the location of the samples.

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sleeve of the princess painting, which is built up with vermillion mixed with lead-tin-yellow and some carbon black (bone black?). The ground tone for her sleeve consists of vermillion with a five to ten percent lead white addition. On top of this layer is a red glaze mixed with some carbon black (bone black?).

After photographic documentation the surface grime was removed with an aqueous solution. Cleaning tests were conducted at the borders of the paintings. The very thick and oxidized varnish layers were removed with the chosen organic solvents. Most overpaint was very soluble and was also removed during this stage of the treatment. The old fills became apparent after the removal of the overpaint and the discolored inpainting.

By studying these fills it became clear that there were at least three older restoration treatments conducted on these paintings over the past decades. Both paintings had a similar build-up of different fills located around the perimeter; over the strips added to the support on each side as well as over the unprepared top and bottom edges where the original barbs were uncovered after the removal of the overpaint. The following is the sequence of overpaint layers from recent to elder :**a.** grey fill under the first overpaint, **b.** water-soluble black overpaint (probably watercolor) under that a water-soluble white fill. **c.** under those two layers a, rather difficult to remove, brown-black layer on top of a lead-containing orange fill, most likely from the time when the panel strips were added. This orange fill was removed from the areas where it was covering up original paint. Due to its hardness, the layer was softened with solvents and than removed under the microscope with a scalpel.

It is complicated to date these previous treatments. By combining the oldest conservation records (*Repair of work of art* records) with the old registrars files (entry cards) it is possible to exactly date the latest treatments. Both paintings were X-rayed in November 1946. On December 12th, 1946 both paintings were at the restorer's³. The painting of the prince underwent the following treatment: *Reduced cracks in lower part of red garment and background. Corrected stains in face and forehead. Refinished surface and reframed painting.* The painting of the princess: *Glazed*

³ This restorer was possibly Frank Sullivan, then on contract to the National Gallery of Art.

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forehead, parts of face and neck, right hand and left puff sleeve.

Both paintings went to the restorer again on January 29th 1947, this time for the following: the prince painting- *Corrected stains on the left side of face. Glazed both hands,* and for the princess- *Cleaned painting superficially.* The old entry cards show that both paintings were with the restorer for four days, starting on the 24th of February 1947. There is no record on the *Repair of work of art* record of what treatment was done during those days. The next stop at the restorer for both paintings was in January 1948, when both paintings were *wiped.* On October 1962, the princess painting went to the restorer: *Removed surface dirt and refinished the surface with B-72 resin.*

CONDITION AFTER CLEANING

A. The black background of the prince painting was completely overpainted. After removing the overpaint it became clear that after the panel strips were added at the sides, the surface was sanded down in order to level the additions with the original support. The same sanding damage occurs in the sitter's right cheek, possibly in order to level the badly joined crack in the panel. On the left side of the prince's garment is a long drip, most likely from a strong solvent that ran down the surface (the damage is less evident in the hands, probably because they contain the more inert lead white). There are several small losses throughout the painting; some of them are from woodworm holes. Also some green leaves and pearls are missing in the crown. The vertical crack in the panel was badly rejoined and then filled over original paint. It was decided to leave the crack as is because re-opening it would be too invasive. The small losses, the thinned down areas, some vertical cracks and the diagonal lines from the streaky preparation layer disturb the overall appearance of the paint layer.

Near the upper edge of the painting at 0.7cm (1/4") from the edge, is a fine light brownish horizontal line with some gold leaf residue parallel to the edge. This line could possibly be related to the original frame or a mordant from a now lost decoration. On the right side of the painting (28cm (11") from the left and 3cm (1 1/8") from the top) are some red lake scumbles. Their function is unclear.

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B. In the princess painting, the black background was also overpainted and the damage is very similar to that in the prince painting. The overall damage is also very comparable to the prince painting. The biggest loss is located in the front part of the princess' hair. The hair and her left eye were also overpainted. The craquelure pattern is more apparent than in the prince painting.

INPAINTING

A synthetic resin varnish was brushed on the paintings. Several minor losses were filled. The big losses, such as the left cheek of the prince and the hair of the princess were carefully reconstructed. In order to be historically correct, several Cranach paintings from the same period were studied as well as high quality images. It was decided to inpaint or tone down the most disturbing cracks in order to regain the overall composition of the painting. The inpainting of these cracks, the filled losses and the abrasions in the paint layer were done with light-stable pigments ground in a reversible synthetic resin.


A reversible varnish was sprayed on the painting.

Treatment of the painting was as follows:


1. The surface dirt was removed
2. The varnish and some overpaint was removed using organic solvents
3. The old inpainting and fills were removed with a scalpel under the microscope
4. A removable varnish was applied
5. The losses were filled using a proprietary, removable synthetic filling putty
6. The cracks, losses and several zones showing abrasion were inpainted using dry pigments ground into a synthetic resin
7. A removable synthetic varnish was applied over the whole.

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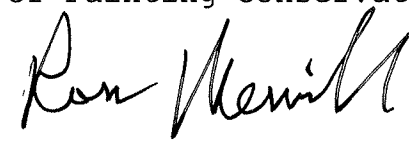
July 24, '07
Date


Bart J.C. Devolder
Andrew W. Mellon Fellow in Paintings
Conservation

July 24, '07
Date


Sarah L. Fisher
Head of Painting Conservation

7/30/07
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