



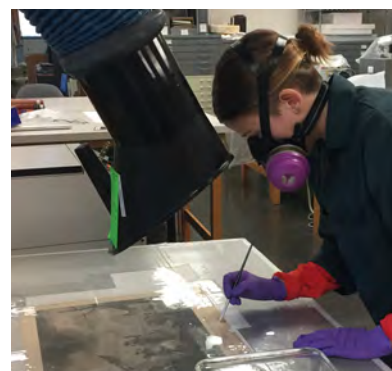
Art Conservation *and filling in the gaps*

Two travelers on horseback, resting in a busy encampment, were the subjects of a merry and even ribald scene in a decorative print entitled Le Voyageur Allemand (The German Traveler) by 18th-century French engraver Jean Charles Baquoy (1721-1777), after a 17th-century painting by Dutch artist Philips Wouwerman (1619-1658). This year a print of the Le Voyageur Allemand dated 1773 became a treatment project for Winterthur/University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation (WUDPAC) Fellow Madison Brockman, a paper conservation major whose pre-program experience included working at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences' Margaret Herrick Library in Beverly Hills, California.

The print, part of WUDPAC's study collection, had at some point suffered numerous tears and losses along its bottom edge, leaving it physically unstable and inappropriate for display. Addressing these would be an important focus of Madison's treatment. First, however, she used cosmetic sponges and vinyl eraser crumbs to selectively clean the surface of the print. She then turned her attention to two different types of tape on the back of the print. In the upper corners, two pieces of water-soluble gummed paper tape were likely from previous hinging for display, perhaps in the study of a gentleman who appreciated its humorous subject matter.

In addition, several pieces of rubber-based adhesive masking tape had been applied to the fragmented bottom edge. This adhesive was not water soluble, so Madison reduced the oxidized, dark yellow adhesive residues from the paper with a poultice of solvent and Fuller's earth, a fine clay that absorbed the adhesive as it was re-activated by the solvent. She then humidified and bathed the print to remove acidic, water-soluble degradation products.

Madison addressed the tears and losses at the bottom edge using the "wet pulp fill" technique, in which a slurry of custom-blended paper pulp and water is applied with a pipette to mend the tears and fill in the gaps. This technique allows new paper to form around existing fragments as the pulp builds up in layers to create secure fills that use no adhesive and that blend in with the surrounding paper. Once the mends had dried, Madison selectively blended dry pigment along the edges of the fills to mitigate the subtle differences between them and the paper. After completing her treatment Madison will return the print to the study collection, where it will be stored in custom-made housing and at a stable temperature and humidity to prevent deterioration and damage.



ARTC Spotlight—April 2018

The University of Delaware's Art Conservation Department educates and trains professional conservators who are well versed in the treatment, analysis, documentation, and preventive conservation of individual artifacts and entire collections. For more news about our students and other department activities visit our web site at www.artcons.udel.edu.

Top: Winterthur/University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation Fellow Madison Brockman filling losses in a print with custom-blended wet pulp. Above: Detail of wet pulp fill technique, with the result below; dried fills were then trimmed and toned. Right (from top down): Madison working with solvents on the suction table to reduce tape adhesive residues, bathing the print on water frames for physical support, and toning the fills with dry pigments after treatment. (Photos: Joan Irving, Amber Kehoe, Emily Farek, and Madison Brockman.)