

Art Conservation *and the modern Michelangelo*

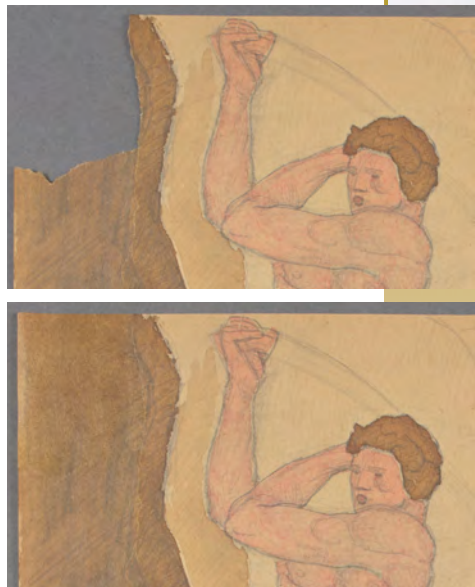
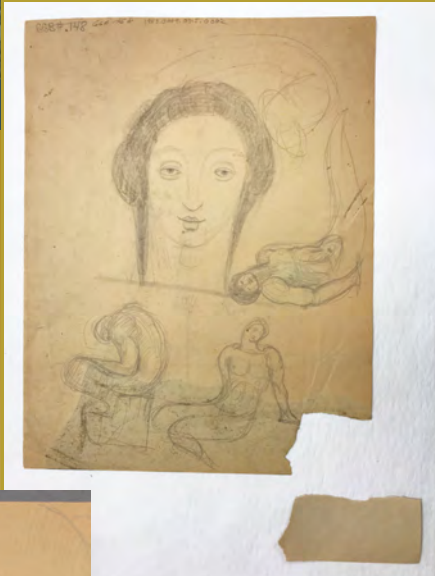
Nicknamed the 'modern Michelangelo' during his lifetime, sculptor George Grey Barnard (1863-1938) is best known for his heroic sculptures and outdoor art. But his larger-than-life pieces started as sketches or drawings on paper, including more than 800 such drawings that are now part of the collection at the University of Delaware Museums. One of these, a graphite and watercolor drawing of a muscular male figure sitting in a twisted, contorted position executed on an 8 1/2 x 11 inch piece of newsprint, had suffered a substantial loss in the upper left corner, a tear down the left side of the paper, and iron accretions left by a paper clip at the top of the page.

This year it fell to Winterthur/University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation (WUDPAC) Fellow Emily Farek to treat the drawing so that it could be safely handled and used for study. Emily, a paper major with a minor in library/archives, enjoys working with drawings because of the attention that must be paid to their aesthetics. She was interested to visit UD's collection of Barnard drawings and papers and learn more about his artistic process and use of materials. She found that many of the drawings are on newsprint and very few include a watercolor wash. At least some, including the drawing she was treating, never became sculptures and remain only ideas captured on paper.

Emily began her treatment by selectively cleaning the drawing's surface with a soft brush. After finding a compatible, newsprint-type paper to fill the corner loss, she used washes of acrylic paint to tone it so that it better matched the dark brown of the original paper. She cut the fill paper to the shape of the loss, beveled the edges to fit the torn edge of the original and then attached the two pieces by applying an adhesive. Once the fill was in place, she used dry pigment as a final touch to integrate the fill.



To mend the tear, Emily used very thin pieces of Japanese tissue paper applied with the same adhesive she had used to repair the corner loss. She also carefully removed as much of the rusted paper clip remnants as she could by working very closely with a small scalpel under a microscope. She decided against using solutions to remove this material from concern that it would create tidelines in the paper. Once she had completed her treatment, Emily returned the drawing to UD in housing that will help preserve it for future study.



ARTC Spotlight—July 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 Emily Farek toning the fill in situ, using dry pigments. Above: The verso of the Barnard drawing and the toned paper fill prior to attachment. Above, left: Recto detail of the loss, before and after insertion of the paper fill. Far left: The fill paper was toned using washes of acrylics, seen in the set-up here, before it was shaped and attached to the drawing. (Photos: Madison Brockman and Emily Farek.)