



Art Conservation *and the transfer of knowledge*

Enthusiasm for hunting in 18th- and 19th-century England carried over to daily life, through the use of tableware and dishes decorated with hunting motifs. In the early 19th century, large ceramic

jugs with this popular imagery were created by Herculaneum, a Liverpool company, often for export to the American market.

The jugs, covered with a transparent glaze and colorfully decorated with both hand-painted and transfer-printed designs, are thought to have been purchased for centerpiece display or ceremonial use. One such jug from the Winterthur collection, a handsome piece of earthenware bearing the molded face of a horned, open-mouthed satyr on its pouring lip, hunting motifs, and floral designs on its body, and an eggplant-colored enameling on its neck, recently became a treatment project and technical study for Winterthur/University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation (WUDPAC) Fellow Julia Commander.

Julia, an objects major whose wide-ranging pre-program experience includes lab research, sculpture conservation, and learning about preventive care in local museums and archives, determined that the jug, which stands almost 21 inches high, was in need of a stabilizing conservation treatment. Earlier repairs were misaligned and loosely joined, particularly around the pouring lip, while mismatched fill material had affected the jug's appearance. In addition, the eggplant-colored enameling on the neck, rim, and handle had flaked and powdered, leaving some areas light brown in color and revealing the cream-colored glazed substrate in others.

After cleaning the jug's surface, Julia used solvents to remove as much adhesive and fill material as possible in places where previous repairs had been made. Through X-radiography, she thought she might find metal dowels where the pouring lip at one point had at broken off and then been rejoined to the jug. Instead, she was interested to find pockets of glue constructed like a bridge inside the break to hold the neck, lip, and jug together. She plans to re-adhere the pieces back in alignment, to fill any structural losses, and to inpaint enamel losses so that the jug is structurally sound and more visually unified.

After completing both her conservation treatment and her technical study, through which she expects to learn more about the materials and pigments used to make the jug, Julia expects the unique object will, for the first time, be displayed at Winterthur.



ARTC Spotlight—March 2016

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 Fellow Julia Commander testing agarose gel poultices for stain reduction. Above: Acetone and cotton poulticing to reverse old repairs, and aged adhesive residues in break edges. Left: Before treatment, detail of pouring lip, and front view. (Images: Jessica Chasen and Julia Commander.)