



Art Conservation *and views from abroad*

Eighteenth-century Europeans learned about East Asia from the writings and drawings of a small number of adventurous travelers. One example was an etching by English engraver Nathaniel Parr, titled *Ragged Cliff's made by Art*. The print was included in an ambitious 18th-century publication depicting landscapes and peoples from around the world. The etching was produced from a drawing by Dutch artist Johan Nieuhof (1618-1672), who had traveled to China with a trading mission a century earlier.

Now unbound, the etching found its way to the Winterthur/University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation (WUDPAC) paper lab study collection of prints and became a treatment project for Jacklyn Chi, a WUDPAC graduate fellow of paper conservation. The etching portrays a landscape dominated by stark, freestanding cliffs juxtaposed against many small human figures, some standing at ground level and others walking on a grand staircase that leads up to and through the peaks. The image appears to combine both Western and Eastern artistic conventions, evoking a traditional Chinese landscape painting, in which figures are dwarfed by larger-than-life mountains and trees, and a European sensibility about nature, seen in the manmade forms that redefine the environment.

Condition issues in the print included a large corner loss in the lower left quadrant and major losses and exposed unstable edges around the perimeter of the upper half, which made it a perfect candidate for a technique known as manual pulp filling. After surface cleaning with soft brushes and eraser crumbs, the print was gently bathed in calcium-enriched water. For filling, Jackie made two different pulp mixtures, formulated to the desired strength and color, using modern and antique papers, in addition to dyes and pigments. Filling was achieved using a variety of pipettes and pulp dilutions. Over the course of several hours, Jackie gradually applied the wet pulp to the humidified print until the appropriate thickness and distribution of fibers was attained. The print was then dried in between blotters and felt under moderate weight. Once the print was dry, Jackie used colored pencils and dry pigments to more precisely match the hue and tone of the paper. She finished by trimming the fills according to the print's maximum dimensions.

The etching was returned to the study collection, and it can now be safely handled and studied. For more information about the print, please visit the New York Public Library website, which has the full publication digitized online: <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47df-ffeb-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>



ARTC Spotlight—May 2017

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: WUDPAC Fellow Jacklyn Chi administering a double-screen bathing procedure for gentle, supported bathing from the verso. Above: The fills were inpainted with dry media, including graphite, charcoal, and color pencils and integrated with blending stumps, tortillons, and silicon tools. Left: Details of the print's top right corner before and after treatment with toned pulp fills. (Photos: Joan Irving, Amaris Sturm, and Jacklyn Chi.)

