

**ART CONSERVATION DEPARTMENT
UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE
REPORT OF EXAMINATION AND PROPOSED TREATMENT**

ARTIST: Unknown

TITLE: *The Flower Shop*

IDENTIFYING NUMBER: GACP 1723d

EXAMINER: Vivien Barnett, Conservation Intern

DIMENSIONS: 18" H x 14" W

OWNER: Winterthur Museum

EXAMINED: September 2018

GENERAL DESCRIPTION:

This painting depicts storefronts on a street. The central shop in the composition has a sign on its front that reads, "JONQUIL," and on the building's side it reads, "FLORIST." The shop to its left has a sign that says "JOHN RICHMOND" and on the right, the sign is cut off in the composition, reading only "21 BEL." Floral arrangements can be seen in the window of the flower shop as two shoppers walk by: a man and what appears to be a girl or small child. The word "JONQUIL" may relate to the Jonquil flower, or the *narcissus jonquilla* which is similar in appearance to a daffodil. This yellow flower can be found all over Europe, but is native to Spain and Portugal.¹

The brushwork used to create this painting shows high impasto in some areas of the painting, and the brushstrokes are rather visible upon close inspection. This is especially noticeable in the sky and clouds in the upper section of the painting when viewed in raking light.



Painting verso in visible light

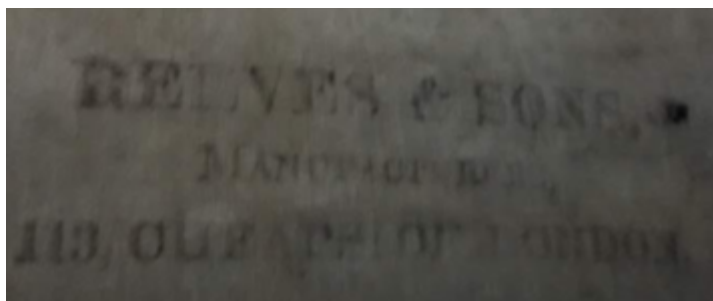


Painting recto and stretcher in visible light

¹ Missouri Botanical Garden. Plant Finder. *Narcissus Jonquilla*.

<http://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/PlantFinder/PlantFinderDetails.aspx?taxonid=275814&isprofile=0&cv=4>

There is a canvas manufacturer's stamp on the recto of the canvas which is rendered more visible under Ultraviolet light. It reads, "REEVES & SONS,/MANUFACTURERS/113, CHEAPSIDE LONDON."



Manufacturer's stamp on the center of the recto of the canvas viewed under Ultraviolet illumination.

This company was established in 1766, and was located at 113 Cheapside in London from 1845 to 1940, meaning that this painting could not have been made prior to the year 1845.²

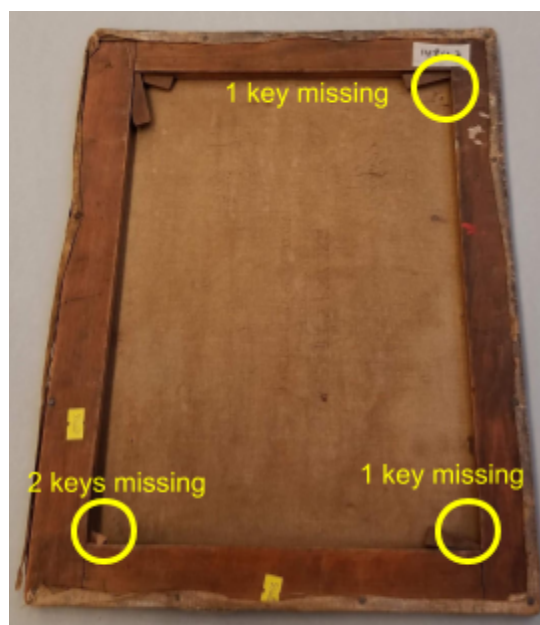
FRAME:

The painting is not currently framed.

There is physical damage visible on the foldover edges of the painting where it would have been in contact with the frame rabbet.

SUPPORT:

The support is a plain-weave canvas, most likely linen, on a wooden stretcher. The canvas has a thread count of approximately 45 tpi. The stretcher is a mortise half-miter style with eight keyholes. However four keys are missing (one from the top PR, one from bottom PR, two from bottom PL). The canvas is attached to the stretcher with tacks on the sides and back of the stretcher (six on top, six on bottom, five on PR, two on PL [three missing]). There is overlapping foldover canvas on all four sides ranging from 1/8" to 3/8" " with some tearing along the tacking edge. The overlapping canvas is tacked to the verso of the stretcher.



Painting recto and stretcher in visible light

² "Reeves and Sons." Grace's Guide to British Industrial History. https://www.gracesguide.co.uk/Reeves_and_Sons

The canvas is in fair condition and has multiple holes. There are two small punctures in an area of paint loss on the bottom proper right quadrant of the painting, on the sign that says “JOHN RICHMOND.”



Two small holes in the canvas viewed under microscope.

The brittle canvas is torn and splitting away from the auxiliary support on the proper left edge on the verso edge of the foldover crease, possibly due to excessive stress placed on the canvas during the stretching.



Proper left side edge of the painting verso showing tears and paint loss in the foldover canvas.

Due to the missing keys, the canvas has become loose and slightly billowing on the stretcher, resulting in a concave depression of the canvas. This is most evident when viewing the painting under raking light. A stretcher bar crease is especially visible on the left side in the photograph. There is much debris trapped between the lower stretcher bar and the canvas which is causing damage and paint loss along the bottom edge.



Painting verso under raking light

GROUND AND PAINT LAYERS:

An off-white blue-gray ground is discernible on the foldover edges that have been primed. There is much flaking on the foldover edges, possibly from moisture damage, especially across the bottom. There is another painted image under the current one: a portrait. An underlying painting is evident due to the dark paint showing through areas of loss on the current painting. This painting was examined by Matthew Cushman. [DATE]



Paint from the lower composition underneath the painting showing through in an area of paint loss from the surface.

The painting was examined under ultraviolet light, but there was no notable fluorescence that would have suggested the presence of overpaint, a natural-resin varnish or specific pigments that might fluoresce, such as purpurin.

The topmost paint layer has significant losses all over the canvas, mostly along the foldover edges over the stretcher and in the bottom half of the image. This damage was most likely caused by water damage, as mentioned above, and by the distortions caused by debris trapped between the canvas and the stretcher, as also mentioned above.



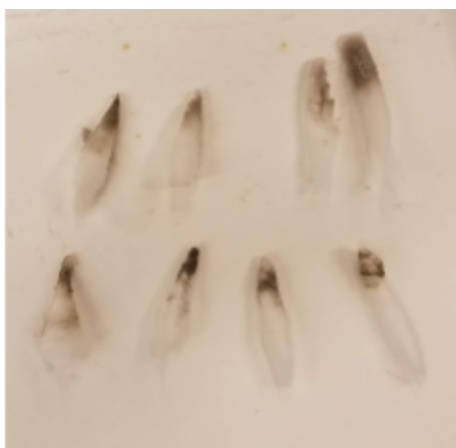
The florist shop viewed under UV light.

SURFACE COATINGS AND ACCRETIONS

The painting does not appear to be varnished or have any visible overpaint or other foreign surface accretions when viewed under visible or UV illumination. The fluorescence shown in the image to the right corresponds to the white pigment used for the highlights in the painting (possibly zinc white), rather than the presence of a varnish.

Solvent testing the surface with a mild enzyme solution showed a layer of grime that is spread across the surface of the painting. Further solvent testing using citric acid (pH 6) and then rinsed with a mild enzyme solution was more effective at removing this layer of grime. The swabs were

taken from different areas along the proper right edge of the painting to survey the accretion over different pigments and levels of impasto across the surface.



Top row: Citric Acid (pH 6) swabs
Bottom row: Mild enzyme solution swabs

PROPOSAL FOR TREATMENT

This painting has multiple types of physical and structural issues, including the loose canvas and insecure attachment to the stretcher due to missing keys and tacks, small holes and tears, and scattered paint loss throughout the image.

The painting should be photographed before, during, and after treatment.

Debris trapped between the lower stretcher bar and the canvas should be removed immediately, possibly with feathers or a dull spatula.

Flaking paint should be consolidated with warm, dilute BEVA 371 and a tacking iron.

Holes and tears should be brought into plane with moisture and weights and then mended with Heiber-thread-by-thread reinforcements or Stabiltex and BEVA 371. The detached areas on the foldover edges of the canvas may need to have localized strip linings attached before re-stretching, perhaps through the use of a secondary support fabric such as Pe-Cap attached with BEVA 371.

Missing tacks should be replaced, missing keys should be replaced, and, after stabilization of the tacking edges, the stretched should be keyed out to tighten the canvas. The keys should be wired to the stretcher to prevent them from falling between the lower stretcher bar and the canvas.

After an isolating and saturating coat of reversible brush varnish such as MS2A or Laropal A-81, losses should be filled with a reversible Modostuc putty. Losses and other distracting scrapes, etc. should be inpainted to reduce the visual distraction using Golden PVA or Gamblin aldehyde reversible conservators' retouching paints.

A final varnish should be applied if necessary.

A vented backing board should be attached to the verso.

The painting should be re-framed with frame that has been given a padded rabbet.

Final photographic and written documentation should be carried out.

Permission to Proceed with Treatment

I have received the report on condition and proposal for the treatment prepared by Vivien Barnett with consultation from Joyce Hill Stoner and Matthew Cushman regarding Winterthur GACP number 1723d, *The Flower Shop*.

As the owner of this painting, I give my permission for the treatment to proceed as outlined in the report:

Dr. Joelle Wickens, c/o Winterthur Museum

Date

If you approve the proposed treatment, please sign and scan and email or fax page six to Joyce Hill Stoner, 302-888-4838.

We estimate that the cost of this examination and treatment, carried out by reputable professional conservators, would normally be approximately \$1800 based on an estimate of the hours of treatment time involved (approximately 20 hours x \$90).

Questions about the progress of the treatment should be directed to Dr. Joyce Hill Stoner, 302 888 4888, email: jstone@winterthur.org.

It is hoped that the treatment will be completed by May 2019.