WEST DEAN
CONSERVATION

Conservation of Ceramics
Condition and Treatment Report

Conservators: Jamie Rigsby, Amy Walsh, Emily Cummins	**Date allocated:** 8 March 2019
Object: Majolica Albarello with strapwork design.	
Treatment start date: 26 April 2019	**Treatment completion date:** 25 June 2019

MAJOLICA ALBARELLO

Image of object on acceptance

Front

Proper Right Side

Verso

Proper Left Side

Non-Original Handles

Dimensions:

- Height: 35cm
- Circumference of Main Body: 68cm
- Circumference of Foot Ring: 44cm
- Diameter of Rim: 23cm

Description of object

The object is a Majolica albarello (pharmacy jar). The vessel once had handles which are now missing. Handles delivered with the vessel appear to be non-original based on the colour of the clay body, shape of the handles, and connection points. The main body has a cobalt blue background, with branch and leaf motif which contains a white undulating ribbon with text on one side. The opposite side features a symmetrical design with stylized faces, dragons, and snakes. The shoulder and foot ring have a repeated woven design. The upper rim has a yellow background with a green crosshatched design.

Condition on acceptance:

- The piece is in overall fair condition.
- The piece has extensive previous damages and repairs. Large areas of missing glaze can be seen on the shoulder, body, and foot ring.
- Much of the missing areas have been filled with a water-soluble fill material. Some of the fills have been toned blue.
- There are areas with excess adhesive, tape, and surface grime and residue can be seen throughout the exterior surface.
- Some previous conservation work can be seen on the interior surface.
- Some discolouration in the joins can be seen on the interior, as well as some yellowed tape.
- All remaining glaze seems to be well-adhered.
- Scratches in the glaze can be seen surrounding many of the filled areas.
- Three out of four pins remain from previous repairs of the non-original handles. Method of pin attachment is unknown.
- Two areas of loss of clay body exist on the piece: one on the upper edge where the body meets the shoulder, and another on the text face.

- The break line located approximately 0.5cm below the shoulder appears to be separating and the regularity of the crack may indicate that the piece was created in two parts and joined before firing.
- Remnants of a paper label can be seen on the bottom surface.
- Two possible fills of an unknown material can be seen on the foot ring.

Treatment Proposal:

- Photograph before treatment.
- Dry surface clean both interior and exterior with brush vacuum.
- Wet surface clean with deionized water on cotton swabs.
- Deconstruction of the jar is not recommended at this time due to the condition of the existing repair and the possibility that introducing solvent to the jar could cause more issues with the separation of the glaze from the clay layer.
- Testing with deionized water, acetone, and IMS were performed. The old fills were easily removeable with deionized water. IMS could be used on heavier fills. Removing the fills would help the appearance of the jar by bringing it in line with the aesthetic preferences of the client and the current blue fills make inpainting more difficult.
- Remove old fills with deionized water on cotton wool swabs where possible. Use IMS on cotton wool swabs where fill material remains.
- Remove excess adhesive manually or with acetone or IMS on cotton wool swabs.
- Remove pins in handle attachments with solvent poultices.
- Photograph during treatment.
- Consolidate the exposed clay body that would be receiving new fills with a 5% solution of Paraloid B-72[1] in acetone. Consolidation ensures that no coloured fill material would come into contact with the original clay body and prevents any mineral migration from the fill material to the clay body.

[1] *Paraloid® B-72:* Ethyl methacrylate (70%) and Methyl acrylate (30%) copolymer; Tg 40C; IR 1.479-1.489; manufactured by Rohm & Haas. Glass transition temperature: 40 C. Soluble in toluene, xylene, acetone, carbon tetrachloride, MEK, others.

- Fill areas of loss with a mixture of Polyfilla [2] and powdered pigments[3]. Polyfilla was selected because of the refined surface texture that can be achieved. Areas of fill will be determined on a case-by-case basis where it is determined that glaze can be replicated. Extensive areas of loss will be left unfilled.
- Retouch areas of loss where possible with Golden Acrylic paints[4] and Primal WS-24[5].
- Photograph after treatment.

Treatment Report

- The jar was dry cleaned using a brush and a vacuum to remove surface detritus from the exterior and interior of the jar.
- The surface of the jar was wet cleaned using cotton wool swabs wetted with deionized water to remove heavier dirt deposits.
- The previous fills were removed with cotton wool swabs wetted with deionized water. Tougher areas were removed using cotton wool swabs wetted with IMS.
- The jar was photographed after removal of the fills.
- Polyfilla was mixed with powdered pigments and tinted to the off-white base glaze colour and spatulated into the losses. The fills were allowed to dry.
- The fills were smoothed to the appropriate depth and shape using cotton wool swabs wetted with deionized water.
- The jar was photographed again to clearly show the areas that received fillwork.
- The fills were touched in using a mixture of Golden Acrylics and Primal WS-24 to match the surrounding areas.

[2] *Polyfilla Cellulose Filler:* A proprietary filler material composed of polyvinylacetate in dispersion bulked with calcium carbonate and cellulose.
[3] *Powder Pigments:* Insoluble, dry solid that is pulverized to a fine powder.
[4] *Golden Acrylics:* 100% acrylic emulsion paints manufactured by Golden Artist Colours, New Berlin, NY 13411.
[5] *Primal WS-24:* acrylic dispersion of polyacrylic acid mixed with acrylic copolymers or sodium polyacrylate in water. AKA Acrysol WS-24. Rohm and Haas.