p: 318-220-0995
e: info@beauxartsconservation.com
w: www.beauxartsconservation.com

Date:	**04/01/2022**
Invoice:	**2022.10**
Client:	
Address:	
Phone:	
Email:	
ETA:	**03/25/2022**

Japanned Tray Treatment Report
31” l x 25” w x 1.75” h

Figure 1 – Japanned Tray after treatment

CONDITION REPORT

The tray is made of papier-mâché that has been pressed into a mold and a black japanned surface has been applied. A painted scene with inlaid mother of pearl adorns the center with gold painted scrollwork around the front surface. The tray has large breaks at the proper left and right side. The proper right side showed significant previous repair and old adhesive. The front has been lacquered with an unknown substance, but the back is clear. There is a partial sticker on the back with identification information and some losses to the back and remaining edges of the tray.

Figure 2 - Detail of old adhesive (fluorescent blue) under UV light

Figure 3 - Detail coating (fluorescent blue) under UV light

Figure 4 - Detail of loss to one edge and old repair

TREATMENT PROPOSAL

Because of the number of pieces broken, it is recommended that the tray be reconstructed to determine the extent of the losses. Then, estimates for compensation to the losses and any structural needs can be determined. The tray may require paper fills or backings to strengthen the areas along the breaks as the sides are the most common areas to hold the tray. Any losses will be filled, and the areas inpainted to match the surrounding areas. A custom hanger should be created to hang it for display.

TREATMENT REPORT

The tray was consolidated with a 15% solution of Acryloid B-72 in acetone and applied to the edges with a brush and allowed to cure. The pieces were reconstructed with a 50% solution of Acryloid B-72 in acetone. Some pieces were held with medical tape until dry. The tape was removed. During reconstruction, it was discovered that the areas where the tray had broken were also the thinnest areas of the papier- mâché, in some cases as thin as 2 mm. In these areas, there was almost no paper present and the lacquer provided most of the structural support. This could explain why the tray broke in the same areas on either side. The paper sheared in a lateral direction, most likely due to weakness in the paper substrate from acid.

The locations of most of the fragments were found, but there was a great deal of loss at the break edges to the front surface of the tray while the thicker scalloped edges fit together and provided stability. There were holes along the thin break edge. It was determined that the breaks should be reinforced, and the holes should be filled with layers of paper. In recesses, thin layers of Japanese kozu kashmir tissue paper was cut to size and laid into the fills. A brush with a 25% solution of Acryloid B-72 in acetone was brushed onto the surface of the paper, soaking through and adhering it to the tray. In areas where there were holes, a layer of kozu kashmir was cut slightly larger than the hole, soaked in the 25% solution of Acryloid B-72 and acetone, and placed over the hole from the back of the tray. These patches were allowed to dry and provided a support by which more layers of the kozu kashmir soaked in the Acryloid B-72 solution could be pressed into the holes. In areas where the substrate was heavier, layers of thicker kozu paper with the solution were inserted from the front of the tray. The layers were added until they reached just below the surface level of the front of the tray. On the back,

1/2 – 1” strips of the kozu kashmir were torn by hand to the length of the break edge to be reinforced. The edges were torn to prevent a hard edge from scissors that would result in a hard line for the patch, similar to chamfering linen for a canvas. The patches were soaked in the 25% solution of Acryolid B-72 in acetone and tamped onto the surface with a brush. One layer was added to breaks, but multiple layers of the kozu kashmir patches were added in the deep grooves that were the weakest in order to strengthen this layer. The patches were allowed to dry. The large losses to the scallops were fabricated in plaster. The plaster was shaped with hand tools and sanded with cabinet paper. A skim coat of Flugger was added to the plaster fabrications and the losses on the front of the tray. The fills were shaped with cotton swabs dipped in distilled water or cabinet paper until smooth. The patches and fills on the back were inpainted with multiple layers (~5) of Acrysol WS-24, Golden Acrylics, and distilled water. The same mixture was used on the front of the tray, though it only needed three layers. The gold decoration was inpainted using mica powders mixed into Acrysol WS-24. A layer of Golden Acrylic Matte was applied to the back to match the sheen of the surrounding areas.

A hanging mechanism was made using 1/8” solid brass rod. The pieces were assembled in an “X” pattern, wrapping the ends around scallops that had not been broken. A loop in the brass rod at the back provided stability, where the other rod passes through, and a 75 lb. wire hanger was added at the top.

AFTER CARE INSTRUCTIONS

It is recommended that the tray not be used. It was thought that hanging would prevent the type of damage that occurs when a tray is displayed flat in a home. The custom hanger can be adjusted to match whatever hook is to be used. Earthquake hooks with a bar securing the wire or two regular hangers are recommended Dusting should be done with a soft-bristled brush, starting from the top and working downward.

Figure 5 - Custom hanging mechanism

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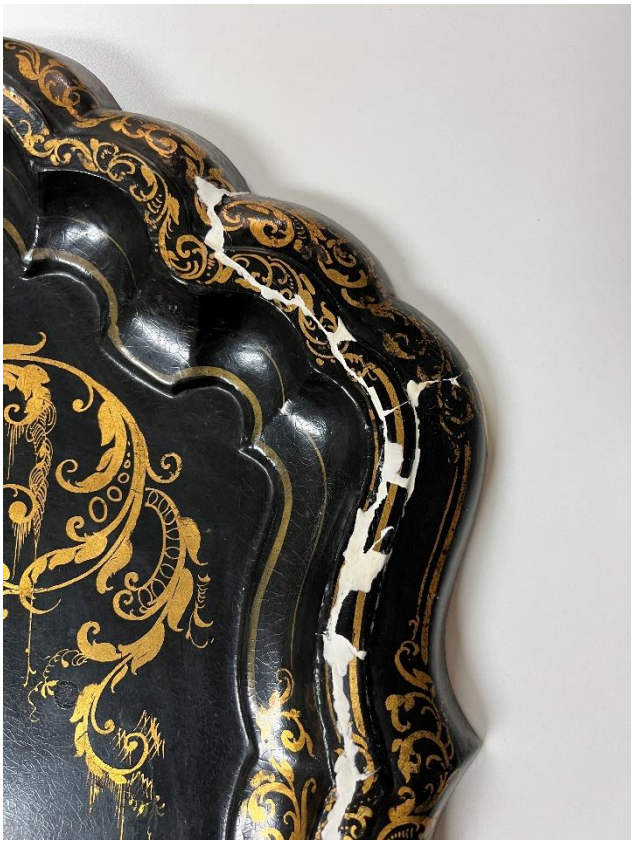

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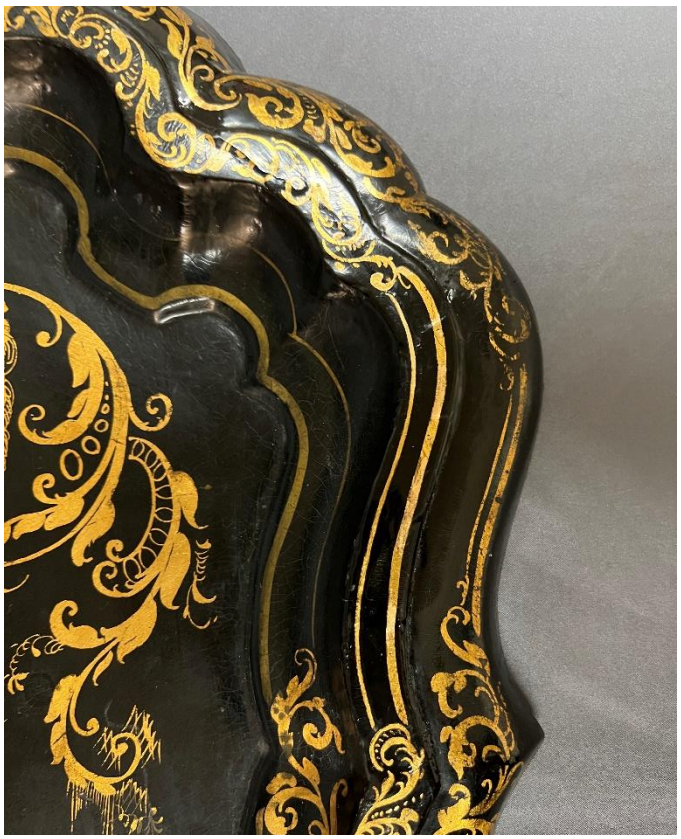

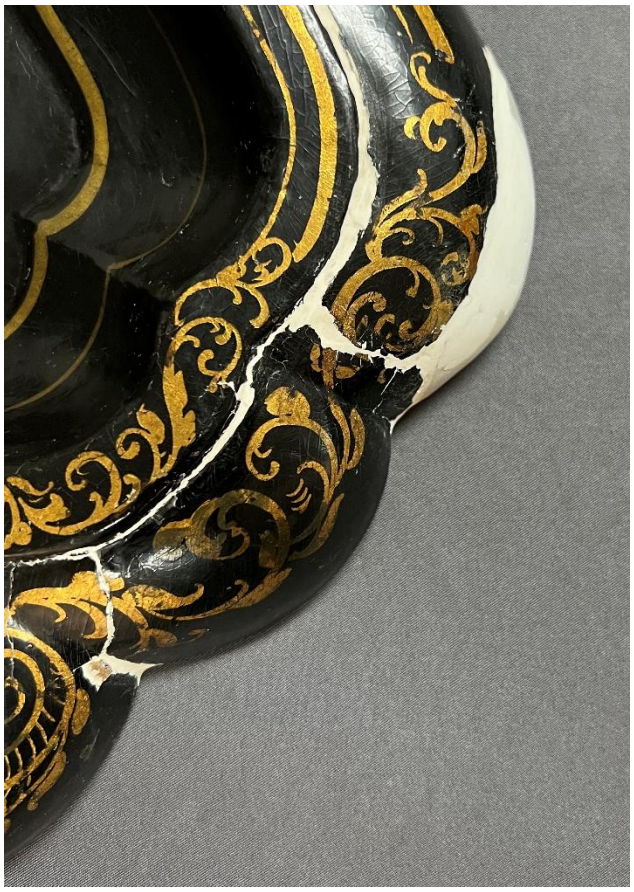

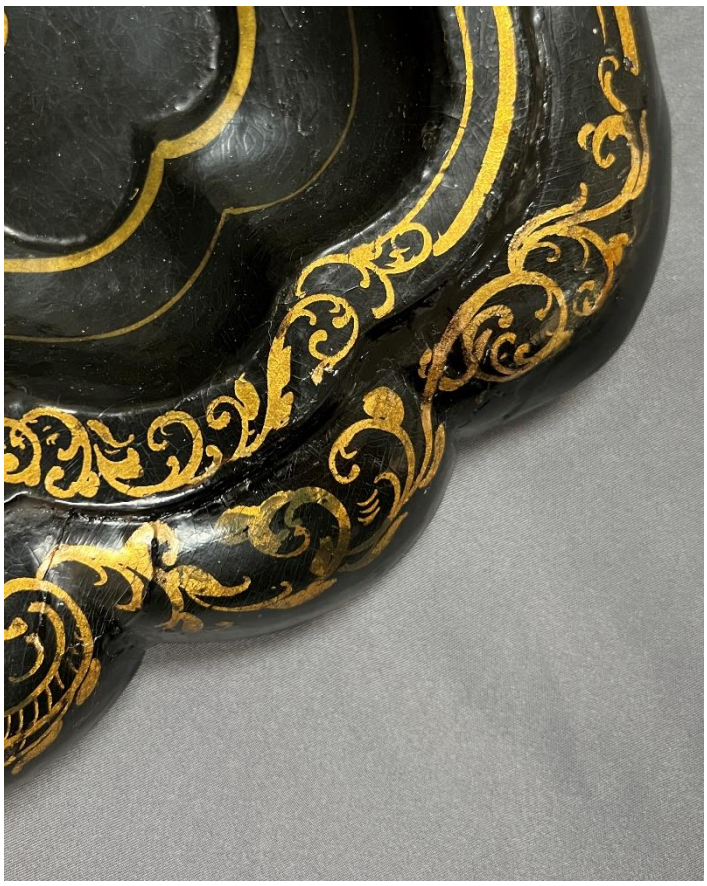

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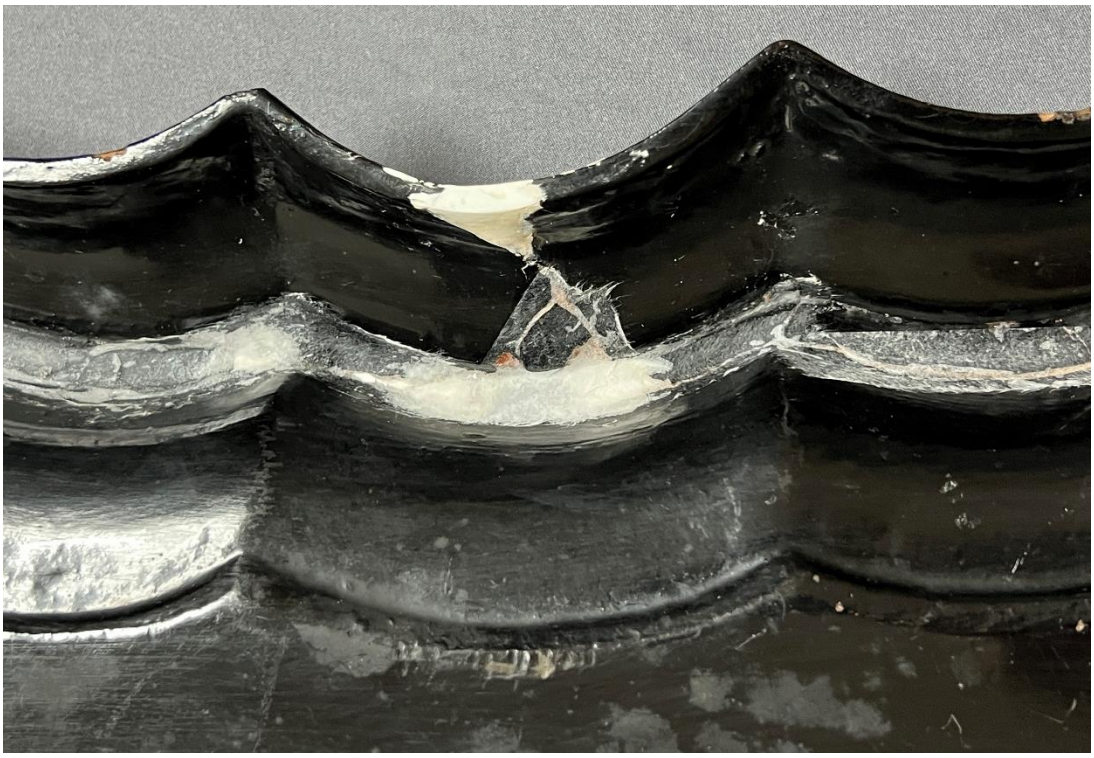

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