

Collection Conservation

NEWS



The Maas At Dordrecht after conservation

Last summer the Haggerty Museum of Art underwent a strategic planning process, which resulted in a five-year plan to strengthen the museum's capacity as a teaching-learning resource and foster closer links with Marquette students, faculty, staff, and the broader community. One of the core priorities of this plan is to improve stewardship of the permanent collection, that is, to strategically acquire and properly care for works of art, and to make them available to the public. A recent project involving the oil painting *The Maas At Dordrecht*, thought to be created in the workshop of seventeenth-century Dutch landscape painter Jan Van Goyen, illustrates the museum's commitment to preserving and sharing its collections in perpetuity.

In the fall of 2012 the museum received a loan request from Stephen Schloesser, S.J., Professor in

the History Department at Loyola University Chicago, who is preparing an exhibition to coincide with *Crossings and Dwellings: Restored Jesuits, Women Religious, American Experience 1814-2014*, a conference that marks the bicentennial of the Restoration of the Society of Jesus in 1814. The Haggerty frequently receives such requests and lends work with regularity, a policy that is not only a professional responsibility and courtesy, but also an opportunity for the Haggerty to make its resources available to a wide audience. Loans serve as ambassadors for the museum, helping to showcase the permanent collection and maximize the Haggerty's educational impact.

Professor Schloesser expressed interest in borrowing *The Maas At Dordrecht*, but the work was in need of conservation; a warped stretcher and a weakened canvas had caused corners to ripple and paint to crack. The museum is responsible for the care and preservation of artworks for living and future generations, and has in place an ongoing art restoration program. For many years the Haggerty has maintained a relationship with Barry Bauman, a conservator with over 40 years of professional experience who founded a facility to address the critical preservation needs of museums and other non-profits with limited resources. Barry has restored 38 paintings from the permanent collection, and this summer he began work on the Van Goyen in order to prepare the painting for loan. His conservation treatment—cleaning discolored varnish and grime off the surface, removing former restoration retouching, flattening the canvas through a vapor treatment, relining the canvas to provide greater stability, applying a final non-yellowing varnish to protect the surface from fluid damage or air pollution, and retouching areas of loss to correct visual irregularities—was carried out over a three month period.

This process has been rewarding, not only because the project so closely aligns with key initiatives of the museum's strategic plan, but also because it inspires confidence in our patrons and donors, who throughout the years have generously entrusted works to the Haggerty's care with the expectation that they will be diligently maintained and displayed with regularity.



Cleaning



Lining



Retouching



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