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Conservation Journal "Fracture" Explores Series, Multiples, and Replicas



Details of the dress of Pharaoh's daughter, showing how closely they align. (Left) Studies for *The Finding of Moses*. (Center) X-radiograph composite of *Finding of Moses* (Washington) with earlier version highlighted. (Right) *Finding of Moses* (Washington).

Washington, DC—The complex themes of series, multiples, and replicas are examined in the newest issue of the conservation division's biennial journal *Fracture*. The volume features nine essays that offer new perspectives on well-known works of art by National Gallery of Art conservators, scientists, and curators, as well as outside scholars studying the collection. Highlighting works in various media, the essays present meticulous technical and analytical study to examine the reasons for replication, whether contemporaneously by an artist's own hand or workshop, subsequently as a posthumous creation, or recurrently as a preferred practice.

Fracture is available for purchase in the West Building and East Building Shops; at shop.nga.gov; by phone at (800) 697-9350; by fax at (202) 789-3047; or by e-mail at mailorder@nga.gov.

Essay Highlights

The Portraits of Giuliano de' Medici by Sandro Botticelli

Authors: Elizabeth Walmsley, conservator of painting; and Alexander J. Noelle, Anne L. Poulet Curatorial Fellow, The Frick Collection, and PhD candidate, The Courtauld Institute of Art; with Babette Hartweg, head of conservation, Gemäldegalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin

Lorenzo de' Medici commissioned portraits of his brother Giuliano de' Medici after his murder in 1478 in order to solidify Medici power. Although clearly part of the same series, the three portraits of Giuliano by Botticelli (National Gallery of Art, Washington; Accademia Carrara, Bergamo; Gemälde Galerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin) discussed in this essay vary in size, iconography, and provenance. Walmsley, Noelle, and Hartweg combine technical and iconographic correlations to provide new interpretations and investigate the intriguing relationship among the portraits.

"Comparable to the Very Tips of Their Spades": Technical and Political Connections among Serial Busts of Charles V

Authors: Dylan Smith, Robert H. Smith Research Conservator; and Wendy Sepponen, Mellon Curatorial Fellow, Meadows Museum, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, and former Joseph F. McCrindle Curatorial Intern, National Gallery of Art

Smith and Sepponen examine Leone Leoni's (1509–1590) bronze portrait busts of the Habsburg Emperor Charles V, whose portrait appears in countless representations in European art. Bronze is often considered a medium for serialization. Through x-ray and metallurgical analysis, these busts were discovered to be unique casts. The fabrication of the Gallery's bronze (second half of the 16th century)—thought to have originated from Leone's design—is linked with northern instead of Italian practices, tentatively tracing the provenance to the Austrian court.

The Mellon *Mercury*: Investigating a Giambologna Replica

Authors: Shelley Sturman, head of object conservation, former Samuel H. Kress Paired Fellow for Research in Conservation and Art History, CASVA; in collaboration with Debra Pincus, independent scholar and former Samuel H. Kress Paired Fellow for Research in Conservation and Art History, CASVA

Sturman and Pincus present a systematic analysis of the art historical background and a close examination and technical analysis of the Gallery's *Mercury* (c. 1780/c. 1850). By comparison with Giambologna's *Mercury* (c. 1580, Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence, Italy), together with several related sculptures, the authors provide answers to persistent questions in Giambologna scholarship concerning the date and authorship of the Gallery's unsigned *Mercury*. Studying the histories of many

versions of the sculpture by Renaissance and later artists, and relating the technical and iconographic differences, this essay proposes exciting new attributions as well as a possible Russian connection.

Auguste Rodin and the Question of the Original in Sculpture

Author: Antoinette Le Normand-Romain, former director, Musée Rodin, and former Edmond J. Safra Visiting Professor, CASVA

This fascinating analysis by Le Normand-Romain discusses the notion of "original" in Rodin's repertoire. The artist is known for serializing his own sculpture. Le Normand-Romain considers whether the casting sequence, earlier or later, contributes to the importance of a bronze, and how the relationship among clay, plaster, and bronze sculptures relates to creative process or authorship.

Vincent van Gogh's Three Portraits of Marcelle Roulin

Authors: Kathrin Pilz, paintings conservator, Van Gogh Museum; Louis van Tilborgh, senior researcher, Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam, and professor of art history, University of Amsterdam; Muriel Geldof, conservation scientist, Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands; and Ann Hoenigswald, senior conservator of painting emerita

Three portraits of the baby Marcelle Roulin by Van Gogh (private collection; Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam; and the National Gallery of Art, Washington) are the subject of a meticulous technical study by Pilz, Van Tilborgh, Geldof, and Hoenigswald. The authors address which painting is the initial version and what relationship these freehand copies have to each other. An important international collaboration, the study reveals the sequence in which the portraits were painted and Van Gogh's working process in the context of repetitions.

The Story Not Told: The Examination and Treatment of Edward Steichen's *Oochens* Series

Authors: Linda Owen, associate paper conservator, Baltimore Museum of Art, and former contract paper conservator, National Gallery of Art; and Kathryn Morales, conservation scientist

Steichen created a series of 15 brightly colored, whimsical compositions in opaque watercolor on paperboard. Called the *Oochens* (1922), the works depict the inhabitants of the Oochen Republic, an imaginary world organized according to the principles of perfect symmetry found in the geometric ratio known as the golden section. Donated in 2011 by the estate of Steichen's wife, Joanna Taub Steichen, the *Oochens* received innovative conservation treatment at the Gallery. Owen and Morales investigated Steichen's materials and methods to develop an appropriate methodology consistent with the artist's intent and palette to conserve the highly vulnerable works of art.

Jean Dubuffet: Molding a New Reality

Author: James Gleason, preventive conservator and former Andrew W. Mellon Fellow in Objects Conservation

Dubuffet's formidable *Site a l'homme assis* (1969–1984) was given to the Gallery in 1991 in honor of its 50th anniversary. The sculpture is formed from six separately cast epoxy resin elements enlarged from the *Hourloupe* series dating from the late 1960s. Through painstaking research and material analysis, Gleason describes Dubuffet's working methods modified to realize his vision, from small, carved polystyrene models, to enlarged, cast modular forms ultimately combined into unique three-dimensional collages.

To Print on Air: Robert Rauschenberg's *Hoarfrost Editions*

Authors: Adam Greenhalgh, associate curator, Mark Rothko Catalogue Raisonné, Works on Paper, and former Andrew W. Mellon Postdoctoral Curatorial Fellow, department of modern prints and drawings; Adam Novak, independent conservator of modern and contemporary art on paper and former Baird Research Fellow, Harvard Art Museums; Julia M. Burke, head of textile conservation; Lisha Deming Glinsman, conservation scientist; Suzanne Quillen Lomax, senior conservation scientist; and Molly K. McGath, analytical chemist, The Mariners' Museum and Park, former Andrew W. Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow, Johns Hopkins University, and contract conservation scientist, National Gallery of Art

Hoarfrost Editions (1974) is a series of nine large-scale transfer prints on fabric made at Gemini G.E.L. (Graphic Editions Limited), the Los Angeles artists' workshop and publisher of fine art prints and sculptural multiples. Informed by the results of technical studies, research conducted in preparation for the Gallery's exhibition *The Serial Impulse at Gemini G.E.L.* (2015), and findings from an earlier survey of approximately 50 *Hoarfrost* prints in private and public collections, this essay describes Rauschenberg's creative process, details the Gemini printers' technical methods, and examines the consequences of both. It also considers conservation challenges involved in maintaining the appearance and effect of *Hoarfrost Editions* as the artist intended.

In Focus: Paolo Veronese's *Finding of Moses: A Reassessment*

Authors: Joanna Dunn, conservator of painting; and John Marciari, Charles W. Engelhard Curator and head of the department of drawings and prints, The Morgan Library and Museum

In this shorter essay, Dunn and Marciari address Veronese's working methods and penchant for creating multiple versions of favorite subjects. Two versions of *The Finding of Moses* (both c. 1580)—one in the Gallery's collection and one in the Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid—were carefully reevaluated in conjunction with a new study of a related drawing at the Morgan Library and Museum, New York. The essay reveals that the Gallery's painting is not simply a copy or replica of the Madrid version but an independent work that was likely made simultaneously. Sensitive conservation treatment, including the removal of disfiguring overpaint and technical imaging, combined with recent scholarship successfully attributes both paintings to the master.

About Facture

Facture, a biennial conservation journal from the National Gallery of Art, presents the latest research on works in the Gallery's collection. Named for "the manner in which things are made," *Facture* addresses aspects of conservation from treatment and technical art history to scientific research. *Facture* seeks to foster dialogue among art historians, scientists, and conservators in the international museum community.

The inaugural issue of *Facture* (2013) centered on Renaissance masterworks in the Gallery's collection, ranging from painting and drawing to sculpture and tapestry. The second volume (2015) explored "art in context," focusing on works from the Renaissance as well as the 20th century: Giotto's *Madonna and Child*; Riccio's *Entombment*; paintings by Mark Rothko; sculptures by Auguste Rodin; and watercolors by John Marin. Dedicated to Edgar Degas (1834–1917) in the centennial year of his death, the third volume (2017) focused on the tremendous wealth of works by Degas in the Gallery's collections. The first to highlight the work of a single artist, the third volume presented insights into Degas's working methods in painting, sculpture in wax and bronze, and works on paper, as well as a sonnet he wrote to his "little dancer."

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General Information

The National Gallery of Art and its Sculpture Garden are at all times free to the public. They are located on the National Mall between 3rd and 9th Streets at Constitution Avenue NW, and are open Monday through Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Sunday from 11:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. The Gallery is closed on December 25 and January 1. For information call (202) 737-4215 or visit the Gallery's Web site at www.nga.gov. Follow the Gallery on Facebook at www.facebook.com/NationalGalleryofArt, Twitter at www.twitter.com/ngadc, and Instagram at <http://instagram.com/ngadc>.

Visitors will be asked to present all carried items for inspection upon entering. Checkrooms are free of charge and located at each entrance. Luggage and other oversized bags must be presented at the 4th Street entrances to the East or West Building to permit x-ray screening and must be deposited in the checkrooms at those entrances. For the safety of visitors and the works of art, nothing may be carried into the Gallery on a visitor's back. Any bag or other items that cannot be carried reasonably and safely in some other manner must be left in the checkrooms. Items larger than 17 by 26 inches cannot be accepted by the Gallery or its checkrooms.

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