Art Conservation *and protecting historic interiors*

Often the simplest solution is the best solution. Sarah Freshnock, a Winterthur/University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation (WUDPAC) Fellow majoring in preventive conservation, experienced this after she was asked to devise a way to protect frakturs and other light-sensitive historic objects from damaging, unfiltered visible light streaming through the two windows in the Winterthur's Fraktur Room.

Sarah's project stemmed from decisions made in 2014, when the museum replaced 410 storm windows and approximately 800 wooden shutters on the 175-room building's exterior. At the time, bronze-colored plexiglass was affixed, with screws, to the interior frames of the museum's windows increasing light filtering protection for the objects inside and solving an aesthetic challenge for the exterior. In the Fraktur room, located in the original 1841 portion of the mansion, an exception to this protocol was necessary. In this room, the windows were not 20th-century additions, but rather artifacts from the historic 1783 Hottenstein house in Pennsylvania. Screwing into these frames was not considered preservation appropriate.

For a variety of reasons, the light filtering challenge in the Fraktur Room was never addressed. This year, Sarah was asked to research potential solutions. She prepared three options for the museum to consider. One of these was to remove the storm windows and place the plexiglass between the inner and outer windows without drilling into the historic window frames or sashes. This work could be done quickly, but it could not be easily reversed and would result in windows that looked different from most of the rest of the house.

Other options involved hanging either a fabric curtain or light-filtering film from a pressure fit curtain rod between the window and existing drapes. The materials used for either option would need to be identified as conservation appropriate, and their application would impact the room aesthetics. However, unlike the plexiglass option they could be easily altered if a better solution is found in the future.

After researching the various light filtering options, Sarah presented them to the museum's Room Committee. The committee members then expressed a variety of different aesthetic and logistical opinions. To assist in the next step of decision making, Sarah will work with the preventive conservation team to test different material options for the committee to consider. This experience has been a wonderful learning opportunity for Sarah as she got to research a creative solution to a unique problem and present the options to a group of invested stakeholders for consideration.

ARTC Spotlight—December 2021

The University of Delaware's Art Conservation Department educates and trains professional conservators who are well versed in the treatment, analysis, documentation, and preventive conservation of individual artifact and archive collections. For more news about our students and other department activities visit our web site at www.artcons.udel.edu.

Top: Interior of the Fraktur room at the Winterthur Museum. Above: Winterthur/University of Delaware Program in Art Conservation Fellow Sarah Freshnock taking a light measurement in the Fraktur room. Left: One of the drawings that is on view in the Fraktur room. Drawing info: Untitled (Two unicorns), Works on Paper, Pennsylvania, 1795-1830, Ink; Watercolor; Paper (laid), Drawn, Hand colored, 1961.1113. (Images: S. Freshnock, M. O'Neil, Winterthur Museum)