

RESTORATION PROCESS VICENTE LÓPEZ PORTAÑA

PORTRAIT OF AN OFFICER OF THE 18th HUSSARS

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Initial and final state of the work



Both photographs show a comparative view of the state the painting was in before the restoration process began and the result after the process.



Technical data

TITLE: PORTRAIT OF AN OFFICER OF THE 18th HUSSARS.
C. 1812-1813.

ARTIST: VICENTE LÓPEZ PORTAÑA
(VALENCIA 1772- 1850 MADRID)

DIMENSIONS: 95,5 x 75,5 cm.
37 19/32 x 29 23/32 in.

MEDIUM: OIL ON CANVAS

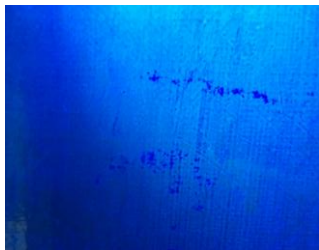
DATE: 19th CENTURY

SIGNATURE: NO

DATE OF RESTORATION: FEBRUARY 2025



Analytical Techniques Performed



Ultraviolet light

The ultraviolet rays make the materials fluorescent, behaving the oldest brighter and opaquer and darker the most modern. The analysis done with ultraviolet light allows to see the areas of old over paintings. These can be distinguished because they take a dark purple color upon the varnish. There are very few points of overpainting because there is hardly any paint loss. Very few interventions can be seen, occasional over-paintings that are beyond their correct dimension.

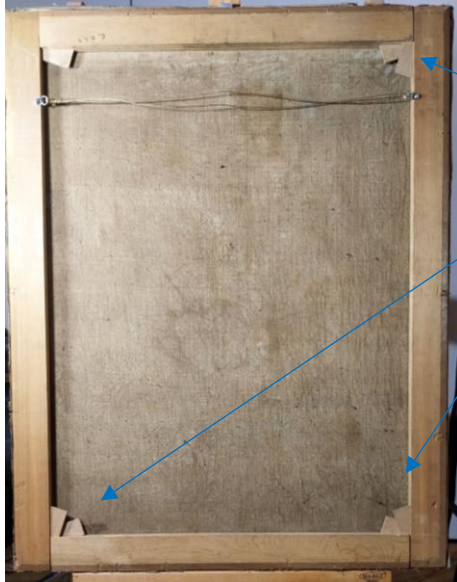
Low light

Consist of taking a photograph with light placed under an acute angle inferior to 20°. The beam of light stands out with great intensity the state of relief in the surface of the painting due the shadows that occur. In these images you can clearly see the crackle of this work.

Macrophotography

Macrophotography takes photographs at a larger size of the natural one with an objective of increase. Its use allows the restorer to observe if there are alterations or not in this area

Initial state of conservation



The stretcher has all keys present, and it hasn't keys-retainers.

Support

The support of the work is made of linen. Ideal fabric for works of art as it allows the stability of the painting as it is not very hygroscopic and absorbs little environmental humidity, so the fabric remains quite stable. Its fabric is Taffeta, that is, the same number of threads in the weft and warp and in a straight grid.



Linen fibers seen under a microscope and Taffeta fabric.

The canvas hasn't a full lining from a previous restoration and it is in good condition of conservation.



The stretcher hasn't auxiliary support cross-piece but the stability to the structure is enough for the dimensions of the work.

The problem with the frame is that the internal edges are not beveled, so they are showing on the painting. In the future I would need to have the edges of the frame beveled.



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Ground Layer

The function of the ground layer is to give elasticity and adapt to the natural movements of the support. The ground layer is made of calcium sulfate and animal glue done in the traditional way.

All the old paintings with canvas support present cracking that influences in their external appearance. This craquelure depends on the materials used in the painting, the artist's pictorial technique, the atmospheric conditions to which the painting is exposed and the way in which it has been treated.

The ground layer has generalized cracking due to extreme changes in relative humidity and temperature. In some areas the preparation is very fine, so the taffeta texture of the fabric is marked, which can be perfectly appreciated on the front.

Painting Surface

The painting surface is in a good state of conservation, only has a few damages produced by over paintings. These over paintings are surpassed of their correct dimension reason why they are eliminated during the restoration process.

There are some areas, such as the greens of the trees in the background or the darks of the jacket, where we can see crackling due to a defect in the painting technique due to the incorrect composition of the oils in the oil painting during its manufacture.

Small spots can be seen on the blue background in the right corner mostly.

Superficial Surface

The varnish layer is very yellowed due to oxidation of the components. This effect prevents observing the true color of the original brushstrokes of the artist.

The varnish is very uneven, with some matt areas on the surface of the artwork.

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Restoration process

Cleaning process

The first step is a complete photographic documentation of the artwork. This method of work will be carried out before, during and after treatment to document the restoration process.

Over time, the varnish deteriorates, and the resin oxidises, turns yellow and crystallises, and over time layers of environmental dirt accumulate on the surface, together with smoke from old candle lighting. All this forms a dark film that prevents the original colours of the work from being seen.

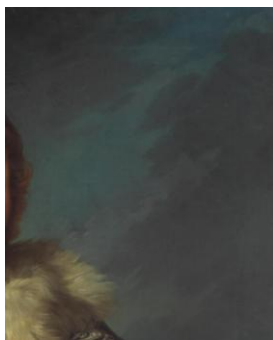
The removal of the different layers of varnish and environmental dirt is carried out by chemical and mechanical cleaning, according to the compositional characteristics of the resins to remove. The cleaning was carried out in two phases. The first one consisted in the elimination of the superficial varnish and the second one eliminated surface over paintings and old dirty.



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Chromatic retouching process

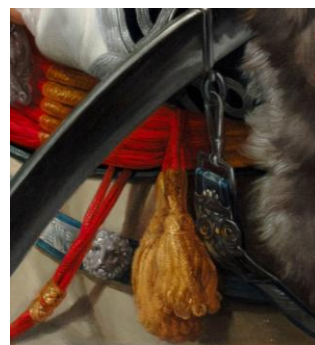
The new retouching gives color to the missing areas, so the lecture of the artwork is completed. There are two types of retouching, one with watercolors that provides a base of color and another with the varnish colors where the tones are adjusted. Both materials can be eliminated without prejudice to the original in case of desired because they are completely reversible.



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Final state

Finally, a varnish layer is applied with a spray gun to protect the colors from the environmental damage. Furthermore, it saturates the color tones for a proper display by the observer extends.



Condition of conservation

All treatment is made with materials fully reversible, which means that in case of being necessary withdrawal would not cause any damage to the original.

The work must be kept in stable temperature and humidity conditions, with a temperature range between 18 and 22 degrees Celsius and a relative humidity between 40 and 60%.

The painting is in a good state of conservation. It can travel under suitable transport and packaging conditions.

The artwork is at present in good condition of conservation.