

CONDITION AND TREATMENT REPORT

Limited Edition Serigraph

Red geometric design.

Signed "Halacy" l.r. in pencil.

Numbered "17/50" l.l. in pencil.

Titled "*Dynon I End State*" in pencil.

Measures 27 x 12 3/8" in frame.

Limited Edition Serigraph

Green geometric design.

Signed "Vasarely" l.r. in pencil.

Numbered "197/250" l.l. in pencil.

Title: *Gaia C*

Paper measures 32 3/4" x 32 3/4"

December 22, 2005

These two prints have yellowed due to acidification by physical and proximal contact with the lignin bearing, acidic cardboard supports. The lignin found in wood-pulp paper naturally breaks down with age and consequently leaves paper brittle and discolored. Within the closed environment of the frame, the acidity of the wood pulp paper has transferred to the prints and caused their discoloration. Long-term contact with the cardboard supports would have destroyed not only the beauty, but also the structural integrity of the artworks.

After diagnosis and deconstruction we determined the causes and methods of previous treatment that have precipitated the deterioration of these two serigraphs. Normally our treatment for a mounted artwork involves dipping a blade in a minimal amount of Naphtha (the appropriate solvent for heat set tissue) and running it between the acidic substrate and the heat set tissue, keeping that localized area saturated and gradually separating the tissue adhesive from the artwork. This process is repeated in small increments of 1/8"-1" with Naphtha, a highly volatile aromatic solvent that evaporates quickly. However, in this case our usual technique was unsuccessful; we had to saturate the substrate with Naphtha, which soaked into the heat set tissue from the verso. The acidic backing board then released from the dry mount tissue. Typically, we would have continued treating the tissue with Naphtha, however, we discovered the print had also been glued to the dry mount tissue, with white resin framer's glue generously applied from a squeeze bottle in a circular pattern. This type of glue is permanent, irreversible, and quite strong. This adhesive could not be removed with solvent. In order to separate the print from the

substrate, we had to proceed very carefully, using a sharp blade in order to separate the dry mount tissue and glue from the artwork. Because this glue is permanent, we had to separate the print from the glue by cutting away at the fibers of the paper. This mechanical procedure left areas of loss on the verso of the paper, though these losses are not visible from the front.

In order to remove the stains (acid burn) from the artwork, the print first had to be washed clean of the Naphtha solvent using a mild detergent in aqueous solution. Aqueous bleaching of the paper that removed the stains followed this rinse. The paper was then buffered against any further acid contamination with an alkaline deposit that was brushed on to the verso of the dry paper. Although both works were pressed and dried under acid free blotter paper, changing frequently over a two-day period, the edges of the paper cockled. This is due to the grain of the paper made during manufacturing. It was determined that to successfully present the pieces, we needed to fill the losses on the verso. As hinging proved to be an inadequate method for keeping the print flat in the frame, we mounted the green print with reversible adhesive on acid-free rag mat in order to prepare it for framing.

In the case of the vertical red print, the aqueous treatment caused the paper to expand while the ink did not, causing minute hairline cracks throughout the print.

Both prints were reframed using archival Alpha rag mat backing boards and spacers. These prints are now stabilized. Never in my 38 years of conservation practice have I seen irreversible wood joining glue used in conjunction with heat set tissue to keep a print flat.

Thomas Koether
Conservator