

Room brochure
(Please read and return)

6 February –
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RESTORING
THE PAST

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Conway Hart

Career in Hobart

Conway Hart established himself as a portrait painter for Tasmanian elite in Hobart, including politicians, dignitaries and their wives. His portraits are typical of the style of the time, often depicting his subjects formally dressed and positioned in front of rich drapery and classical architecture. Some of his notable works include an 1855 portrait of Tasmanian artist Mary Morton Allport, which is now displayed in the State Library of Tasmania, and a portrait of Sir Richard Dry (speaker of the Tasmanian Legislative Council) also painted c. 1855.

While in Victoria, Hart continued to exhibit his work, including four paintings shown at the Geelong Mechanics Institute Exhibition. By 1860 he diversified into photography, operating a studio in Melbourne (60 Elizabeth Street) for two years.

In 1861 Hart relocated to Calcutta, India and continued practicing as a photographer until his death from cholera in June 1864 at the age of 48.

pXRF Analysis: pigments used by the artist

Portable X-Ray Fluorescence (pXRF) analysis was performed on the Chapman portraits to assist in identifying the pigments used by Conway Hart. pXRF provides a non-destructive method of detecting elements, which can be matched to historical pigments used by artists.

The results of the pXRF indicate the following pigments were used by Conway Hart:



Lead (Pb):
Lead white pigment



Mercury (Hg):
Vermillion pigment



Calcium (Ca), Sulphur (S)
and phosphorus (P):
Gesso (gypsum)



Iron (Fe):
Yellow ochre pigment

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Underdrawings

John Glover was an English painter who moved to Lutruwita/Van Diemen's Land in 1831 and became one of Australia's most significant landscape artists. This English landscape, which is similar to the painting that hung in the Chapman's Dining Room at Sunnyside, was in need of conservation. An aged varnish layer was removed, and areas of loss reintegrated with pigment and varnish. Interestingly, original underdrawings can be seen in the infrared photography.



Infrared photograph, detail
John Glover (1767–1849)
View near Byrkley Lodge
c. 1820
oil on canvas
Presented by the Trust Bank of
Tasmania, 1998
AG6040



Conservation tools

Conservators use many tools in their treatments. These include the following (left to right):

Nitrile gloves, low tack tape, smoke sponges, hake brush, scissors, cotton swab, metal spatula, tweezers, scalpels, palette knives, round brushes, torch, measuring tape and thread counter.

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Glossary

Accretion	Any dirt and or non-original material on the surface of a painting or frame.	Lead white	A white pigment containing lead.
Bole	A layer of colour made of clay and glue used in preparation for gilding. It is typically yellow, red, or dark grey.	Mitre join	A mitre join is a woodworking join created by cutting two pieces of material at a 45-degree angle to form a corner, typically a 90-degree angle.
Bronze paint	A metallic paint containing metal (typically a copper alloy) as its pigment. In the past, bronze paint has been used to restore gilded frames and conceal gilding deterioration. However, over time, the paint tends to dull and darken in appearance.	Mortise-and-tenon	A join that connects two pieces of wood with two components, the <i>mortise</i> hole and the <i>tenon</i> tongue. The tenon fits into a square or rectangular hole cut into the other, corresponding member. The join may be glued, pinned, or wedged to lock it in place.
Cartouche	Frame ornament featuring shell, rocaille, S-scroll and foliage motifs.	Raking light	Light illuminating an object at an oblique angle to reveal surface texture.
Compo	Compo, short for 'composition', is a flexible material used for frame mouldings. It typically consists of whiting (calcium carbonate), oil, resin, glue, and water.	Slip	A slip is a flat, removable section of a frame positioned next to the image, often gilded and finished with a high-sheen burnish.
Craquelure	A network of fine cracks that form on a painting surface due to aging or drying.	Stretcher	An adjustable wooden framework that provides support for the canvas.
Cupping paint	Saucer-shaped hollows in the paint layer with edges curving upward. Occur due to loss of adhesion between the paint and ground layer or substrate, such as canvas.	Tacking margin	The side edge of a painting, typically where tacks or staples secure the canvas to the stretcher.
Drying cracks	Occur during the curing process and can form when an underlying paint layer hasn't fully dried before applying another layer.	Tenting	Tenting refers to the formation of raised shapes in paint as it lifts and peels away from the canvas. This damage is often caused by water, which contracts the canvas and glue size, resulting in a loss of paint adhesion and eventual detachment.
Gesso	Gesso, Italian for gypsum, traditionally refers to a plaster ground layer but is also used to describe acrylic-based primers.	Tulle	A fabric woven in a mesh or diamond pattern often used in skirts for ballerinas (tutus).
Gilding	The technique used to apply a thin sheet of hammered gold or metal leaf to a frame surface.	Ultraviolet radiation (UV)	Ultraviolet radiation (UV), part of the electromagnetic spectrum below 400 nanometres, is used in painting conservation to examine and identify varnishes, adhesives, and pigments. When exposed to UV, the painting surface fluoresces in different colours depending on the materials present.
Keys	Keys are inserted into a stretcher's mortise-and-tenon joins. When tapped with a hammer, they allow the stretcher to be expanded.	Zinc white	Zinc white is an inorganic pigment composed of zinc oxide that has been used by painters since the late eighteenth century.