

Adhesive based support as an alternative method for fragile textiles meant to be exhibited hanging

Heige Peets heige.peets@evm.ee Ruth Paas ruth.paas@evm.ee
SA EVM Conservation and Digitalisation Centre Kanut, Estonia

Object

In case a damaged textile object cannot be conserved with traditional needle-thread method, the conservator can use gluing as an alternative. The future function of the object certainly influences the choice here. Backing of the damaged fabric does not always grant the possibility to hang it and flags, curtains, cummerbunds, scarves and other textiles, more often than not, may lose a part of their original value when hung.

Our presentation deals with the backing of two even textile objects the original surfaces of which were covered with glue-pasted netting with just the aim to protect the surface from mechanical damages when they are hung.

Preparations for the backing fabric

Materials used

Lascaux Acrylic Adhesive 360 HV, 498 HV (www.Kremer-pigmente.ee), BEVA 371-film (www.Kremer-pigmente.ee), Hollytex (PEL, www.preservationequipment.com), netting (monofilament, Dukeries Textiles & Fancy Goods LTD).

Object

The flag of the mixed choir Raudam, made in 1936

116 x 167cm

Owner – SA Haapsalu Muuseumid (Foundation Haapsalu Museums), the Estonian Railway Museum.

The flag was conserved by Ruth Paas.

The mixed choir *Raudam*, established in 1922, is the oldest choir in Tallinn. Initially it was made up of employees of the Estonian Railway Company but even when there are no more of these, the choir itself is still active.

The flag that the choir commissioned in 1936 is made of blue and yellow silk fabric and decorated with fine silk embroidery. The latter was designed by Voldemar Vahar and made by Silvia Haas. The blue side has the date and the name '1922 RAUDAM' on it and the yellow side bears the words 'RAUDAM, RAUDTEELASTE KULTUUR-HARIDUSÜHING' (meaning – the Cultural-Educational Union of Railway Workers).

The flag was in such a bad condition that it could not be displayed. The museum expressed their wish to display it when hanging to show both its sides. The flag was unpicked, its fabric was washed and the tears in it mended. Both sides of the flag were backed with toned and glued fabric.



Fig. 4 The flag was damaged by fire-extinguishing water (it is not known when it happened). We could deduce from the marks of water that the flag had been rolled up and the water had penetrated all the layers. The dyes of the fabric had yielded and so the initial colour scheme was changed.



Fig. 5 The edges of the aureoles had become rusty brown and damaged fibres of silk had become brittle. Had we used the traditional thread-needle method the fabric would have suffered further damages.



Fig. 6 - 7 The flag had been mended now and then, whereas various materials had been used for that. Even the edges of the flag itself had suffered, as somebody had cut material for repairs elsewhere. The photo shows washing, stretching and drying the yellow side of the flag on the vacuum washing table.



Fig. 8 - 9 The sides were worked on separately – the fabric was placed on the vacuum table, covered with toned and glued netting and then the surface was gone over with a thermal heat spatula. At the same time the flag was stretched on the vacuum table with a slight pull.



Fig. 10 - 11 Both sides of the flag after they had got the backing of netting.



Fig. 12 - 13 Fine-meshed netting covered the surface of the fabric evenly and did not change the looks of the flag



Fig. 1 Pasting the glue onto the netting on Teflon fabric. Mixture of thermoplastic acrylic Lascau 360: Lascau 498: water (1:1:5) was used as glue.

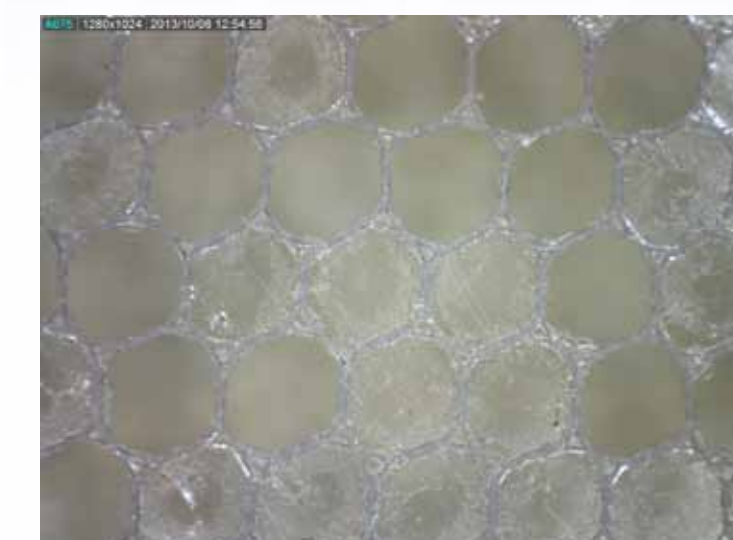


Fig. 2 A wrong decision! The glue was supposed neither to fill the mesh of the net nor cover the backing unevenly and form a foil. Macrophoto.

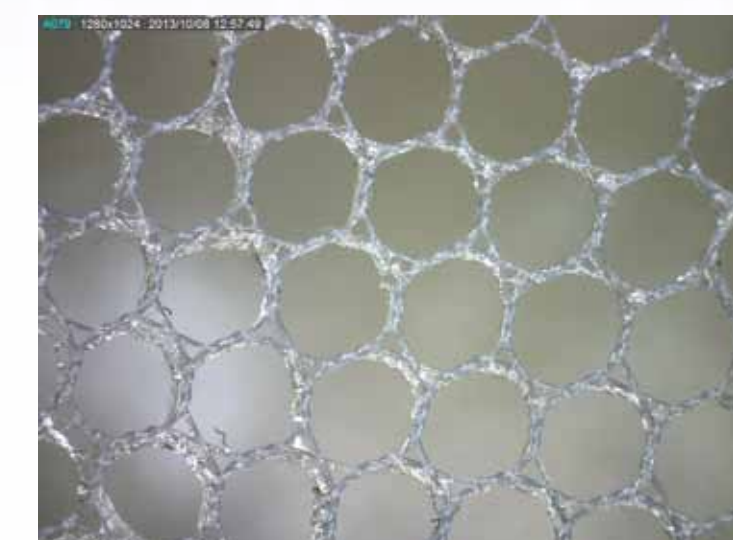


Fig. 3 We've got it! Only the thread for netting was glued. Macrophoto.

Object

Memorial Wreath from the Monument to the War for Independence in Harju-Risti

Memorial Wreath from the Monument to the War for Independence in Harju-Risti

The metal wreath was found when the attic of the Risti Church was being cleaned up in 2010. The wreath was within a zinc-plated iron tub. The parish wished that the wreath would be conserved for displaying it permanently in the church.



Fig. 14 In the upper part of the wreath a bow in national colours had been fixed with wire. The ribbon had been made of 17 cm-wide white cotton, edged with black mourning stripe of 1.7 cm. In the centre of the ribbon was an 8.5 cm-wide blue silk strip that had been fixed on a sewing machine. On this strip the text in black India ink was written – 'To the heroes of RISTI who fell in the War for Independence. Ministry of War.'



Fig. 15 - 16 White fabric of the ribbon was soiled, had rusty spots and was torn to pieces. The silk had faded and turned yellow, the initial blue shade could be seen only inside the folds of the ribbon. Due to the decay of the silk, a part of the fabric was shredded and several pieces of the text were lost.



Fig. 17 - 18 As the textiles were so fragile all the conservation stages were carried out so that the side with the text was upwards. The cleaned and stretched ribbon was placed on the vacuum table and backed with the help of the BEVA foil on Hollytex fabric. The thermal processing was done on the warming plate of the vacuum table. The ribbon was kept on the warm plate under slight pressure for about three hours.



Fig. 19 - 20 Backing of the white cotton fabric restored the whole of the ribbon. The silk part with the text needed additional processing. The whole surface of the ribbon was covered with netting pasted with glue and this fixed the shredded silk and granted that the ribbon could be displayed hanging on the wreath.



Fig. 21 Glued netting on the ribbon. Macrophoto.



Fig. 22 The conserved wreath was taken to the Risti Church in June 2014 when 90 years had passed from the unveiling of the monument to the War for Independence.

