

CLIENT – MUSEUM VS PRIVATE COLLECTION

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Fig. 3 The doll that belongs to the Estonian History Museum before conservation. The doll made of plaster mass had fallen down while the display was being prepared and broken into several pieces in the material of which were cracks. The eye-construction had disintegrated and both eyelids were damaged, one eye had lost its lashes. The tongue in the mouth had become loose and only an edge of a paper strip was still keeping it in place. The body had broken into eight pieces at the back. The right arm had a burn and two fingers were missing on the hand (earlier damages were left untouched). The arm had broken into two when it fell and there were loose fragments on both parts. Two fingers on the left hand were damaged and one finger was missing. The covering paint on the face, body, arms and legs had damages as well.



Fig. 4 The loose fragments of the head, body, arms and hands were joined with a bridging method, first using PVA-glue and Japanese paper on the edges of the fragments and then the glue *Acronal* that can be brushed on the contact surfaces in a rather thin layer.

Fig. 5 New eyelashes were glued on the right eye to improve the general look of the face. The lashes were made of natural hair that was cut into proper lengths and glued on Japanese paper and with that on the glass eyeball, using PVA-glue.



Fig. 6 The joining places and cracks were filled with toned priming of gypsum and chalk. When the filling had dried well, the surfaces were sanded down, toned and varnished.



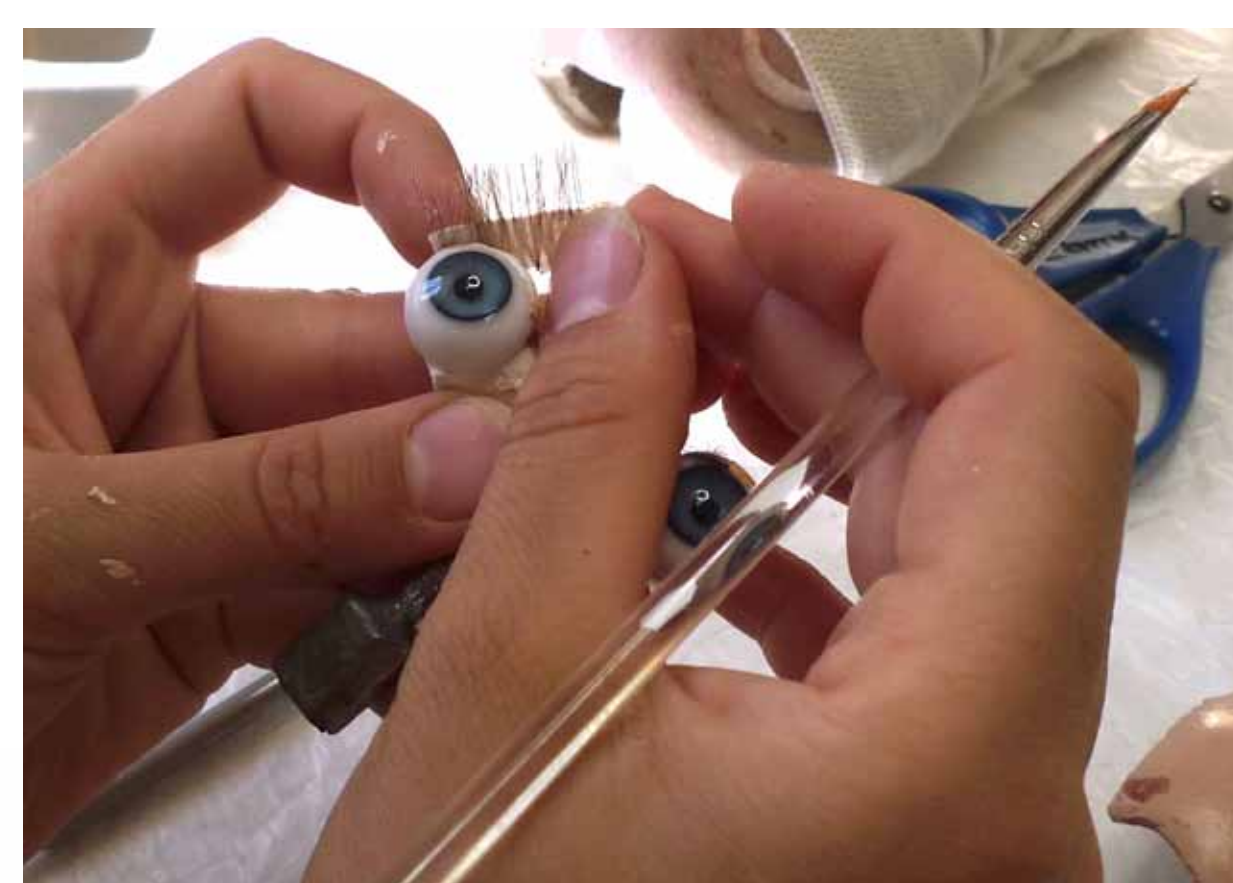
Fig. 7 The heat damage on the arm was left untouched, as it had contextual and topical value.



Fig. 1 An exhibit of the Estonian History Museum's display – *State on Chessboard. The German Occupation in Estonia in 1941-1944*. The doll got fire damages in the Tallinn air raid of 1944. Here is the doll after conservation.



Fig. 2 Doll Tiiu after conservation that had been commissioned by its private owner.



The goal of conservation quite often depends on the planned function of the object after conservation, on the storing conditions afterwards and, certainly, on the values of the item that should be retained above all. To illustrate the differences the present poster is dealing with two conservation assignments similar in form but different in their content. One of them is a doll that was to be displayed at the Estonian History Museum's exhibition – *State on Chessboard. The German Occupation in Estonia in 1941-1944*. Another doll, called Tiiu had a great emotional value to the owner, who commissioned the conservation.

Differences in the conservation of the two similar objects are due to the different evaluation of them. For the first doll, a museum piece, the methods and materials were chosen mainly keeping in mind its historical value and topical connections that were to be preserved. The doll was a 'victim' of the air raid in Tallinn in 1944 and its owner's personal memories of the event made it a suitable illustrative exhibit. In case of doll Tiiu in private ownership, it was important to consider the future function as a toy, respecting also the owner's sentimental remembrances of its looks.

The best practices tell us that conservation must end, where and when conjectures begin. All the changes and additions have to observe and take into consideration of what is still there, they should not change the balance of the composition or harm the appreciated values of the object.

With the museum piece the aim was to restore the condition in which the doll had been before – it had namely fallen down and broken when the exhibition was already being laid out. It was decided to restore the doll into condition (seen in a photo) it had been when purchased for the museum collection, meaning that all the damages it had obtained due to the air raid were left untouched. The private owner's doll had to be restored as aesthetically as possible, providing the grandchildren with an opportunity to play with it.

Materials used

PVA glue (Estonia), acrylic glue Acronal (Kremer Pigmente, Germany), two-component epoxy resin Araldite 2020 (Kremer Pigmente), isopropyl alcohol, tri-Ammonium-citrate, detergent Villašampoon (Estonia), wheat-starch, Japanese paper (11 g/square cm and 60 g/square cm KOZO; Japan), gypsum, chalk, MAIMER Readymade colours (Kremer Pigmente), white spirit, semi-matt varnish (AS Vunder).



Fig. 8 Mixed-mass doll Tiiu before conservation. The elastic band connecting the parts of the body had stretched and all the limbs were hanging down. The left glass eyeball had a broken iris. The doll was covered with dust and its hair was dirty and tousled. The ball of the right foot and the little finger of the left hand were missing. The contact surfaces of limbs and body were worn or broken and some insect damages occurred in the material.



Fig. 9 In order to repair the eye construction the wig and the top of the head had to be removed. The eye was repaired with *Araldite 2020* glue. The moving mechanism was set into its place and the piece of plaster fixing it was supported first from below with a strip of Japanese paper and then glued back.



Fig. 10 The torn parts of the damaged foot and the cracks in the material were fixed and strengthened with Japanese paper. To restore the toe a strong base was made of thicker Japanese paper and PVA glue. This was layered with gypsum that was modelled after the other foot. Then it was covered with pastel-toned chalk mass and sanded down.

Fig. 11 A wooden pin was pressed into the paper mass vertically for the missing finger. It was covered with layers of Japanese paper and finally with gypsum. The finger was modelled and shaped, sanded down, covered with pastel-toned chalk mass, sanded down once more and finished with varnish.



Fig. 12 Reassembling of the doll. Inside the doll, the arms were connected with elastic ribbon first, after that legs and the head were connected with each other forming an elastic ribbon triangle inside the body. In order to get the ribbon through the body a wire loop was made and used. The ends of the elastic ribbon were fused with a lighter to prevent them from unravelling. The hair was glued on the head with a mixture of PVA glue and wheat-starch. It was dried under slight pressure.



Fig. 13 The owner wished us to give the doll a hair-do and so the conservator's 'salon' gave it festive waves and curls, tied with two pink ribbons. The conservator also made a pair of pink patent shoes that matched with the new dress the owner made herself.

