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The execution of wax-resin linings by Johannes Albertus Hesterman (1848-1916) and sons

Research into their working method and materials

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The execution of wax-resin linings by Johannes Albertus Hesterman (1848-1916) and sons

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Introduction

- 1 Since the introduction of the wax-resin lining method by the Dutch artist and restorer Nicolaas Hopman (1794-1870) and his son Willem Antonij Hopman (1828-1910) in the middle of the nineteenth century, wax-resin linings have been frequently executed on paintings. Wax-resin lining is a treatment applied to damaged paintings in which an additional canvas is fixed to the original support by means of a mixture of wax and resin. Although wax-resin lining was developed as a treatment to reinforce the original canvas and to consolidate the ground and paint layers, its damaging effects became clear during the twentieth century and criticism of wax-resin linings grew stronger.

Johannes Albertus Hestermans and sons

- 2 This study concentrates on the wax-resin lining method of the Dutch artist and restorer Johannes Albertus Hesterman (1848-1916) and his sons Frederik Coenraad (1873-1932) and Johannes Albertus Jr (1877-1955). Five seventeenth-century portraits of various doctors from the collection in the Amsterdam Museum, which were lined by the Hestermans in the years 1907-8, are investigated (Fig. 1). In addition,

reconstructions of wax-resin linings and research into literature and archival sources have been carried out.

Fig. 1 Artist Unknown. *Pieter Pauw (1564-1617)*. 1600-1620



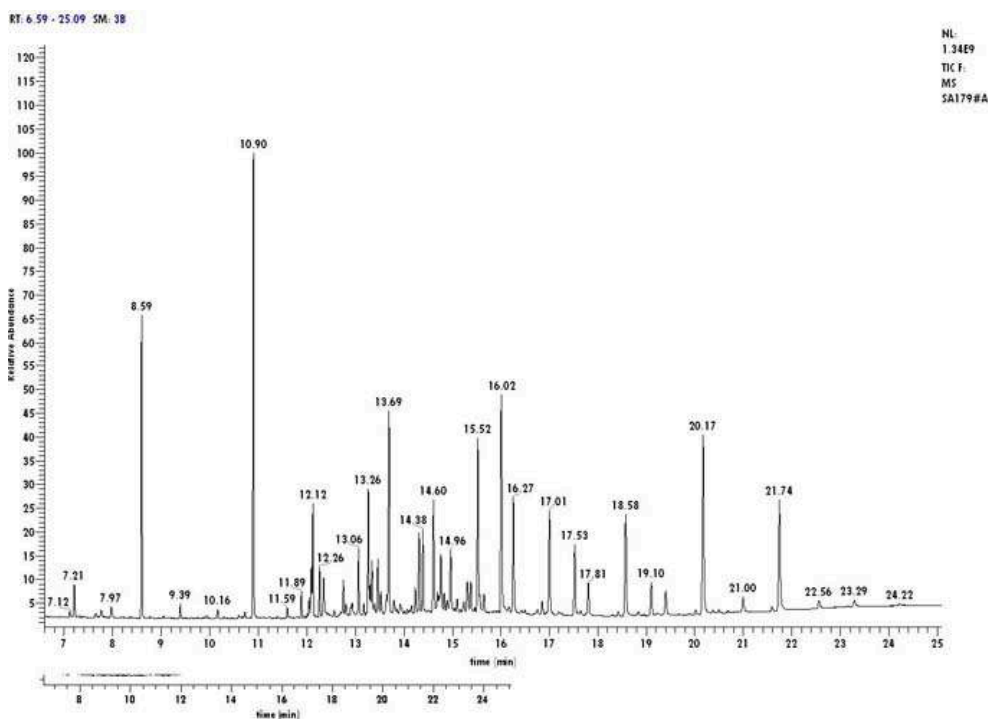
Oil paint on canvas, 81 x 65 cm. Amsterdam: Amsterdam Museum. SA 1121. Reverse of the portrait, showing the wax-resin lining of J. A. Hesterman and sons, carried out in 1907/1908.

Credits: Femke van der Knaap

A standardised lining method

- 3 The five linings that have been studied show similarities in type of stretcher, lining canvas, the wax-resin mixture and in the way the linings are stretched. Py-TMAH-GCMS analysis of the wax-resin mixture of the linings has indicated that each mixture consists of beeswax, colophony and Venetian turpentine (Fig. 2). Moreover, as a result of automatic thread counts, it can be concluded that the lining canvasses, made of linen and woven in a plain weave, were cut out of one roll of textile. The similarities between the linings seem to indicate a standardised lining method.

Fig. 2 Py-TMAH-GCMS result



Py-TMAH-GCMS result of the wax-resin lining mixture of the painting SA 179 from the Amsterdam Museum shows the presence of linseed oil, beeswax, colophony and Venetian turpentine. The chemical analysis was carried out by Katrien Keune (Rijksdienst Cultureel Erfgoed Amsterdam).

An ethical approach

- 4 The linings were carefully executed by the Hestermans respecting the original material. The portraits as well as the linings are in a stable condition. In their careful, and for that time, ethical approach with regard to the lining of paintings (e.g. preserving and restoring the original tacking edges) the Hestermans are not only comparable with the Hopmans, but also with restorers Martin de Wild (1899-1969) and Alois Hauser Jr (1857-1919).

Logbook

- 5 The Hestermans were among the first restorers who recorded their restoration treatments. They kept a logbook in which descriptions can be found of paintings that had been treated in their studio. The study of this book has made it clear that the Hestermans lined paintings as a preventative measure, with the exception of relatively new paintings, those painted after 1850.

Conclusion

- 6 This research has given more insight into the lining practice of the restorers Hesterman and sons. In order to make this study complete, more wax-resin linings by the Hestermans should be visually examined and described. In addition, it is

recommended that more reconstructions of their wax-resin recipe should be executed in order to gain more knowledge about the characteristics of their wax-resin mixture during ageing.

ABSTRACTS

This research concentrates on the wax-resin lining method of the Dutch artist and restorer Johannes Albertus Hesterman (1848-1916) and his sons Frederik Coenraad (1873-1932) and Johannes Albertus Jr (1877-1955). Five seventeenth-century portraits from the collection in the Amsterdam Museum, which were lined by the Hestermans in the years 1907-8, were investigated. In addition, reconstructions of wax-resin linings and research into literature and archival sources have been carried out.

Cette étude se concentre sur la méthode de rentoilage à la cire-résine de l'artiste et restaurateur néerlandais, Johannes Albertus Hesterman (1848-1916) et ses fils Frederik Coenraad (1873-1932) et Johannes Albertus Jr (1877-1955). Cinq portraits du XVIIe siècle, de la collection du Musée d'Amsterdam ont été examinés. En outre, des reconstitutions de rentoilage à la cire-résine et des recherches dans la littérature et les sources d'archives ont été réalisées.

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Mots-clés: Hesterman, rentoilage, cire-résine, reconstruction, analyse technique

Keywords: Hesterman, wax resin, lining, logbook, reconstruction, technical analysis

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