



Object: Bobbin Lace Cap

Accession Number: FITGSC.2008.562.59A.07

Dimensions: 6" width x 9 7/8" length

Materials: Bobbin Lace- cotton ground with bast (likely linen) gimp. Ribbon- silk with silk brocading

Client:

Location: FIT Graduate Studies Collection- Room E615

Conservation Report

Description: A small bobbin lace cap with brocaded silk organza ribbon bows. The center lace medallion is a tape-based bobbin lace, and is trimmed with a lace edge. The lace edge has a honeycomb reseau and a gimp detail. The edge lace is hand shirred and handsewn to the center medallion. The two silk bows are handsewn onto opposite ends of the cap.

As machine-spun cotton strong enough to be used in making bobbin laces was not available until 1803, and not used widely until the 1830s¹, this lace cap dates from somewhere in the nineteenth or twentieth centuries.

¹ Page 23. Earnshaw, Pat. *The Identification of Lace*, Shire Publications, Ltd, Buckinghamshire. 2000.

Condition: The bobbin laces are in fair condition. There is some soiling, adhesive residue, and the fibers have lost some flexibility. The silk bows are in poor condition. They are lightly soiled, have lost flexibility, and have disintegrated in places.

Testing: Testing the pH of the bobbin lace in two areas showed that it has a pH of about 4. Blotting with paper and water showed soiling. Testing the adhesive with water showed that the adhesive is not water-soluble. Additional blotting with paper and orvus released additional soiling.

Goal of Treatment: To release some of the wrinkling, remove excess soiling, and to bring the lace areas to a stable pH.

Treatment Proposal: This object would benefit from both a surface cleaning as well as a wet cleaning to stabilize the pH. As the ribbon bows do not appear to have ever been wet, a carefully documented removal of the bows is suggested prior to wet cleaning. The placement will be marked with thread tailor's tacks. The bows will then be re-attached with basting stitches and talor's tacks prior to storage.

Cost Estimated:

Documentation, testing- 2 hours

Surface Cleaning- ½ hour

Preparation for wet-cleaning- ½ hour

Wet cleaning, reshaping and preparing for drying- 45 minutes

Preparation for storage- 15 minutes

Post-treatment photography- 15 minutes

Total estimate- 4.25 hours

Materials- provided by Graduate Study Collection

Report Prepared by: Larissa Shirley

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Post Treatment Report

Treatment process: The object was surface cleaned with the fine nozzle attachment on a HEPA vacuum cleaner on the lowest amount of suction. Then the bows were carefully removed, with the original thread left attached to the bows. The bow placement was marked with large loose loops of white thread. The bows were set aside.

The lace cap was then wet cleaned in a tub, supported by a piece of reemay- the first rinse with distilled water (sample #1), the second with a solution of water and orvus which was sponged on with a natural sea sponge , then rinsed with tap water (sample# 2) . The third wash was a second sponging with orvus. It was then rinsed with tap water (sample #3). The final rinse was with distilled water. The object and the rinse waters were then tested for pH.

The object was then lifted with the reemay, and placed onto a coroplast board. It was carefully manipulated to reshape the object and ease out some of the wrinkling. As there was still adhesive on the object, some wrinkles were impossible to ease out. The object was covered with a piece of cotton gauze cheesecloth, and left to dry.

After the object had fully dried, the bows were re-attached with large stitches in the same technique as they were originally sewn on with. The only change in technique was using tailor's tacks to start and finish, rather than knotting.

The object was then photographed and prepared for storage.

Starting pH of object- 4

pH of first rinse- 7

pH of second rinse- 7

pH of third rinse-6

pH of final rinse- 6.5

Final pH of object- 5.5

Materials used:

Blotting paper, pH test strips, distilled water, tap water, reemay, acid free tissue, orvus solution, sea sponge, cotton wrapped polyester #50 thread, blue board, cotton gauze cheese cloth, glass plates.

Photography:



Left- detail of damage to bow cleaning

Right- removal of bow prior to wet-



Left- first cleaning with distilled water solution

Right- wet cleaning with orvus



Left- re-attaching the bows



Right- Post-treatment

Recommendations:

This object should be stored flat with unbuffered tissue inside a blue box with no other objects stacked on top of it, due to the fragile three-dimensional nature of the silk bows.

Report prepared by:

Larissa Shirley, March 20, 2008