

THE ARTCARE™ ADVANTAGE: PROFILES IN CONSERVATION



THE CLIENT PROFILE

In 1998 officials at The Athenaeum of Philadelphia chose an important collection of watercolors by artist William L. Breton, and slated them for an exhibit at the Institution in early 1999. The works included in this collection, painted primarily in the 1820's, were originally created as a record of important Philadelphia buildings being threatened by demolition during that time. Many of these early watercolors depicted buildings that are now significant historic sites found throughout Philadelphia.



These important architectural drawings, once too fragile for viewing, have now been restored and protected by Artcare products, making them accessible to scholars and suitable for exhibition.

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Artcare Provides Safe Housing for Philadelphia Athenaeum Collection



THE CONSERVATION CHALLENGE

After carefully choosing Mr. Breton's collection as the focus of this exhibit, officials realized that a complete conservation treatment was in order. Unfortunately the works of art all displayed severe damage due to aging, as well as mat burn and brittleness. The entire collection was slated for display at the Athenaeum in 1999, so time was of the essence.

THE PROCESS AND SOLUTION

The first course of action was to test each individual work for stability. The watercolors were then carefully cleaned and washed. Experts involved in the conservation process used a weak ammonium hydroxide solution for particularly difficult foxing stains and mat burns. Any tears found in the paintings were mended using Japanese paper and wheat starch paste, and complete losses were filled with toned wove paper.

Finally, to safely preserve the art for future showings and for historical record, each of the 10 watercolors in the collection was hinged to an Artcare storage mat. The individual elements of the storage mats—cover board, window mat and back mat—consisted of 8-ply Alpharag Artcare.

THE SUCCESS OF ARTCARE

In late February 1999, the 10 beautifully restored watercolors were exhibited in the Haas Gallery of the Athenaeum of Philadelphia. The 8-ply Alpharag Artcare mat used in the conservation treatment now provides these historic treasures with a safe and strong housing. This housing will protect them from further deterioration from any pollutants the art becomes exposed to and inherent acids in the art itself.

Because of the Artcare mats used in the conservation of these historical pieces, the watercolors, like some of the historic buildings they depict, are now safely preserved for future audiences.

The Artcare™ Archival System
The art of protecting your art.

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MATERIALS USED

Alpharag® Artcare™ 8 ply 100% cotton rag board for window mats and mounting boards, to provide appropriate rigidity and distance from glazing while also absorbing gases generated by aging artifacts.

Japanese rice paper hinges and wheat paste for mounting images to board.

Original frames re-used for presentation.

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