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Date: September 15, 2012

To: San Diego International Airport
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Attn: Constance White
Director, Public Art

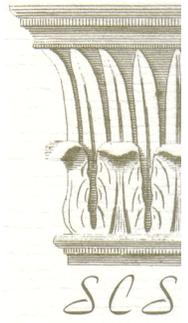
Re: Condition Report for Lucky Spirit relief

Artist: John Jay Whalen

Title: Lucky Spirit

Date: 1997

Location: Originally installed on exterior wall of Commuter Terminal at
San Diego International Airport



All of our work conforms to the strictest conservation standards and the guidelines specified by the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works and with the United States Department of the Interior's Standards for Historic Buildings.

Description:

There was a mural on the wall of the Commuter Terminal at the San Diego International Airport with a larger than life size figure of Charles Lindbergh in an aviator suit holding a small bi-plane. This figure was painted onto dibond aluminum composite boards and was secured onto a concrete wall, which was painted blue. The figure (aluminum panels) was removed from the wall on June 19, 2012 by Sculpture Conservation Studio and SD Artworks, and taken to the studio of Sculpture Conservation Studio to perform condition analysis.

Condition:

Overall: Because of the length of time the artwork has been outdoors and exposed to the airport environmental elements, it has broken down the paint layer, which has left a chalky surface. All of the paint is very transient, or comes off when you touch it with a glove. The most stable paint is found in the pink area of the face, although the features also appear chalky and transient. It is very possible that there is no longer a

binder in the paint, which would hold the pigments together and secure them onto a surface. Because of the transient nature of this paint, it appears that any slight oil from fingers (whether the artist or previous handlers not wearing gloves) has created a dark colored smudge over the surface.

The black accretions on the backside of the majority of the panels could be mold. These were not touched or tested, but it is logical that a biological growth appears on the backside of a panel as a result of the lack of airflow and the increase of moisture. The coating on the backside is a thin white plastic. The majority of the panels are having problems with this coating – peeling, cracking, and black (mold) accretions.

#1 Head

Dimensions: 48" x 48" (rounded at the top)

Condition:

Backside: There is lifting of the top coating layer with some dark areas of accretions, or possible biological growth.

Front: This surface appears in be satisfactory condition. The pink paint appears to be more stable than the brown and beige colors. At the bottom of the panel (around the nose area) is a crushed, lifted section on the edge of the panel.

#2 Lower half of face and fur collar

Dimensions: Triangular shape with 10' long at collar and 4' wide

Condition:

Backside: There is visible lifting of the white plastic coating, with dark accretions, possibly biological growth, over this surface.

Front: The painted area that represents the fur collar appears in good, stable condition. The surface of the face is in good condition, with less transient paint than in the darker colored paint areas. There are some smudges, which could be dark finger marks, visible on the edges.

#2A Left shoulder segment

Dimensions: 6 ½" x 3" (triangular)

Condition:

Backside: There is light layer of dirt visible on the backside.

Front: The front side has surface grime from being exposed to the outdoor elements and there is darker dirt over the light grime.

#2B Right top corner shoulder segment

Dimensions: 7 ½" x 4" (triangular)

Condition:

Backside: The backside of panel shows grime and dirt and a spottiness of mold-like accretions over the surface.

Front: The front side shows an overall layer of surface grime and dirt due to being exposed to the outdoor elements.

#3 Chest and upper left arm

Dimensions: 10' x 4'

Condition:

Backside: The coating is peeling and is black with possible biological growth on the lifted edges. There are spots of dark areas over the surface that appears like mold.

Front: There are many dark smudges, or finger marks, visible at the bottom and top edges. The paint is visibly chalky and very unstable, and lifts off the surface, when touched with a glove.

#4 Right upper arm and majority of airplane

Dimensions: 10' across and right side is 48" (looks like a sideways "L")

Condition:

Backside: The coating is peeling on all of the edges and it is cracking and peeling in the center. Dark mold-like accretions are visible on the top edges, around the screw holes and on the side.

Front: This surface is in overall good condition with light smudges on the edges (finger marks).

#5 Wing of airplane

Dimensions: 20" x 10"

Condition:

Backside: The coating is peeling and there are dark accretions, which could be biological growth, over that surface.

Front: This side is painted grey and appears to be in good, overall condition.

#6 Chest, stomach, and mid left arm

Dimensions: 4' x 10'

Condition:

Backside: Same as #12

Front: This surface is in overall satisfactory condition. There are some dark smudges, which could be finger marks, visible on the edges. A few black paint marks are visible over the surface.

#7: Torso, right arm, right hand, and toy bi-plane

Dimensions: Overall 91" x 48"

Condition:

Backside: The plastic white coating is peeling off at the middle and sides of this panel. There is lifting of this coating visible on the small tears in the center. These tears appear like lifting, open cracks over the surface.

Front: There is a gap between the chest and the hand, and dark smudges (finger marks) are visible on the edge, between the chest and the arm. There are also smudges (finger marks) visible on the bottom edges and around the screw hole on the upper left side of the chest. The paint comes off of the surface easily when touched, which could mean the binder is no longer in the paint.

#8: Fingers and plane

Dimensions: 24" x 14"

Condition:

Backside: The plastic coating is lifting, with dark areas, possibly biological growth, over the surface.

Front: The surface on this side appears in overall good condition.

#9 Waist, belt, and left sleeve

Dimensions: 4' x 10'

Condition:

Backside: The plastic coating on the backside of this panel appears in stable condition. There is no visible lifting of the edges. There are brown paint drips and areas of black accretions that appear to look like mold, visible over the surface.

Front: There is a black residue on the inside of the screw holes and vertical pencil marks are visible on the left side. The top edge surface has black smudges (finger marks). Three inches below the top edge are several black horizontal lines near the center of the panel. There are vertical lines of dark pencil visible down the center. These lines could be the artist's pencil markings. Dark smudges are noticeable on the bottom edge.

#10 Right side of jacket and lower right elbow

Dimension: L-shaped panel: Long horizontal side is 64", vertical side is 48", and short side is 28".

Condition:

Backside: The plastic coating is peeling off on one side and that lifting material appears dark on the edges. There is a dark mold like accretion visible over the surface, which could be a biological growth.

Front: There is a 1" black line near the top. The color on this panel is very transient and comes off easily when touched. There are surface fingers marks (dark smudges) visible over the surface of this panel.

#11 Left upper thigh at hip and left hand

Dimensions: 48" x 64"

Condition:

Backside: The plastic coating is peeling off and is a dark, black color on the lifted edges. There is some cracking visible on the plastic and some dark coating of grime over the surface.

Front: The area inside the screw holes is dark and peeling. The corners appear to have dark smudges, or finger prints, over the surface. A few dark spots are visible in the center but no smudges (finger marks). There are a few very small areas on the surface with paint loss. There are a few random smudges (outdoor environmental grime) over the surface.

#12 Top of right leg

Dimensions: 55" x 48" (tapers to 41")

Condition:

Backside: The plastic white coating is peeling off at the middle and sides of this panel. There is lifting of this coating visible on the small tears in the center. These tears appear like lifting, open cracks over the surface.

Front: The top edge (larger width) has several darkened areas all along the top. These could be finger marks. The paint is very transient on this panel, especially the burnt sienna colored area on the left side. There are small losses of paint along the side and at the bottom of the panel. The bottom edge also has dark spots (finger marks) on the edge.

#13 Left upper thigh

Dimensions: 82" x 48"

Condition:

Backside: The coating appears secure on this panel, but there are black areas of mold-like accretions over the surface. There is a black line across the center of the coating.

Front: There are large dark areas at the top (smudges over the paint). There are several small dark round spots in the center of the panel. There are several dark finger mark-like smudges visible on the bottom edge.

#14 Right upper leg

Dimensions: 48" x 50"

Condition:

Backside: The coating on the backside of this panel is peeling off on the edges, with vertical lifting and tearing of the coating visible on the center of this area. There is a visible dark mold like accretion on the edges, which could be an active biological growth.

Front: There are scratches and losses of paint visible along the edges. There are dark dirt like smudges and dark black markings over the surface of the paint. There are pencil-looking marks on the center of the panel, which could be from the artist, and there are 2 large vertical dark paint "drips" on the center. "Finger marks" appear at the top of the panel due to previous handlers working on the panel without gloves.

#15 Right leg (small vertical piece on outer side)

Dimensions: 48" tall by 24"

Condition:

Backside: There is a light grime and dirt layer over the surface. Black mold-like accretions are visible at top and bottom of this panel on the backside.

Front: The side edge of this panel appears to have much loss of paint along this edge. There are some dark smudges visible at the top of piece (wide side). These smudges could be finger marks.

#16 Left knee and pocket

Dimensions: 45" x 48"

Condition:

Backside: The top plastic layer is peeling off at the edges and those lifted edges are a black color. There are vertical tears/splits in the visible center of this coating.

Front: There are dark spots (finger marks) at the top of this panel and dark, dirt smudges visible at the bottom of this panel. The screw holes where the panel was attached to the wall have a dark peeling material inside them. This peeling material could also contain a biological growth in it.

#17 Right leg, thigh, and pocket

Dimensions: 48" high/ 46" to 34" wide (tapers)

Condition:

Backside: There is a layer of dirt visible on the edges. There is a mold like black dirt around the screw holes and in one corner of the surface.

Front: There is a visible chalkiness of the pigments over the front surface and when touched with a glove, the pigment comes off on your glove. It appears that there is no longer a binder in the pigments. Several dark brownish colored dirt smudges and grime are visible over the front surface.

#18 Left lower leg/shin

Dimensions: 48" x 36" (tapers)

Condition:

Backside: The top coating is peeling off, cracking in the center and lifting in the cracked areas. There are two areas of dark accretions, which could be a biological growth.

Front: There are dark areas, possibly finger marks, along the edges of the panel, with dark marks around and in the screw holes. There is a loss of paint visible around the lower screw hole.

#19 Right lower leg/shin

Dimensions: 48" high, tapers from 32" down to 23"

Condition:

Backside: There is a black residue visible around the screw holes. The white overcoat layer has cracks with lifting plastic edges around the inside of the cracks and several holes visible on it. There are some other areas that appear to have black accretions over the surface, which could be biological growth

Front: The chalkiness of the paint is very visible in this panel, along with the transient quality of the pigments. There are several small losses of paint visible over the surface. Dark black smudges, paint drips and scratches into the paint can be seen over several areas on the front.

#20 Lower most left leg panel

Dimensions: 10" x 18"

Condition:

Backside: There is a dark colored dirt and grime visible over the backside of this section, including over the plastic coating. The plastic white coating is intact, without any lifting of the edges.

Front: There is a general overall layer of dirt and grim visible on this side. There are some dark colored spots, which could be some type of accretion formed over the top or a biological growth, over the surface of this area. You can see the different colored layers of paint used in the beige areas on this panel.

#21 Lower most right leg panel (not in crate)

Dimensions: 18 x 21"

Condition: This piece was taken to the studio of SCS for testing and was not in the crate with the sections of this mural.

Backside: There is a white plastic coating over the backside of the panel that is peeling off on the edges. This coating has torn in the center section with small vertical cuts, which appears to have also caused this coating to wrinkle over the surface. There are areas over this coating, which are a dark, dirt like substance, along with some spotty dark substance that could be a biological growth. The front side has overall surface dirt, scratches and dark markings.

#22 Plaque:

Says: Lucky Spirit 1997 A Mural by John Jay Whalen

Dimensions: 40" x 30"

Condition:

The design appears to look like a framed plaque with a grey colored frame, with the center section imitating blue skies and clouds.

Backside: There is a black mold-like dirt visible around the screw holes. The center of the panel is in overall satisfactory condition.

Front: The front side is in overall good condition, except for the chalkiness of the paint, which wipes off when touched.

Conclusions of Conservator:

The artwork presently has several major problems that need to be addressed. These problems would need to be resolved and treatments completed before the artwork would be stable enough to be mounted on a wall. The immediate problem is the possible biological growth on the backside of the panels. This condition has a danger of spreading through its spores, into the atmosphere around the artwork. This treatment would need an open outdoor space or an indoor space with good ventilation, where the work can be performed, along with the Conservator wearing a protective mask, goggles, gloves and suit. The area must be isolated, with no other artworks or objects in that area. The towels, wipes, etc., must be disposed of through a Hazmat service. Presently, the biological growth is stable and cannot spread into the atmosphere as long as the pieces are individually wrapped and secured into a wooden crate.

The second problem is the lack of binder in the paint. This lack of binder is causing the chalky, loose surface color. It is impossible to put binder back into paint. The only solution would be to apply a clear barrier layer over the present paint and then repaint each panel, and coat each panel with a protective UV clear coat. The artist would also need to be informed that the artwork is being re-painted and the airport would need his approval.

A new mounting system would need to be developed. The present mounting tools have corroded and these panels now need to be seismically fitted onto a stable wall. The wall would also need stabilization and repainting. The paint that was previously on the wall had faded extensively.

The above mentioned restoration treatments are costly and extensive. If the treatments were to be performed, along with the logistics for creating a new mounting system and stabilizing and painting the wall, the final results would be very costly (approximately \$175,000.00), and take several years to complete.

It is the opinion of this Conservator that good documentation has been taken of the artwork, and this artwork should NOT be conserved or restored, but either de-accessioned or stored for future reference only.

Submitted by:

Andrea Morse
Principal Conservator
Sculpture Conservation Studio



PLAQUE = #22