

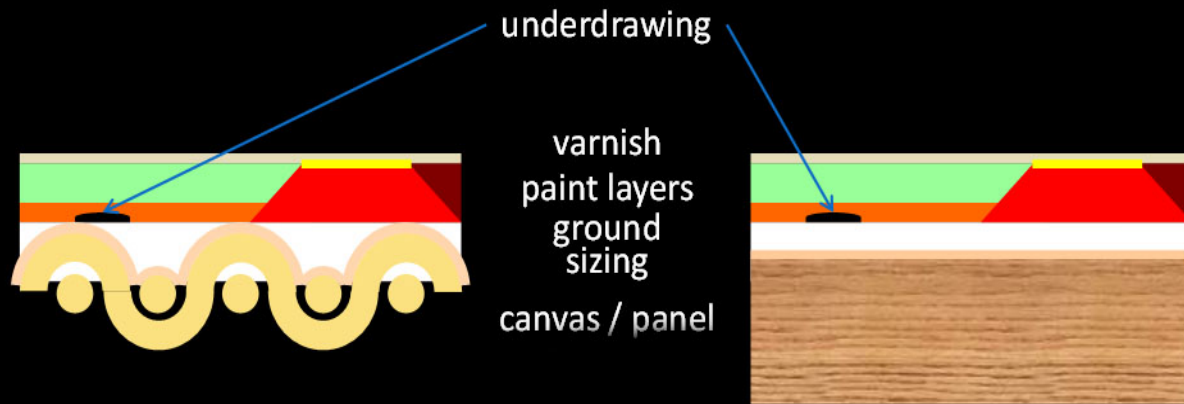
Painting Conservation at the MFAH: four case studies

What is art conservation ?

All measures and actions aimed at safeguarding tangible cultural heritage while ensuring its accessibility to present and future generations. Conservation includes preventive, remedial conservation and restoration. All measures and actions should respect the significance and the physical properties of the cultural heritage item.

What do conservators do?

The structure of paintings



Case 1 : Major structural treatment



Antonio Vivarini, Virgin and Child,
c.1440

tempera and gold leaf
transferred on Masonite and
honeycomb panel

Egg tempera



Moveable cradle



1955 treatment

- Cradle removed
- Redwood strips attached to panel verso
- Wax infused linen canvas adhered to the verso

Treatment 1973

- 1955 additions of redwood strips and entire original wooden panel removed.
- Painting was transferred to a Masonite panel mounted to an aluminum honeycomb panel.

Protective facing of tissue and cardboard



Removing the wood support



Removing the linen canvas backing



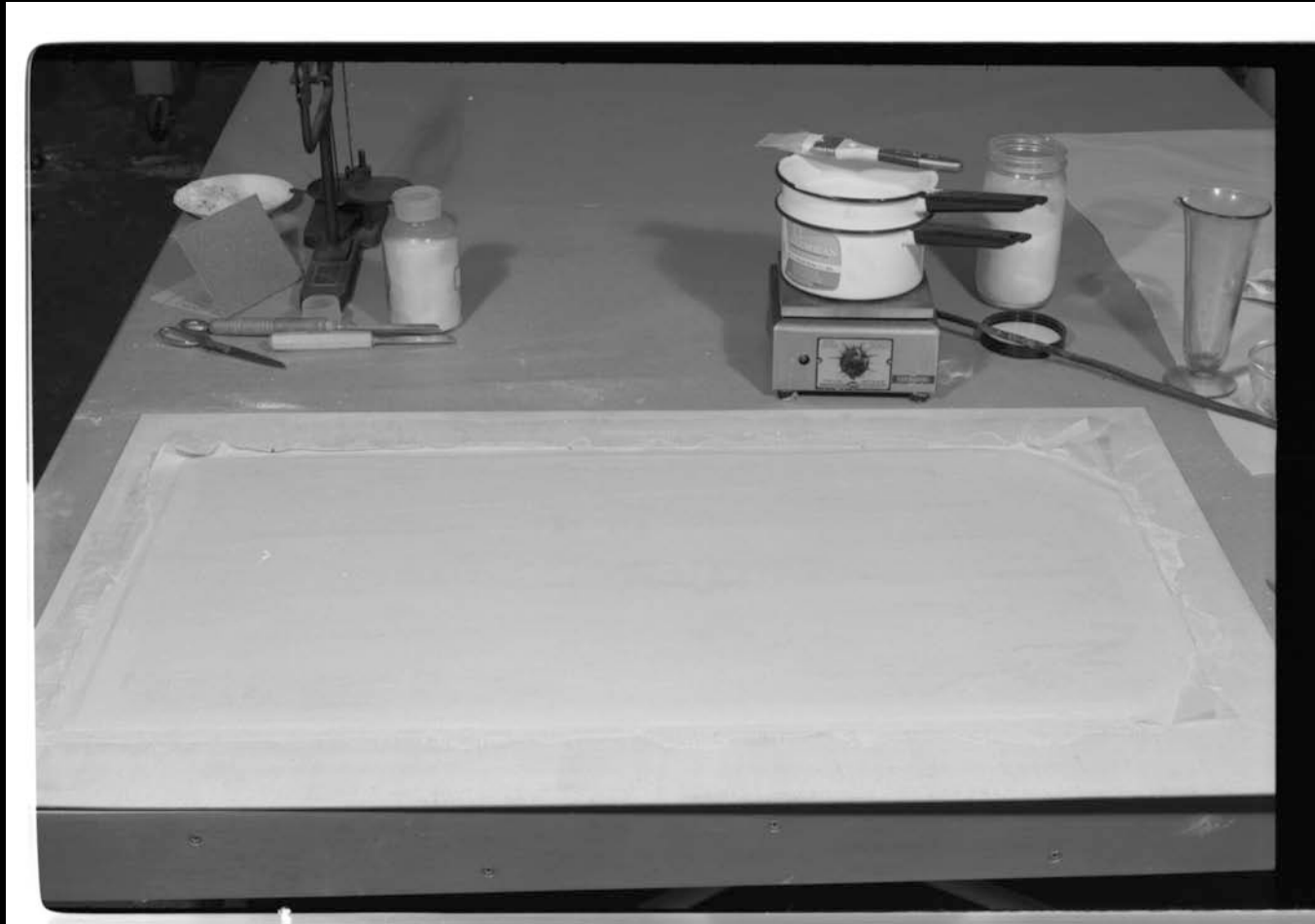
Removing the original wood panel



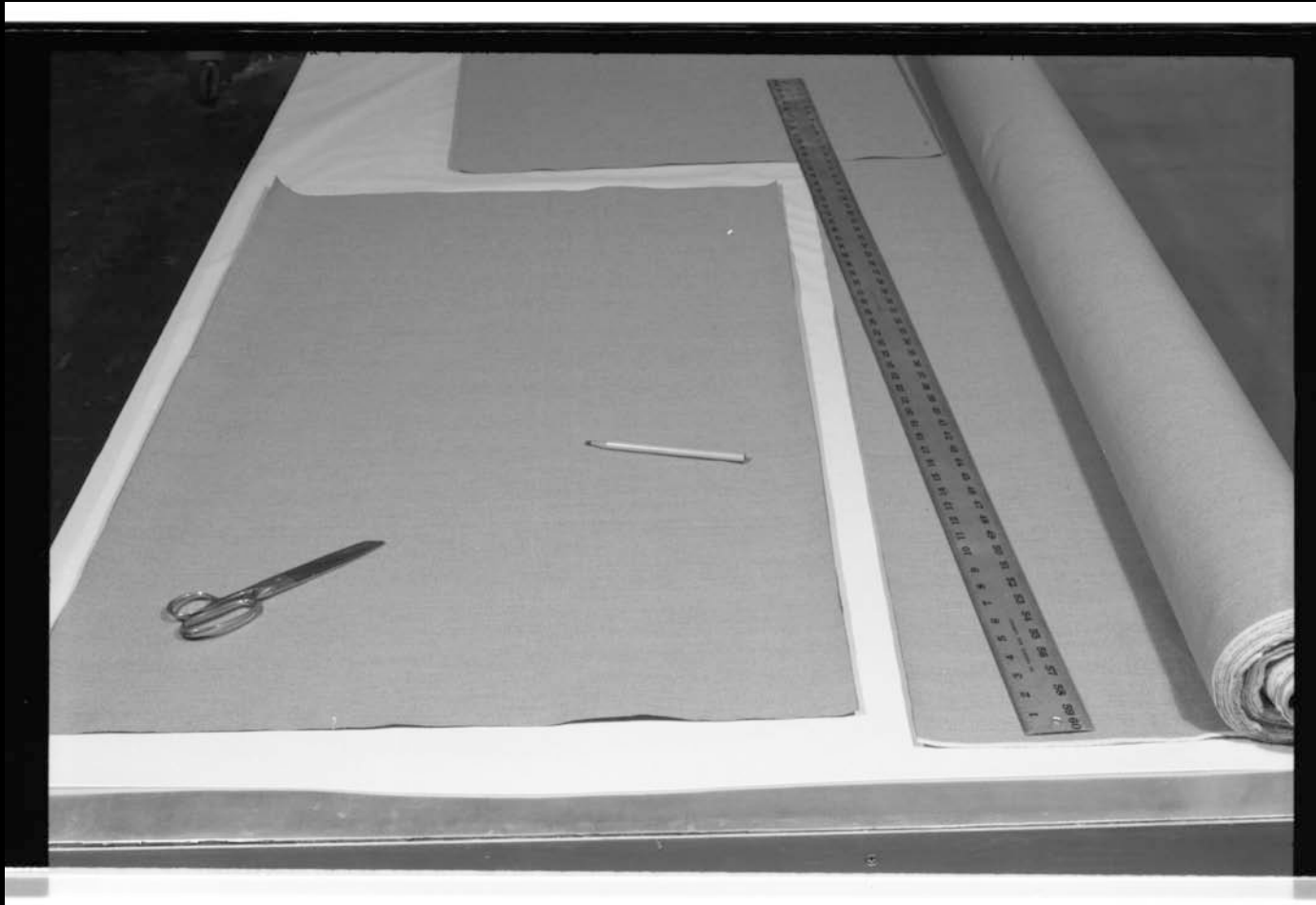
Arriving at the original gesso ground layer



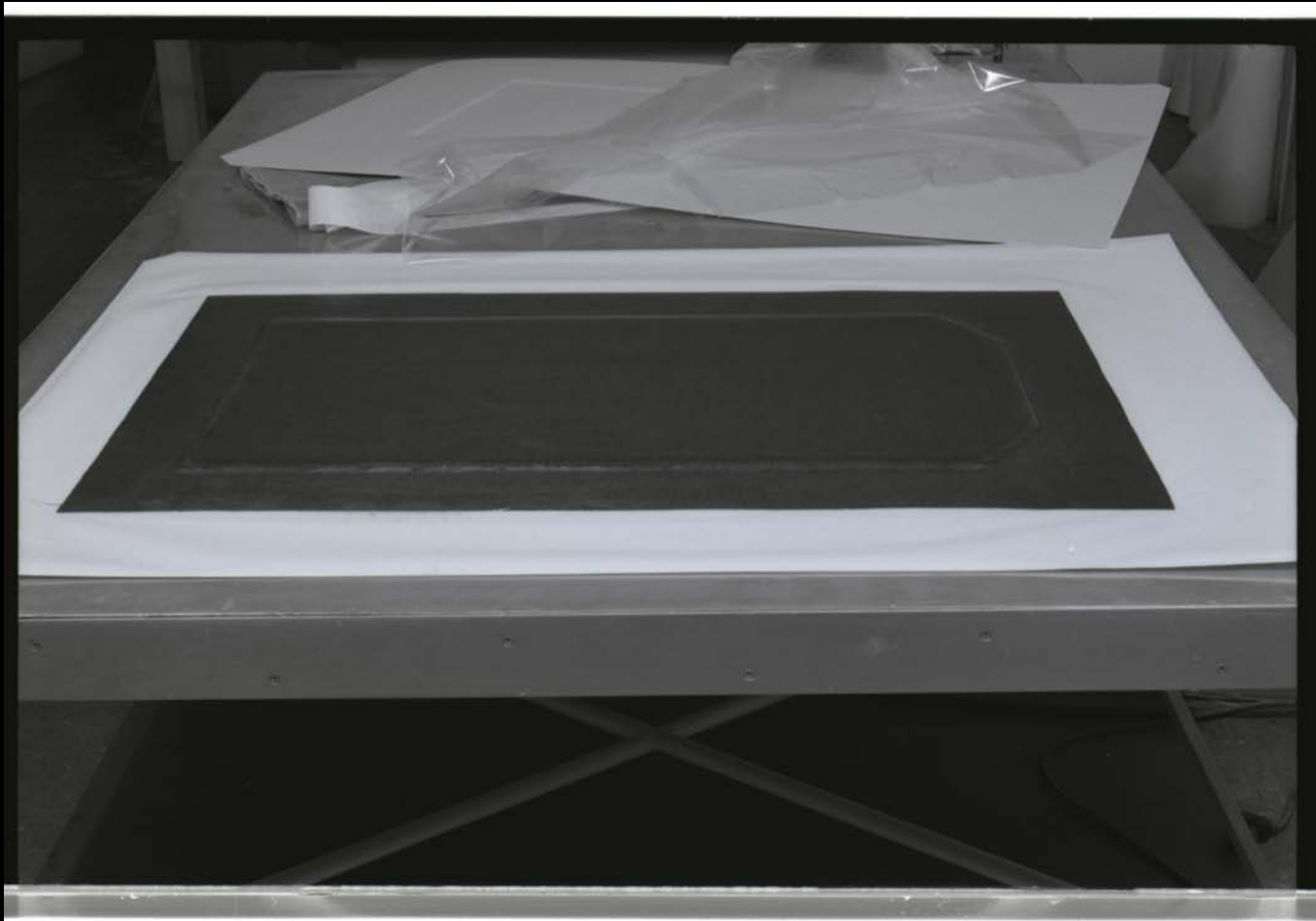
Applying coats of gesso



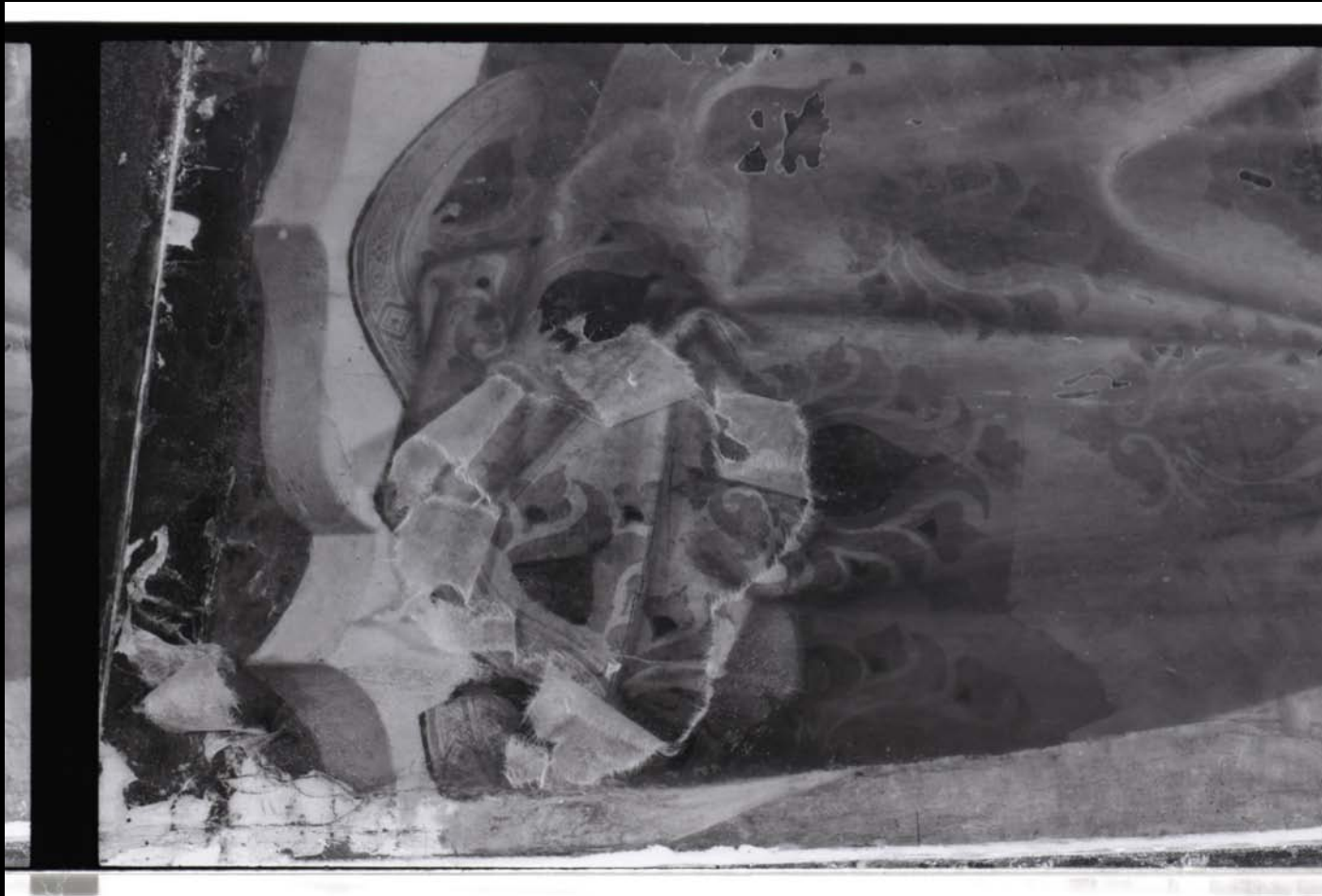
New linen canvas backing



Adhering canvas backing



Removing the protective facing



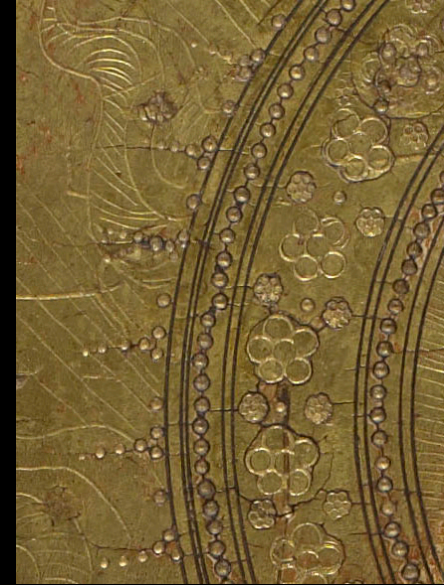
Restoration phase



Treatment 2011



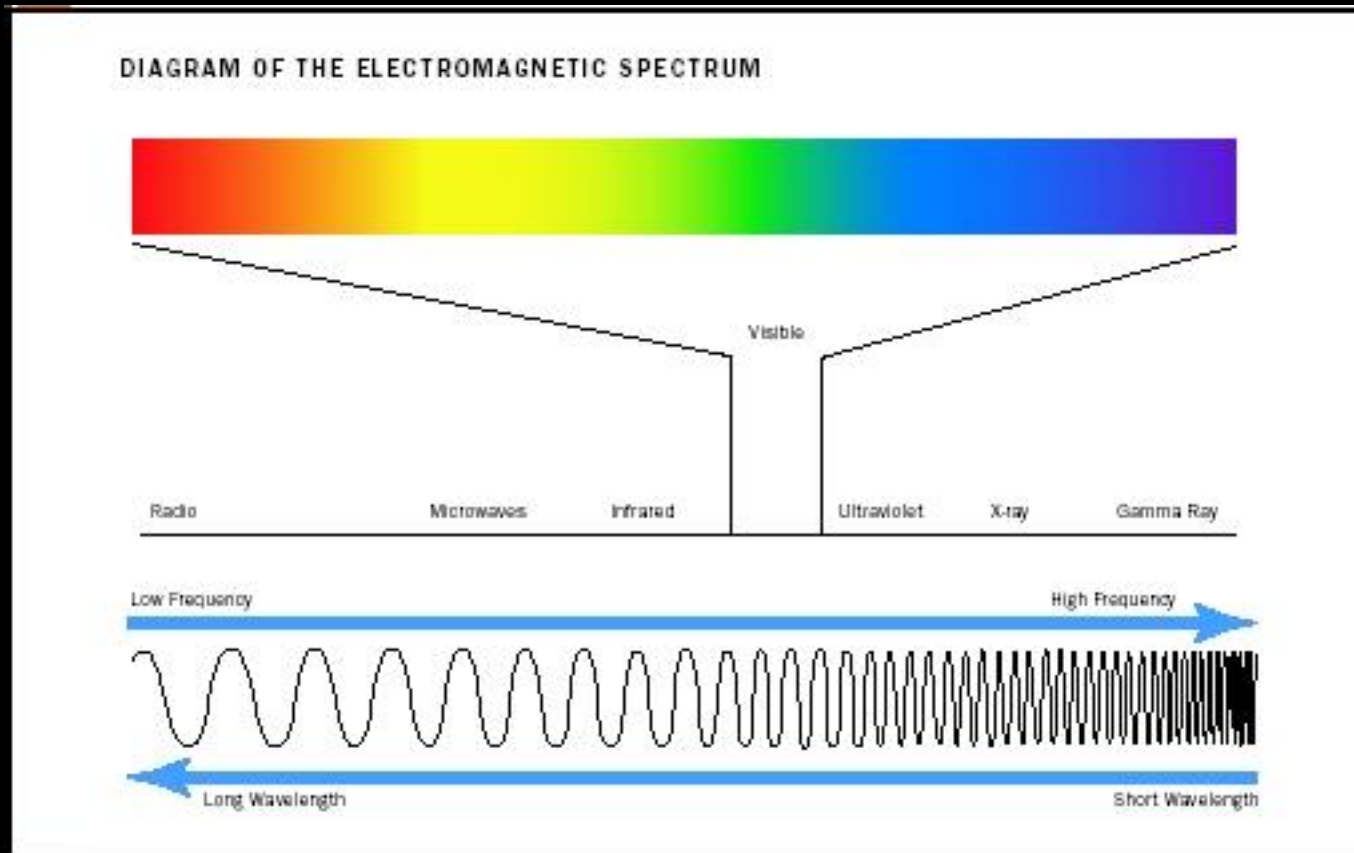
Before treatment



after treatment

Punch work

Electromagnetic spectrum



Ultraviolet fluorescence



2011 Before
treatment, UVF

Case 2 : Unwelcome embellishments



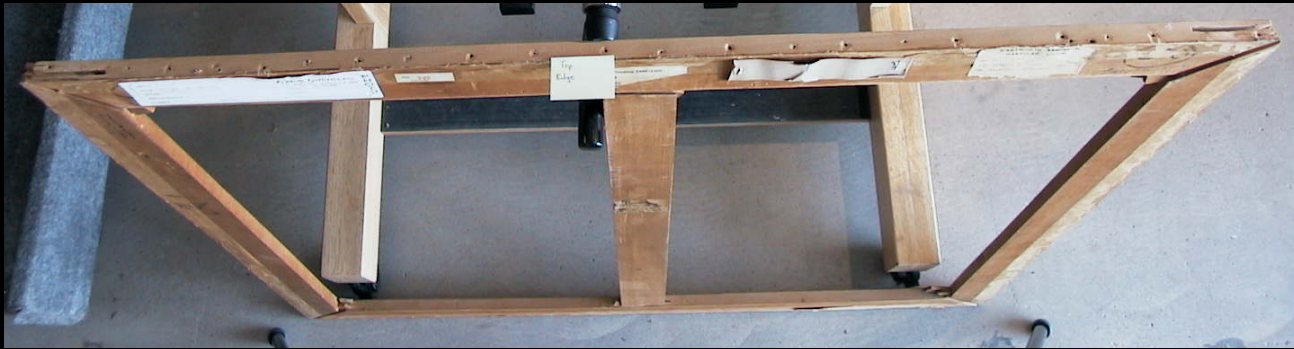
William Merrit Chase, Sunlight and Shadows; Shinnecock Hills , 1895



Verso shows an unlined canvas

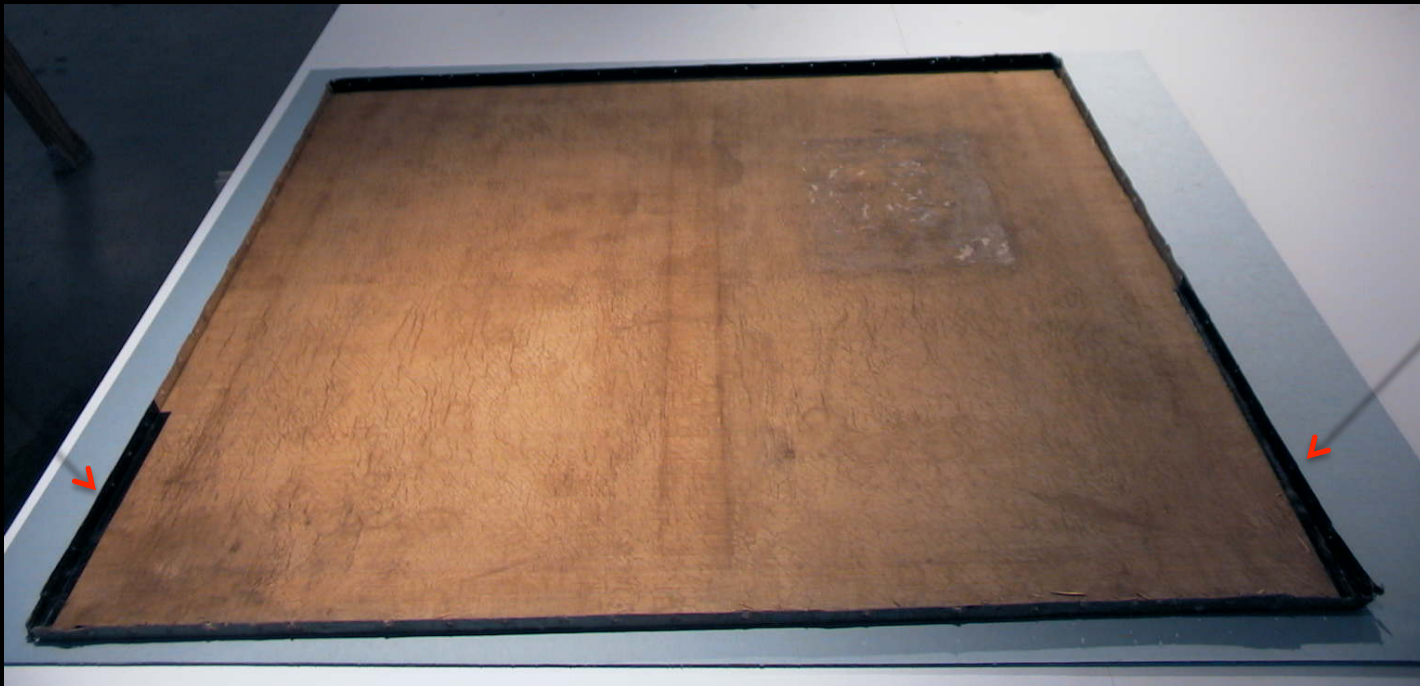


Non-original stretcher



Top edge of stretcher and painting on stretcher

Crossbar marks on verso of canvas



Low pressure suction table



During varnish removal



Enhancements



Before and after



Case 3: unlined and unvarnished: a modern conservation treatment



Edmond Henri Cross, *Regatta in Venice*, 1906

Painting technique



Before treatment details of technique

Raking or tangential light



Examination with UVF



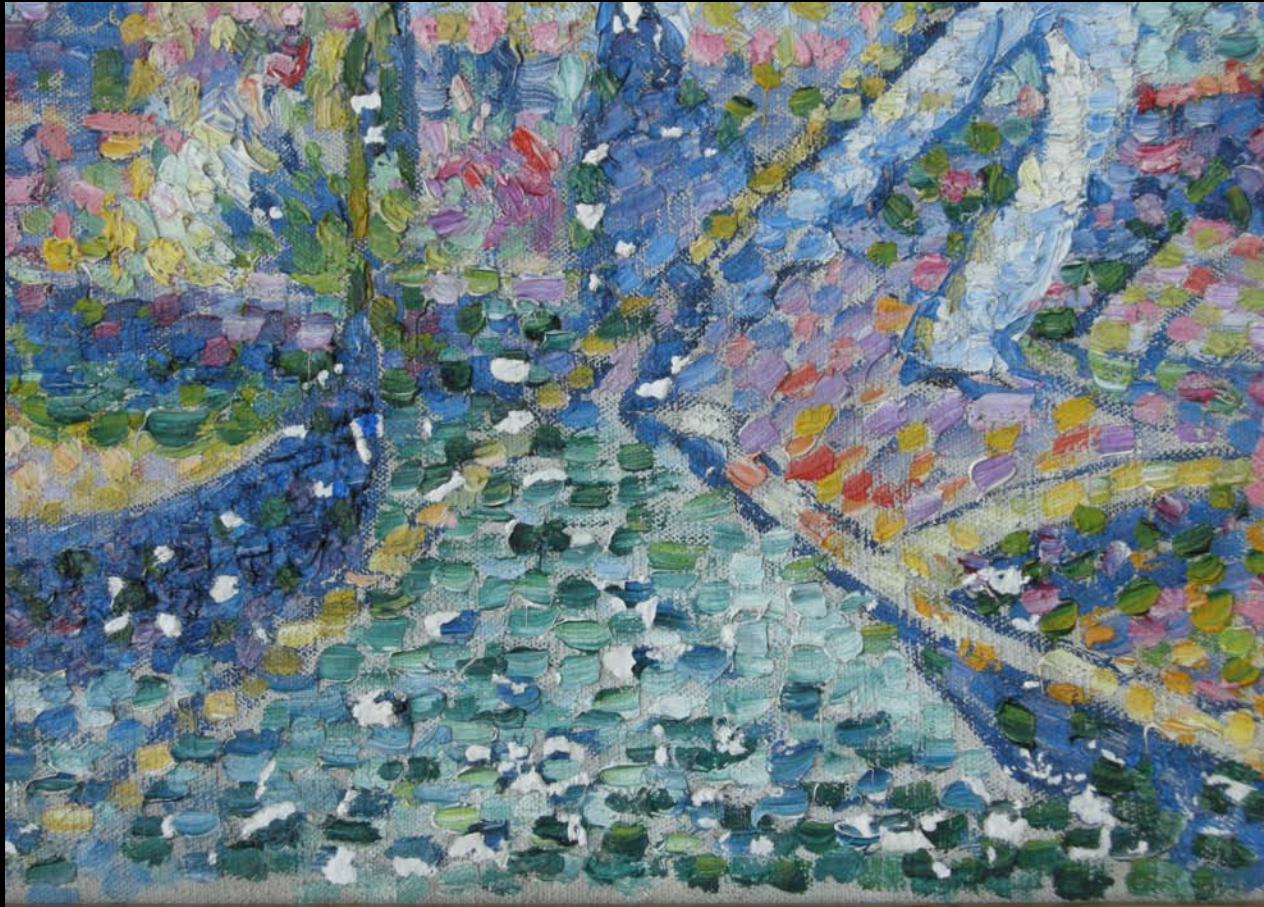
During varnish and soot layer cleaning



Old losses



Restoration: filling losses of paint



After treatment



After treatment verso





Case 4: beautiful under drawing

French Unknown,
Pieta, c. 1500
Tempera and oil

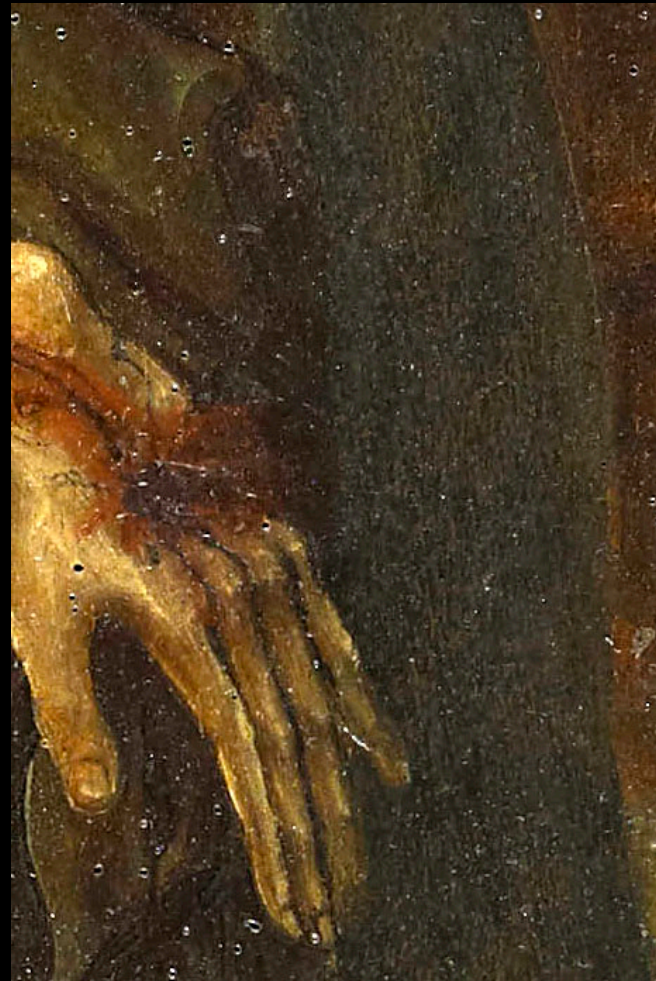
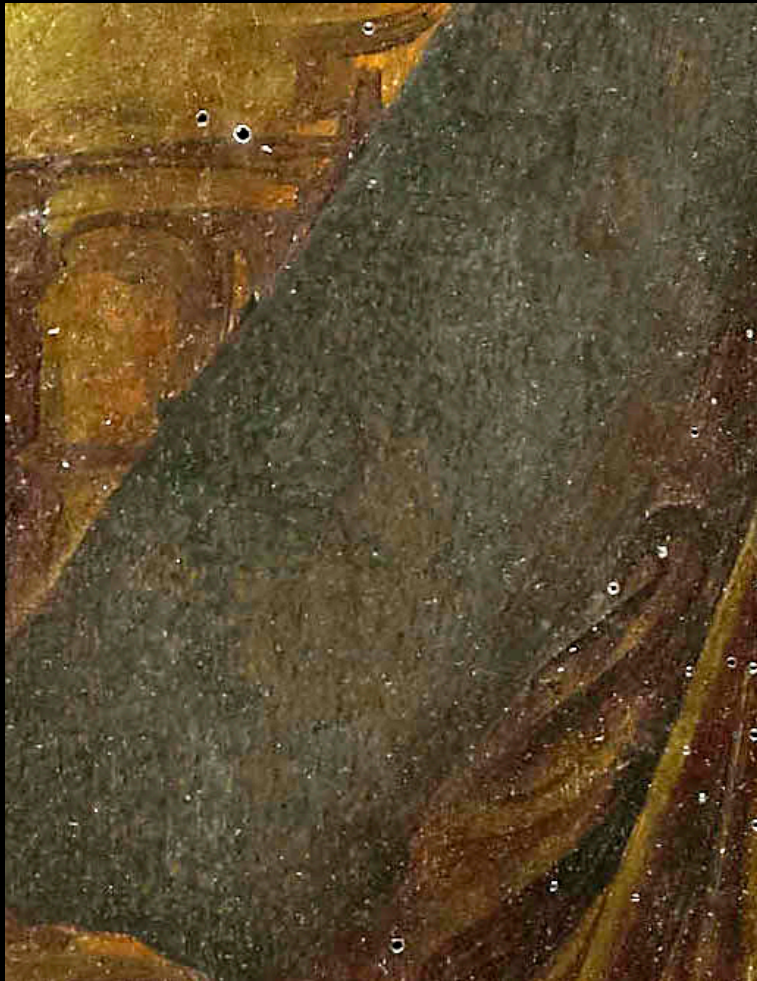
Changes with age



Faded red lake



Theft or Deterioration?



Infrared reflectography



IR 1 (700 to 950 nm)



IR2 (950 to 1100nm)



IR 1 (700 to 950 nm)



IR2 (950 to 1100nm)

Infrared reflectography



IR 1 (700 to 950 nm)



IR2 (950 to 1100nm)

