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*Conservation of Paintings*  
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## CONSERVATION REPORT

**COLLECTION:** Holburne Museum of Art Bath  
**HOLBURNE ACC NO:** A341  
**ARTIST:** Thomas Barker  
**TITLE:** Portrait of Priscilla Jones  
**DIMENSIONS:** 758 x 629 mm  
**MEDIUM/SUPPORT:** Oil on canvas  
**INSCRIPTIONS:** Stretcher reverse  
 Intaglio stamp x 2:  
 HILL  
 LINER  
 BATH

### CONDITION

#### SUPPORT

The single window stretcher is in good condition; it is not the original but dates from the 19<sup>th</sup> century when the painting was lined and bears the intaglio stamp of Hill on the upper and lower limbs. All 8 wedges are present and secured with thread and brass screws. The plain weave linen canvas is glue/paste lined onto similar. It is currently slack with a small, convex deformation bottom right caused by an obstruction behind the stretcher bar long since removed. The condition of the lining is generally good. The painted, original canvas is a little smaller than the stretcher size.

#### GROUND AND PAINT LAYERS

The ground and paint layers are structurally sound. The paint is evenly applied and generally in good condition. A 10+mm strip along the upper edge has been inpainted or overpainted and the paint has darkened. The reason for this is not obvious but possibly the canvas here is part of the tacking edge incorporated into the picture plane during the lining. There is no other obvious sign of restoration. The paint has a pronounced, horizontal crackle pattern which may have been caused by the painting having been rolled at some point before it was lined.

#### SURFACE LAYERS

The varnish is thin and even but discoloured. A thin grey layer is visible over, and partially ingrained in, the lighter hues. There is thin layer of black surface dirt.

#### TREATMENT

Surface dirt was removed initially with saliva followed by de-ionised water.

Discoloured varnish was removed with a mixture of acetone/propan-2-ol/white spirit (2:1:1). Though generally thin there appeared to be two or three layers of varnish with a layer of black dirt lying between which was the visible grey layer. This varnish/dirt layering appeared to be similar, if not identical, to the surface layer structure on Thomas Barker's Self Portrait (A102) suggesting that the two portraits had been treated similarly since they have both been in the collection of the Holburne Museum. The cleaning mixture did not remove the restoration paint along the top edge and as it did not prove easily removable it was left in place.

The reverse was vacuumed to remove loose dirt and dust and wedges were tapped.

Some small losses in the lower right corner were filled with *Flugger* acrylic paste.

A varnish of *Paraloid B72* (acrylic) in *Shellsol A100* was applied and initial inpainting of the small losses and overpainting of the upper strip was carried out in dry pigment dispersed in *Paraloid B72* in 2-methoxy propanol. A varnish of *MS2A* (reduced ketone) in white spirit was applied and inpainting continued in this medium plus dry pigment. A final light spray of *Laropal K80* (ketone) + c. 2% *Cosmolloid 80H* wax (microcrystalline) in white spirit was applied.

#### PHOTOGRAPHS

35mm colour prints, variable daylight:

Before treatment 06/2012

Before treatment, reverse 06/2012

Before treatment, reverse, detail of liner's stamp 06/2012

Before treatment, detail of ingrained dirt x2 06/2012

Before treatment, detail of cracks 06/2012

During cleaning, detail of face 07/2012

Before inpainting 07/2012

After treatment 08/2012

Digital jpg:

During treatment, details x4 07/2012

#### FRAME

The painting was refitted into its (restored) frame with brass mirror plates and screws, the rebate having been lined with gummed brown paper tape. Spacers of (pinned in) balsa wood and plasterzote were used. The hardboard backboard was replaced.

**DATE:** September 2012