Focus of the Restoration

- consolidation of the loosely bound paint layer
- removal of the harmful varnish
- retouching losses

Throughout the process materials similar to the original ones were applied following an overall concept for the ensemble [1].

Seven landscape paintings

- late 18th century: origin, artists and original setting unknown
- at least two painters involved
- possibly inspired by a series of etchings by the Venetian artist Marco Ricci (1676 - 1729)
- owned by the Bundesmobilienverwaltung, Vienna

- identical decoratively shaped stretchers (125x 96,5x 2,5 cm) and technique
- painted in grisaille: dolomite ground, lead white and carbon black paint layer
- loosely bound with protein-glue: matte, rough, stone-like surface
- water soluble and susceptible to damage

Condition

Two main problems:
- the loosely bound paint layer: extremely instable due to the degradation of the binding media and water damage
- the varnish: strongly deteriorated, has caused increased tension on the paint layer which has led to major losses, affects the originally intended matte appearance

Goal

- to stabilise the substance
- to equalise the differences in appearance
- to make the paintings work as the ensemble it was intended to be

Conclusion

Due to the size and number of the paintings about a dozen students took part in the expansive restoration. The extent and differences in the damages meant that the concept had to be adapted accordingly.

The project was a great challenge for everybody involved.

Figures

1 varnished painting before restoration
2 unvarnished painting before restoration
3 flaking varnish
4 powdery paint layer and losses
5 varnish during the removal
6 thread-by-thread tear mending
7 fig. 1 painting after restoration

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