

RESTORATION OF A VITRINE

VILNIS LĪDAKA

Senior master conservator - restorer

The Scientific Restoration Department of Rundāle Palace Museum

DESCRIPTION OF THE VITRINE

A two-part, parallelepiped-form cabinet with a glazed top part and an inside mirror. Lower part - circle frame with an inlaid panel. The wooden structure is covered in a special varnish made of black-tinted resin. The surface is brightly polished. Mother-of-pearl inlay on a black varnish background. The artistic composition consists of painted mother-of-pearl plates. Paintings most characteristic elements are fantastic, multicoloured birds, butterflies and oriental-style flowering plants; in order to intensify the polychrome effect, these paintings are made with silver powder and translucent, thin and tinted varnishes.

Vitrine's finish is in a bad condition. The varnished surface is mechanically damaged with pronounced scratches and extensive loss of black varnish. The cabinet's construction and surface is deformed; there are cracks in places where the wooden details are glued together. The decor with mother-of-pearl inlay has a loss of fragments; this is due to glue degradation.

AUTHOR: unknown
OWNER: Rundāle Palace Museum, RPM 7029,
ORIGIN, DATE: cabinet - vitrine, Japan, end of 19th c.
DIMENSIONS: overall height - 218 cm (123 cm +95 cm); width - 109,5 cm (upper part), 119,5 cm (lower part); depth - 39 cm x 42 cm
MATERIAL: base material - wood, mother-of-pearl, black varnish, tinted varnishes, paint, silver, glass, mirror glass
TECHNIQUE: carpentry - creating a construction, inlay, varnish, painting



Vitrine before restoration.



Fragment of the vitrine before the restoration.



Vilnis Lidaka, a senior master conservator, restoring the cabinet-vitrine.



Fragment of the vitrine after restoration.



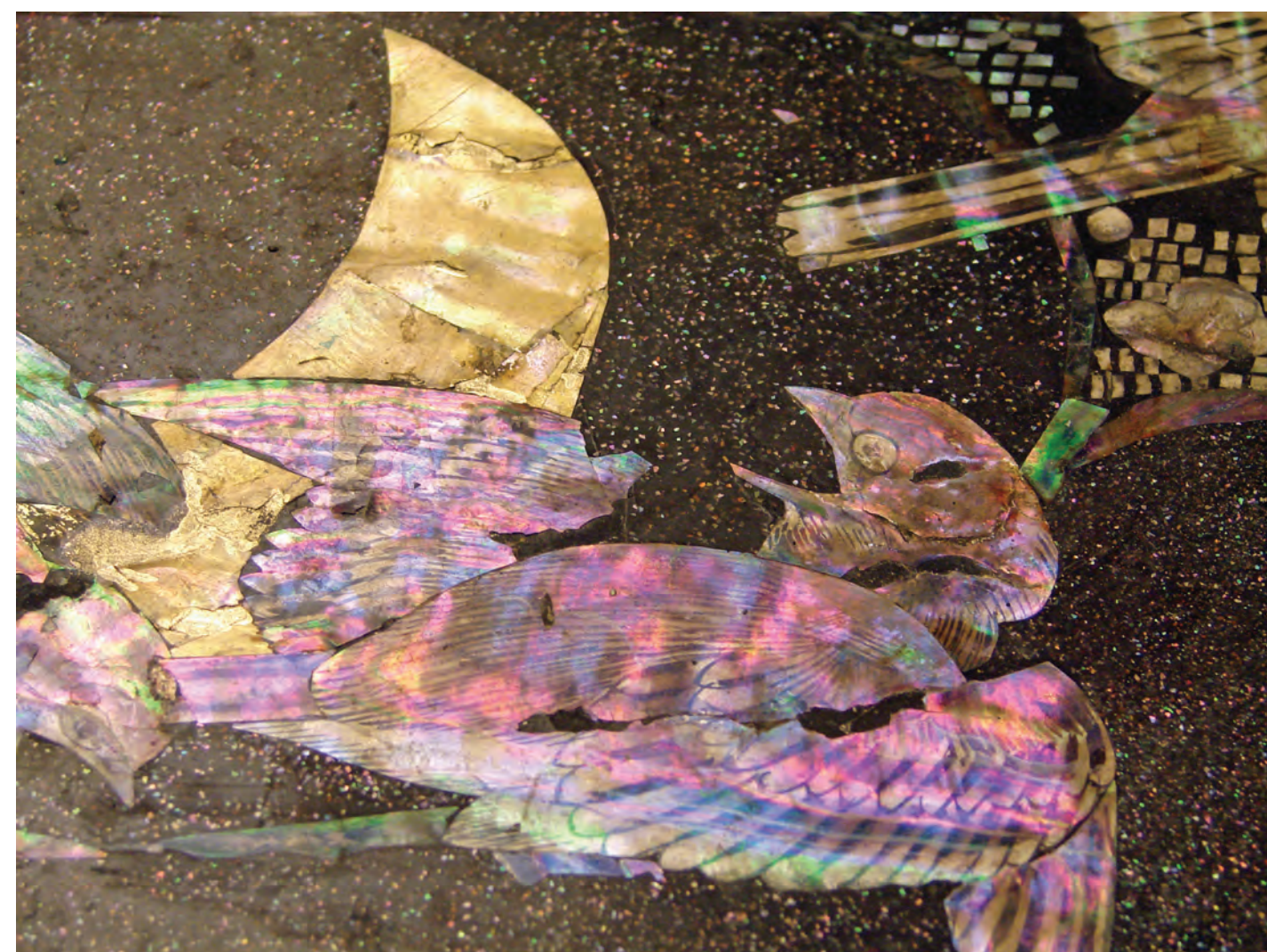
The cabinet-vitrine after restoration.

RESTORATION PROCESS

- Researching the object, defining the type of damage, photo documentation.
- Treating the black varnish surface by removing dust and dirt; applied cleaning solution: polarized water - ethyl alcohol - baby soap.
- The mother-of-pearl plates that had separated from the base were strengthened with Titebond glue, then inpainted using alcohol-based wood stains of suitable tone added to a solution of shellac and ethyl alcohol, varnished with a "Borma Wachs" solution of shellac and ethyl alcohol.
- Areas of loss were filled with "Bormawachs Bio Holzspachtel" black-toned filler, surfaces were polished with fine-grained sandpaper.
- The drawing was restored to the extent possible and losses of inlay elements were restored with thinned mother-of-pearl pieces. The mother-of-pearl plates were pre ordered from "Dictum" catalogue. They were separated by fibre in small fragments, the surface was treated and the plates were glued in areas of loss using Titebond glue.
- The mother-of-pearl plates were varnished with Bow Slides Pearl, Colored, 5-Pce Set, Violin, Viola, and Avon Cosmetics nail polish was used in small quantities.
- Materials used for surface inpainting and for retouching fine finish elements: ColArt SWeden AB gold and silver powder, Brons CB 300k MEDEGULD paste.
- Finally, the surfaces were varnished with bleached, translucent solution of "Borma Wach" shellac and ethyl alcohol.



Fragment of the vitrine in the process of restoration.



Fragment of the vitrine before restoration with the decor delamination and loss.



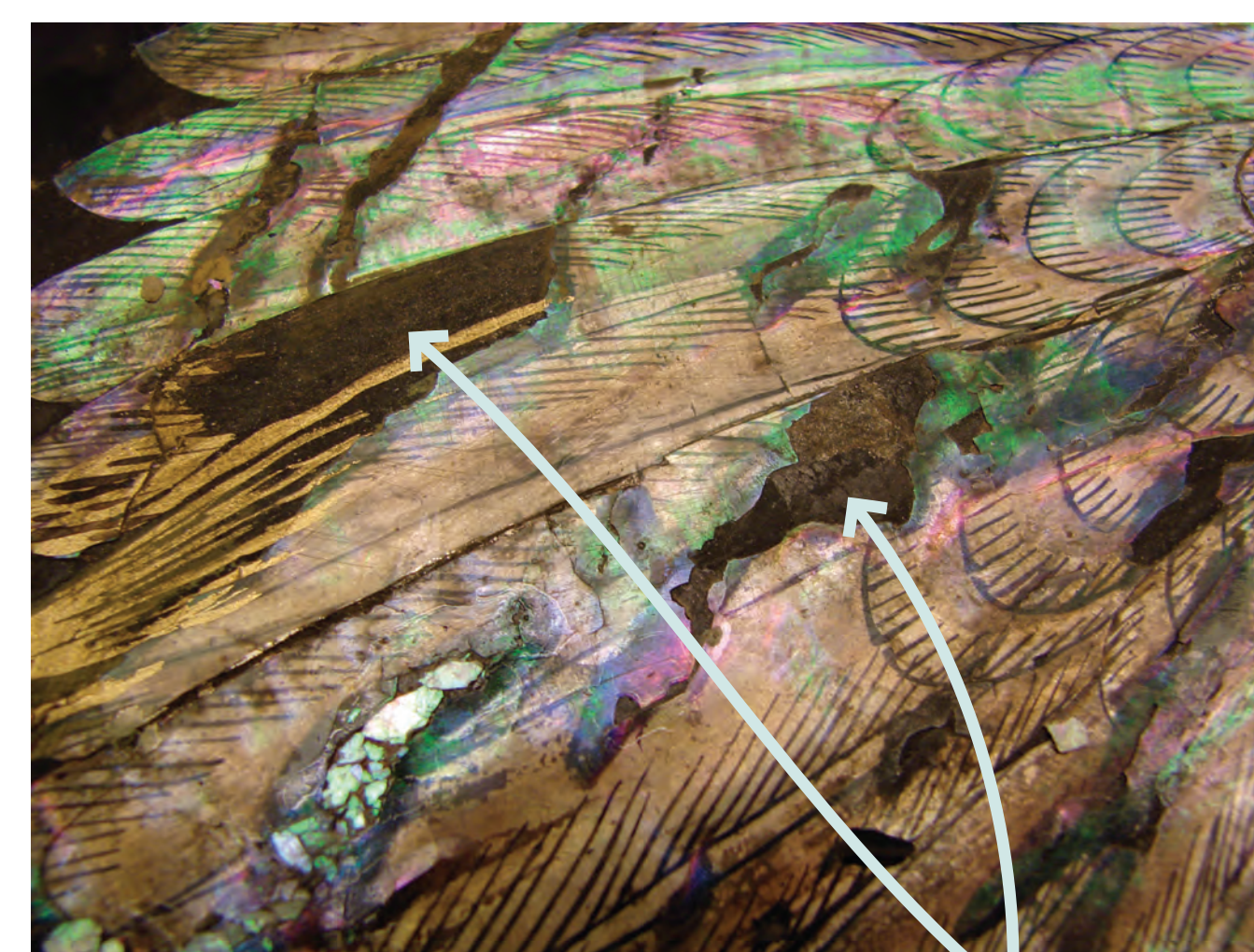
Fragment of the vitrine in the process of restoration.



Fragment of the vitrine in the before of restoration.



Fragment of the vitrine before restoration Loss of decor.



Fragment of the vitrine before restoration Loss of decor.



Fragment of the vitrine in the before of restoration.



Fragment of the vitrine before restoration with the decor delamination and loss.



Fragment of the vitrine in the before of restoration.



Fragment of the vitrine in the before of restoration.