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Madonna and Child Altarpiece

Madonna and Child Enthroned with Saints
(14th–Century Florentine)
The Regina A. Quick Center for the Arts,
St. Bonaventure University

This early Italian Renaissance, gold ground altarpiece was treated at the ICA in 2003. The painting was in poor condition aesthetically—covered with years' accumulation of surface grime, several campaigns of darkened varnish, and patches of discolored retouching and fill material. After the obscuring varnish, overpaint, and dirt were removed it was again possible to see the high key palette characteristic of the period. Delicate tempera brush strokes became more visible, the previously dull gold ground brightened significantly, and many lovely details emerged. It is now much more obvious that the Christ Child's feet are poking out from beneath his robe. You can again see the grain on the wood of the cross, gold dots on the angels' wings, the remains of stars that decorated the Madonna's pink robe, and faint scales on St. Margaret's dragon. Since this painting is part of a teaching collection, retouching and reconstruction after cleaning were kept to a minimum. The retouching focused on closing small losses and toning back dark cracks that were breaking up forms.

St. Bonaventure University obtained a grant from the Lower Hudson Conference Conservation Treatment Grant Program to help underwrite the cost of treatment.