



**CONDITION AND TREATMENT REPORT**

**Date:** 9/15/2017

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**Acc. / Loan no:** 2017-10-1

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**Object:** Basket

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**People; Country:**

Democratic Republic of the Congo artist

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**Materials:** Plant, wood, raffia, natural dyes

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**Reason for conservation report:** New acquisition, October 2017




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**DESCRIPTION**

The core structures of the lid and lower container appear hastily made and for structural purposes; not aesthetic. They are fabricated using thick uneven vertical strips of an unknown plant tethered to two, roughly hewn, wood discs that serve as the top of the lid and base of the lower container. To the core structures, light-brown flat strips of raffia are tightly wrapped around the circumference so that the wood discs and vertical strips are not visible. Next, thin dark-brown vertical raffia strips of uniform thickness were added. In contrast to the core structure and subsequent layers, the basket was then enhanced with delicate light-brown geometric zig zag, diamond, and chevron designs that were added to the dark-brown raffia using a twill or plaiting technique and executed in linear embroidery. In effect, the contrasting light-on-dark decorative surface clearly stands out and is reminiscent of the patterns and color schemes used on textiles produced in the DRC. The rough unfinished edges of the lid, lower compartment opening, and foot are hidden with a decorative dark-brown raffia braid. Where the pattern on the top of the lid wraps onto the sides and terminates is also hidden with the same dark-brown braid. 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Dimensions:

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**CONDITION**

Although the fibers are somewhat brittle, the basket is in good structural condition and does not exhibit extensive fiber loss or damage. Interior and exterior surfaces are dusty/dirty; especially the lid. Green and red smudges measuring approximately 1cm, and of an unknown source, are evident on the interior wood discs.

On the lid, there are several small areas of loss measuring 1 to 2 centimeters each and on the weaving structure around the upper and lower braided bands. On the exterior of the lower compartment, there

are a number of loose fiber ends and several broken or missing fibers on the upper and lower braided bands. This is more prevalent on the lower braided band since it serves as the basket's foot and therefore, more wear is expected. Also on the basket's foot, the dark brown fibers have been abraded and are now light brown/beige.

The wood disc on the lid interior and lower compartment have several pin-sized holes, which are caused by wood-boring insects. Their cast larva skins and frass can be seen in the lid and lower compartment. No live insects were found, but as a precautionary measure, the object was sealed in a polyethylene bag.

Examined by: J. Batkin-Hall

Date: 9/15/2017

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### **PROPOSED TREATMENT**

Perform pest treatment by freezing the object for two weeks, lightly surface clean with a dry brush, HEPA vacuum, and cosmetic sponges, consolidate loose and fraying fibers with a cellulosic adhesive (Japanese tissue or Tyvek "bridge"), and reinstate areas of loss using Japanese tissue or Tyvek toned with Golden acrylic paint (burnish to mimic sheen?).

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### **TREATMENT**

1. Wrapped the basket in plastic and placed it in a freezer for two weeks at -20°C.
2. Surfaced cleaned using a variable speed HEPA vacuum and a dry brush, and then with the end of the vacuum tube covered with Vellux.
3. To stabilize the dark brown braided areas, narrow strips of Tyvek Hard Structure were toned with Burnt Umber, Raw Umber, and Yellow Ochre Golden Acrylics, and then woven into the existing structure. Strips were held in place by either tucking them or using a 1:1 mixture of Lascaux 498 and Lascaux 360 HV. While wet, excess adhesive was removed using a pointed dental tool. A 4.5cm section of missing braid on the foot is in stable condition and was therefore, not recreated.
4. A thin coat of 3% w/v B-72 in acetone was brushed onto the Tyvek to replicate surface sheen.
5. Insect debris was removed with a HEPA vacuum, tweezers, and/or a pointed dental tool.

Conservator: Janelle Batkin-Hall

Date: 1/11/2018 – 2/8/2018

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### **Photographic Documentation**

2017-10-1-bt1 (through bt9)

2017-10-1-at1 (through at9)

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### **Exhibition Recommendations**

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### **Exhibition Record:**